



Impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurship career intentions of university students. Case of Midlands State University

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship plays a significant role in the economic development of society. This is the reason why universities are paying attention to promoting entrepreneurship education programs. These programs are being provided at numerous levels and there is a need to assess the effectiveness of these programs from different aspects and to find out the strategies for designing entrepreneurship education programs more effective in terms of creating more student entrepreneurs. In order to know the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship intention plays a pivotal role. If students develop their intention to start their own venture in business, then it will be a good indicator of their future entrepreneurial behavior. Hence the current research examines the impact of entrepreneurship education in terms of entrepreneurship intention. The research had three objectives which are, to determine the impact of attitude has on entrepreneurship intentions, to determine the impact of subjective norms has on entrepreneurship intentions and to determine the impact of perceived behavioral control has on entrepreneurship intentions. As these three variables are relevant for developing the entrepreneurial intention hence it is was important to explore their mediating roles. In order to collect data, the questionnaire method was used and overall one hundred and thirty two questionnaires were included in the final data analysis. The results suggest that attitude, subject norm and perceived behavioral control directly impact on entrepreneurial intention. The study recommended the use of role models in entrepreneurship education as it influences student attitude, the adoption of Project-based learning as it explains well why people should be entrepreneurial and the need for student motivation.

Keywords: entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurship intention

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has become a topic of study at many institutions across the world through entrepreneurship programs and courses, although little uniformity in satisfaction and method among these projects and courses. Entrepreneurship education is becoming a growing concern in political and academic circles. Entrepreneurship education should not only make university students aware of the entrepreneurial career option, but also instill the mentality, attitudes, and develop the knowledge, talents, and capacities to recognize, evaluate, and take advantage of market opportunities. As a result, entrepreneurship education will make it easier to choose an entrepreneurial career path, recognize opportunities, and establish intentions to start a business. When university students are confident in their own abilities and capacities, and can see fantastic opportunities in the market, they are bound to plan to form new organizations and participate in activities aimed at launching new hobbies (Aparicio *et al.*, 2021) ^[2]. Students' ability to create and run their own businesses after graduation can be improved by exposure to entrepreneurship education.

In China, student entrepreneurship establishes a vital piece of the entrepreneurial groups in China which is of enormous importance in further developing the employment rate, maintaining social stability, and advancing knowledge production in medium and small sized enterprises (Chime and Liu, 2019). Universities in China have regularly come with entrepreneurship education in order to enhance university students' entrepreneurship (Lihao Wu *et al* 2022) ^[16]. Oman, as one of the Middle East's major oil producers is dealing with a serious problem of youth unemployment, particularly among college graduates. Various pilot initiatives as well as national, regional, and global projects have been implemented to promote entrepreneurship and provide entrepreneurship education to university students.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, entrepreneurship is used as a means of overcoming lifestyle and livelihood restrictions for some groups of people. Given the unfavorable conditions for entrepreneurship and the low quality of entrepreneurship, various governments and institutions are beginning to invest in public policies and programs that promote entrepreneurship and improve business ecosystems.

Entrepreneurship is widely considered as a catalyst for development, a solution for inclusive economic growth, and social inclusion in developing African countries. Despite the fact that some authors are skeptical about the link between entrepreneurship and development in poor nations, the majority of authors see entrepreneurship as a component of the solution, if not a panacea. However, legal impediments, restrictions, insecurity, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and bad financial systems obstruct the creation and expansion of many businesses in developing countries. As a result, educational institutions are increasingly being viewed as vehicles for cultivating an entrepreneurial culture (Mauchi 2014) ^[23].

The Zimbabwean economy is plagued by massive economic issues, the most serious of which is unemployment (Kabonga, 2020) ^[10, 11]. The unemployment rate in Zimbabwe is about 70%. (Biti, 2015 cited by Kabonga *et al* 2020) ^[10, 11]. Given this reality, the importance of student entrepreneurship cannot be overstated, as students are more likely to face employment issues following graduation.

