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Entrepreneurship Education and Self-employment Intentions: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment remains a major global issue, particularly in the Global South. As a response, entrepreneurship education has gained traction for equipping students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset needed for self-employment. This paper explores how exposure to entrepreneurial attitudes, skills, and information influences students' motivation to pursue entrepreneurship and their aspirations to start their ventures. Findings indicate that entrepreneurship education enhances self-confidence, risk-taking ability, and opportunity recognition—key traits in entrepreneurial decision-making. However, the transition from education to self-employment is shaped by factors such as cultural norms, financial access, and institutional support. Challenges in implementation include the lack of standardized curricula, limited teacher expertise, and minimal industry collaboration. Additionally, while many students have entrepreneurial intentions, external barriers often hinder them from launching viable businesses. A comprehensive approach—integrating financial incentives, incubation support, and enabling policies—is essential to increase impact. Entrepreneurship education is promising but must be contextually grounded for long-term success.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The number eight goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. With the increasing global economic recession, providing a sustained and dynamic strategy for economic development is essential. Nurturing entrepreneurship skills and intentions among the youth demographic to foster economic and human development has become a global focus among countries worldwide. The attainment of this goal informs the efforts of countries towards "promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all." With the global financial crisis and changes in the labor market, youth graduates are at the receiving end of this global challenge, with the unemployment rate increasing.

This explains the swift focus of governments, policymakers, stakeholders, and educational institutions on introducing entrepreneurship education (EE) into the curricula of their countries (Monteiro *et al*., 2020; Aboobaker & Renjin, 2020). Entrepreneurship education allows students to engage in entrepreneurial tasks such as analyzing business feasibility, preparing business plans, and developing their business ideas. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education allows hands-on experience and practical training (Wardana *et al*., 2020), thereby equipping students with the skills needed to start their businesses upon graduation. Social and economic development, the creation of new startups, innovation, and a rise in individual income are some of the benefits entrepreneurial activities can promote in a nation. This is why more effort should be geared toward entrepreneurship education (Lv *et al*., 2021).

The high rate of unemployment has led Nigeria's higher educational institutions to attach significant importance to entrepreneurship education. This has resulted in the implementation of entrepreneurship education into the national curriculum (Jia *et al.*, 2021). According to the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria (NBS), in its Q1 2024 labor force statistics report, the unemployment rate increased to 5.3% in the first quarter of 2024, from 5.0% in the third quarter of 2023, with 2.0% of the unemployed group being graduates. According to the distribution of youth by areas of training needed by zone, in the area of entrepreneurship, the South-West zone of Nigeria requires 42.7% and 57% of its youths in entrepreneurship and vocational training, respectively, indicating the need for entrepreneurship and vocational education in the region. This has further increased the interest of governments in the region to address the alarming crisis of youth unemployment (Monteiro *et al*., 2020).

The proportion of entrepreneurs in a country directly influences the employment rate. This implies that the lower the proportion of entrepreneurs, the higher the likelihood of unemployment in the country (Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020). Entrepreneurial intention plays a vital role in stimulating the growth and development of entrepreneurs, and sound entrepreneurship education positively arouses the interest of youths (Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020; Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021). Entrepreneurship education takes a leading role in cultivating entrepreneurial zeal, spirit, and attitudes among youth. It helps shape students' mindsets, attitudes, and traits toward pursuing entrepreneurship as a career, rather than becoming job seekers (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021; Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020).

Scholars around the world have argued that understanding entrepreneurship is essential, particularly how to start, manage, and grow a business. Additionally, some scholars believe that perceived self-efficacy in an individual's behavior and attitude leads to greater cognitive awareness (Wardana *et al*., 2020; Monteiro *et al*., 2020). Entrepreneurship education is a

department or core course in some tertiary institutions that develops students' self-employment abilities, entrepreneurial qualities, creativity, innovation, and overall entrepreneurial capacity (Jia *et al*., 2021). Studies and surveys on self-employment and willingness to start new businesses are vital in developing countries that have adopted entrepreneurship education into their curricula, such as China, which has experienced rapid development after including it in its education system. The inclusion of entrepreneurship education will help student entrepreneurs become self-employed, better prepared to operate in a market economy, and more efficient in resource allocation (Jia *et al*., 2021).

Based on the different insights into self-employment intentions, four components of self-employment intentions are recognized: attitude towards self-employment, self-efficacy, desire for autonomy, and entrepreneurial intention. The definitions, rationale, and explanations are as follows.

Attitude towards self-employment refers to the mental readiness of a person to act toward something, how they respond to conditions, and how they regulate their life (Rosmiati *et al*., 2015). Entrepreneurial attitude involves three main domains: cognitive, affective, and conative. These drive individuals to explore, initiate, and apply different methods to products, provide quality services, and generate profit (Kurczewska, 2011).

