

EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA

SIJUADE, ADENIKE FLORENCE

School of Education, Federal College of Education, Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria
olorinike3@gmail.com

Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of entrepreneurship education on the emotional intelligence (EI) of Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Southwest Nigeria, considering the moderating role of students' level of study. Employing a quasi-experimental research design of pre-test post-test non-equivalent control group type, the study involved 293 students selected through multi-stage sampling. The experimental group received a four-week entrepreneurship education intervention focusing on business plan development, simulations, and guest lectures, while the control group continued regular coursework. EI was measured using a validated instrument assessing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Data analysis using ANCOVA revealed a significant positive effect of entrepreneurship education on EI ($F(1, 291) = 313.327, p < .000$). The level of study also significantly impacted EI ($F(1, 291) = 5.151, p < .000$), with final-year students exhibiting the highest EI levels. However, no significant interaction effect was found between entrepreneurship education and level of study ($F(2, 290) = 1.146, p > .05$). The study concludes that entrepreneurship education enhances EI consistently across all levels of study, while the level of study itself influences EI development. Recommendations include integrating entrepreneurship education across all levels, prioritizing experiential learning, and offering specialized EI development programs for final-year students.

Keywords: Colleges of Education, Emotional Intelligence, Entrepreneurship Education, Business Education.

Introduction:

Entrepreneurship education in recent years has attracted a lot interests as a vital instrument for encouraging students' creativity, economic development, and independence. According to Oyeku, Adejuwon, Tutuwa, and Oyeku (2023), entrepreneurship education gives people the abilities, information, and attitude needed to spot opportunities, take measured risks, and add value in a variety of settings. But in addition to its practical and financial advantages, entrepreneurship education has also been connected to the growth of non-cognitive abilities like emotional intelligence (EI). It is becoming more widely acknowledged that emotional intelligence—which includes the capacity to identify, comprehend, and control one's own emotions as well as those of others—is an essential skill for both professional and personal success (Goleman, 1995). This study explores the effect of entrepreneurship education on the emotional intelligence of students of Business Education in Colleges of Education, a group poised to become future educators and entrepreneurs.

In the context of Business Education students, the connection between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurship education is very pertinent. In both academic and entrepreneurial contexts, these students are required to manage stress, lead teams, and negotiate intricate interpersonal relationships. By encouraging self-awareness, empathy, and effective communication skills, entrepreneurship education may improve emotional intelligence, according to research (Usman, Kawu & Jimoh, 2023). For example, students can practice emotional regulation and conflict resolution, two essential elements of emotional intelligence, through experiential learning activities like group projects and business simulations (Usman, Kawu & Jimoh, 2023).

However, despite the growing interest in this field, there is little empirical research on the specific impact of entrepreneurship education on the emotional intelligence of college of education students. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how entrepreneurship

education programs influence the EI of Business Education students. Emotional intelligence is also a critical factor in entrepreneurial success, as entrepreneurs with high EI are better able to handle the uncertainties and challenges of starting and running a business, build strong relationships with stakeholders, and adapt to changing environments (Baron, 2008).

By doing so, it aims to contribute to the broader discourse on the role of education in fostering holistic student development and preparing individuals for the demands of the 21st-century workforce. The study is significant as it will contribute to understanding the link between entrepreneurship education and the development of crucial emotional intelligence skills. This is vital for educators seeking to cultivate well-rounded graduates. Secondly, by examining the moderating role of the student's level of study, the research can reveal whether the impact of entrepreneurship education varies across different stages of academic progression. This informs targeted curriculum development. Finally, the findings will offer practical implications for enhancing Business Education programmes to better equip students with both entrepreneurial and emotional competencies, ultimately improving their future career prospects and personal success.

Literature Review

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the capacity to recognize, understand, regulate, and influence one's own emotions as well as those of others. and has become a crucial concept in psychology, education, and organizational behavior (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence's importance in both personal and professional success has been the subject of much research since it became popular in the 1990s. This review summarizes important research on emotional intelligence, emphasizing its elements, assessment, and effects on different outcomes.

