

EFFECT OF EXPERIENTIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION ON ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOURS OF JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE, NNIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of experiential entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial behaviour of junior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. Guided by three research questions and corresponding null hypotheses, a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group design was employed. The study population comprised 310 public junior secondary schools, with an estimated junior secondary school student population of about 163,358 in the study area. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, four schools and 150 students were selected and assigned to experimental ($n = 73$) and control ($n = 77$) groups. The study employed the Students' Adaptive Entrepreneurial Behaviour Test (SAEBT) and the Students' Adaptive Entrepreneurial Behaviour Evaluation Scale (SAEBES) to collect data; both instruments were expert-validated and showed high reliability ($\alpha = 0.79$ for the scale). The experimental group participated in an eight-week experiential entrepreneurship programme focusing on entrepreneurial behaviours: opportunity identification, feasibility analysis and business plan development, while the control group followed the standard curriculum. Pre-test and post-test assessments measured the behavioural outcomes. Data were analysed using mean scores, standard deviations, and ANCOVA at a 0.05 significance level, controlling for pre-test scores. Findings revealed that experiential entrepreneurship education significantly enhanced students' competencies across all measures ($\eta^2 = 0.935\text{--}0.950$). The study concludes that integrating experiential entrepreneurship education into the junior secondary curriculum can substantially strengthen entrepreneurial skills and readiness. It was recommended that education authorities and curriculum planners should ensure the effective implementation of experiential Entrepreneurship Education programmes in junior secondary schools.

Keywords: Experiential entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial behaviour, junior secondary students, opportunity identification, feasibility analysis, business plan

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has increasingly become a major driver of economic growth, innovation, employment generation and national development. Governments, educational institutions and development agencies now recognise entrepreneurship as a strategic response to rising unemployment, poverty and economic dependency, particularly among young people. Entrepreneurship involves identifying opportunities, mobilising resources, taking calculated risks and creating value through innovative activities. Scholars such as Schumpeter (1934), Drucker (1985), Timmons and Spinelli (2009) and Ulrich (2006) emphasise that entrepreneurship is opportunity-driven and behavioural in nature, requiring individuals not only to recognise opportunities but also to transform them into productive ventures to create economic and social value. Consequently, countries seeking sustainable economic development increasingly prioritise entrepreneurship education as a mechanism for developing entrepreneurial competencies among citizens.

In Nigeria, the persistent rise in youth unemployment, poverty and economic instability has intensified the need for entrepreneurial capacity development among young people. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) therefore integrated entrepreneurship education into the national education system to equip learners with practical skills, self-reliance, creativity and innovative abilities necessary for productive participation in the economy. At the junior secondary school level, entrepreneurship-related content is embedded within subjects such as Business Studies, Basic Technology, Digital Literacy, Agriculture and other vocational skill subjects. These subjects are intended to expose students to foundational entrepreneurial concepts and practical skills that can stimulate creativity, innovation and enterprise development from an early stage.

Notwithstanding these curriculum reforms, entrepreneurship education in many Nigerian junior secondary schools remains predominantly theoretical and examination-oriented. Teaching is often characterised by teacher-centred instructional approaches with limited opportunities for students to engage in practical entrepreneurial activities. Consequently, students may acquire theoretical knowledge without developing observable entrepreneurial behaviours such as opportunity identification, feasibility analysis, problem-solving and business plan development. Higgins, Smith and Mirza (2013) observe that traditional business education-based curricula frequently fail to meet market expectations because they emphasise memorisation rather than the development of practical competence. This limitation generated concerns regarding the effectiveness of conventional entrepreneurship instruction in preparing learners for real entrepreneurial engagement. The concept of entrepreneurial behaviour has therefore become increasingly important in entrepreneurship education research. Contemporary entrepreneurship scholars argue that entrepreneurship should not merely be viewed as intention, attitude or personality disposition, but as observable behaviour demonstrated through practical entrepreneurial actions (Bird, 1988; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Entrepreneurial behaviour refers to the practical competencies through which individuals identify opportunities, assess business viability, mobilise resources and develop innovative solutions. In the context of this study, entrepreneurial behaviour is operationalised through opportunity identification, feasibility analysis and business plan writing. Opportunity identification involves recognising unmet needs, market gaps or viable business ideas within the environment. Feasibility analysis entails evaluating the practicality, sustainability and profitability of a business idea, while business plan writing involves translating entrepreneurial ideas into structured and actionable business proposals. These competencies are essential for entrepreneurial success and represent practical indicators of entrepreneurial readiness among students.

