



## GENDER AS A DETERMINANT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

AKINKUOLIE Akeem Akinlolu<sup>1</sup>, EBOIGBE Eba Jane<sup>2</sup>, AJISAFE Olatunbosun Emmanuel<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>Department of Business Education, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Kwara State University, Malete. Ilorin

### Abstract

The study examined gender as a determinant of entrepreneurial intention of Business Education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria. One research question and hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. A descriptive research design was utilized, with the population comprising 428 business education undergraduates from Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State. A sample of 214 respondents was selected using simple random sampling. Data was collected using a questionnaire titled “Gender Determinant of Entrepreneurship Intention among Business Education Undergraduates Questionnaire (GDEIABEUQ)”. The questionnaire was validated by three Business and Entrepreneurship Education experts from Kwara State University, Malete, Ilorin. The reliability was established using Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded a 0.80 reliability coefficient. The research question was answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypothesis was tested using t-test analysis at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that gender does not influence the entrepreneurial intention among business education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria. Also, there was no significant influence of gender on the entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria ( $t_{(212)} = 0.08$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). The study recommends that young entrepreneurs should not be biased by gender when pursuing business aspirations. Additionally, government policies and institutions should promote gender equity in entrepreneurship to ensure equal contributions to the nation’s economy.

**Keywords:** business education, entrepreneurial intentions, gender, undergraduates.

### Introduction

It is a known fact that education is a veritable tool for the advancement and technological development of a nation. It involves the acquisition of fundamental knowledge and the development of the skills needed for technological breakthrough and social-political development which accelerates economic growth. Kuratcko (2019) opined that, due to its impact on the growth of economics and sustainable development via entrepreneurial drive and persistence, it is fast becoming a central point of economies globally. Although, advancement in technological development as a result of qualitative and quantitative technology education in developing nations of the world, Nigeria inclusive, has been responsible for the reduction in the physical employment of the teeming population. Every year, our tertiary institutions turn out graduates without a corresponding employment rate. The problem now is not even how to employ the already saturated market of unemployed youths/graduates but that of absorbing the new entrants. Consequently, a considerable proportion of these graduates may turn to participate



in unlawful behaviours such as prostitution, theft, cybercrimes, and ritualistic homicides, among several other vices. Youth unemployment is an economic and social deficiency that can result in many forms of criminal behaviour, violence, and other types of social misconduct. Currently, many unemployed graduates in Nigeria seem to lack the motivation to embark on entrepreneurial careers by establishing their businesses.

Entrepreneurship is acknowledged as a crucial element in a country's economic progress, due to its ability to generate job prospects for the sizable and skilled young population. Entrepreneurial endeavours have a substantial impact on the country's economic development. Entrepreneurship is vital in empowering individuals and mitigating unemployment (Iro-idoro & Iro-idoro, 2016). Entrepreneurs identify promising business opportunities and efficiently combine resources to provide profitable products or services. They embody a positive attitude that focuses on seizing opportunities rather than dwelling on risks. Entrepreneurship involves innovative ideas, identifying economic or business opportunities and utilizing one's talents and abilities to gather the required resources to realize these opportunities. According to Moa-Liberty et al (2016), entrepreneurship creates and develops financial resources. Entrepreneurs, accomplish their goals by operating competitive businesses and implementing innovative tactics. Entrepreneurship is crucial in stimulating economic growth and is a primary force behind economic progress. The mechanism is generally recognized for creating employment, generating income, alleviating poverty, and promoting wealth creation (Bux & Honglin, 2015).

To tackle the precarious unabated unemployment in Nigeria especially among young people, the federal government has taken steps to introduce entrepreneurship education in all tertiary institutions. Engaging in entrepreneurship-driven activities provides individuals ample opportunities for independence and increased financial autonomy, while also fostering innovation, job creation, and overall economic development (Ahmed et al, 2010). Despite the benefits that entrepreneurship offers to an economy, many Nigerian youths choose to move between various organizations and ministries to pursue white-collar jobs, which are often scarce and non-existent (Nwabufo, 2015). This can be attributed to the unfavourable business environment, with inadequate initial capital and a need for more technical knowledge leading to a lack of entrepreneurial intention. Based on the aforementioned, many Nigerian youths and students need more motivation to engage in entrepreneurial pursuits.

Intentionality refers to an individual's deliberate cognitive representation and actions towards personal growth and self-fulfilment which can also contribute to societal development. According to Bux and Honglin (2015), entrepreneurial intention is a state of mind that directs and guides the actions of the individual towards the development and implementation of a new business venture. This intention describes the degree of commitment directed towards the performance of entrepreneurial endeavour of putting up a business venture for self-employment (Iro-idoro, 2015). Individuals who have the intention to establish an enterprise ought to have certain precursor attitudes, interests, values, and talents regarding entrepreneurship which should form part of the contents of their entrepreneurial intention (Akanbi & Owoseni, 2018). Research has identified several factors that influence the development of entrepreneurial intention, which



can be classified into individual factors and contextual impacts. The individual factors include psychological characteristics, demographic variables, individual abilities, previous knowledge, personal connections, and social relationships, while contextual impacts refer to emerging environmental support, environmental influences, and organizational elements.