Goleman (1995) distinguished five components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These elements emphasize how interpersonal and intrapersonal emotional competencies interact. Mayer and Salovey (1997) offered an alternative definition of emotional intelligence (EI), defining it as the ability to identify, use, understand, and regulate emotions. This idea, which emphasizes the cognitive processing of emotional information, has been operationalized via ability-based tests such as the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (Mayer et al., 2002). On the other hand, trait-based methods evaluate emotional intelligence (EI) as a personality attribute, such as the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) (Bar-On, 1997). Both ability and trait models emphasize the significance of emotional intelligence (EI) in adaptive functioning, despite variations in measurement.

Research has shown that emotional intelligence is a good predictor of success in a variety of disciplines. Effective leadership, teamwork, and job success are all correlated with emotional intelligence (EI) in the workplace (Goleman, 1998). High EI leaders are better able to encourage their people, handle stress, and settle disputes (Wong & Law, 2002). In educational settings, EI has been linked to academic achievement, student engagement, and positive teacher-student relationships (Parker et al., 2004). Furthermore, EI plays a crucial role in mental health, with higher EI levels correlating with lower stress, anxiety, and depression (Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar & Rooke 2007).

Beyond theoretical knowledge, entrepreneurship education enhances critical emotional competencies for business leadership and effective communication. Research has shown that entrepreneurship education incorporates emotional intelligence training, which is essential for managing personal emotions and building relationships with others (Todorova & Antonova, 2023). Structured educational programs that aim to improve emotional intelligence have shown promising results, successfully raising students' emotional competencies (Usman, Kawu &

Jimoh, 2023). Additionally, exposure to entrepreneurship education fosters a proactive entrepreneurial mindset, leading students to pursue entrepreneurial careers and building resilience (Yun & Hock, 2023).

According to Ottman, Zamzamin, and Ahmad (2023), emotional intelligence mediates this process by fostering creativity and intrinsic motivation, two qualities that are critical for entrepreneurial ventures. Significantly, emotional intelligence is associated with managerial traits that are essential for aspiring business owners, such as empathy and teamwork (Manda, TodoruÈ, & Manda, 2020). Students who acquire these talents through school are better equipped to handle business issues in the real world. Although emotional intelligence is greatly increased by entrepreneurship education, others contend that natural emotional intelligence is also essential for successful entrepreneurship, underscoring the intricate relationship between education and innate characteristics.

As individuals advance in their education, the relationship between academic achievement and emotional intelligence seems to get stronger. While core emotional competencies are definitely advantageous across all levels, evidence suggests that the influence of enhanced emotional intelligence becomes increasingly obvious in higher education. Studies, such as Ramesh, Thavaraj, Haorei, and Ramkumar (2021), reveal a favorable association between solid personal and social abilities and superior grades, a connection that likely intensifies as academic demands and interpersonal difficulties increase in more advanced educational settings. Similar to this, as students deal with the difficulties of independent study and higher education, emotional intelligence's contribution to student engagement—a critical component of academic success (Tareke et al., 2023)—may become even more important. Success in challenging academic settings increasingly depends on a student's capacity for self-control, stress management, and teamwork—all aspects of emotional intelligence.

The effect of entrepreneurial education on emotional intelligence, especially among students pursuing business-related areas, has been the subject of numerous research. By encouraging self-awareness and empathy, for example, entrepreneurship education dramatically raises students' emotional intelligence, according to a 2013 study by Sánchez. According to the study, experiential learning exercises like role-playing and business simulations give students a safe setting in which to hone their social and emotional intelligence. Similarly, Nabi, Liñán, Fayolle, Krueger and Walmsley (2017) reported that entrepreneurship education positively influences students' motivation and self-efficacy, which are closely linked to emotional intelligence.