In Zimbabwe, a low-income country with a sluggish economy, the government has launched a concerted effort, led by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, to re-orient the country's higher education system toward equipping students with entrepreneurial skills and attitudes in order to reduce youth unemployment (Ndofirepi, 2016). This initiative is based in part on incorporating mandatory entrepreneurial instruction within the different programs of study offered by the country's higher education institutions. Furthermore, the Minister of Higher Education and Technology named six state institutions in 2018. (Midlands State University, Chinhoyi University of Technology, University of Zimbabwe, National University of Science and Technology, National Defence University and Manicaland University of Science and Technology) Business incubators, innovation hubs, and scientific parks were to be developed as part of attempts to promote aspiring student entrepreneurs in line with the country's modernisation and industrialisation goal (Masunda *et al*, 2018) ^[22]. According to Phiri (2018) ^[27], a sum of US\$380 million was allotted to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education in the 2018 national budget declaration to fund research and innovation for university students. Despite these efforts, it is unclear whether entrepreneurship education is able to influence students' entrepreneurship intentions. As a result, the research area on assessing the impact of entrepreneurship education on students entrepreneurship intentions.

Statement of the problem

All developed and emerging countries are concerned about unemployment. Unemployment has been rising over the world, especially since the global financial crisis. To minimize unemployment, several policies and initiatives have been used around the world. Entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as a substantial producer of economic growth, innovation, and job creation, making it one of the most popular alternative solutions to the unemployment crisis. However, practically all countries have challenges in entrepreneurship growth and influencing people's attitudes about entrepreneurship. To encourage entrepreneurship, officials have implemented a variety of policies and techniques. To raise the amount of entrepreneurship, one strategy is to provide entrepreneurship education to university students. Entrepreneurship education gives students the motivation, information, and skills they need to start a successful business. The goal of entrepreneurship education is to teach students how to develop skills, ideas, managerial talents, and self-employment capacity rather than being employed for income. Another goal is to encourage students to think about business as a career option by cultivating favorable attitudes about entrepreneurship. Despite the widespread belief that entrepreneurship education fosters future entrepreneurs, little is known about the process by which this intervention achieves its goals. Along these lines, a gap was left, which this study would attempt to fill by examining the influence of entrepreneurship education on university students' entrepreneurship career plans at Midlands State University.

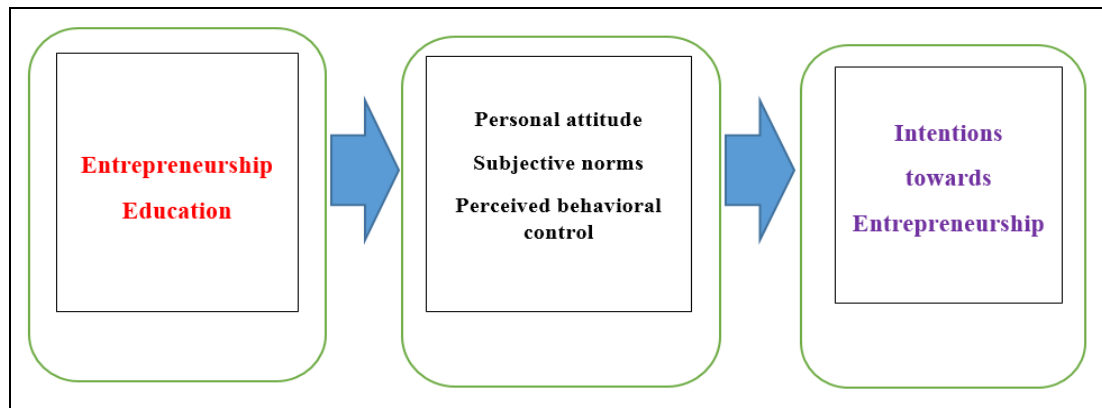
Research objectives

- a. To determine the impact of attitude has on entrepreneurship intentions.
- b. To determine the impact of subjective norms has on entrepreneurship intentions.
- c. To determine the impact of perceived behavioral control has on entrepreneurship intentions.

