

# EXTENT ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION INFLUENCES THE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATIVE SKILLS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS' IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** This study ascertained the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences the innovation and creativity of business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The population of 1619 business education students was used for the study using census survey sampling. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested. A structured questionnaire containing 20 items was used for data collection. Cronbach Alpha was used to compute data collected and reliability coefficient of 0.91 and 0.87 for the two clusters (B1 to B2) with an overall coefficient of 0.89 were obtained. 1617 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and to determine the homogeneity of the respondents' ratings while the z-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that entrepreneurial orientation influences business education students' towards becoming innovative and creative. It also revealed that male and female business education students' in universities in South-East, Nigeria did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences them towards becoming innovative and creative. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that business education students' in universities in South-East, Nigeria would benefit from effectively delivered entrepreneurial orientation as it would improve their innovative and creative skills. However, the researcher recommended among others that, universities should device a means to assist business education students' that indicated interest in being self-reliant and self-employed while in school and after graduation through incubator programme.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial orientation, business education, creative skills and innovative skills.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is an important aspect of human development and existence. Basically, education is a tool for creativity and innovative skills. Education empowers young people with knowledge, abilities, aptitude and skills, which in turn provide them with access to productive employment and meaningful contribution to the nation building. According to Ubulom & Ogwunte (2017), education is the most powerful agent for social transformation, national stability, security,

unity, and prosperity. Education is an effective instrument for facilitating qualitative knowledge needed for developing the economic, social-cultural and political indices of a nation (Ementa & Onokpaunu, 2019). The need to equip individuals with innovative and creative education for national development led to the institution of business education in universities. Business education is an academic programme that imbues in its learners the innovative and creativity skills for self-reliance upon graduation. The programme of business education equips the students with innovative skills that make them to be self-reliant without waiting for the white collar job. According to Okoli & Ozoegwu (2021) business education is a programme of study that equips individuals with skills, competencies, attitudes and values in different specialty areas as accounting education, office technology management, marketing and cooperative economics management and education. Business education is the embodiment of vocational experience and skills needed for jobs and development in a wide variety of business professions (Enwemasor & Charles-Odili, 2022). Enang (2022) business education is a programme of study that prepares students to acquire practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of the economy and social life. Akeke, et.al. (2022) business education is a branch of education that involves teaching the skills and operations of the business industry. Through business education, specific skills such as business environment, managerial skills, innovative skills, creative skills and marketing skills that are needed for successful entrepreneurship is taught.

Entrepreneurship brings together creative and innovative ideas for national development. Entrepreneurship is the development of skills, attitudes, and capabilities that can be applied in the world of work. Entrepreneurship is concerned with fostering creative skills supported with innovative skills that can be applied in real life situation. Suleiman, 2006 as cited in Ibitomi & Adeleke (2020) asserted that, entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual to seek investment opportunities in order to run an enterprise successfully. Entrepreneurship is defined as the act of bringing together creative, innovative ideas and management abilities with human and material resources to achieve a goal, (Nwachukwu, et.al, 2014 as cited in Dim, 2022). Entrepreneurship offers business education students such opportunities by helping them anticipate and respond to changes in the business world. As a result, there has been a considerable increase in research about entrepreneurship. However, exposure to this knowledge may instill entrepreneurial orientation in business education students.