It has been demonstrated that including entrepreneurship education into the curriculum improves emotional intelligence in students of Business Education in Colleges of Education by encouraging resilience and a growth mentality. Students who received entrepreneurship education showed greater levels of emotional intelligence than their colleagues who did not receive such training, according to a 2009 study by Adeyemo. The focus on hands-on learning and real-world problem-solving, which call on students to control their emotions and communicate with others in an efficient manner, was credited by the study with this development. The study's theoretical foundations are derived from two main fields: emotional intelligence and entrepreneurship education. Giving students the mindset, skills, and knowledge necessary to identify and take advantage of business possibilities is the aim of entrepreneurship education (Dhanalakshmi, Lekshm, & Goonefillake, 2024). It places a strong emphasis on problem-solving, innovation, and risk-taking—all of which are critical for successful entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, Goleman (1995) conceptualized emotional intelligence as consisting of five components: social skills, self-regulation, self-awareness, empathy, and motivation. Effective leadership, teamwork, and human relationships—all essential to entrepreneurship—require these elements.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of entrepreneurship education on the emotional intelligence of College of Education students in Business Education is examined in this study. While entrepreneurship education aims to foster skills like innovation and resilience, its impact on emotional intelligence, crucial for navigating interpersonal and professional challenges, requires examination. This research seeks to determine if participation in entrepreneurship education programmes significantly influence students' emotional intelligence.

Furthermore, the study explores the moderating role of the students' level of study (e.g., year 1, year 2, etc.) in this relationship. It hypothesizes that the impact of entrepreneurship education on emotional intelligence may differ depending on the student's academic level. Understanding this dynamic will help tailor entrepreneurship education programmes to better enhance the holistic development of Business Education students, specifically focusing on their emotional intelligence alongside entrepreneurial skills.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of entrepreneurship education on emotional intelligence of students of Business Education in Colleges of Education in southwest Nigeria. Other objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the effect of treatment on emotional intelligence of students of Business Education in Colleges of Education in southwest Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the effect of level of study on emotional intelligence of students of Business Education in Colleges of Education in southwest Nigeria.
3. Inquire into the effect of level of study and treatment on emotional intelligence of students of Business Education in Colleges of Education in southwest Nigeria.

Methodology

This study investigates the effect of entrepreneurship education on the emotional intelligence of Business Education students in Colleges of Education, with the level of study as a moderating variable. A quasi-experimental design was employed, specifically the pre-test post-test non-equivalent control group design. Existing data shows there were 1083 College of Education students in southwest offering Business Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2025). This comprised the population for the study. Multi-stage sampling was used to select participants for the study. First stage is the simple random sampling of three states from the six states in the southwest. Second is the random selection of one College of Education from each of the States selected in the region. The third stage is the purposive selection of 91 Business Education Students from all the three colleges of education that participated in the study. The researcher arrived at a total sample of 293 using the Taro Yamane's sample formula.

There were two major groups: experimental and control group. The experimental group received entrepreneurship education intervention for 4 weeks, while the control group continued with their regular coursework. The intervention involved a structured programme incorporating activities like business plan development, simulations, and guest lectures from entrepreneurs, designed to enhance emotional intelligence skills alongside entrepreneurial knowledge. Emotional intelligence was measured using a validated instrument, administered as a pre-test before the intervention and as a post-test after the intervention. The instrument assessed components of emotional intelligence such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Data on the students' level of study (i.e. Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3) was collected to determine the moderating effect. Data analysis was conducted using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to compare the post-test emotional intelligence scores of the experimental and control groups, controlling for the pre-test scores. This helped isolate the effect

of the entrepreneurship education intervention. Ethical principle was given considerations in the course of the study. Participants' informed consent was sought while data collected was kept confidential.

Results

Table 1: Main Effect of Treatment on Emotional Intelligence of the Participants

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Emotional Intelligence

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	11073.529 ^a	2	5536.764	313.327	.000	.684
Intercept	252864.586	1	252864.586	14309.663	.000	.980
Treatment	11073.529	2	5536.764	313.327	.000	.684
Error	5124.560	290	17.671			
Total	282605.000	293				
Corrected Total	16198.089	292				

a. R Squared = .684 (Adjusted R Squared = .681)

Table 1 presents the result of analysis of covariance for main effect of treatment emotional intelligence of the participants. The table shows that the treatment had statistically significant effect [$F(1, 291) = 313.327$; $p = .000 < .05$]. The partial eta square which is .684 is another testament to the significance effect of the treatment on emotional intelligence of the participant as it implies that the treatment emotional intelligence of the participants is predicted by 68.4% of the treatment. Hypothesis 1 is consequently rejected.