The limitations of traditional instructional methods have led scholars to advocate experiential entrepreneurship education as a more effective pedagogical alternative. Experiential entrepreneurship education is a learner-centred approach that engages students in practical entrepreneurial activities such as simulations, project-based learning, field experiences, problem-solving exercises, feasibility studies and business plan development. Rooted in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, the approach emphasises learning through concrete experience, reflective observation, conceptualisation and active experimentation. Middleton (2014) argues that experiential entrepreneurship education enables learners to actively navigate real-world entrepreneurial situations, make decisions, solve problems and apply creativity in practical contexts. By engaging students in authentic entrepreneurial activities, experiential learning not only develops entrepreneurial knowledge but also enhances confidence, initiative, resilience and behavioural competence.

Empirical studies have shown that experiential entrepreneurship education can significantly improve entrepreneurial competencies and behavioural outcomes. DeTienne and

Chandler (2004) found that experiential entrepreneurship interventions enhanced students' opportunity identification skills, while Ferreira and Pinheiro (2018) demonstrated that active entrepreneurship learning methodologies improved business planning competencies among students. Similarly, recent studies suggest that experiential learning strategies strengthen entrepreneurial self-efficacy, analytical reasoning and venture readiness. However, many existing studies in Nigeria have concentrated their research activities on tertiary institutions and focused more on entrepreneurial intention, attitudes and self-efficacy rather than directly observable entrepreneurial behaviours among junior secondary school students. Furthermore, most previous studies have relied heavily on survey designs and self-reported perceptions, with limited use of quasi-experimental approaches and performance-based assessments capable of measuring actual behavioural competencies.

The growing recognition of entrepreneurship as a driver of economic development has led to the institutionalisation of entrepreneurship education across various levels of formal schooling. Classical and contemporary scholars emphasise complementary notions of entrepreneurship: Schumpeter (1934) highlights innovation as the driver of economic development, Drucker (1985) stresses proactive exploitation of opportunity, and Hisrich, Peters, & Shepherd (2017) underscore value creation through effort, risk and reward. Synthesising these notions, entrepreneurship is the identification of viable business opportunities, conducting systematic feasibility analyses and translating the identified opportunities into actionable business plans to create value while managing associated risks.

In response to the escalating youth unemployment in Nigeria, entrepreneurship education is integrated into the junior secondary curriculum. The aim is to enable students to identify opportunities within their communities, conduct feasibility analysis, develop business plans, present business proposals and cultivate creativity, critical thinking and self-confidence. Entrepreneurship education is a pedagogical process designed to develop entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required for opportunity recognition and value creation (European Commission, 2006). Unlike conventional business education, entrepreneurship education emphasises experiential learning, creativity, innovation, initiative and problem-solving. It seeks to transform learners from passive recipients of knowledge into proactive opportunity seekers. The underlying theoretical assumption of entrepreneurship education is that entrepreneurial competencies are not fixed personality traits but can be developed through deliberate instructional interventions. Accordingly, entrepreneurship education is expected to shape entrepreneurial behaviours. Despite the reforms, questions regarding the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in promoting behavioural outcomes persist. However, previous studies demonstrated that structured interventions can foster key entrepreneurial competencies (DeTienne & Chandler, 2004), hence the need for the study.

Experiential Entrepreneurship Education (EEE) is a deliberate, structured approach designed to develop learners' cognitive, behavioural, and affective capacities for opportunity recognition, resource mobilisation, and innovative value creation (Tiberius & Weyland, 2024). It provides junior secondary students with foundational entrepreneurial skills, including opportunity identification, feasibility analysis, and business plan development, while fostering practical understanding and hands-on engagement. Unlike traditional business lessons, EEE integrates clearly defined objectives, sequenced content, coherent pedagogical strategies, and aligned assessments, emphasising active, experiential, and reflective learning (Iwu et al., 2025).

The central aim of EEE is to cultivate entrepreneurial competencies, including strategic planning, resilience, problem-solving, and venture creation, thereby enhancing employability and contributing to socio-economic development (Machingura & Nkala, 2025). Its theoretical

foundation draws on Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), which supports simulations, fieldwork, and reflective tasks; Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997), which highlights entrepreneurial self-efficacy through coaching, mentorship, and scaffolded learning; and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which explains how EEE shapes entrepreneurial perceived behavioural control.