Entrepreneurial attitude also includes various aspects such as emotions and feelings (affective), thoughts and beliefs (cognitive), and actions and behaviors (conative) (Wardana *et al*., 2020). Entrepreneurship education encompasses these three elements. Many scholars agree that entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in shaping students' entrepreneurial attitudes (Yang, 2013; Wu & Wu, 2008; Keat, 2011; Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021). Attitude reflects one's readiness to act or respond to conditions that may transform their life (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to carry out tasks, solve problems, and achieve goals (Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020; Wardana *et al*., 2020). It is enhanced through entrepreneurship education, which provides students with opportunities to engage in tasks such as business feasibility analysis, developing business plans, and implementing their ideas. Self-efficacy is one of the main factors that drive youths to pursue entrepreneurship and has been recognized as a key motivator for entrepreneurial interest (Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020). Four sources of self-efficacy include (Kisubi *et al*., 2021):

(i) performative mastery (past success),
(ii) secondhand learning (observing others),
(iii) social persuasion (feedback and encouragement), and
(iv) physiological state (awareness of one's physical and emotional condition).

For instance, mastery and secondhand learning can be gained through field trips, classroom practical sessions, reading biographies of entrepreneurs, and simulation exercises, all of which can significantly enhance student self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been consistently recognized as a key factor in motivating youth to start their businesses. Scholars have described self-efficacy as a cognitive trait that drives entrepreneurial behavior, correlating with students' attitudes toward entrepreneurship and their self-employment intentions (Wardana *et al*., 2020).

Desire for autonomy refers to an individual's motivation to work independently and make decisions without external control. Entrepreneurial autonomy involves the freedom to determine what tasks to undertake, how to execute them, and when to take action, including the ability to define the strategic direction of the business (Breaugh, 1999). Many entrepreneurs report that their desire for independence and decision-making freedom was a primary reason for starting their businesses. Autonomy is widely acknowledged as a driving

force behind entrepreneurial behavior and decision-making. The extent of personal experience and influencing factors can shape decisions related to business ownership, innovation, and the broader start-up process (Ireland *et al*., 2008). Other motivating factors include economic freedom, opportunity-driven self-employment, performance-based rewards, the desire to lead, and the need for self-actualization, which involves realizing one's potential and creativity (Mamman, 2019).

To understand the concept of entrepreneurial intention, one must first understand the concept of an "entrepreneur." An entrepreneur is defined as a coordinator, a risk-taker, and an innovator. He is a high-level decision-maker who possesses the ability to create new techniques, develop new methods of doing things, or improve existing ones. Entrepreneurial intention refers to an individual's decision to become an entrepreneur and their confidence in taking risks that may lead to success. This decision is often influenced by a sense of happiness, personal intent, and will (Rakib *et al*., 2020). Entrepreneurial intention forms the desire within a person to start and grow a business (Yousaf *et al*., 2021). It is a strong self-belief in one's ability to establish and operate a new enterprise in the future. Entrepreneurship education has increased awareness and recognition of entrepreneurial intention (Soomro & Shah, 2022; Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020).

The resolution to start a business is often described as entrepreneurial intention (Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020). A comparison between entrepreneurial intention and self-employment intention reveals that both refer to the same concept: the desire to start a new venture, promoting self-reliance and self-efficacy. Entrepreneurial intention is typically measured through indicators such as involvement in entrepreneurship education, the intention to start a business after graduation, and the willingness to work with partners (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

The rate of unemployment among youth in Nigeria has steadily increased over the past two decades, contributing to a rise in crime and other socio-economic challenges (Aboobaker & Renjin, 2020; Monteiro *et al*., 2020). According to reports, as of 2024, Nigeria has over 270 universities—149 of which are privately owned, and more than 63 are run by state and federal governments. This means that a significant number of graduates emerge each year from universities, polytechnics, mono-technics, and colleges, increasing the national unemployment figures. Statistics show that 23.4% of unemployed youth are from the South-West region, with 25% believing that no jobs are available and 29.8% still enrolled in tertiary education.

According to the distribution of youth training needs by zone, the South-West region of Nigeria requires 42.7% of its youth to be trained in entrepreneurship and 57% in vocational skills. This data suggests a clear gap and a growing need for effective entrepreneurship education. If entrepreneurship is already being taught in some tertiary institutions, such as those in Ondo State, why do the statistics still reflect a high demand for entrepreneurship education and rising youth unemployment in the region?

Entrepreneurship education has been integrated into Nigeria's curriculum for some time. If it was truly designed to boost youth startups, several questions why has unemployment among youth (particularly in the South-West) continued to grow? Despite the volume of research conducted on entrepreneurship education and self-employment in the country, there remains an inadequate understanding of the relationship between these two variables, not only in Nigeria but globally.

This article aims to review entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions. While numerous studies have explored the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial outcomes, limited research has critically examined the direct link

between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions among Nigerian youth, particularly within the Southwest region of Nigeria. This study offers a novel contribution by contextualizing self-employment intentions through four key psychological components—attitude, self-efficacy, desire for autonomy, and entrepreneurial intention—within the framework of entrepreneurship education. Additionally, this study addresses a significant knowledge gap by juxtaposing the government's efforts in integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum with the persistent rise in youth unemployment, raising important questions about the effectiveness and implementation of such educational reforms. By drawing on current statistical data and highlighting regional disparities in training needs, this research presents an evidence-based, region-specific analysis that has been largely overlooked in previous studies.

