



Assessment of Entrepreneurial Aspirations and Challenges among Business Education Students in Adamawa State, Nigeria.

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to assess the entrepreneurial aspirations and challenges among business students in Adamawa State. Three specific objectives were used. Three research questions were formulated to guide the study. Theory of planned behavior propounded by (Ajzen, 1991) was adopted. The methodology adopted for the study was descriptive survey design. The population size was the whole tertiary institutions in Adamawa State namely: Modibbo Adama University, Yola, (MAU) Adamawa State University, Mubi (ASU) Federal College of Education, Yola, (FCEY) College of Education, Hong, (COE), Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, (FPM) and Adamawa State Polytechnic, yola (ASPY) sample and sampling technique were employed were by in each of the tertiary institutions, 20 of the students were randomly sampled which gave a total of 120 students as respondents. 106 was retrieved. The data obtained were analyzed using simple percentages. It was concluded that entrepreneurship education influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business. And the barriers that influence aspirations of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new among others are; financial constraints, fear of failure, and a lack of practical experience. The findings reveal a complex view of entrepreneurship that extends beyond traditional business creation, encompassing elements of social innovation and personal fulfillment. Students displayed a generally positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, influenced strongly by their involvement in practical entrepreneurship-related activities and their familial backgrounds. Also,

Challenges students face are; financial constraints, fear of failure, and a lack of practical experience

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education; Entrepreneurial aspiration; Entrepreneurial challenges; Entrepreneurship perceptions;

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is now the societal problem solver, because it explores an individual to be self-employed. Self-reliance and self-dependent. It is the process of creating new ventures that did not previously exist; it is the practice of starting a new business; it involves creation of new wealth through implementation of new concepts Paul (2019). Entrepreneurship has become a vital component of economic development, and educational institutions are increasingly focusing on fostering entrepreneurial skills among students. Business education students, in particular, are expected to possess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to start and manage their own businesses. (Rodrigues 2023). Entrepreneurs are individuals who take calculated risks, exhibit creativity, and display a proactive mindset in building and expanding their enterprises (Hisrich, Peters, & Shepherd, 2020).

Entrepreneurship education has become a cornerstone of business education training programs across the globe, aiming to equip students with the skills necessary to launch successful ventures. The literature on entrepreneurship education suggests a multidimensional approach that encompasses not only the impartation of necessary business skills, but also the development of a proactive and innovative mindset essential for navigating the multifaceted business environment (Fayolle 2017).

Entrepreneurial aspirations refer to individuals' state of mind aimed at creating new ventures, developing new business concepts or creating new value within existing firms, individual's willingness or plans to engage in a particular behavior and have several antecedents. Auken et al. (2019) posited that entrepreneurial aspiration is a central variable for searching the entrepreneurial process such as the transformation of knowledge into an economic outcome.

Despite the growing importance of entrepreneurship in economic development, there is a dearth of research on the entrepreneurial aspirations and challenges faced by business education students in Adamawa State. Most studies have focused on entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intentions, and entrepreneurial skills, but little attention has been paid to the specific aspirations and challenges of business education students. This study seeks to fill this gap by

exploring the entrepreneurial aspirations and challenges of business education students in Adamawa State.

Purpose of the study

This study contributes to the literature by focusing on three important areas: The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess how entrepreneurship education influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business.
2. To identify the barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business.
3. To determine the solutions to the existing barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new.

Research Questions.

1. How entrepreneurship education influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business?
2. What are the barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business?
3. What are the solutions to the existing barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new?

Significant of the Study

This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial aspirations among business education students. The findings will provide insights into the challenges faced by business education students in pursuing their entrepreneurial aspirations and inform policymakers and educators on how to support student entrepreneurs.