Table 2: Main Effect of Level of Study on Emotional Intelligence of the Participants

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Emotional Intelligence

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	5867.483 ^a	29	202.327	5.151	.000	.362
Intercept	85328.064	1	85328.064	2172.310	.000	.892
Level of Study	5867.483	29	202.327	5.151	.000	.362
Error	10330.606	263	39.280			
Total	282605.000	293				
Corrected Total	16198.089	292				

a. R Squared = .362 (Adjusted R Squared = .292)

Table 2 presents the main effect of level of study on emotional intelligence of the participants. It shows that level of study had statistically significant effect [$F(1, 291) = 5.151$; $p = .000 < .05$] on emotional intelligence of the participants. The partial square eta of .362 shows that level of study of the participant accounted for 36.2% in emotional intelligence of the participants. Hypothesis 2 is therefore rejected.

Table 2b: Scheffe's Post-hoc Analysis the Contribution across Levels of Study

Multiple Comparisons						
Dependent Variable: Emotional Intelligence						
LSD						
(I) Level	(J) Level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Year 1	Year 2	-2.83*	.603	.000	12.40	14.77
	Year 3	-13.59*	.766	.000	1.32	4.33
Year 2	Year 1	2.83*	.603	.000	-14.77	-12.40
	Year 3	-10.76*	.656	.000	-12.05	-9.47
Year 3	Year 1	13.59*	.766	.000	-4.33	-1.32
	Year 2	10.76*	.656	.000	9.47	12.05

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square (Error) = 17.671.

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

To determine the most significant beneficiary of the treatment among the levels of study (Year I, II and III), a Scheffe's Post-hoc analysis becomes imperative. It shows that the treatment benefited students of Year III as the mean difference between Year III and Year I is 13.59 and between Year III and Year II is 10.76.

Table 3: Interaction Effect of Level and Treatment on Emotional Intelligence of the Participants

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Dependent Variable: Emotional Intelligence						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	11954.052 ^a	56	213.465	11.870	.000	.738
Intercept	99714.514	1	99714.514	5544.868	.000	.959
Level	4179.271	2	2089.636	116.199	.000	.496
Treatment	298.037	29	10.277	.571	.963	.066
Level * Treatment	41.204	2	20.602	1.146	.293	.108
Error	4244.037	236	17.983			
Total	282605.000	293				
Corrected Total	16198.089	292				

a. R Squared = .738 (Adjusted R Squared = .676)

Table 3 presents the interaction effect level of study and treatment on emotional intelligence of the participants. It shows that level of study and treatment had no significant effect [$F(2, 290) = 1.146$; $p = .293 > .05$]. Consequently, hypothesis 3 is therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The researcher investigated the effect of entrepreneurship education on emotional intelligence of students of Business Education in Colleges of Education in southwest Nigeria. It was discovered that entrepreneurship education significantly enhanced emotional intelligence of college of education students in southwest Nigeria. Empirical evidence supports this finding. Research shows that entrepreneurship education cultivates self-awareness and empathy through experiential learning (Sánchez, 2013), which is consistent with findings by Usman et al. (2023) on the beneficial effects of structured emotional intelligence training. Todorova et al. (2023) also

noted that entrepreneurship education incorporates the development of emotional intelligence, which is essential for leadership and communication. Nabi et al. (2017) also connect entrepreneurial education to higher levels of self-efficacy and motivation, both of which are associated with emotional intelligence. The empirical evidence clearly shows that entrepreneurship education significantly increases emotional intelligence, preparing students for entrepreneurial careers and real-world business challenges by cultivating essential managerial qualities like empathy and team-building (Manda et al., 2020) and fostering a proactive entrepreneurial mindset (Yun et al., 2023). However, some argue that inherent emotional capabilities may play a role.