The findings aim to inform policy adjustments, curriculum development, and strategic interventions targeted at enhancing the real-world impact of entrepreneurship education on youth self-employment in Nigeria.

2. METHODS

Using databases (PubMed, Scopus, the Cochrane Library, and Hinari Direct) and search engines (Google Scholar), a comprehensive search of the literature was conducted. The first search was carried out by academics with a great deal of experience conducting systematic reviews, abstracts, and full texts. If there was a disagreement, it was to be resolved by another reviewer. Entrepreneurship education, self-employment intentions, tertiary institution students, and Ondo State, Nigeria were the original search terms. A mix of LBW-related keywords, research design-related terms (entrepreneurship education" and "self-employment intentions), title, title/abstract, or medical subject heading were developed for the search approach. Grey literature and full-text article reference lists were also searched on Google to find pertinent material.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Conceptual Review

3.1.1. Entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education is the act of teaching people entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education helps improve business startups, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and self-efficacy (Wardana *et al*., 2020). Entrepreneurial education is a learning process that instills and enhances knowledge, skills, attributes, attitudes, and elements related to entrepreneurship (Aboobaker & Renjin, 2020; Aga, 2023; Wardana *et al*., 2020). In agreement with the definition of entrepreneurship education, it is also noted that entrepreneurship education equips students to start new businesses by integrating entrepreneurial experiences, skills, and knowledge (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021). Entrepreneurship education inculcates college students with entrepreneurial abilities and qualities (Jia *et al*., 2021). It exposes students to the entrepreneurial field through the teaching of theoretical foundations, practical experiences, field trips, and entrepreneurial techniques (Aboobaker & Renjin, 2020). **Figure 1** illustrates the process of teaching students entrepreneurial fundamentals, which involves identifying feasible business opportunities and transforming them into successful commercial enterprises (Lv *et al*., 2021).

Social and economic development, the creation of new startups, innovation, and a rise in individual income are among the benefits that entrepreneurial activities can bring to a nation. Therefore, more effort should be directed toward promoting entrepreneurship education (Lv *et al*., 2021). In response, governments and educators aim to address the pressing issue of

youth unemployment by integrating entrepreneurship education into national curricula, from elementary to higher education levels (Monteiro *et al*., 2020). Recent studies have highlighted the urgent need to strengthen entrepreneurship education due to its potential to positively influence attitudes, behaviors, and intentions toward entrepreneurship (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

Entrepreneurship education is the act of teaching people entrepreneurship (Otache *et al*., 2019). It supports the development of business startups, fosters positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and enhances self-efficacy (Wardana *et al*., 2020). Similar to China, Nigerian higher education institutions have recognized the importance of entrepreneurship education, adopting relevant policies and effectively implementing entrepreneurship education into the national curriculum (Jia *et al*., 2021). EE tends to transform individuals' mindsets and promote an entrepreneurial culture, behavior, attitude, skill, managerial capability, and a drive toward self-reliance (Magasi, 2022). Entrepreneurship education must extend beyond classroom-based teaching; hands-on and practical learning experiences are essential to developing students' entrepreneurial mindsets (Wardana *et al*., 2020).

Figure 1. The process of teaching students entrepreneurial fundamentals.

3.1.2. Entrepreneurship curriculum

Entrepreneurship education is an education that inculcates college students with entrepreneurial abilities and qualities. Entrepreneurship education aims to improve students' self-employment ability, develop their basic entrepreneurial skills, and cultivate high-quality modern socialist builders with innovative spirit and entrepreneurial capacity (Jia *et al*., 2021). The objectives of entrepreneurship education, as highlighted by Osuala, are as follows: to provide meaningful education for youth that instills self-reliance and encourages the drive for profit-making and independence; to provide graduates with the training and support necessary to establish careers in small and medium startups; to equip school leavers with sufficient training in risk management to help minimize losses; to train graduates to meet the manpower needs of society; to stimulate industrial and economic growth in rural areas rather than in urban centers; to foster creativity and innovation in graduates so they can identify new business opportunities; and to offer small and medium-sized enterprises the chance to recruit qualified graduates.

From these objectives, the teaching-learning content of schools offering entrepreneurship education is developed. Teaching and learning materials include all objects, people, and environments used to facilitate the learning process and achieve the intended outcomes. All tools used by instructors to support and encourage students in their learning activities are considered teaching and learning materials. In teaching materials published for university undergraduates, content includes definitions of entrepreneurship, enterprise, and enterprise education; business plan development; budgeting and financial management; identifying basic resources; sources of business financing; insurance coverages; government regulations and requirements; marketing; risk and its management; legal requirements for enterprise; preparation of simple business feasibility reports; and training and practical sessions for students. These contents reflect the core objectives of entrepreneurship education as a compulsory course in Nigeria's tertiary institutions.