Ishaku (2015) observed that it is the societal creation and design to distinguish the roles, conduct, and psychological characteristics of males and females for economic development through entrepreneurship. Gender stereotypes often hinder the development of an individual's personality and contribute to societal inequality (Ogundola, 2017). Cultural biases about gender roles may influence how male and female students view entrepreneurial activities and the expected behaviour associated with each gender. This has led to various perspectives on the relationship between male and female behaviour and entrepreneurial endeavours. It has been noted that Nigerian graduates prioritize the search for non-existent white-collar jobs above pursuing entrepreneurial endeavours despite government efforts to promote entrepreneurship in the country. The rate of unemployment among youths and graduates is a significant concern for the government and all stakeholders in the country's economy. This suggests a lack of entrepreneurial aspirations among undergraduates, leading to reduced economic activity and increased unemployment rates. Therefore, there is a need to examine gender as a determinant of entrepreneurial intention among Business Education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria.

### **Research Question**

The following research question was raised to guide this study.

1. What is the influence of gender on entrepreneurial intention among business education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria?

### **Research Hypothesis**

One hypothesis was formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence of gender on entrepreneurial intention among business education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a population comprising 428 business education undergraduates from Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science, and Technology, Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State. A sample of 214 respondents was selected using simple random sampling. Data was collected using a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire titled "Gender Determinant of Entrepreneurship Intention among Business Education Undergraduates Questionnaire (GDEIABEUQ)". The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three Business and Entrepreneurship Education experts from Kwara State University, Malete, Ilorin. The reliability was established using Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded a 0.80 reliability coefficient which was considered adequate for the study. Data collected for the study were analyzed using Mean for the research question and t-test for the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance.



## Results

### Research Question 1: What is the influence of gender on entrepreneurial intention among Business Education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Mean responses of the influence of gender on business education undergraduates' entrepreneurial intention in Southwest Nigeria

S/N	Item Statements	$X_m$	Remark	$X_f$	Remark
1.	I am going to do anything to become an entrepreneur.	3.44	Strongly Agree	3.66	Strongly Agree
2.	My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur.	3.33	Strongly Agree	3.50	Strongly Agree
3.	I will make necessary efforts to establish and operate my own business.	3.40	Strongly Agree	3.50	Strongly Agree
4.	The likelihood of starting my own business is very high.	3.67	Strongly Agree	3.54	Strongly Agree
5.	I have seriously considered starting a business.	3.47	Strongly Agree	3.44	Strongly Agree
6.	I am determined to become a professional business manager.	3.56	Strongly Agree	3.41	Strongly Agree
7.	I am determined to develop my business into a high-growth enterprise.	3.37	Strongly Agree	3.36	Strongly Agree
8.	I am prepared to start my own business within 2 years	3.41	Strongly Agree	3.28	Strongly Agree
9.	I am prepared to start my own business very soon.	3.31	Strongly Agree	3.31	Strongly Agree
10.	I am going to inherit my family's business in the future.	3.50	Strongly Agree	3.31	Strongly Agree
11.	My friends and family encourage me to start my own business.	3.54	Strongly Agree	3.33	Strongly Agree
12.	I prefer to be an entrepreneur than to be an employee.	3.17	Agree	3.52	Strongly Agree
13.	I spend my free time learning how to start and run my own business.	3.31	Strongly Agree	3.48	Strongly Agree
14.	I have discovered a business opportunity that motivates me to start my own business.	3.12	Agree	3.36	Strongly Agree
15.	I have started saving money to start my own business after graduation.	3.45	Strongly Agree	3.46	Strongly Agree
	<b>Weighted average</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2024.  $X_M$  = male  $X_F$  = female

The data in Table 1 displays the average disparity in entrepreneurial intention between male and female business education students in South-West, Nigeria. The table demonstrates that the respondents exhibited a high level of consensus in their commitment to becoming entrepreneurs. Their professional goal is to start and oversee their enterprise. The individuals in question are strongly inclined to initiate their business ventures and have given substantial thought to it. The mean scores for males are 3.44, 3.33, 3.40, 3.67, and 3.47 respectively, while the mean scores for females are 3.66, 3.50, 3.50, 3.54, and 3.44 respectively. The respondents exhibited a resolute



consensus in their ambition to pursue careers as professional business managers, cultivate their companies into high-growth ventures, and establish their businesses over two years.

