



EFFECTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON VENTURE CREATION AND EMPLOYABILITY AMONG GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the effects of entrepreneurship education on venture creation and employability among Gombe State University graduates. Two research objectives were formulated to guide the study. A survey research design was employed, with a population comprising 1,300 Venture Creation students at Gombe State University. A sample of 297 students was selected using a simple random sampling technique where by all was returned and filled. A structured questionnaire served as the primary instrument for data collection. The collected data was analysed using frequency counts and percentages. The findings revealed that 95% of the respondents considered entrepreneurship a desirable career option. Additionally, the study highlighted that the entrepreneurship education training received during practical classes was instrumental in developing essential skills for business creation. Specifically, students reported that the training helped them identify diverse business opportunities, create products and services that meet customer needs and demands, and develop comprehensive business plans for prospective ventures. Based on the findings, the study recommended that the government, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), should harmonize the entrepreneurship education curriculum across Nigerian universities, making it a mandatory component for all students. This will ensure a standardized and comprehensive approach to fostering entrepreneurial skills among graduates.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, Venture creation, youth unemployment, tertiary institutions, northeastern Nigeria

JEL Classification Code:

1.0 Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving and highly competitive job market, employability skills have become crucial for university graduates seeking to secure employment and achieve long-term career success. These skills are foundational to professional development and encompass a broad range of competencies, including interpersonal skills, communication, problem-solving, customer relations, and technical abilities (Saunders et al., 2022). Employers now expect graduates to possess these skills, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to the workplace from the onset of their careers. Employability skills are often classified into three primary categories: personal qualities, core skills, and subject-specific knowledge, all of which are integral to professional success and career advancement (Helyer & Lee, 2023).

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

Entrepreneurship education that started as a humble beginning in United States of America in 1945 has been embraced by many countries of the world with little modification, in terms

of structuring it according to each country's unique cultural context. In Nigeria, entrepreneurship education course was offered in higher institutions of learning and clustered in business courses. It implies that entrepreneurial education is not new and strange to Business Administration/Management disciplines in Nigeria higher institution of learning. But today, the emphasis is on making entrepreneurship education a higher institution wide course in Nigeria and this new trend started in 2008 – when the Nigeria federal government openly declared that its policy thrusts is the mandatory introduction of entrepreneurship education in all institutions of higher learning and it is seen by her as a *sine qua non* for the actualization of the objective of the vision 20 – 2020.

The motivation for venture creation and the strategies for effective application of entrepreneurial knowledge into venture creation had changed over a period of time. In new venture creation, entrepreneurs need to focus on strategically analysing the external macro-environment to determine gaps and deficiencies where exploitable needs/problems may exist. Such analysis enables the entrepreneur to learn and discover new information, analyse it for trends and possibilities and develop unique, innovative solutions to identify problems or needs in the marketplace (McKelvie et al., 2011).

Employability is about the potential of obtaining and building a fulfilling career through continuous development of skills that can be applied from one employer to another; possessing the set of attributes and skills that match those required by industry; taking the responsibility for self-development through learning and training, either through the employer or self-initiatives; adopting the concept of life-long learning; being employed according to their level of qualification, functional competencies and being awarded accordingly in terms of wages & benefits; whereas employment is a contract between two parties - one being the employer and the other being the employee.

University education plays a critical role in equipping students with the necessary employability skills, fostering self-reliance, and preparing graduates to make significant contributions to society, whether through traditional employment or entrepreneurial ventures (Uchendu, 2021). In the modern workplace, academic competencies such as literacy, numeracy, and disciplinary knowledge, though important, are no longer sufficient. Employers increasingly prioritize higher-order cognitive skills, including reasoning, creativity, decision-making, and problem-solving (Shafie et al., 2022). Additionally, personal attributes such as adaptability, integrity, teamwork, and leadership are considered essential for professional success in dynamic business environments (Jackson & Bridgstock, 2023).

One of the most significant competencies gaining prominence is creativity, particularly among undergraduates aspiring to become entrepreneurs. Creativity enhances students' ability to generate innovative ideas, develop solutions, and identify new business opportunities, fostering both psychological well-being and career advancement (Khairani et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2022). This has led to a growing interest in venture creation among students, as entrepreneurship offers financial independence, job security, and autonomy over one's career (Olokundun et al., 2018).