Entrepreneurial orientation is a mind-set and characteristics that provides the creativity and innovation needed by business education students. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) is one of the key aspects of the organization goal and success. The essence of entrepreneurial orientation to business education students is to imbibe in them the requisite knowledge, skill and attitude for harnessing other resources and bringing them into a world of work, for achieving societal goals. According to Kiyabo & Isaga (2020) entrepreneurial orientation is an intangible firm resource that creates competitive advantage and eventually promotes firm performance. NuelOkoli, et.al (2021) opined that entrepreneurial orientation is envisioned as a process and decision-making activity used by entrepreneurs that leads to new entrance and aid for business ventures. Makhoulfi, et.al.(2021) conducted a study on the impact of entrepreneurial orientation on innovation capability: The mediating role of absorptive capability and organizational learning capabilities and the findings indicate that EO is positively associated with innovation capability. Oduro (2022) carried out a study on entrepreneurial orientation and innovation performance of social enterprises in an emerging economy and the results demonstrated that all the dimensions of EO – innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, risk-taking and competitive aggressiveness significantly influence the innovation performance of social enterprises. Similarly, Iqbal, et.al. (2021) conducted a study on linking entrepreneurial orientation with innovation performance in SMEs; the role of organizational commitment and transformational leadership using Smart PLS-SEM and the findings suggested the significantly positive direct relationships among entrepreneurial orientations, organizational commitment and innovation performance. This study adopts Al Mamun and Fazal (2018) view which stated that there are four dimensions to entrepreneurial orientations, which include creativity and innovativeness, risk taking propensity, pro-activeness and autonomy. However, the study focused on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences the creativity and innovative skills of business education students' in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

Innovation is the ability of the universities to embrace new ideas, experiment and introduce the new ideas to the students through creative measures. Ferreira, et.al,(2020) conducted a study on dynamic capabilities, creativity and innovation capability and their impact on competitive advantage and firm performance: the moderating role of entrepreneurial orientation and the findings revealed that dynamic capabilities, creativity and innovative competences do significantly, positively, affect performance. Creativity and innovation makes business education students to go around the world and

continue to improve and evolve. According to Mazla, et.al. (2019) creativity is a continuous process in which required party to work hard and continually improve ideas and solution. Kaur (2022) innovation is taking an idea and turning it into something valuable and relevant while creativity is the ability to see the world in new ways, find hidden patterns, make connections between seemingly disparate things and generate new ideas. Innovation often drives creativity, but creativity does not always lead to innovation. Akanbi and Iortimbir (2015) creativity is the ability to make or otherwise bring into existences something new, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device, or a new artistic object or form. Mudjijah,et.al.(2022) carried out a study on the effect of entrepreneurial orientation and talent management on business performance of the creative industries in Indonesia and the results show that entrepreneurial orientation mediated by talent management and market orientation can improve creative industry business performance for the better. Dapper,et.al.(2018) conducted a study on the creativity as a predictor of entrepreneurship orientation among indigenous entrepreneurs in South-South, Nigeria and the result shows that contributory creativity has significant predictive effect on entrepreneur's innovativeness as the alternative hypotheses was accepted in place of the null hypotheses as a result of the p-value been lesser than the level of significance (i.e  $0.013 < 0.05$ ). The question now is, does entrepreneurial orientation influence the creativity and innovation of business education students. If entrepreneurial orientation has influence on them, the idea of looking for the white collar job will be a thing of pass. Business education students, after the orientation should be able to look at old design and recreate it, imagine things and create it. But this is not so, business education students after undergoing entrepreneurial orientation still remain jobless after graduation, going for job hunt from one industry to the other without initiating an idea of what to create, how to design it and which people will be the end users. The knowledge gained from entrepreneurial orientation is not properly utilized by business education students. The idea behind the orientation is to enable the students to focus on being self-reliant and self-employed upon graduation. This problem is not limited to a particular sex. The willingness of business education students to exploit opportunities is a function of individual differences.

Gender is one of the variables of interest in this study. This is because business education students comprises of male and female students. According to Gokan and Gupta, 2015 as cited in Marques, et.al.(2018) gender, being an influential aspect of self- perception of the person, plays a significant role in men and women in the orientation towards entrepreneurship. Quaye, et.al. (2015) carried out a study on gender differences in entrepreneurial orientation: Evidence from Ghana and the findings of the study indicate that there are significant differences between the levels of entrepreneurial orientation among the two genders. Also that these differences are in risk-taking, innovativeness and proactiveness and men are found to be more entrepreneurial oriented than women. Zastempowski, et.al.(2021)conducted a study on the impact of entrepreneur's gender on innovation activities. the perspective of small businesses and the results of the study suggest that the female gender of the entrepreneur has a positive impact on the product and process innovativeness of small enterprises. Parmentier, et.al. (2017) carried out a study on the female creativity in organizations: What is the impact of team composition in terms of gender during ideation processes and the result shows that there is no gender difference in terms of creative agility. Steyn and Bruin (2020) conducts a study on gender differences in the relationship between innovation and its antecedents and the results reveal that the relationships between innovation and its antecedents do not differ practically across gender, nor does gender moderate the relationship between these variables. A lot of research has been carried out on the outcome of entrepreneurial orientation in respect to innovation and creativity but little or no effort has been given to the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences the creativity and innovation of business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria. Thus, the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences the creativity and innovation of business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria has not been fully researched on. This makes it imperative to conduct this study in order to add to the pool of empirical evidence for objective remedial actions by relevant stakeholders.

