

THE EFFECT OF SELF EFFICACY IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL POTENTIAL AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN JOS NORTH LGA, PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study seeks to examine the direct impact of entrepreneurship education, as well as the mediating role of self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial potential of senior secondary school students in Jos North LGA, Plateau State Nigeria. Data was collected through a primary field data, i.e. a questionnaire survey was gathered from 327 students spread across 19 government schools in the region. Data was analyzed by structural equation modelling using SPSS 26 and AMOS 23 to establish the impact of the study variables. The results suggest that entrepreneurship education, in terms of student centered learning, course content and inspiration, mediated by self-efficacy, and significantly influences entrepreneurial potential. Findings of the study reveals that self-efficacy has a mediating role in the relationship entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial potential. Also, the direct relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial potential was positive and significant. Furthermore, anchoring on the theory of planned behavior supported by the engagement learning theory, this study finds that students' active participation in an entrepreneurship education course can increase his/her self-belief to be effective when performing a task. And believing in oneself, having personal standards and having control over behavior can help build the entrepreneurial potential of the student towards venturing into being self-employed.

Key words: Entrepreneurship Education, Self-Efficacy, Entrepreneurial Potential.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Globally, entrepreneurship has significantly grown in importance in the areas of wealth creation, innovation, and technological advancement, resulting to job creation via formation of new ventures and also in bridging the (Holmgren & From, 2005, Ratten & Jones, 2021). Although the role of entrepreneurship varies from one economy to the other, it is considered a necessary ingredient in economic development. The contribution of entrepreneurship as earlier stated is reflected in the entrepreneurial activities being carried out by individuals in their respective nations. For instance, youth rate of entrepreneurial activities measured in terms of Total-Early Entrepreneurial Activities (TEA) in the USA is placed at 15.9%, Brazil is placed at 26.5%, UK is 13.3%, Canada is 20.9%, Germany is 8.5% and Nigerian is 8% (GEM, 2022). Scholars (Ronak et al, 2022; Hashim et al, 2017) have attributed such involvement in entrepreneurial activities to the entrepreneurial potential developed by these individuals, even though from the statistics, the Nigerian TEA is the lowest. Entrepreneurial activities such as launching of business and making it to the growth stage arguably requires certain skills and competencies (Morris, et al., 2013) which can be gained through entrepreneurship education. Given the above scenario, it is worrisome to state that with the population rate placed at about 200 million, Nigeria's overall unemployment rate is 41% of which 60% applies to the youths (KPMG, 2023; ILO, 2023), The Nigerian TEA stated above is the lowest, and the rate of self-employment among youths within the age group 15-29 years is 29% in 2022 as compared to the 39% recorded in 2021 (State of Entrepreneurship, 2022). This is a clear case of continuous erosion of entrepreneurial potential among the young people. This agrees

with the findings of Alhaji et al, (2022) that there is low entrepreneurial potential among Nigerian youths. And while some youths lack the knowledge of how to start the entrepreneurial process, others lack the confidence to start. The critical role of entrepreneurial potential is essential given the current work-market conditions, which are defined by increased competition for survival through self-employment. This seems to support the idea that being self-employed depends on one's entrepreneurial potential that unlocks opportunities for individuals (in this case, youths) to raise their standards of living (Dakung et al., 2019). However, in the case of Nigeria, the visibility of these entrepreneurial prospects among our youths is low even with the introduction of entrepreneurship education in the secondary schools (Alhaji & Muharam, 2019). More worrisome is the fact that they constantly engage in social vices instead of being problem solvers.

Thus, there have been arguments that education for entrepreneurship should begin as early as possible (Cheung & Au, 2010; Paco et al., 2011; Rodrigues et al., 2012). The pertinence of entrepreneurship education, specifically in secondary schools, may be justified on various grounds. Firstly, these students are already about to face choices over their professional careers. The benefit of cultivating entrepreneurial potential in secondary education is that it increases the possibility of self-employment before deciding to continue with one's academics. This remains valid whether or not students intend to proceed with higher education studies or to join the workforce. Hence, secondary schools should boost student awareness as regards the fact entrepreneurship might represent a future career option (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).