To reduce youth unemployment and increase youth entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education must be emphasized, as it instills entrepreneurial knowledge, mindset, skills, creativity, and innovation (Lv *et al*., 2021). This recognition has prompted governments, educators, and policymakers to integrate entrepreneurship education into the national curriculum. The entrepreneurship education curriculum seeks to teach students entrepreneurial fundamentals, including identifying viable business opportunities and transforming them into successful commercial enterprises. When delivered effectively, entrepreneurship education fosters creativity and innovation, which in turn influences students' intentions to become entrepreneurs (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

3.1.3. Entrepreneurship Pedagogy

Pedagogy refers to the method adopted by an instructor to teach both in theory and practice. In the context of entrepreneurship education, it has been argued that entrepreneurship pedagogy should be designed to elicit emotions that simulate real-life entrepreneurial experiences, such as the emotions associated with risk-taking and failure. This approach helps students learn to manage challenging emotional events and stimulates their awareness of emotions as a channel for new learning outcomes (Neergaard *et al*., 2021). While much importance has been placed on teaching tools and techniques, these cannot replace the unique creativity and innovation of the individual entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship education aims to develop the psychological disposition and personality traits that encourage students to take risks, linking theoretical knowledge with real-world challenges and examples (Cotton & Cachon, 1987). This is one reason why many tertiary institutions have established skill acquisition centers where hands-on practicals are conducted as core components of entrepreneurship training programs or courses.

3.1.4. Entrepreneurship Practicals

A framework for entrepreneurship education mechanisms that promote student employability after graduation (practice, recognition, and re-recognition) has been proposed (Jia *et al*., 2021). Emphasis has increasingly shifted toward practical-based approaches to entrepreneurship education rather than purely theoretical instruction. It is also believed that entrepreneurship education should expose students to the entrepreneurial field through the teaching of theoretical foundations, practical exercises, field trips, and techniques (Aboobaker & Renjin, 2020). The teaching-learning process should extend beyond the classroom, encouraging hands-on tasks that help students retain knowledge by actively engaging in the tasks individually or collaboratively. In many tertiary institutions across

Nigeria, students participate in skill acquisition programs and hands-on practical sessions as graduation requirements.

A study revealed that entrepreneurship education alone may not fully explain students' intentions to become entrepreneurs. One reason for this is the emphasis on theoretical and classroom knowledge over practical and project-based learning. Practical sessions, hands-on experiences, field trips, and seminars are essential components of entrepreneurship education and are increasingly being integrated into curriculum content (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

3.1.5. Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Education Programs

Recent studies have highlighted the urgent need to improve entrepreneurship education due to its ability to influence entrepreneurial attitudes, behaviors, and intentions (Jena, 2020). Entrepreneurship education provides students with exposure to the entrepreneurial environment through theoretical lessons, practical experiences, field visits, and technical skills (Aboobaker & Renjin, 2020). The inclusion of entrepreneurship education is believed to help students become self-employed, operate effectively in a market economy, allocate resources efficiently, and position themselves as entrepreneurs rather than job seekers (Jia *et al*., 2021). The primary objective of entrepreneurship education is to develop entrepreneurial knowledge and orientation in students, encouraging them to establish new business ventures (Aboobaker & Renjin, 2020). For example, China's approach to addressing youth unemployment includes implementing entrepreneurship education programs that promote self-employment and entrepreneurial competencies among students (Lv *et al*., 2021).

Entrepreneurship education is instrumental in shaping the mindset, attitudes, and traits of students toward viewing entrepreneurship as a viable career rather than seeking traditional employment. Studies have shown that entrepreneurship education can effectively foster entrepreneurial thinking in students (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016; Wibowo *et al*., 2018; Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

The primary goal of entrepreneurship education is to shift students' perspectives and transform their behaviors and interests so that they gain a deep understanding of entrepreneurship. This understanding equips them with an entrepreneurial mindset necessary to start profitable ventures and create job opportunities instead of becoming job seekers (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021). The goal of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions is to cultivate entrepreneurial spirit, promote entrepreneurial ability and cognition, help students identify core entrepreneurial values, and foster an entrepreneurial culture (Jia *et al*., 2021).

Despite the increasing academic focus on entrepreneurship education, studies on its impact have yielded conflicting results. These inconsistencies highlight the need for continued research in the field of entrepreneurship education (Aboobaker & Renjin, 2020).

3.1.6. Entrepreneurial Experience

Entrepreneurship education can be either formal or informal. It may occur within the four walls of a classroom as a teaching-learning experience, or outside the classroom through practical engagement. Informal entrepreneurship education can result from an individual's involvement in the daily operations of a business and observing how activities are carried out. Studies have shown a relationship between entrepreneurial experience and a positive outlook on the future. Some individuals develop entrepreneurial skills and confidence by running or working in a business, demonstrating that prior knowledge and exposure can significantly

shape one's future aspirations (Ucbasaran *et al*., 2010). Therefore, experienced entrepreneurs are more likely to be optimistic about their future compared to those without entrepreneurial experience.