Literature review

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on theory of planned behavior one of the several competing theories used to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial intention (EI) and its antecedents propounded by (Ajzen, 1991) extended by Schlaegel and Koenig, (1981). Later referred to as "The entrepreneurial event model" this sees business creation as the interaction of initiative, ability, management relative, autonomy and risk. The model indicates that entrepreneurial intention stems from perception of feasibility and desirability which is shaped by cultural and social context, as well as the exposure to entrepreneurial activity

Entrepreneurship Education Impact

Entrepreneurship programs aim to equip students with essential skills such as opportunity recognition, risk management, and innovative thinking, which are crucial in today's dynamic business environment. According to Kuratko (2020), the purpose of entrepreneurship education extends beyond merely teaching students to start businesses; it fosters a proactive, innovative mindset necessary for success in various professional domains. This educational approach helps students adapt to market changes and cultivates skills like critical thinking and problem-solving, which are highly valued in any career path. Globally, higher education institutions have increasingly integrated entrepreneurship into their curricula, a trend highlighted by the 2024 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report. The report suggests a strong correlation between comprehensive entrepreneurship education and heightened entrepreneurial activities among graduates (Hill et al. 2024). According to Bae et al. (2018) Practical components, such as workshops, incubators, and live project engagements, are particularly effective in enhancing entrepreneurial intent and capability among students. In addition, the role of entrepreneurial education and its impact on creating entrepreneurs has been questioned, e.g., Remeikiene et al. (2018), For example, the role and impact of education and training on improving students' perception of entrepreneurship has been questionable.

Perceptions about Entrepreneurship

The perception of entrepreneurship among business students is multifaceted and influenced by various cultural, educational, and economic factors, which can significantly shape their career aspirations and entrepreneurial intent (Naqvi et al. 2023). argue, entrepreneurship does not have a single, universally accepted definition, which suggests that its perception can be broad and varied across different contexts. This flexibility in definition allows students to see entrepreneurship not only as business creation, but also as an opportunity for innovation in various domains such as technology, social initiatives, and even arts and culture. Entrepreneurial education plays a critical role in shaping these perceptions. The exposure to entrepreneurship courses often broadens students' understanding, highlighting not only the potential rewards but also the inherent risks and challenges. Despite the generally positive perceptions of entrepreneurship, students often have misconceptions about the nature of entrepreneurial success and the challenges involved. Many underestimate the level of risk and the resilience required to overcome failures, as highlighted in the works by Dollinger (2018) These misconceptions can lead to unrealistic expectations, which are detrimental to the practical outcomes of entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship Aspiration

Entrepreneurial aspiration among business education students represent a critical focus for educators, as these aspirations strongly predict future entrepreneurial activities. The concept of entrepreneurial aspirations refers to the deliberate willingness to start a new business venture (Katz and Green 2021). Understanding the formation and determinants of this aspiration is essential for crafting effective entrepreneurship education. The literature identifies several key influencers on entrepreneurial aspiration (Auken et al. 2019) At the core are attitudes towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, which collectively form the basis of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen 1991). These elements are shaped by personal, educational, and environmental factors that interact to either encourage or inhibit entrepreneurial ambitions. Educational influence, particularly through specialized entrepreneurship programs, plays a pivotal role in shaping these intentions. Such programs not only impart necessary business skills but also enhance students' perceptions of entrepreneurship as a viable career path (Liñán and Fayolle 2018). These educational experiences are crucial in modifying students' attitudes and increasing their perceived control over entrepreneurial outcomes, thereby fostering stronger intentions to engage in entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship Challenges