The Federal Government of Nigeria, at different arrangements has attempted to address the low rate of self-employment over the years by introducing policy programme(s) which is aimed at overcoming, idleness, poverty, crime, and other social vices (byproducts of unemployment) among youths which remain a serious cause for worry (Oyekunle, 2021). Notable among these programs are; National Directorate of employment (NDE) introduced in 1986, the N-POWER 2016, National School Entrepreneurship Programme(N-SEP) which is an initiative of SMEDAN Act of 2003, Student Entrepreneurship Activity Hub (SEA-Hub) Club 2016 among others. However, it appears that these policy programmes are yet to yield desire result. (Isaac, et' al., 2022; Maklu, et' al., 2020; Dakung, et' al., 2016). because even with these programme(s), it is still clear that Nigerian youths' thinking are tailored towards job seeking rather than job creation which is reflected in the increasing rate of unemployment among them (Maklu, et' al.,2020). To this end, this study would investigate how entrepreneurship education (EE) and self-efficacy influences the entrepreneurial potential (EP) of secondary school students, thereby identifying the elements that influence secondary school students' entrepreneurial potential (Alhaji & Muharam, 2019; Mahlaole, 2021; Chukray, 2021; Alhaji et al 2022).

This study uses student-centred learning, inspiration, and course content(which is relevant relating to student entrepreneurial potential) as proxies of entrepreneurship education(EE) relating it directly to EP and also mediating the relationship by SE, amongst senior secondary school students in Jos north LGA, Plateau State, while other studies (Chou, 2018, Iyortsuun, Goyit & Dakung, 2020) used extra-curricular activities, financial and incubation resources as proxies of entrepreneurship education, Secondly, scholars, (Kim et al, 2021; Chronaki, 2021) have also contributed to the study of EE and EP in other contexts, but this study looks at the Nigerian context. Lastly, while many other empirical research studies have looked at behavior (Dakung et al., 2017; Dakung et al., 2019), Mindset (Jiatong et'al., 2021; Olutuase, 2017; Rodriguez & Lieber, 2020; Chronaki, 2021), entrepreneurial action (Afolabi et al, 2017) as the outcomes of entrepreneurship education, this study explores entrepreneurial potential mediated by Self Efficacy as an outcome of entrepreneurial education.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Specifically the following objectives will be pursued:

- i. Determine the effect of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial potential of senior secondary school students in Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the effect of entrepreneurial education on self-efficacy of senior secondary school students in Nigeria.
- iii. Assess the effect of self-efficacy on Entrepreneurial Potential of senior secondary school students in Nigeria.
- iv. Explore the mediating effect of self-efficacy in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial potential of senior secondary school students in Nigeria.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section conceptualized some key variables of this study

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Entrepreneurship Education (E.E)

Entrepreneurship education is one area that champions the principle of inclusivity, integration and mainstreaming and has become a serious matter for school administrators, course developers, government (public) servants, and researchers (Dakung, 2017; Kuratko, 2005). It is the basic education that prepares people for organizing, owning and managing a business and becoming self-reliant.

In this study, EE means active student participation in the learning process, going through a well detailed curriculum that will inspire the learners to explore their self-employment potential which may ultimately translate into creation of a new business.

The proxies of EE are briefly defined as it relates to this study;

Student Centred Learning: This is a learning process that engages the students by listening, writing, thinking deeply and speaking which helps build their capabilities to solve problems, make decisions and meet the needs around them.

Course Content: It is any informational content that must be understood or participated in, including any obligatory texts, videos, exams, and other learning resources.

Inspiration: This may be summarized as secondary school students' motivation to adopt a favorable attitude toward their own entrepreneurial potential as a result of their enrollment in and gains from an entrepreneurship education program

2.1.2 Self Efficacy

Self-efficacy is people's belief in their ability to exert control over their functioning and events that affect their lives and produce a favourable outcome. Inspiration, well-being, and individual achievement can all stem from a person's sense of self-efficacy (Lopez-Garrido, 2020). Chen et al, (1998) defines Entrepreneurial self-efficacy as "the strength of an individual's belief that he or she is capable of successfully performing the roles and tasks of an entrepreneur" It has an effect on personal choice of behaviour setting, where people tend to choose situations which they anticipate higher control over and avoid low personal control situations. In recent findings, Mahendra Prabu,(2019) suggests that self-efficacy helps to determine how much effort individuals will expand on an activity, how long they will persevere when challenging obstacles and how resilient they will prove in the face of adverse situation, the higher sense of efficacy, the good the effort, perseverance and resilience.