This prior entrepreneurial experience may stem from personal involvement in business-related activities. The joy and fulfillment of participating in entrepreneurship can spark interest in the field (Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020). This interest may be driven by either inherent or external factors. Inherent factors include self-efficacy and one's belief in their ability to understand and perform entrepreneurial tasks. External factors may include influences from the environment, such as family background and educational experiences.

3.1.7. Self-employment Intentions

Self-employment means working for oneself. This implies that one is not employed by someone else but is a boss in their own right and can also become an employer of labor. Self-employment intentions form the basis of new businesses and are fundamental to any entrepreneurship process. Self-employment intentions can therefore be considered a golden thread in the developmental pattern of a startup. Entrepreneurship education is one of the key ways to stimulate self-employment intentions (Mamman, 2019). It aims to improve students' self-employment ability, develop their entrepreneurial capacity, and transform them into high-quality modern developers with innovative spirit (Jia *et al*., 2021). Self-employment intention is considered a blueprint for achieving sustainable economic growth and development. It is also a strategy for tackling household poverty and youth unemployment (Kisubi *et al*., 2021).

With the global financial crisis and labor market changes, newly graduated youths are at the receiving end of these challenges, and the unemployment rate continues to rise (Monteiro *et al*., 2020). Job creation and reduced unemployment can be achieved through an increase in youth entrepreneurship (Lv *et al*., 2021). As studies show the positive impact of entrepreneurship education on economic development, governments, and policymakers strongly believe that prioritizing entrepreneurship education will boost self-employment and reduce unemployment (Boahemaah *et al*., 2020). The main objective of entrepreneurship education is to instill entrepreneurial knowledge and encourage students to become self-employed by starting new ventures (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021). Entrepreneurial intentions include thoughts and motivations that direct individuals to create new, innovative, and unique businesses through opportunity exploration and problem-solving (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021). Entrepreneurial activity is better studied by focusing on intention rather than other factors (Faloye & Olatunji, 2019).

Self-efficacy is enhanced through entrepreneurship education. Students are allowed to analyze business feasibility, prepare business plans, and execute those plans. One of the primary drivers of youth entrepreneurship is self-efficacy, which has been identified as a major force in awakening entrepreneurial interest among young people (Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020). From an individual's self-efficacy, four key sources of information can be derived:

(i) Performance mastery: one's past success;
(ii) Secondhand learning: observing others;
(iii) Social persuasion: receiving feedback that reinforces capability; and
(iv) Physiological state: understanding one's physical and emotional readiness (Kisubi *et al*., 2021).

For example, performative mastery and secondhand learning gained from field trips, classroom practicals, biographies of successful entrepreneurs, and simulations can significantly increase entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Self-employment intention is heavily influenced by personal interest. Interest is composed of three components: cognitive (knowing and perceiving through experience and information), conative (will and desire to act), and affective (emotional response toward the object) (Sugianingrat *et al*., 2020). Starting a business is driven by both interest and entrepreneurship skills. Entrepreneurial intention is measured by indicators such as participation in entrepreneurship education, intention to start a business after graduation, and willingness to work with partners (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

There are various reasons behind an individual's choice to pursue self-employment: a desire for economic freedom, seizing market opportunities, seeking merit-based rewards, the drive for autonomy, a need to exert authority, and the pursuit of self-actualization—realizing dreams, applying creativity, and innovating (Mamman, 2019).

Components of self-employment intention include attitude, subjective norms, entrepreneurial motivation, and perceived behavioral control (Vuong *et al*., 2020). Entrepreneurship education significantly influences students' attitudes by shaping their behavior, ideology, and mindset, which drive their ambition to become successful business owners. Beyond survival, individuals with a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship are more likely to strive for self-actualization (Yang, 2013). Attitudes toward entrepreneurship can be significantly influenced through entrepreneurship education (Wu & Wu, 2008).

Adding entrepreneurship education to tertiary curricula helps develop student skills and entrepreneurial mindsets, transforming their attitude toward self-employment (Boahemaah *et al*., 2020). Understanding entrepreneurship—particularly how to start, manage, and evolve a business—is essential (Wardana *et al*., 2020). The inclusion of entrepreneurship education helps students become self-employed, operate effectively in a market economy, allocate resources efficiently, and compete as entrepreneurs rather than job seekers (Jia *et al*., 2021). Ultimately, the individual's self-employment intention is shaped by both personal attributes and environmental factors (Mamman, 2019).