High rate of graduate's unemployment has become a source of concern to all constituted authorities. Urevbu, (2018) attributed this phenomenon to missing link between creativity and functional education system in Nigeria. Embarking on an entrepreneurial career is full with challenges that can significantly impact the intentions and success of aspiring entrepreneurs. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing effective support mechanisms within entrepreneurship education programs. One of the primary challenges faced by business students is financial constraints. Sourcing funds to start and sustain a new business is a challenging task for many young entrepreneurs. According to a study by Farrell et al. (2023), financial challenges are often cited as the most significant barrier to business creation. Students frequently lack the collateral needed for traditional loans and may be unaware of or unable to access alternative funding sources such as venture capital or angel investors. Beyond financial issues, lack of experiences, skills and market knowledge also pose a substantial challenge. Many students have innovative skills, ideas and initiatives but lack the practical business skills necessary to implement these ideas successfully. This gap between skills and aspirations can lead to poorly planned ventures that are more likely to fail (Jayabalan et al. 2020). Entrepreneurship education programs should, therefore, emphasize not only the ideation process but also the development of hard skills such as financial management, marketing, and operational planning.

Another critical challenge is the fear of failure. This psychological barrier can deter even the most motivated individuals from pursuing entrepreneurial ventures. Despite extensive research on entrepreneurship and education, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these elements interact within business students in Adamawa State. Furthermore, existing studies often overlook how the combination of cultural, economic, and educational influences uniquely affects students' entrepreneurial aspirations and challenges in this new era. This study aims to fill this gap by providing contemporary insights into how these factors interplay to shape the entrepreneurial mindset and barriers perceived by students today, thereby contributing valuable perspectives to the field of entrepreneurship education.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey is particularly suitable for this study as it allows students' to express their perspectives and experiences, providing rich detailed data that are often not accessible through quantitative methods (Cohen et al. 2018). The population of the study consists of the whole Tertiary institutions that offer business education program in Adamawa State, namely: Modibbo Adama University, Yola, (MAU) Adamawa State University, Mubi (ASU) Federal College of Education, Yola, (FCEY) College of Education, Hong, (COE), Federal Polytechnic, Mubi, (FPM) and Adamawa State Polytechnic, yola (ASPY) Multi-stage random sampling technique was used to sample the respondents. From each of the tertiary institutions, 20 of the students were randomly sampled which gave a total of 120 respondents. Two expert from the department of vocational education, MAU validated the instrument. The questionnaire was designed for data collection using a binary No of 1 as YES while 0 as No. Though, out of the 120 administered questionnaires 106 were retrieved. The data obtained were analyzed using simple percentages for achieving the objectives of the study

Presentation of results

Research question one: How entrepreneurship education influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business?

Table 1: Percentages responses on the entrepreneurship education influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business?

S/N	Establish a new business (n=106)	YES	NO	REMARKS
1.	Are you having the intention of establish fast food business?	30(28.3%)	76(71.7%)	NO
2.	Are you having the intention of establish Automobile Services?	50(47.2%)	56(52.8%)	NO
3.	Are you having the intention of establish POS business?	100(94.3%)	6(5.7%)	YES
4.	Are you having the intention of establish Electrical/Electronic services?	40(37.7%)	66(62.3%)	NO
5.	Do you have the intention of establishing tailoring business?	60(56.6%)	46(43.3%)	YES
6.	Do you have the intention of establishing Fashion/Beauty Services?	70(66%)	36(34%)	YES
7.	Do you have the intention of establishing Barbing Saloon?	80(75.5%)	26(25.5%)	YES
8.	Do you have the intention of establishing Laundry services?	60(56.6%)	46(43.4%)	YES
9.	Do you have the intention of establishing Hand set repairer?	70(66%)	36(34%)	YES
10.	Do you have the intention of establishing Soft drink business?	80(75.5%)	26(24.5%)	YES
11.	Do you have the intention of establishing Bakery business?	39(36.8%)	67(63.2%)	NO
12.	Do you have the intention of establishing other businesses that are not included above?	97(91.5%)	9(8.5%)	YES

From the above Table 1 Responses, no 1 question, 30 respondents representing 28.2% of the respondents expressed intention to establish fast food business 76 respondents representing 71.6% did. 50 respondents representing 47.2% of the respondents expressed intention to establish Automobile Services, while 56 respondents representing 52.8% of the respondents did not. 100 respondents representing 94.3% of the respondents expressed intention to established establish POS business while 6 respondents representing (5.7%) did not. 40 respondents representing (37.7%) have intention to established establish