The finding that level of study significantly affects emotional intelligence, with final-year College of Education students demonstrating the highest levels, aligns with existing research on the developmental trajectory of emotional competencies. The demands on students' emotional intelligence rise as they move through their academic journey: Higher education requires more self-regulation to handle heavier workloads and increased academic pressure; the ability to build and maintain collaborative relationships becomes essential for navigating group projects and networking; and the capacity for self-awareness and empathy is crucial for success in professional settings, a key focus for final-year students preparing for their careers. These developmental progressions are consistent with research that shows a strengthening link between academic performance and emotional intelligence (Ramesh et al., 2021). As academic complexities and interpersonal challenges increase, the refined emotional intelligence gained through education and experience becomes more crucial for student engagement (Tareke et al., 2023) and overall success. The final year, which frequently involves final projects and job searches, probably acts as a testing ground for these abilities, which explains why these students have the highest emotional intelligence.

However, the researcher could not discover any interaction between the degree of study and entrepreneurial education and the emotional intelligence of southwest Nigerian College of Education students. The fact that there is no interaction effect between entrepreneurship education and academic level suggests that the advantages of this kind of instruction are consistent across all academic levels, despite research showing that entrepreneurship education increases emotional intelligence (Sánchez, 2013; Nabi et al., 2017, Usman et al., 2023; Todorova et al., 2023;). Regardless of whether a student is in their first, second, or final year, entrepreneurship education seems to boost emotional intelligence, even though final-year students have higher emotional intelligence overall, probably because of developmental factors and increased academic/professional demands (Ramesh et al., 2021; Tareke et al., 2023). This suggests that the impact of the curriculum on emotional competencies is not greatly affected by the student's current academic stage, and that although the level itself is important for developing emotional intelligence, the additional benefit from entrepreneurship education is relatively constant. This highlights the importance of incorporating such education into all levels of study in order to develop important managerial skills (Manda, TodoruÈ, & Manda, 2020) and a proactive entrepreneurial mindset (Yun et al. 2023).

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of entrepreneurship education on the emotional intelligence of Business Education students in Colleges of Education in southwest Nigeria. The findings provide compelling evidence that entrepreneurship education significantly enhances students' emotional intelligence. This reinforces the growing body of research highlighting the crucial role of such education in developing not only business acumen but also essential personal and interpersonal skills. The observed increase in emotional intelligence underscores the potential of entrepreneurship education to equip students with the emotional competencies necessary for success in both entrepreneurial ventures and broader career paths.

Furthermore, the study revealed a significant effect of the level of study on emotional intelligence, with final-year students exhibiting the highest levels. This suggests that emotional

intelligence develops over time, likely influenced by the increasing academic and personal demands of higher education. As students progress, they encounter more complex challenges requiring greater self-regulation, relationship management, and self-awareness, contributing to the growth of their emotional intelligence.

Interestingly, while both entrepreneurship education and level of study independently influenced emotional intelligence, no interaction effect was found between these two variables. This implies that the positive impact of entrepreneurship education on emotional intelligence is consistent across different levels of study. While final-year students may naturally possess higher emotional intelligence due to their accumulated experience, entrepreneurship education provides a comparable boost to emotional intelligence regardless of whether a student is in their first, second, or final year. This emphasizes the value of integrating entrepreneurship education throughout the college curriculum to cultivate these essential skills in all students, regardless of their current academic level. Future research could explore the specific components of emotional intelligence most influenced by entrepreneurship education and investigate the long-term impact of these programs on students' career trajectories and entrepreneurial success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since entrepreneurship education demonstrably enhances emotional intelligence and the effect is consistent across study levels, Colleges of Education should integrate entrepreneurship education into the curriculum for all Business Education students, regardless of their year of study. This ensures that all students benefit from the development of these crucial emotional competencies.
2. Given the demonstrated effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in enhancing emotional intelligence, institutions should prioritize experiential learning activities within these programmes. Simulations, case studies, real-world projects, and internships provide valuable opportunities for students to practice and develop their emotional intelligence in a practical context, maximizing the impact of the education.
3. Recognizing that final-year students already exhibit higher emotional intelligence due to developmental factors, institutions should offer specialized programmes tailored to their needs. These programmes could focus on refining advanced emotional intelligence skills, such as negotiation, conflict resolution, and leadership, preparing them for the specific challenges of the professional world.

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