Individuals in the business world are typically categorized as either Employees (E), Specialists/Self-employed (S), Business Owners (B), or Investors (I). It is important to determine which of these categories students in Ondo State prefer after graduation, which is one of the objectives of this study. The best strategy for a school leaver, as suggested, maybe a combination of employment and entrepreneurship—starting a business using income earned from a job. Numerous studies confirm that entrepreneurship education has the potential to enhance individuals' intention to become entrepreneurs (Marini & Hamidah, 2014; Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

3.2. Theoretical Review

3.2.1. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The theoretical literature review aids in the development of new hypotheses for testing, as well as the identification of existing theories, linkages, and the extent to which they have been explored.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was postulated by Ajzen and later adopted in entrepreneurial studies by Krueger and Carsrud (Ajzen, 1991; Krueger & Carsrud, 1993). The association between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions has been theoretically explained using Ajzen's TPB and the earlier work of Shapero and Sokol (Ajzen, 1991). According to TPB, entrepreneurial behavior is dependent on entrepreneurial intentions. TPB evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which focuses on the intentions that precede actual behaviors, based on beliefs about the outcomes of those

behaviors. Individuals who develop a positive attitude toward a particular behavior are more likely to form strong intentions to engage in that behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Three core components of TPB contribute to entrepreneurial intentions:

(i) Attitude toward the behavior – the individual's perceived attractiveness of the behavior,
(ii) Subjective norms – the perceived social pressure or support regarding the behavior, and
(iii) Perceived behavioral control – the individual's perception of their ability to perform the behavior, closely related to self-efficacy (Ajzen, 1991; Magasi, 2022).

Ajzen also noted that when the perceived likelihood of success is high, individuals are more likely to pay attention to their intentions and act on them (Ajzen, 2005). According to TPB, entrepreneurial behavior (EB) is a function of entrepreneurial intention (EI), and this intention is shaped by attitude, and motivation (behavioral control), and ultimately leads to action (Krueger & Carsrud, 1993).

Numerous entrepreneurship studies focused on intention have applied TPB to effectively predict behavioral outcomes related to entrepreneurship (Faloye & Olatunji, 2019; Boahemaah *et al*., 2020; Lv *et al*., 2021; Magasi, 2022; Wardana *et al*., 2020). This study therefore relies on the TPB framework, as it effectively captures key constructs relevant to understanding self-employment intentions—namely, intention, attitude, and motivation—as illustrated in **Figure 2**.

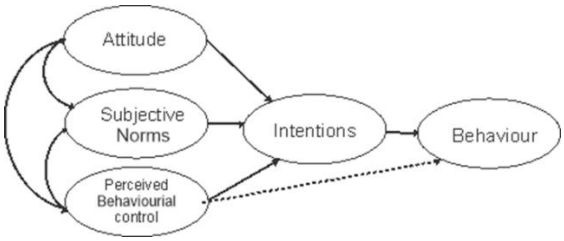

Figure 2. Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991).

There are three independent determinants of intention proposed by Ajzen (1991) in the TPB, number one is the attitude towards behavior, which describes how much a person thinks positively or negatively of an issue. The second indicator is the social component called the subjective norm, this explains the perceived social pressure to carry out an action or refrain from it. The third is the perceived behavioral control which refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of engaging in the behavior and the consciousness to reflect on past experiences, predicted barriers, and difficulties. This means the stronger and more positive an individual's attitude and subjective norm are toward a behavior, the stronger the level of his intentions was it. As a result of this it may be unveiled that in certain applications, attitude alone can positively impact intentions. And that attitude and perceived behavioral control alone are sufficient to explain intention in other applications and that all three predictors individually contribute to intentions in yet other applications Onasanya.

3.2.2. The Theory of Social Cognitive

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) proposed by Bandura establishes that the environment influences behavior, but behavior also influences the environment (Bandura, 1986). SCT is centered on the concepts of reinforcement and observation, with significant emphasis on mental processes and social interactions (**Figure 3**). It postulates that observations and imitations can be drawn from various models, including parents, educators, peers, and even television programs. These observations and the decision to imitate a behavior are influenced by cognitive processes that help individuals determine whether the observed behavior is worth replicating. SCT also explains that self-efficacy can be enhanced through

entrepreneurship education, as individuals gain confidence by engaging in entrepreneurial tasks, observing role models, and receiving feedback.

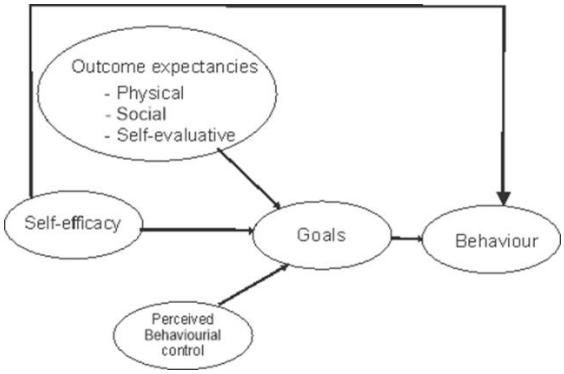

Figure 3. An Illustration of the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2000).

Self-efficacy is a "self-judgment of one's ability to perform a task in a specific domain" (Bandura, 1986). The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) explains that a person's sense of self-efficacy can be influenced by four processes: enactive mastery, role modeling and vicarious experience, social persuasion, and physiological states such as arousal and anxiety. SCT highlights that self-efficacy affects several factors that predict motivation because it is a key motivational construct derived from the theory (Bandura, 1986). Providing students with opportunities to engage in entrepreneurial tasks such as analyzing business feasibility, preparing business plans, and executing those plans can help boost their motivation and intention to become self-reliant business owners.