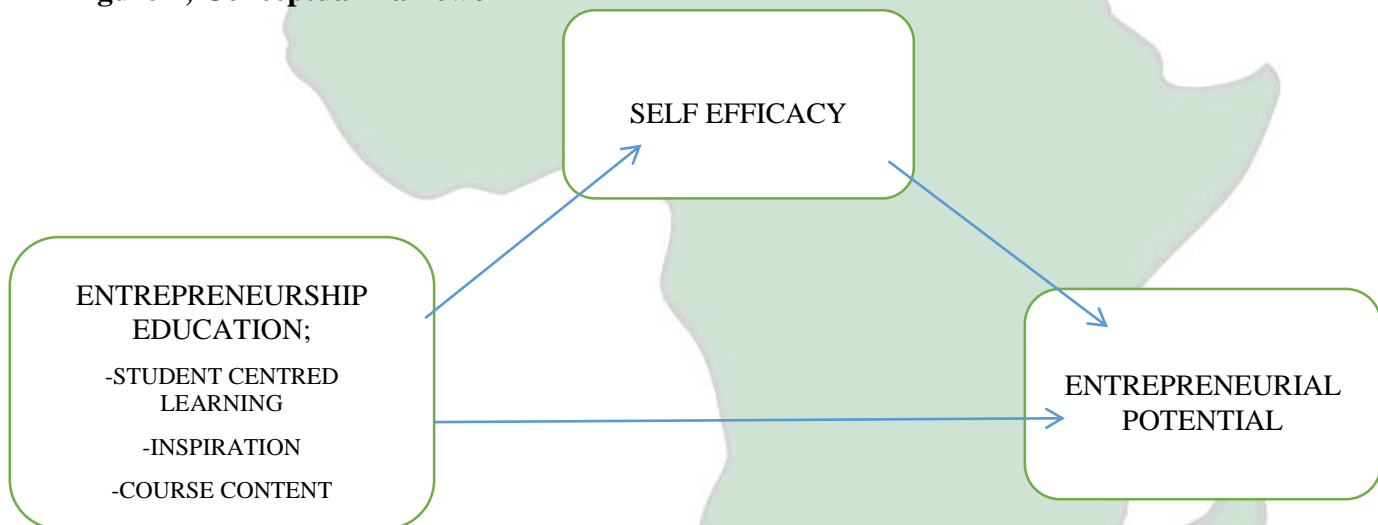
In this study, Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is the degree to which entrepreneurs have faith in themselves, are assured of their potential to start a firm, and successfully perform various tasks and projects. Simply put, it means one's believing in his/her ability to develop interest and to be effective in performing a particular behavior or not.

2.1.3 Entrepreneurial Potential

Entrepreneurial potential is a state of mind directing a person's attention and action towards self-employment as opposed to searching for jobs. Entrepreneurship potential is the fundamental elements which determine people's rationale to inspire new business formation. Leaning on the argument of Zaffane (2013), the benefit of using the concept of "Entrepreneurial Potential" is that it captures both "felt ability" and "desire" to become an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial "intention" refers primarily to the desire, whereas 'potential' refers to both "felt ability" and "desire".

Ajzen (1991) sees potential as "the indication of how hard people are willing to try of how much an effort they are planning to exert in order to perform the behaviour". Similarly, Aladejebi (2018) defined EP as a desire to carry out productive activities by effectively directing people to utilize and implement relevant concepts of new ventures. EP is not merely a yes or no question but can range from very low, zero, to a very high level as relates to setting up a business (Nwagu, 2017). Thus, EP is not inherited, but it could be acquired through training and education (Aladejebi, 2018). This means that entrepreneurial potential could be positively formed by the educational programme such as business studies, entrepreneurship education, which will make students aware about entrepreneurship as a career choice. Entrepreneurial potential therefore, summarizes the willingness of an individual to start his own business.