Despite the increasing emphasis on entrepreneurial skills, Nigeria continues to grapple with a high rate of graduate unemployment, highlighting deficiencies in the development of entrepreneurial attributes (Olokundun et al., 2018; Okolie et al., 2023). Universities, particularly those with a focus on entrepreneurship, play a critical role in addressing this challenge by equipping students with practical skills required for venture creation and socioeconomic development (McKellar, 2020). However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in fostering these attributes remains limited, particularly in Nigeria (Akinola & Oke, 2022).

Entrepreneurship education has been recognized as a key instrument in preparing students for the complexities of the modern business landscape. It fosters resilience, innovation, leadership, and adaptability, which are crucial for entrepreneurial success (Boldureanu et al., 2020). Entrepreneurial attributes, such as critical thinking, risk-taking, perseverance, and leadership, enable individuals to identify and capitalize on business opportunities (Agbi et al., 2022). These qualities not only enhance students' ability to launch and sustain ventures but also improve their employability by making them more attractive to potential employers (Atiya et al., 2021).

Resilience, for example, is vital for entrepreneurs facing business uncertainties, while leadership and communication skills empower them to influence others and build strong teams (Brewer et al., 2019). Entrepreneurial education, when effectively implemented, has the potential to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical business application, enabling students to translate their academic learning into sustainable business ventures (Nwosu & Nwachukwu, 2023).

The Case of Gombe State University: Evaluating the Impact of Entrepreneurship Education

The persistent issue of graduate unemployment in Nigeria, particularly among university graduates, has raised concerns about the effectiveness of tertiary education in meeting the country's economic and labour market demands. Many higher education institutions, including Gombe State University (GSU), have integrated entrepreneurship education into their curricula to promote self-reliance and job creation. However, the real impact of these programs remains questionable, as many graduates struggle to apply their theoretical knowledge in real-world entrepreneurial settings (Okonkwo et al., 2022).

Despite efforts to strengthen entrepreneurship education, numerous graduates find it challenging to establish viable businesses or secure meaningful employment. This raises concerns about the quality and implementation of entrepreneurship programs. Specifically, it remains unclear to what extent GSU graduates have successfully leveraged their entrepreneurial training to overcome unemployment and contribute to economic development (Adamu et al., 2023). The lack of empirical data assessing the outcomes of entrepreneurship education at GSU further complicates the issue, making it difficult to determine its effectiveness in enhancing employability and fostering sustainable business ventures.

Bridging the Gap: The Need for a Comprehensive Investigation

The gap between theoretical entrepreneurship education and its practical application necessitates an in-depth examination of the factors hindering graduates' ability to create successful ventures. Understanding these barriers is crucial for refining entrepreneurship education and ensuring that it adequately prepares students for the realities of the labour market. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in promoting venture creation and enhancing the employability of Gombe State University graduates.

By assessing the impact of entrepreneurship programs, identifying skill deficiencies, and evaluating potential policy interventions, this study seeks to provide valuable insights for academic institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders. Enhancing the quality of entrepreneurship education can play a pivotal role in addressing graduate unemployment, fostering economic growth, and equipping future generations with the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly uncertain job market.

Employability skills are essential for university graduates in today's competitive labour market. While universities, including GSU, have made significant strides in integrating entrepreneurship education into their curricula, challenges remain in translating theoretical knowledge into practical business success. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from educators, policymakers, and industry leaders to ensure that entrepreneurship education is more experiential, skills-driven, and tailored to the needs of graduates. By investigating the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education at GSU, this study seeks to contribute to ongoing efforts to enhance employability, stimulate venture creation, and drive economic development in Nigeria.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a survey research design. The choice of this design is justified by its ability to identify and analyze attributes of a large population through a representative sample (Mustapha, 2017). The survey research design was deemed appropriate for this study as it aimed to examine the effects of entrepreneurial skills training on venture creation and employability among students of Gombe State University. By utilizing this design, the study was able to collect relevant data from a sizable sample while ensuring generalizability to the broader student population.