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial education is discussed as a predictor variable, psychological dispositions such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as mediating variables, and entrepreneurship ambitions as the response variable in the research review.

Conceptual framework: The researcher created the diagrammatic conceptual framework below after considering and taking into account the research objectives. Three independent variables, namely personal attitude, self-efficacy, and subjective norms, were chosen as independent variables to determine the students' intents toward entrepreneurship (dependent variable), whereas entrepreneurship education was used as a moderating variable. Because of the possible effects of entrepreneurship education, these three independent variables were considered.



Source: Adopted from Ajzen (2012) ^[1]

Fig 1

Theoretical framework: This study used the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 2012) ^[1] to determine the impact of entrepreneurship instruction on students' entrepreneurial intents at Zimbabwean public universities, particularly Midlands State University. This theory serves as a foundation for a major portion of the research on deliberate behavior. The widely used Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior informs this study, which supports the hypothesis that the entrepreneurship education-entrepreneurship intention relationship is neither direct nor operates in a vacuum, but is rather mediated by psychological functions such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral controls. The Theory's basic thesis is that human conduct is mainly predetermined and planned. As a result, entrepreneurship, like most human action, is thought to be deliberate (Ajzen, 2012) ^[1]. This hypothesis implies that entrepreneurship is not an unintentional, serendipitous event of an unaware individual, but rather a purposefully designed human endeavor.

Entrepreneurship Education: Many countries have made significant investments in entrepreneurship education in the hopes of spurring more entrepreneurship. With the high rate of unemployment among Zimbabwean university students, several colleges now offer entrepreneurship education to produce graduates who can see self-employment and entrepreneurship as a viable career option. The primary goal of entrepreneurship education is to raise student knowledge of entrepreneurship, provide opportunities for students to acquire entrepreneurial skills, teach students how to apply theory to practice, and promote entrepreneurship as a career route (Bae *et al.*, 2014; Fayolle and Gailly, 2013).

To encourage students to become entrepreneurs, the university must assist them in improving their business cognitive mechanisms, particularly their ability to dynamically respond on the environment through accompaniment. The desire to start a business is far stronger than the belief that it is a desirable and viable action. The notion of planned behavior has been utilized in several research to predict and explain entrepreneurial behavior in students. According to research, there is a strong link between the desire to become an entrepreneur and real conduct (Sánchez, 2010) ^[28]. A multitude of "exogenous" elements, such as the educational process through entrepreneurship education, influence these objectives (Karimi & al. 2012).

Entrepreneurship is a critical component of a country's economic progress (Liu *et al* 2019). The literature emphasizes the importance of education in the spread of entrepreneurship and the development of a more entrepreneurial society (Hattab, 2014) ^[9]. Entrepreneurship education has been shown to be critical to the success of any university, economy, or region (Malebana, 2014) ^[18]. Entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions aims to improve students' entrepreneurial skills, motivations, and ambitions (Brixiova *et al.* (2015) ^[4]. Students who obtain an entrepreneurship education are more likely than those who do not to have a higher entrepreneurial ambition (Fayolle *et al* 2014) ^[6]. Thus, universities are increasingly occupying an entrepreneurial position in the business sector by launching innovative small businesses and becoming a stakeholder in socio-economic development (Gerba, 2012) ^[8], confirming their vital role in entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial Intention: Entrepreneurial Intention are a significant step in the business creation process from a procedural standpoint. It forecasts that the act of undertaking will take place. Intentional and planned entrepreneurial activity, as well as job choices in general, can be regarded (Krueger, (2012) ^[13]. Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2015), has been widely employed to explain and anticipate engagement and reluctance to start on entrepreneurship behavior to the extent that the process of entrepreneurship, particularly new venture formation, is a carefully thought out and intentional activity.