SCT and entrepreneurial self-efficacy are essential tools for understanding entrepreneurial learning, competence, and intention, which is one of the reasons this study adopts their use (Bayern, 2013). This suggests that self-efficacy and the desire for autonomy can be shaped by one's interactions with environments, individuals, activities, and educational programs—particularly when individuals pay attention to detailed, motivating information that inspires imitation and application in real-life settings.

3.3. Empirical Review

3.3.1. Globally

A study examined the impacts of entrepreneurship education on the development of entrepreneurial skills and behaviors in students. A total of 1,470 questionnaires were distributed to students from three universities in Portugal, with 1,290 deemed valid for analysis. Squared Multiple Correlations were used to interpret the data. The results showed that behavior associated with promoting new ventures can be predicted by individual characteristics. Specifically, students with greater prior knowledge, entrepreneurial alertness, opportunity recognition, motivation, and intention demonstrated higher entrepreneurial behavior. However, the study drew samples only from universities, excluding other tertiary institutions like business schools and polytechnics, which also represent a significant portion of the youth population (Adeel *et al.*, 2023).

A study conducted in China focused on exploring the influence of entrepreneurship education on student entrepreneurial intention. It utilized data from seven universities in Shaanxi Province, collecting 643 valid responses out of 680 distributed surveys. The findings indicated that entrepreneurship education positively impacts entrepreneurial intention and that increased exposure to entrepreneurship education strengthens students' self-efficacy and decision-making capabilities. However, the study did not fully consider motivational

factors such as personality traits, family business background, or entrepreneurial culture, suggesting a need for future research to include such variables.

A study in India investigated the impact of opportunity recognition and entrepreneurial self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial intention of university students from business and management backgrounds. Data were collected through questionnaires from 334 students. Results showed that both opportunity recognition and self-efficacy had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. Moreover, education was found to positively moderate the self-efficacy–intention relationship. However, the study was limited to business and management students, which may hinder the generalizability of its findings.

Research conducted in Vietnam examined the factors influencing the entrepreneurial intentions of Information Technology (IT) students. The researchers employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, using surveys with 424 IT senior students and applying multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that the entrepreneurial educational environment was the most influential factor, followed by personal characteristics, feasibility perception, support systems, and financial accessibility. The study also found that attitudes toward entrepreneurship partially mediated the relationship between independent variables and entrepreneurial intention. However, the exclusive focus on IT students limits the generalizability of the findings to students from other academic fields (Vuong *et al*., 2020).

Another study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial education, attitude, family education, environment, and students' entrepreneurial intention. Using structural equation modeling on a convenience sample of vocational students in Malang, Indonesia, the study found that entrepreneurial education alone could not fully explain students' intentions to become entrepreneurs. It also highlighted the influence of environmental factors on student attitudes and intentions. Despite moving beyond university samples, the study failed to thoroughly address the role of family and entrepreneurship education, which were part of its research aims (Kusumojanto *et al*., 2021).

A study tested a model linking participation in entrepreneurship education programs with students' entrepreneurial intentions. Using data from 348 students across seven Pakistani universities, it found that three key program components—learning, inspiration, and resources—positively influenced entrepreneurial intentions. Access to incubation resources had the strongest effect by increasing perceived norms, which in turn boosted positive attitudes and perceived behavioral control. Although the study validated earlier findings, it only drew participants from universities, omitting other types of higher education institutions.

In Southern Spain, a study explored entrepreneurial intentions among university students in Health Sciences. Using an online questionnaire completed by 1,518 students, the research revealed that perceived desirability and feasibility significantly influenced entrepreneurial intention. Perceived desirability also had an indirect effect through feasibility. However, expectations of success and self-efficacy showed no direct impact. The study did not confirm whether the students had prior exposure to entrepreneurship education, which could explain the weak role of self-efficacy and expectations of success.

A study examined the influence of entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, need for achievement, and entrepreneurial intention among commerce students in Pakistan. Data were collected via survey from 184 students at various public universities. The results showed a significant positive impact of entrepreneurship education and knowledge acquisition on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial intention, and the need for achievement. The study concluded that entrepreneurship education plays a significant role in shaping self-efficacy and fostering entrepreneurial drive (Soomro & Shah, 2022).

3.3.2. African Countries

A study conducted in Uganda investigated the role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions. A cross-sectional and explanatory survey design was adopted, and data were collected using a systematic sampling technique from 458 final-year undergraduate students across two Ugandan universities. The results suggested that entrepreneurial self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions. However, the study was limited to final-year students and cannot be generalized. Future studies should explore the non-student youth population, considering both formal and informal entrepreneurship education settings and including vocational schools (Kisubi *et al*., 2021).

In South Africa, a study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention, including the mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Using data from 500 university students through questionnaires, the findings showed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly mediated the relationship between entrepreneurial passion and intention. Additionally, social support had a positive and significant influence on entrepreneurial intention, and it moderated the indirect effect of passion on intention through self-efficacy.