Figure 1; Conceptual framework



2.2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study is anchored on and underpinned primarily by the theory of planned behavior and its supported by the Engagement Theory of Learning OF Kearsley & Shneiderm, 1998. This is to provide a relevant framework for understanding how entrepreneurship education and self-efficacy can explain entrepreneurial potential among secondary school students. The support for a multi-theoretical approach comes from management research academics who combine the benefits of one theory's limitations with those of a related theory (Isaac et al., 2022; Yonla et al., 2020; Dakung, et al., 2017).

2.2.1 Engagement Theory of Learning (ETL)

The Engagement Theory of learning is based on the assumption that; when students find lessons meaningful and have a high level of interest in the course tasks, they learn more effectively, and have the tendency to retain the knowledge acquired, and are able to contribute to others (Kearsley & Shneiderm, 1998). In this study the engagement theory of learning seeks to explain the construct of entrepreneurship education within the conceptualization of **student-centred learning, inspiration and course content.**

Students who are actively engaged in learning about entrepreneurship by actively participating in entrepreneurial curriculum and are inspired are able to acquire prospects that would catapult their emotional dispositions towards self-employment.

Hence, students are expected to listen, read, write, speak and think deeply about the entrepreneurship course that is being taught, which helps them to prioritize, solve problems, and make decisions that are optimum (Bogart, 2009). Additionally, the theory entails that students develop skills that support their entrepreneurial thinking when they successfully collaborate on projects that are important to them.

2.2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen (1991) propounded the theory of planned behaviors from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The theory claims that attitude, social norm (which can also mean personal standards), and controlled behavior (which can also mean self-efficacy towards the behaviour (Bandura, 1986) predicts intention of an action. It consists of the fact that the probability of a behavior is related to the intention of the individual; as well as, intention is usually stereotyped by the attitude of the person, that is, the attitude is determined by the desired outcomes and how the behavior will drive those outcomes.

It then suggests that, participation in a program can influence an individual's attitude, psychological control over behavior and personal standards in the development of student's potential to venture into a new business.

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Research about the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial potential has been carried out by a number of researchers in Nigeria and outside Nigeria and they have established a positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial potential. For instance, Fayolle et al. (2006) in a study on assessing the impact of entrepreneurship education programmes in France maintained that commencing entrepreneurship education at the early stages of education has a significant impact on entrepreneurial potential of the students. He indicated that because creativity and innovation are integral in entrepreneurship, early entrepreneurial training helps develop the cognitive thinking of students at the early stage. Similarly, Kaet et al.(2011) tested the influence of curriculum content, role model and entrepreneurial internship programs on the potential of Malaysian students to engage in entrepreneurship. The results show that entrepreneurship education is positively correlated to entrepreneurial potential. Furthermore, Syden and Gordon,(2014) found that a variety of learning activities such as experiential learning (learning by association) in entrepreneurship education have been designed to boost entrepreneurial potential. This suggests that entrepreneurship intention is not inherited, but established through entrepreneurship education. Individuals are likely to start new businesses and engage in activities aimed at launching new ventures when they are confident in their own skills and abilities, and are able to recognize opportunities in the market. This skill can be built by proper education of the learners (Mahlaole et al., 2021).

H1: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial potential.

Theoretically, self-efficacy development is influenced by Entrepreneurial Education. According to Bandura (1992), there are four key sources of self-efficacy; enactive mastery, vicarious experience/self-modeling, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal, and it is established that training has a favorable impact on these variables. Some researchers have tested and demonstrated that entrepreneurship education can provide these sources (Nowiński et al., 2019; Watson et al., 2014). Also, conventional entrepreneurial training program teaching techniques, which incorporate guest teachers and case studies, can also strive for self-efficacy through the employment of role models (Wilson et al., 2007). These enable users to compare their own abilities with those of others. Verbal persuasion, encouragement and positive reinforcement can boost self-efficacy. As discussed by Kisubi et al, 2021 and Boutaky& Sahib, 2021,

when individuals are subjected to entrepreneurial training, their level of self-believe is improved. Entrepreneurship education strengthens entrepreneurial self-efficacy, especially for those with little or no self-efficacy at the beginning of the course.