### Statement of the problem

Entrepreneurial orientation is a mind-set and characteristics that provides the creativity and innovation needed by business education students. However, many students are not benefitting from the programme as expected due to several challenges in its execution, ranging from lack of fund to quest for white collar jobs. Every student wants to be referring to as an accountant, banker and so on. This ideology is rampant with business education students, irrespective of their course that is skill oriented, which if well articulated with the knowledge acquired from entrepreneurial orientation will go an extra mile being innovative and creative. Based on these challenges, the aim of entrepreneurial orientation is defeated as most of them end up not having a skill that will make them to be self-reliant and self-employed upon graduation hence the need for this study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences the innovative and creativity of business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

The following research question guided the study:

1. To what extent does entrepreneurial orientation influence business education students’ towards becoming innovative?
2. To what extent does entrepreneurial orientation influence business education students’ towards becoming creative?

**Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Male and female business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences their innovative skills.
2. Male and female business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences their innovative skills.

**2. METHODS**

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study which was carried out in South-East, Nigeria. The population of 1617 business education students was used for the study using census survey sampling. Instrument for data collection was a 20 item five- point response option questionnaire ranging from Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Moderate Extent (ME), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). To establish the reliability of the instruments the researcher administered it to 20 business education students of Delta State University. The resulting responses were used to obtain the measure of internal consistency of the instrument using cronbach Alpha and it yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.89. The instrument was administered to the study population in their schools personally by the researchers with the help of three research assistants, using on the spot method to facilitate a high response rate. Out of the 1619 questionnaires, 1617 copies of the questionnaire (representing 97 percent) were retrieved and used for the data analysis.

**Research Question 1**

To what extent does entrepreneurial orientation influence business education students’ towards becoming innovative?

**Table 1: Respondents’ Mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influence business education students’ towards becoming innovative N=1617**

S/N	ITEMS ON INNOVATIVE	MEAN	SD	REMARK
1.	I like to explore new opportunities.	3.53	1.24	High Extent
2.	I like to initiate new ideas .	3.29	1.19	Moderate Extent
3.	I can take risk.	3.22	1.19	Moderate Extent
4.	Develop a mindset of high performing innovators.	3.64	1.14	High Extent
5.	I learn how to generate, analyze, evaluate and implement innovative ideas.	3.57	1.18	High Extent
6.	I can initiate an idea-friendly environment that enhances innovation and collaboration.	3.60	1.01	High Extent
7.	I can initiate a problem-solving framework to manage innovation process.	4.20	0.89	High Extent
8.	I can develop the mental agility to think outside of the box.	3.57	1.19	High Extent
9.	I can look at something and redesign it.	4.06	1.05	High Extent
10.	I am self confidence.	3.87	0.94	High Extent
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>		<b>3.66</b>	<b>3.66</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

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The analysis of data in Table 1 shows that entrepreneurial orientation influences business education students' towards becoming innovative at a high extent. This is shown by the aggregate mean of 3.66 which fell within high extent category. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

**Research Question 2**

To what extent does entrepreneurial orientation influence business education students' towards becoming creative?