Electrical/Electronic business while 6 respondents representing (62.3%) did not. NO 5 and 8 were on the same opinions as 60 respondents representing (56.6%) have agree to established tailoring business while 46 respondents representing (43.3%) did not. No 6 and 9 were on the same opinions as 70 respondents representing (66%) decide to established Fashion/Beauty Services while 36 respondents representing (34%) did not. No 7 and 10 were on the same opinions as 80 respondents representing (75.5%) have the aspirations of establishing Barbing Saloon while 26 respondents representing (25.5%) have not. 39 respondents representing (36.8%) have the intention of establishing Bakery business while 67 respondents representing (63.2%) did not. 97 respondents representing (91.5%) have the intention of establishing other businesses that are not included above while 9 respondents representing (8.5%) did not.

Research question two: What are the barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business.?

Table 2: Percentages responses on the barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business.

S/N	Barriers to entrepreneurial aspiration(n=106)	YES	NO	REMARKS
1.	Do you agree that Lack of financial resources is a significant barrier?	100(94.3%)	6(5.7)	YES
2.	Do you agree that Fear of failure can discourages you to achieve your entrepreneurial aspiration?	90(84.9%)	16(15.1%)	YES
3.	Do you agree that limited access to business networks hinders entrepreneurial aspirations?	50(47.2%)	56(52.8%)	NO
4.	Do you agree that lack of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge poses a barrier to aspiration?	70(66%)	36(34%)	YES
5.	Do you agree that cultural and societal norms discourage you from pursuing entrepreneurial ventures?	40(37.7%)	66(62.3%)	NO
6.	Do you agree that limited availability of entrepreneurial support services hampers aspirations?	70(66%)	36(34%)	YES

7.	Do you agree that personal obligations and responsibilities is another factor affecting entrepreneurial aspiration?	100(94.3%)	6(5.7%)	YES
8.	Do you agree that perceived lack of support from families and friends acts as a barrier to entrepreneurial aspiration?	102(96.2%)	4(3.7%)	YES

From the above Table 2 responses. No 1 and 7 were on the same opinions as 100 respondents representing (94.3%) agreed that Lack of financial resources is a significant barrier, while 6 respondents representing (5.7) did not. 90 respondents representing (84.9%) agree that Fear of failure can discourages them to achieve their entrepreneurial aspiration, while 16 respondents representing (15.1%) did not. 50 respondents representing (47.2%) agreed that limited access to business networks hinders entrepreneurial aspirations, while 56 respondents representing (52.8%) did not. No 4 and 6 were on the same opinions as 70 respondents representing (66%) agreed that lack of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge poses a barrier to aspiration while 36 respondents representing (34%) did not. 40 respondents representing (37.7%) agreed that cultural and societal norms discourage them from pursuing entrepreneurial ventures, while 66 respondents representing (62.3%) did not. 102 respondents representing (96.2%) agreed that lack of support from families and friends acts as a barrier to entrepreneurial aspiration, while 4 respondents representing (3.7%) did not.

Research question three: What are the solutions to the existing barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish?

Table 3: Percentages responses on the solutions to the existing barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish

S/N	Solutions to the barriers (n=106)	YES	NO	REMARKS
1.	Do you believe that providing entrepreneurship training would enhance your entrepreneurial aspirations?	100(94.3%)	6(5.7%)	YES
2.	Would access to funding opportunities increase your desire to start a business?	100(94.3%)	6(5.7%)	YES
3.	Do you believe providing resources (eg, equipment, software,) would enhance your ability to start a business?	98(92.5%)	8(7.5%)	YES
4.	Do you agree that entrepreneurship is more important than government work?	101(95.3)	5(4.7%)	YES

From the above Table 3 responses, NO 1 and 2 questions were on the same opinion as 100 respondents representing (94.3%) Agree that providing entrepreneurship training would enhance their entrepreneurial aspirations while 6 respondents representing (5.7%) did not, 98 respondents representing. (92.5%) agree that believe providing resources (eg, equipment, software,) would enhance your ability to start a business while 8 respondents with 7.5% answered no. 101 respondents representing. (95.3%) agree that entrepreneurship is more important than government work while 5 respondents representing (4.7%) did not.