H2: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and Entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

The role of self-efficacy (SE) in the study of entrepreneurship is increasingly emphasized, particularly in entrepreneurial preference and potential research (Schmutzler, et al 2018). Studies have revealed that SE, together with self-personality and self-confidence, impacts entrepreneurial interest of learners (Sandi & Nurhayati, 2020). Similarly, Hutasuhut (2018) tested Self-efficacy, business knowledge, and family influence and he found significant impact of SE on students' desire to start their own business. This also agrees with the findings of Farrukh et al., (2018) who tested the vitality of personality traits, self-efficacy and motivational variables on the entrepreneurial potential of students. It turned out that there is a positive relationship. Furthermore, the findings of Kim et al (2021) suggested that expanding business education opportunities and new involvements to improve entrepreneurial self-efficacy are critical for advancing entrepreneurial potential.

Conclusively, the perception of entrepreneurial self-efficacy has a strong effect on entrepreneurial potential and probably is reflected in subsequent entrepreneurial behaviour. This efficacy, whether uni-dimensional or multidimensional is very important in entrepreneurship research and is influenced by many factors such as entrepreneurship education, culture, personal factors etc

H3: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial potential.

The mediating role of self-efficacy

Recent studies have examined the theoretical contributions to entrepreneurship research utilizing self-efficacy as mediators predicting various study findings (Usan et al, 2022; Zhao et al, 2005; Ronak et al, 2022). In view of the above, the need to utilize the mediating role of self-efficacy in this study is justified. Thus, it would provide a novel impact on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial potential. Furthermore, learning about entrepreneurship by engaging in entrepreneurship education (using the right teaching method and allowing the students to actively participate) can challenge senior secondary school students to develop positive thinking. And consequently, it will help students to develop their entrepreneurial potential early enough.

Anchoring on the theoretical frameworks of the engagement theory of learning (Kearsley & Schneiderman, 1999) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1991) this study seeks to shed light on how entrepreneurship education in terms of course content, student-centered learning and inspiration explains the entrepreneurial potential of secondary school students. The engagement theory of learning sheds light on how meaningful and interesting learning activities which allows student's active participation can inspire a student to build self believe and confidence in his/her ability which may also lead to desire to start a venture. While the theory of planned behaviour of Ajzen(1991) tries to explain how students' entrepreneurial potential is enhanced through the self believe built through the entrepreneurship education program.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design, Population and Sample

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design. Data was collected among senior secondary school students in Jos North LGA of Plateau State. The stratified random sampling design was preferred

and adopted in order to minimize bias when dealing with the population. Taro Yammane (1967) formula was used to determine a sample size of 352 out of a population of 5372 registered senior secondary school students within Jos North LGA in Plateau State (Plateau State Ministry of Education, 2022). A total of 360 questionnaires were issued and 327 questionnaires were returned and fit for analysis. Constituting 92.8% of the entire questionnaires distributed. The study instrument (questionnaire) was designed on a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 =disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree), which measured the relevance and suitability of the measurement items.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data were cleaned, followed by parametric assumptions diagnostic tests. The results revealed that the parametric assumptions were met. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the sample characteristics. Correlations between the dependent variables and the independent variables were performed using Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 25) and are presented in Table 3. CFA was required to ensure that the proposed model was a good fit and since there is a strong theory about the structure. Also, Structural Equation Model (SEM) was performed using AMOS 23 to establish the relationship between the formulated hypotheses.

Table 1.0; Frequencies of descriptive data

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
13 - 15years	73	22.3
16-20 years	252	77.1
Not indicated	2	0.6
Total	327	100
Gender		
Male	139	42.5
Female	188	57.5
Total	327	100
Field of study		
Sciences	133	40.7
Arts	114	34.9
Commercial	80	24.5
Total	327	100

Source; Field survey, 2023

This basic attributes of respondents include: gender, age brackets, and fields of study. From table 1.0, the ages 13-15 constitutes 22.3% of the sample with the frequency of 73, while the ages 16-20 constitutes 77.1% of the respondents with the frequency of 252. 0.6% of the respondents didn't indicate their ages. Majority of the respondents are age 16-20. There were 139 males representing 42.5% of the study while the females with the frequency level of 188 constituting 57.5% which completed the gender classification. The respondents from the sciences constitutes 40.7% with the frequency of 133, while those in arts are

34.9% with the frequency of 114. Only 24.5% of respondents are from the commercial class with a frequency of 80 students.