A study in Ghana investigated how entrepreneurship education influences students' intentions to become entrepreneurs, focusing on individual factors and educational influences. The study used a quantitative design and surveyed 255 undergraduate agricultural science students at a mono-technical institution. Results revealed that entrepreneurship education positively impacts entrepreneurial intentions, particularly through interactions with attitudes and motivation. However, findings may not be generalizable across students in other academic disciplines due to different educational backgrounds and contexts (Boahemaah *et al*., 2020).

3.3.3. Nigeria

A study in Kwara State, Nigeria, used a descriptive survey to examine the self-employment intentions of business education students in universities. Data were collected from 372 students using a researcher-designed questionnaire, and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and linear regression. Results showed a strong positive intention toward self-employment and a significant effect of entrepreneurship education on students' intentions ($B = 1.78$; $t(370) = 9.257$, $p = 0.000$). The researcher concluded that entrepreneurship education plays a vital role and should be made compulsory in universities. However, the study was limited to business education students, limiting generalizability across departments and institutions (Mamman, 2019).

A longitudinal study was conducted to examine the effect of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intentions using constructs from the Theory of Planned Behavior. The research employed a one-group pretest-posttest design and involved 250 National Diploma students from five polytechnics in North Central Nigeria. Findings showed that entrepreneurship education significantly affected students' attitudes toward behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial intentions. The study recommended expanding entrepreneurship education to primary and secondary schools. However, its limitation lies in sampling only from polytechnics, excluding other tertiary institutions.

In Ondo State, a study explored key determinants of entrepreneurial intentions and the relationship between attitude orientation and business startup intentions among recent

graduates. Data were collected via questionnaires from 230 National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members randomly selected from a pool of 2,357 graduates. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The study found a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and business startup intentions ($r = 0.313$; $p = 0.000$). The researchers recommended establishing innovation and skill acquisition centers nationwide to promote self-reliance, reduce unemployment, and combat youth-related crime (Faloye & Olatunji, 2019).

3.4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the interconnection between variables in the study to enhance clarity and understanding. As shown in **Figure 4**, the framework is divided into two components: the independent variables and the dependent variable. The four components of self-employment intentions—attitude toward self-employment, self-efficacy, desire for autonomy, and entrepreneurial intention—are internally linked and also connected to entrepreneurship education as a central factor.

These four components jointly contribute to shaping self-employment intentions. Entrepreneurship intention reflects an individual's desire to start and grow a business (Yousaf *et al*., 2021). Autonomy plays a crucial role in motivating individuals to become self-employed, as it is closely tied to independence, freedom, and decision-making influence (Lange, 2012). Entrepreneurship education supports the development of business start-ups, fosters positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and strengthens self-efficacy (Wardana *et al*., 2020).

Entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions can be embedded through multiple approaches: structured classroom curricula, clearly defined learning objectives, diverse teaching methodologies, and extracurricular activities such as field trips, pitch competitions, and business plan development. These learning strategies collectively contribute to preparing students for real-world entrepreneurial challenges and enhancing their self-employment intentions.

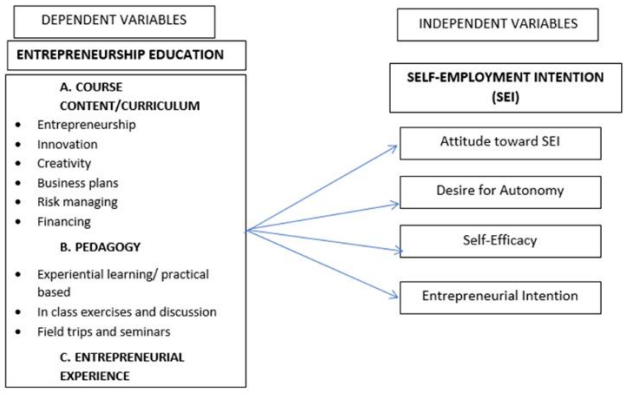

Figure 4. Framework Entrepreneurship Education and Self-Employment Intentions.

4. CONCLUSION

The transition from education to actual business creation is significantly influenced by external factors such as cultural norms, access to finance, and institutional support. Challenges including inconsistent curricula, a shortage of qualified educators, and weak linkages with industry continue to limit the full impact of entrepreneurship education. Despite these barriers, entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in shaping students' self-

employment intentions by equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to launch business ventures.

To maximize its effectiveness, entrepreneurship education must be complemented with startup incubation programs, accessible funding opportunities, and supportive policies. Bridging the gap between intention and action requires a holistic approach involving collaboration among public institutions, private stakeholders, and educational bodies. While entrepreneurship education has the potential to significantly reduce unemployment, its success depends on addressing these systemic challenges. Ultimately, fostering a stronger and more sustainable culture of self-employment will depend on creating an enabling environment that supports entrepreneurial growth and innovation.

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6. AUTHORS' NOTE

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