**Table 2: Respondents' Mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influence business education students' towards becoming creative N=1617**

S/N	Items on Creativity	Mean	SD	Remark
11.	I have the ability to reformulate concepts to reach a new ideas.	3.14	1.19	Moderate Extent
12.	I can give up old ideas to solve a new problem.	3.43	1.14	Moderate Extent
13.	I consider myself to be creative person.	3.20	1.15	Moderate Extent
14.	Ideas simply occur to me without even thinking about them.	3.12	1.17	Moderate Extent
15.	I can express my new ideas and proposals with confidence.	4.42	0.74	High Extent
16.	I can make distinct links between information.	2.42	1.14	Low Extent
17.	I can generate a large number of ideas.	4.13	0.98	High Extent
18.	I ability to express my ideas in a way that can easily be understandable by everyone.	1.88	0.92	Low Extent
19.	I have the ability to redesign things.	2.31	0.93	Low Extent
20.	I make use of the ideas that I saw in my dream.	2.61	1.20	Moderate Extent
<b>Aggregate</b>		<b>3.07</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>Moderate Extent</b>

Data in Table 2 shows that entrepreneurial orientation influences business education students' on the basis of creativity to a moderate extent. This is shown by the aggregate mean of 3.07 which fell within moderate extent category. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range showing that the respondents are not wide apart in their ratings.

**Hypothesis 1**

Male and female business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences their innovative skills.

This null was tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: z-test analysis of male and female respondents on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influence business education towards becoming innovative**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	df	z-cal	z-crit	Remark
Male	523	3.86	0.98	0.05	213	0.21	1.96	Not Significant
Female	1094	3.83	0.98					

Data in table 3 shows that the calculated z-value of 0.21 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 (0.21<1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 213 degree of freedom. This means that male and female business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influence them towards becoming innovative. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2**

Male and female business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences their innovative skills.

This null was tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance and the results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: z-test analysis of male and female respondents on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influence business education towards becoming creative**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	df	z-cal	z-crit	Remark
Male	523	3.57	0.88	0.05	213	-0.62	1.96	Not Significant
Female	1094	3.65	0.97					

Data in table 4 shows that the calculated z-value of -0.62 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 (-0.62<1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 213 degree of freedom. This means that male and female business education students did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influence them towards becoming creative. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

**3. DISCUSSION**

The result of the data analysis in respect of research question one as presented in table 1 showed the response of business education students on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influences them towards becoming innovative in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The findings revealed that that entrepreneurial orientation influences business education students’ towards becoming innovative at a high extent. This is shown by a mean score of 3.66 which fall under high extent category range of 3.50-4.49. The findings of this study is consistent with that of Makhoulfi,et.al(2021)which reported that EO is positively associated with innovation capability. In agreement, Oduro (2022) reported that the results demonstrated that all the dimensions of EO – innovativeness, proactiveness, autonomy, risk-taking and competitive aggressiveness significantly influence the innovation performance of social enterprises. Similarly, Iqbal,et.al. (2021) reported that there is a significantly positive direct relationship among entrepreneurial orientations, organizational commitment and innovation performance. 0.013<0.05). Furthermore, the result of the test null hypotheses shows that the calculated z-value of 0.21 is less than the critical z-value of 1.96 (0.21<1.96) at 0.05 level of significance and 213 degree of freedom. This means that male and female business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the extent entrepreneurial orientation influence them towards becoming innovative. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This concurs with the findings of Dapper,et.al.(2018) which reported that contributory creativity has significant predictive effect on entrepreneur’s innovativeness as the alternative hypotheses was accepted in place of the null hypotheses as a result of the p-value been lesser than the level of significance (i.e 0.013<0.05). To support this stance, Steyn and Bruin (2020) reported that the relationships between innovation and its antecedents do not differ practically across gender, nor does gender moderate the relationship between these variables.

**4. CONCLUSION**

In the light of the findings of this study, it could be concluded that business education students in universities in South-East, Nigeria would benefit from effectively delivered entrepreneurial orientation as it would improve their creativity and innovation. As Nigeria is facing unemployment, effective delivering of entrepreneurial orientation in universities is imperative as it would make business education students to initiate an idea and create it as well. Again when business education students are highly innovative and creative, they would not join in the rig of graduates searching for white collar jobs.

**5. RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Universities should device a means to assist business education students that indicated interest in being self-reliant and self-employed while in school and after graduation through incubator programme.
2. Entrepreneurial orientation should start from secondary school level through university level.

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