Discussions

From the findings in research question one, it was clearly stated that, majority of the respondents agreed to choose the following business as their aspirations; POS business, tailoring business, Fashion/Beauty Services, Barbing Saloon, and other businesses. Because entrepreneurship education plays major impact on business education students to decide on their aspirations. This study illustrate that business students view entrepreneurship not merely as a means to economic success but as a platform for innovation and societal impact. This aligns with Gedeon (2016) argue, entrepreneurship education allows students to see entrepreneurship not only as business creation, but also as an opportunity for innovation in various domains such as technology, social initiatives, and even arts and culture. Entrepreneurial education plays a critical role in shaping these

perceptions. Nabi et al. (2017). This study reveals that direct engagement in practical entrepreneurial activities, such as business plan competitions and entrepreneurship clubs, profoundly influences students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurial careers. The findings challenge educators to rethink how entrepreneurship is taught, advocating for a more action-based learning approach that mirrors real-world business challenges and opportunities.

From the findings in research question two, most of the respondents were at the same opinions that Lack of financial resources, Fear of failure, limited access to business, lack of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, cultural and societal norms, lack of support from families and friends are the major challenges of entrepreneurial aspirations. Most challenge identified by the study is financial constraints. Several students' express concerns about accessing the necessary capital to start and sustain a business. This challenge is consistent with findings from previous studies, such as those by Hisrich and Ramadani (2017), which have long highlighted financial barriers as a primary concern for new entrepreneurs. The fear of not securing enough funding or facing financial instability can discourage students from pursuing entrepreneurial prospects. Also a study by Farrell et al. (2023), stated that financial challenges are often cited as the most significant barrier to business creation. Students frequently lack the collateral needed for traditional loans and may be unaware of or unable to access alternative funding sources such as venture capital or angel investors

From the findings in research question three, on the solutions to the existing barriers that influence aspiration of Business Education students in Adamawa State to establish new business, majorities of the respondents stated that; entrepreneurship training would enhance their entrepreneurial aspirations as well as access to funding opportunities increase their desire to start a business providing resources (eg, equipment, software,) entrepreneurship is more important than government work, because it makes an individual to be self-reliant, self -employ and self -dependent.

Conclusions

From the findings, on Entrepreneurial Aspirations and Challenges among Business Education Students in Adamawa State, the researcher concluded that students perceive entrepreneurship as a broad concept that extends beyond traditional business creation to include elements of social innovation and technological advancement. preparing students not only for business creation but also for social and technological innovation. The research highlights that students' intentions to pursue entrepreneurial endeavors are strongly influenced by their engagement in practical entrepreneurship-related activities. However, students

face significant barriers, including financial constraints, fear of failure, and a lack of practical experience. These challenges emphasize the necessity for educational curricula to incorporate practical business skills, financial literacy, and strategies to cope with psychological barriers like fear of failure. entrepreneurship training would enhance their entrepreneurial aspirations as well as access to funding opportunities increase their desire to start a business providing resources (eg, equipment, software,) entrepreneurship is more important than government work, because it makes an individual to be self- reliant, self -employ and self -dependent.

It was also concluded that providing entrepreneurship training would enhance their entrepreneurial aspirations as well as access to funding opportunities increase their desire to start a business providing resources (eg, equipment, software,) entrepreneurship is more important than government work, because it makes an individual to be self- reliant, self -employ and self -dependent.

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