Table 2.0: Convergent Validity

Construct	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Entrepreneurship education				
CCT_2	0.619			
CCT_6	0.594			
CCT_8	0.608			
SCL_5	0.567			
SCL_9	0.648	.871	0.870	0.416
SCL_10	0.551			
INS_3	0.610			
INS_7	0.705			
INS_8	0.672			
INS_10	0.747			
Self-Efficacy				
SEF_1	0.630			
SEF_2	0.761	.766	0.769	0.520
SEF_3	0.782			
Entrepreneurial Potential				
EPT_6	0.762			
EPT_7	0.797	.802	0.804	0.571
EPT_8	0.718			

Source; Field survey, 2023

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), threshold for the average variance extracted is 0.51-0.59. However, when the AVE is less than but close to 0.5, then on the basis of composite reliability alone, the researcher may conclude that the convergent validity of the construct is adequate. In this study, the AVE for EE is 0.416, less than but close to 0.5, with a composite reliability of all the constructs well above the recommended level, hence the internal reliability of the measurement items is acceptable.

Discriminant validity

Correlation analysis was performed to determine the Discriminant validity and associations among the studied variable dimensions of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial mindset among graduating students. The results seen in Table 3 show that Comparing the squared inter-construct correlations (SIC)

Regression Analyses

A regression analysis was carried out to establish whether there was a relationship between the predictor variables Entrepreneurship Education dimensions and the criterion (dependent) variable Entrepreneurial potential in our study. It could be seen there is a relationship between the variables.

Table 4: RESULT OF HYPOTHESES TESTING

Paths	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient		p-value	Decision
	Beta	SE	Beta	t-value		
H1 EE → EP	.628	.145	.666	4.340	***	Reject
H2 EE → SE	.885	.073	.869	12.130	***	Reject
H3 SE → EP	.143	.138	.155	1.038	.125	Accept

Interpretation of results

Decision criteria: The decision rule is that if the **p-value** is less than the level of **significance of 0.05**, the null hypothesis will be rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. But if the p-value is greater than the level of **significance 0.05**, fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Ho 1; The findings presented in table 4 indicate statistically significant positive effect of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial potential of secondary school students in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.666$, $p = 0.000$). This outcome leads us to reject H_0 at the 5% level of significance. The empirical evidence provides support for the conclusion that entrepreneurship education indeed plays a crucial role in fostering the entrepreneurial potential of secondary school students in Nigeria.

Ho 2; The result of the test as shown in table 4 revealed that entrepreneurship education has positively and significantly affected self-efficacy of secondary school students in Nigeria, with ($\beta = 0.869$ and $p = 0.000$). Thus, hypothesis two was not supported and therefore rejected at 5% level of significance. There is adequate evidence to conclude that entrepreneurship education has significantly affected self-efficacy of secondary school students in Nigeria

Ho 3; The result from table 4 shows that self-efficacy positively but insignificantly affects Entrepreneurial Potential of secondary school students in Nigeria., with $\beta = .155$ and $p = 0.125$. This result support hypothesis three and was therefore accepted at 5% level of significance. The study therefore concludes that there is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and Entrepreneurial Potential of secondary school students in Nigeria.

Table 5; Indirect Effect of Self-efficacy

Variables	Indirect effect of self-efficacy	Indirect effect-lower bound	Indirect effect-higher bound
Self-efficacy	0.000	0.000	0.000

Entrepreneurial potential	0.135	-0.182	0.504
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To determine the significance of the indirect effect, the researcher examined whether it falls within the 95% confidence interval generated by the 5000-bootstrapping procedure. Specifically, the effect between the upper and lower bounds of the indirect effect was assessed. The lower bound of the indirect effect is reported as -0.182, while the upper bound is indicated as 0.504. This indicates that the range between the lower and upper bounds of the indirect effect include zero, suggesting a partially significant indirect mediation of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial potential through self-efficacy. However, it should be notable that this indirect mediation does not fully account for the entire relationship.