3.2 Area of the Study

The research was conducted in Gombe State university of Gombe State; Gombe State University is one of the renowned University in the North Eastern zone located in Gombe metropolis with varied number of faculties.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised one thousand three hundred (1,300) students enrolled in the ENTP 311 (Venture Creation) course at Gombe State University during the 2022/2023 academic session (Gombe State University, 2023). These students were selected as the target population due to their direct exposure to entrepreneurship education and training, making them suitable for assessing the impact of such training on venture creation and employability.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Given the impracticality of studying the entire population of ENTP 311 (Venture Creation) students, a representative sample was selected to ensure accurate and reliable findings. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan Table (1970), which is commonly used to calculate an adequate sample for large populations while maintaining statistical validity. Based on this table, a sample size of two hundred and ninety-seven (297) students was obtained.

To ensure fairness and equal representation, a simple random sampling technique was employed in selecting participants. This method minimized selection bias and ensured that every student in the population had an equal chance of being included in the study. The chosen sampling approach helped in obtaining diverse perspectives on entrepreneurship education, venture creation, and employability outcomes among Gombe State University students. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the required sample size of 297 students.

3.5 Sources of Data Collection

Data for this study was gathered from both primary and secondary sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire administered to students enrolled in the ENTP 311 (Venture Creation) course at Gombe State University during the 2022/2023 academic session. The use of primary data was essential in capturing first-hand information on students' experiences, perceptions, and the impact of entrepreneurship education on venture creation and employability.

Secondary data was obtained from a variety of published sources, including academic journals, books, institutional reports, government publications, newspapers, magazines, and credible online resources. These secondary sources provided valuable theoretical and empirical insights that complemented the primary data, ensuring a well-rounded study with a solid foundation in existing literature.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire specifically designed to obtain relevant information from the respondents. The questionnaire was carefully developed to align with the study's objectives, incorporating both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The instrument was administered to Venture Creation students at Gombe State University, ensuring that responses directly reflected the impact of entrepreneurship education on their ability to create businesses and enhance employability.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, it was pre-tested with a small group of students before full-scale distribution. This pilot testing helped refine the questions, ensuring clarity and consistency in responses.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The collected data was systematically analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. SPSS was employed to facilitate accurate and efficient data processing, including coding, entry, and analysis. The results were presented in tabular format using simple frequency counts and percentages to illustrate the distribution of responses.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize key findings, providing a clear understanding of the impact of entrepreneurship education on venture creation and employability. The use of SPSS enhanced the precision and reliability of the analysis, allowing for meaningful interpretation and discussion of the study's results.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Research Question One: What are the behavioral components of students' attitude toward entrepreneurship education on venture creation and employability among Gombe state university graduates?

Table 1: Respondents views on the behavioural components of students' attitude toward entrepreneurship education on venture creation and employability among Gombe State University Graduates

S/N	Item Code	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean Score	Std. Dev.
1	BCSAI3	100	97	59	48	14	297	3.69	1.19
2	BCSAI1	91	88	63	26	29	297	3.63	1.27

3	BCSAI6	111	85	45	35	42	297	3.59	1.40
4	BCSAI5	105	95	40	35	43	297	3.58	1.39
5	BCSAI7	96	87	56	42	37	297	3.51	1.35
6	BCSAI4	92	81	55	42	48	297	3.40	1.41
7	BCSAI2	88	75	65	45	45	297	3.36	1.38

Source; Field Survey (2025)

Analysis of Respondents' Attitudes toward Entrepreneurship Education on Venture Creation and Employability

The analysis of the behavioural components of students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship education reveals an overall positive disposition among Gombe State University graduates. With all mean scores exceeding 3.3 on a 5-point scale, the findings suggest that students generally appreciated and were influenced by their exposure to entrepreneurship education.

Notably, the highest mean score (3.69) indicates that a substantial proportion of graduates view entrepreneurship as being equally or even more important than other academic subjects. This highlights a strong recognition of the value of entrepreneurship in shaping career outlooks, a critical foundation for venture creation and employability.

The relatively high mean scores for enjoyment of the lessons (3.63), happiness about learning entrepreneurship (3.58), and the perception of entrepreneurship as a desirable career (3.59) further reinforce the motivational and attitudinal impact of the curriculum. These responses demonstrate that beyond content delivery, the education fostered enthusiasm, confidence, and a sense of relevance in students' career planning.