Entrepreneurship attitude and entrepreneurial intention: The person's attitude toward the proposed conduct, in this instance the act of becoming an entrepreneur, is measured by the attitude toward the behavior. Students create attitudes, according to Ajzen (2015), based on their ideas about the consequences of completing the behavior. Prior research has indicated that key ideas like autonomy, authority, economic opportunity, and self-

realization, independence, self-actualization, and financial success influence attitudes toward entrepreneurship (Fretschner and Weber, 2013) ^[7]. Entrepreneurial inclinations have been linked to attitudes toward independence, money, and ownership. According to Levenburg and Schwarz, (2008) ^[15]. students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship, change, money, and their perceptions of university support for entrepreneurship influence their intentions to start a business.

Attitudes have an impact on behavior and intentions, and they vary depending on the situation and the individual. According to Lorz, M. (2011) ^[17], persons with more positive views about risk and independence are more likely to want to be entrepreneurs. Intentional behavior explains why many entrepreneurs opt to establish a firm before looking for business prospects (Mandel and Noyes 2016) ^[19]. Students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship education are also influenced by demographic factors. According to Maresch, *et al* (2016) ^[20], a student is destined to be influenced by a specific set of people, such as relatives, companions, and friends. Individuals who grow up in a community or family that operates a business, for example, are more likely to learn and display entrepreneurial tendencies, since they regard it as more practical, socially appealing, and financially rewarding than official job in an organization.

Subjective norm and entrepreneurship intention: Individuals' judgments that significant persons or groups accept or disapprove of a particular behavior, or that these social referents themselves participate or do not engage in it, give rise to subjective standards (Ajzen, 2005). Parents, spouses, close friends, coworkers, and even experts in the behavior of interest are examples of significant others. People will sense social pressure to do the behavior if they believe the majority of referents with whom they are inclined to comply believe they should. Recent study supports Ajzen's viewpoint, indicating that people are more likely to want to start a business if they have ties with other entrepreneurs (Lapista *et al*, 2012) ^[14].

Individuals are more likely to create business intents when they believe that others near to them would approve of them doing that and when they see these others engaging in the same behavior. The more people believe that important others would approve of them when they engage in a certain behavior, the more likely they are to do it. This has a beneficial impact on people's opinions of their own abilities to execute the behaviour and its attractiveness (Marques *et al*, 2012) ^[21].

Perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurship intention: According to Nabi and Liñán (2011) ^[24], individuals' perceptions of their ability to achieve level of performance that affect their lives are referred to as perceived behavioral control. In the study, I found that students' capacity to establish a business is mostly determined by tactics taught, such as the formulation of an entrepreneurial idea and mastery of the processes and practical skills required to start a new business. Specific supervision was carried out in order to generate business ideas and contacts with various partners (regional investment centers, banks, chambers of commerce, etc.).

Individuals' estimates of their ability to accomplish a specific activity are referred to as perceived behavioral control. External and internal factors which increase or decrease the perceived difficulty of performing a behavior in question include the resource availability and opportunities, information, skills and abilities, emotions and compulsions, reliance on others, prior experience with the behaviour and attitude, second-hand information about the behavior, observing this same experiences of acquaintances and friends, and other factors (Ajzen, 2012) ^[1]. According to Otuya *et al* (2013) ^[26], when entrepreneurial conduct is authorized and positively regarded by others in society, people are much more likely to feel capable of engaging in it.

Methodology

The study used a quasi-experimental design on a sample size of one hundred and thirty two participants on all final year students in nine faculties at Midlands State University. To obtain more reliable results on specific entrepreneurship education characteristics and their influence on entrepreneurial intention, this study used descriptive analysis. The relationship between variables in the conceptual framework was assessed using SPSS version 20 were used to analyze primary data using correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Results and discussion

Demographic profile of respondents

The respondents for this study were 132 Midlands State University final-year students. A wide range of respondents provided different viewpoints and experiences on approaches that are ideal for boosting entrepreneurship intentions. The first question asked respondents to state their gender, with the results shown below.

Table 1: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	85	64.4	64.4	64.4
	Female	47	35.6	35.6	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS version 20 (2022)

Males accounted for 64% of respondents, while females accounted for 36%. This indicates that the study was dominated by male participants. Males are more involved in entrepreneurship activities than females, according to Otuya *et al.* (2013) [26].