Ho 4; The regression result of the test show that self-efficacy has positive but insignificant influence on the relationship between entrepreneurship education and Entrepreneurial Potential. The β coefficient is 0.135 and the p value is 0.371. These values from the results supported the null hypothesis stated at 5% level of significance. There is a partial significant indirect mediation of entrepreneurship education to entrepreneurship potential through self-efficacy.

4.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In line with the objectives and the hypotheses stated above, the findings are as follows;

H1; Entrepreneurship education positively impacts entrepreneurial potential of senior secondary school students in Nigeria. The findings suggest that the syllabus increases the student’s prospects to start a business of any type. Materials used for teaching entrepreneurship makes students search more about what they want to do in life and also encourages students to work with others in class. This also increases the student’s desire to innovate things of benefit to their environment. Students who are actively and meaningfully engaged in learning about entrepreneurship by actively participating in entrepreneurial curriculum and are inspired are able to acquire competences that would catapult their emotional dispositions towards self-employment, which is the basis of the engagement theory of learning earlier discussed. The position of this findings lent support to scholars (Jahani et al, 2018; Otache, 2019; Alhaji et al, 2022), whose studies also established a positive relationship between entrepreneurial education; in terms of identifying opportunities in the industry and familiarity of the business, and entrepreneurial potential displayed by their various respondents. The findings provide new understanding of Nigerian entrepreneurship education which helps senior secondary school students to get knowledge about entrepreneurship and build their aptitude for creativity and leadership which will in turn help the students gain confidence to start a venture. This argument can be further strengthened by the emphasis of the engagement learning theory earlier introduced which says that collaborative efforts, project based assignments, and non-academic focus can result in learning that is creative, meaningful and authentic.

H2 Findings indicated a positive relationship between entrepreneurial education and self-efficacy of senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Implying that senior secondary school students who show great aptitude for creativity via entrepreneurship education can demonstrate high level of self-belief in whatever they will do in life and can maintain favourable relationships with potential investors. It also means that these students can use their initiative to lookout for new ways to improve doing business. They express lots of their belief in the ideas they have and no matter the obstacle, they make it happen. This study supports the assertion made by academics (Shaheen & AL-Haddad, 2018; Osiri et al., 2019) that entrepreneurial self-efficacy affects one's willingness to launch a business. According to their study, inventiveness and entrepreneurial self-efficacy were key indicators of prospects for entrepreneurship. Students who are confident in themselves and who recognize new market opportunities, easily build their businesses early in life. This makes entrepreneurial self-efficacy a valuable primary predictor of future business activities.

The results of testing hypothesis **H₃** have established that the study found a non- positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurship potentials. This shows that no matter how students show great aptitude for creativity and leadership it will not yield to the creation of entrepreneurial venture in this context. This also implies that, students can develop and maintain favourable relationships with potential investors. Yet it will not have any effect on the investors because they lack confidence and effective ways of doing things.

The findings from **H₄** suggest that there is an established, positive but insignificant relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial potentials in this study, which indicates a partial mediation effect of self-efficacy in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial potential. This may be as a result of contextual difference and/or possibly difference of the respondents in this study. This finding is supported by scholars (Usan et al, 2022; Ronak et al, 2022; Sandi & Nurhayati, 2020; Lee et al 2016) whose studies revealed that self-belief has a favorable and vital effect on the interest of learners in entrepreneurship. This indicates that self-efficacy has a direct and indirect relationship with entrepreneurial potential. **Senior secondary school students with no creativity cannot spot opportunities of being entrepreneurs. Gaining new experience during the entrepreneurship course and being carried along by the teacher** will help students to feel confident about performing tasks. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is built from information; both personal experience and other people's experience, verbal persuasion and emotional reactions. Going back to our theory of planned behaviour, we see that once a student builds self confidence in his abilities, either from knowledge gained through entrepreneurship education or from being inspired from other's situation, and with all resources and opportunity to be successful, he/she will act rationally, according to their attitudes, personal standards, and psychological control over behaviour. Hence, despite literature reviewed shows positive and significant relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial potential, this study found that self-efficacy is not a good predictor of entrepreneurial potentials.