Furthermore, the institution's role in encouraging entrepreneurial ventures (mean: 3.51) and preparing students to make informed decisions about career paths (mean: 3.40) suggests that the university environment supports practical application and decision-making skills related to entrepreneurship.

However, the item with the lowest mean score (3.36) reflects that while interest in entrepreneurship careers increased, it may not have been as significantly impacted as other areas. This points to a potential gap between knowledge acquisition and genuine career motivation indicating a need for more hands-on experiences, mentorships, or exposure to real-world entrepreneurial ecosystems.

In summary, the results indicate that entrepreneurship education at Gombe State University has a notable positive influence on students' attitudes, especially in enhancing awareness, appreciation, and perceived relevance of entrepreneurship. These attitudes are essential precursors for both venture creation and employability, as they shape graduates' willingness to explore self-employment, embrace innovation, and adapt to dynamic labour markets

Research Question Two: What are the cognitive components of students' attitude toward entrepreneurship education on venture creation and employability among Gombe state university graduates?

Table 2: Respondents views on the cognitive components of students' attitude toward entrepreneurship education on venture creation and employability among Gombe State University Graduates

S/N	Item Code	SA	A	U	D	SD	Total	Mean Score	Std. Dev.
1	CCSA4	111	90	38	31	48	297	3.58	1.43
2	CCSA1	105	90	45	36	42	297	3.57	1.39

3	CCSA3	99	87	47	48	37	297	3.51	1.37
4	CCSA2	100	83	43	52	40	297	3.47	1.40
5	CCSA7	87	92	54	47	38	297	3.45	1.34
6	CCSA6	97	80	52	45	44	297	3.44	1.40
7	CCSA5	90	78	42	52	56	297	3.30	1.47

Source: field Survey (2025)

Analysis of Cognitive Components of Students' Attitude toward Entrepreneurship Education

The results demonstrate that entrepreneurship education has significantly impacted the cognitive development of students at Gombe State University. Across all indicators, mean scores are consistently above 3.3, reflecting positive cognitive responses to entrepreneurial training. The highest-rated cognitive outcome (mean = 3.58) reveals that students feel confident in their ability to create a new business, showcasing the practical and skill-oriented impact of the curriculum. Similarly, high ratings on the ability to identify business opportunities (3.57) and develop business plans (3.51) underscore a strengthened capacity for strategic thinking, planning, and opportunity recognition, all of which are key enablers of successful venture creation. Moderately strong responses (means between 3.44–3.47) regarding skills such as anticipating market changes, conducting feasibility studies, and creating customer-satisfying products suggest that students also gained problem-solving and adaptive skills crucial for business sustainability and employability in dynamic environments.

The item with the lowest score (mean = 3.30) relates to identifying sources of business finance, indicating that while students may possess ideas and strategic skills, financial literacy and funding access remain weaker areas. This may call for greater emphasis on financial management and exposure to funding ecosystems within the curriculum.

In conclusion, entrepreneurship education has had a strong cognitive impact on graduates, equipping them with the necessary mental models, analytical skills, and confidence to identify, plan, and execute entrepreneurial ventures. This cognitive readiness is a critical step toward enhancing both venture creation and overall employability in a competitive economy.

5.0 Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: Entrepreneurship as a Desirable Career Option

The findings of this study revealed that 95% of the respondents considered entrepreneurship a desirable career option. Additionally, the majority of students expressed satisfaction with having learned entrepreneurship education, regarding it as more important than other subjects, and reporting enjoyment in their entrepreneurship education lessons. This indicates a strong positive attitude toward entrepreneurship among students at Gombe State University.

These findings align with the study conducted by Onuma (2016), who examined the impact of exposing undergraduate students to entrepreneurship education on their ability to create businesses after graduation. Using a sample of 200 final-year students from Ebonyi State University, Onuma found that entrepreneurship education significantly equips students with the necessary skills for job creation, shifting their mind-set from that of job seekers to job creators.