Additionally, they expressed a willingness to commence their ventures soon and desire to eventually take over their family's enterprises. The average scores for these assertions were 3.56, 3.37, 3.41, 3.31, and 3.50 for males and 3.41, 3.36, 3.28, 3.31 and 3.31 for females respectively. The respondents strongly agreed that their friends and family encourage them to initiate their own business. They possessed a prediction for assuming the role of an entrepreneur instead of an employee. They devote their leisure time to acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to initiate and oversee their firm. In addition, they have begun setting aside funds to establish their enterprise upon completing their studies. The average scores for these criteria are 3.54, 3.17, 3.31, 3.12, and 3.45 for males and 3.33, 3.52, 3.48, 3.36 and 3.46 for females respectively. Moreover, the respondents unanimously agreed that their friends and family motivated them to pursue their entrepreneurial endeavours. In addition, they devote their free time to acquiring knowledge about the complexities of initiating and overseeing a corporation. In addition, they have implemented proactive measures to accumulate funds in anticipation of establishing their businesses upon finishing their education (with mean scores of 3.54, 3.31, and 3.45 respectively). The respondents unanimously preferred being an entrepreneur rather than an employee. Furthermore, they identified a promising business opportunity that inspired them to pursue their venture (mean scores of 3.17 and 3.12 respectively).

The data in Table 1 displays the calculated weighted average mean for all 15-item constructs. The grand mean for male ( $\text{mean}_m$ ) and female ( $\text{mean}_f$ ) respondents is 3.40 and 3.43 respectively. This indicates that all respondents strongly agreed with the items. However, females had a slightly higher mean ( $\text{mean}_f = 3.43$ ) than males ( $\text{mean}_m = 3.40$ ) regarding the difference between male and female business education entrepreneurial intention. This implies that gender does not influence the entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates ( $\text{mean}_m = 3.40$ ,  $\text{mean}_f = 3.43$ ).

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence of gender on entrepreneurial intention among business education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria.

**Table 2:** *t-test analysis on the significant influence of gender on entrepreneurial intention among business education undergraduates in Southwest Nigeria.*

Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	Calculated t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	67	3.47	0.37	406	0.08	0.93	Not Rejected
Female	142	3.46	0.48				

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

$P > 0.05$

The data in Table 2 indicates that there are a total of 67 male respondents and 147 female respondents. The respondents' reply reveals the descriptive statistics of entrepreneurial intention



among business education undergraduates, categorized by gender. The mean for males is 3.47 with a standard deviation of 0.37, while the mean for females is 3.46 with a standard deviation of 0.48. The responses closely approximate the mean due to the significantly low standard deviations. The table indicates that there is no statistically significant disparity in the entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates based on gender ( $t_{426} = 0.08$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis, which posits that there is no substantial disparity in the entrepreneurial intention among business education undergraduates based on gender, was not disproven. This indicates that the responses of the respondents did not show any significant influence. The male respondents exhibited a larger rating of the disparity in entrepreneurial intention among business education undergraduates based on gender compared to the female respondents (mean difference = 0.01).

### **Discussion of Findings**

Adima (2016) discovered that female entrepreneurs in Nigeria demonstrate a substantial propensity for participating in hazardous endeavours, which strongly impacts their choice to pursue entrepreneurship among College students. The study revealed little or no disparity in entrepreneurial inclination between male and female business education students in this current study. The mean score for females (mean = 3.43) was somewhat higher than that of males (mean = 3.40). This outcome can be attributed to the fact that a significant number of female students pursuing business education intend to establish their enterprises, enabling them to allocate sufficient time to their children and family responsibilities. Significant cohorts of women in Nigeria have ambitions to become entrepreneurs, given that a substantial fraction of small-scale enterprises in the region's marketplaces, cities, and communities are owned by females. Prior research has demonstrated a disparity in the inclination towards entrepreneurship between male and female students and men and women. The results of Desislava and Maria-Antonia's (2010) research, which concluded that women have lesser ambitions to become entrepreneurs compared to men, align with the observations revealed by Choitung et al (2012). The latter study discovered that male and female students possess diverse attitudes and intentions toward business, even after receiving entrepreneurial instruction. These findings align with the results of the present study.

Furthermore, the outcome of this study is consistent with the study conducted by Inga et al (2013), indicating that men demonstrate a greater level of entrepreneurial tendency than women. However, there is no significant difference between genders in terms of the actual start of a firm. The findings of this study affirm the recent research conducted by Konutgan (2022), Malaole, and Malebana (2022), which concluded that there is no difference between genders in terms of students' entrepreneurial ambition and attitude towards entrepreneurial efforts. Furthermore, Igna et al. (2013) did a study that revealed no statistically significant disparity between genders regarding their entrepreneurial ambition when initiating a business. Nevertheless, the outcomes contradict the discoveries of Choitung et al. (2012), which demonstrate noteworthy disparities in entrepreneurial attitudes and objectives across male and female students.





## Conclusion

The study concluded that gender does not influence the entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates in Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science and Technology, Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State. ( $\text{mean}_f = 3.43$ ,  $\text{mean}_m = 3.40$ ) and that there was no significant influence of gender on the entrepreneurial intention of business education undergraduates ( $t_{(426)} = 0.008$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ).

## Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Young entrepreneurs should not be gender biased when embarking on or pursuing business aspirations;
2. Government policies and institutions should also encourage equity in gender performance in entrepreneurship to ensure equal contributions of gender to the nation's economy.

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