Education qualification

The researcher gathered information indicating that the respondents had varying levels of literacy. This was due to the fact that the respondents came from various backgrounds and educational backgrounds in their respective faculties. The table below displays the respondents' various degrees of schooling.

Table 2: Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Degree	50	37.9	37.9	37.9
	Diploma	41	31.1	31.1	68.9
	Certificate	23	17.4	17.4	86.4
	Other	18	13.6	13.6	100.0
	Total	132	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS version 20 (2022)

According to Johnson (2019), education is one of the most essential factors that might influence respondents' attitudes, perspectives, and understanding of any given social phenomenon. In some ways, an individual's reaction is likely to be impacted by his or her educational position, so knowing the respondents' educational backgrounds is essential. As a result, the researcher looked into the variable 'Educational qualification,' and the data on education is shown in Table 4.3 above. It is clear that many of the responders had earned a university diploma. With 38 percent of the total responders being bachelor's degree holders. Diploma holders account for 31%, high school diploma holders for 17%, and other qualifications for 14%.

The impact of attitude has on entrepreneurship intentions

Table 3: Correlations between attitude and entrepreneurship intentions

			Entrepreneurship Education	Attitude
Spearman's rho	Entrepreneurship Education	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.864**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	132	132
	Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	.864**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	132	132

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Source: SPSS version 20 (2022)

Table 3 shows that $r = 0.864$, implying that there is a substantial positive link between students' attitudes and their intention to start their own entrepreneurial business. Ajzen, I. (2012) [1] is in support of this relationship and highlighted that students that have a positive attitude toward starting their own business express an interest in doing so.

The impact of subjective norms has on entrepreneurship intentions

Table 4: Correlations between subjective norms and entrepreneurship intentions

			Entrepreneurship Education	Subject norms
Spearman's rho	Entrepreneurship Education	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.904**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	132	132
	Subject norms	Correlation Coefficient	.904**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	132	132

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Source: SPSS version 20 (2022)

Table 4 reveals that subjective norms about starting a business have a strong positive influence on entrepreneurial intention among Midlands State University students, with $r = 0.904$. The link between the two parameters is clearly positive, as can be shown. This means that, in this scenario, an increase in the subjective norm to start a business has a favorable impact on entrepreneurial intent. The social and cultural pressure to

execute a given behavior is referred to as subjective norms. Fretschner, M. and Weber, S. (2013) ^[7] highlighted that Friends, family, peers, networks, and mentors' perceptions about the desirability of being an entrepreneur are very important in this regard. The researcher discovered that a multi-item subjective norms measure has the strongest link to entrepreneurial ambition.

The impact of perceived behavioral control has on entrepreneurship intentions

Table 5: Correlations between perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurship intentions

			Entrepreneurship Education	Perceived Behavioral Control
Spearman's rho	Entrepreneurship Education	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.885**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	132	132
	Perceived Behavioral Control	Correlation Coefficient	.885**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	132	132

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Source: SPSS version 20 (2022)

The impact of perceived behavioral control over one's potential to succeed on entrepreneurial intention is shown in Table 5. The value of $r = 0.885$ indicates that a student's perceived behavioral control over his ability to succeed has a considerable impact on his desire to establish his own business. Students at Midlands State University have a positive impression of their potential to achieve, which is consistent with their desire to start a business (Dinc and Budic, 2016).

Recommendations

Use of role models during student learning. Role models in entrepreneurship education improve students' desire to start their own business, which is mediated by their attitude toward behavior and perceived behavioral control. The attitude, perception, and intention of participants can all be influenced by role models.

Use of Project-based learning. This has a significant and favorable impact on students' intentions to establish their own businesses via use of business plan. A business plan is a type of entrepreneurship education that explains why people should be entrepreneurial and start new businesses.

The need for student motivation. Learning motivation and perseverance are essential. Entrepreneurial motivation is defined as the energy that motivates a person to engage in activities that suit their requirements. As a result, students with entrepreneurship education are likely to be highly motivated.

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