5.0 CONCLUSION.

From results discussed above, it can be concluded that entrepreneurship education is a good predictor of entrepreneurial potential and also that entrepreneurship education positively impacts self-efficacy among senior secondary school students in Plateau state. The syllabus and teaching materials used in entrepreneurship education were found to enhance students' prospect to start businesses and foster innovation. Also, Individuals who received entrepreneurship education demonstrated greater aptitude for creativity and showed higher levels of self-belief in various aspects of life, including building relationships with potential investors and overcoming obstacles.

However, the study did not find a significant relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial potential among senior secondary school students in Plateau state which means that self-efficacy weakly mediates the relationship between EE and EP. Despite previous literature suggesting a positive connection between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial interest, the findings in this study may be attributed to contextual differences or the characteristics of the respondents. It is important to note that while there is no significant relationship, this does not imply a complete absence of correlation between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial potential. This indicates that self-efficacy partially mediates the effects of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial potential. However, individuals with low self-efficacy alone cannot explain entrepreneurial potential.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDIES.

Theoretical implications

The integration of engagement theory of learning and theory of planned behaviour facilitates the entrepreneurial potential of senior secondary school students which has been supported by this study. The finding showed that entrepreneurship education in terms of (student-centered learning, course content and inspiration) is associated with entrepreneurial potential of senior secondary school students

With regard to engagement learning theory, it was reviewed in this study to provide a theoretical explanation for addressing entrepreneurship education. It suggests that students who are meaningfully and actively engaged in entrepreneurship education would be able to develop self-belief and also develop positive entrepreneurial potential. To this extent, the findings validate the theoretical contribution of the engagement learning theory.

Methodological implication

This study provides an accurate methodological process attempting to clearly define each of the underlying constructs, where reliability and validity tests were conducted to purify the measurement scales using confirmatory factor analysis. The results confirmed the correspondence rules between both empirical and theoretical concepts. Therefore, combining these methodologies with the purified measurement items, this study provides a useful direction for future empirical research into entrepreneurial potential. The quantitative approach employed contributes to the development of literature relating to entrepreneurial potential of senior secondary school students in Plateau State. Adding to that, the study adds significantly to the already existing literature on entrepreneurship for academic audience and researchers.

Managerial and policy implications

Majorly, the managerial implication of this study focuses on the application of self-efficacy in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial potential. Secondary schools should employ competent entrepreneurship education teachers that will enhance the active engagement of students and will shape their entrepreneurial potential. Another implication relates to providing an enabling environment that fosters lifelong entrepreneurship learning for students by the secondary schools/stakeholders.

LIMITATIONS/DIRECTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Although the study objectives were achieved, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, the study employed a cross-sectional research design which is a research design that collects data at a single point in time. It would therefore, be more appropriate to employ longitudinal research designs in future to better understand the effect of entrepreneurship education on attitude towards self-employment. Secondly, the study used a sample of senior secondary school students only. Future studies could explore this using a larger population. Thirdly, the study may not have fully explored or accounted for specific contextual factors that could influence the relationship between entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial potential among senior secondary school students in Plateau state. Factors such as government policies, cultural norms, or economic conditions may have a significant impact but were not addressed.

Further Study Suggestions:

1. Conduct a comparative analysis between senior secondary school students in Plateau state and students from other states/countries to examine the impact of entrepreneurship education and self-efficacy on entrepreneurial potential.
2. Supplement quantitative data with qualitative research methods, such as interviews or focus groups, to gain deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions regarding entrepreneurship education, self-

efficacy, and entrepreneurial potential. Qualitative research can provide rich narratives and contextual understanding of the factors that influence entrepreneurial development.

3. Explore the influence of external factors, such as family support, social networks, and access to resources, on the relationship between entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial potential.

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