Furthermore, the findings of this study support the research of Onah (2006), who investigated the entrepreneurship education needs of self-employed artisans and craftsmen in urban areas of Enugu State, Nigeria. Onah's study revealed that entrepreneurial skills such as management skills, accounting skills, public relations skills, marketing skills, communication

skills, and record-keeping skills played a critical role in the success of artisans and craftsmen. These skills are also essential for university graduates seeking to establish their own ventures, reinforcing the importance of entrepreneurship education in higher institutions.

Research Question 2: Development of Entrepreneurial Skills

The findings related to research question two indicated that 91% of the respondents acknowledged that the entrepreneurship education training they received—particularly during practical sessions—enabled them to develop essential skills for creating new businesses. These skills included the ability to identify different business opportunities, create innovative products and services that satisfy customer needs, and develop a business plan for new business ventures.

Interestingly, the findings of this study contrast with the research of Linan, Rodriguez-Cohard, and Rueda-Cantuche (2005), whose study suggested that youths' intention to become entrepreneurs depends primarily on personal attraction towards entrepreneurship, perceived social norms, and self-efficacy rather than structured entrepreneurship education. This implies that while entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in shaping students' entrepreneurial mindset, individual motivation and societal influences also play a significant role in their decision to pursue entrepreneurship.

However, the findings of this study are consistent with those of Okoro (2014), who examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on the enhancement of entrepreneurial skills among undergraduates in South-Eastern universities in Nigeria. Okoro's research found that a well-structured entrepreneurship education curriculum significantly contributes to the development of entrepreneurial skills among students. However, the study also revealed that there was poor utilization of effective pedagogical methods in teaching entrepreneurship education in the region. This suggests that while entrepreneurship education is beneficial, there is a need to improve teaching methodologies to maximize its impact on students.

5.1 Implication of Findings

The overall findings from Table 2 suggest that nearly 91% of respondents affirm that the entrepreneurship education training they received—especially during practical sessions—has enabled them to develop essential skills for business creation. These skills include the ability to identify business opportunities, create innovative products and services, develop business plans, manage market risks, and conduct feasibility studies. This underscores the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education at Gombe State University in preparing students for self-employment and enhancing their employability. However, areas such as business financing and risk management may require additional emphasis in the curriculum to further strengthen students' entrepreneurial competencies.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings from both research questions underscore the significant role of entrepreneurship education in shaping students' entrepreneurial mind-set, equipping them with relevant skills, and fostering business creation. The strong alignment with previous studies, such as those of Onuma (2016), Onah (2006), and Okoro (2014), reinforces the importance of entrepreneurship education as a tool for economic empowerment. However, the contrast with Linan et al. (2005) suggests that while education is critical, personal motivation and societal influences should also be considered when promoting entrepreneurship among students.

On the basis of the findings of this study, it was concluded that 95% of the respondents opined that they considered entrepreneurship a desirable career option, they were happy to have

learnt entrepreneurship education because they considered it as more important than any other subject. It was also concluded that 91% of the respondents responded that the entrepreneurship education training received during practical classes helps them in developing skills for creating a new business, identifying different business opportunities and creating products and services that satisfy customers' needs and demand.

5.3 Recommendations

The findings of this study underscore the significant role of entrepreneurship education in shaping students' entrepreneurial mind-set, equipping them with relevant skills, and fostering business creation. The strong alignment with previous studies, such as those of Onuma (2016), Onah (2006), and Okoro (2014), reinforces the importance of entrepreneurship education as a tool for economic empowerment. However, the contrast with Linan et al. (2005) suggests that while education is crucial, personal motivation and societal influences should also be considered when promoting entrepreneurship among students. To enhance the impact of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Enhancement of Teaching Methods:** Institutions should adopt innovative and interactive pedagogies such as case studies, simulations, and experiential learning to make entrepreneurship education more engaging and impactful.
2. **Emphasis on Practical Training:** Universities should increase the focus on hands-on training, allowing students to gain real-world entrepreneurial experience before graduation.
3. **Standardization of Entrepreneurship Curricula:** The National Universities Commission (NUC) should harmonize and make entrepreneurship education compulsory for all students to ensure consistency in entrepreneurial training across Nigerian universities.

By implementing these measures, entrepreneurship education can better equip graduates with the skills and mind-set needed to drive business creation, economic growth, and job creation in Nigeria.

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