Effective EEE curricula comprise four interrelated components: objectives, content, pedagogy, and assessment (Tiberius & Weyland, 2024). Objectives go beyond theoretical knowledge to include practical skills such as creative problem-solving and venture planning, with content contextualised to local economic realities (Kyarma, 2024). Pedagogical strategies emphasise experiential methods, including case studies, project-based assignments, and community-based ventures, while assessments capture real outputs and reflective learning (Machingura & Nkala, 2025). Innovations such as entrepreneurial coaching further strengthen learners' self-efficacy, emotional resilience, and autonomy (Ndlovu et al., 2025). Empirical evidence, including studies by Al Najidiya and Al Hashmi (2025) and reports from the International Journal of Management Education (2025), suggests that EEE positively influences entrepreneurial competencies and venture readiness. However, while EEE demonstrates significant potential in shaping entrepreneurial behaviour, careful localisation and resource support are critical for sustained impact.

Contemporary entrepreneurship scholarship conceptualises entrepreneurship as behaviour rather than merely intention or personality disposition. Entrepreneurial behaviour is the observable actions and competencies, through which individuals identify opportunities, evaluate feasibility, mobilise resources and implement innovative ideas. Bird (1988) conceptualises entrepreneurial behaviour as an intentional and action-oriented one, directed toward venture creation and opportunity exploitation. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) further identify innovativeness, proactiveness and risk-taking as core behavioural dimensions of entrepreneurship. Importantly, entrepreneurial behaviour represents the practical manifestation of entrepreneurial learning. While intention reflects cognitive readiness, behaviour reflects enacted competence. Entrepreneurial behaviours include opportunity identification, proactive problem-solving, risk assessment and venture planning activities. By measuring specific competencies such as opportunity identification, feasibility study conduct, business plan writing, the notion of entrepreneurship is operationalised as an observable action.

Opportunity identification is both a cognitive and behavioural process through which individuals recognise unmet needs, market gaps, or social problems that can be transformed into viable ventures (Shane, 2003). Theoretically, opportunity identification is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that recognising opportunities shapes entrepreneurial intentions and subsequent actions. Experiential Learning Theory emphasises the role of education and practical engagement in developing this skill. In Benue State, secondary school students often encounter challenges in opportunity recognition due to limited exposure to practical business contexts, socio-cultural attitudes that prioritise formal employment and predominantly theory-driven curricula, even though they may possess creative potential (Haruna et al., 2025). Therefore, the concept is a structured exercise in which students analyse their immediate environment for potential business or social opportunities, with performance assessed based on novelty, feasibility and relevance, reflecting their readiness to engage in subsequent entrepreneurial behaviours.

Conducting a feasibility study is the systematic evaluation of a proposed business idea to determine its viability, sustainability and potential profitability (Scarborough & Zimmerer, 2015). Entrepreneurial behaviour integrates analytical reasoning, market assessment, resource evaluation and risk analysis. Theoretically, conducting feasibility is supported by Experiential

Learning Theory, which emphasises the translation of knowledge into practical decision-making and problem-solving competence. Secondary school students in Benue State appear to face challenges in conducting feasibility studies, probably due to limited access to authentic market data, inadequate mentorship and insufficient classroom time for practical exercises. Although a study by Tanko, Abdullahi and Aliyu (2024) demonstrates that structured feasibility exercises significantly enhance analytical and evaluative skills, comparable evidence at the secondary level is scarce, highlighting a contextual research gap. In this study, students' conduct of feasibility studies is assessed through structured tests in which they evaluate a selected business idea for market potential, financial viability, resource requirements and risk factors. It includes performance scored on logical reasoning, completeness and practical applicability, reflecting readiness for entrepreneurial activities.

Business plan writing entails the controlled articulation of a business idea, integrating objectives, operational strategies, financial projections and marketing approaches (Barringer & Ireland, 2016). The behaviour reflects the intersection of Experiential Learning Theory, which facilitates the translation of cognitive and practical skills into actionable plans. Additionally, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) links self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control to students' capacity to formalise ideas into coherent and structured strategies. The researchers observe that in Benue State, secondary students often face challenges in producing analytical business plans due to limited exposure to planned frameworks, insufficient mentorship and a lack of iterative feedback. Empirical studies indicate that many students frequently generate descriptive rather than actionable plans, highlighting the need for scaffolded instruction and guided practice (Ediagbonya, 2013; Katundu & Gabagambi, 2014). Therefore, business plan writing is assessed, in this paper, using rubrics that measure clarity, completeness, feasibility, financial literacy, creativity and organisation, reflecting students' ability to translate entrepreneurial knowledge and intention into designed, actionable strategies that can support future venture development.

Experiential Learning Theory argues that learning is most effective when individuals actively engage in concrete experiences, reflection, conceptualisation and experimentation. Entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level typically incorporates practical activities such as feasibility analysis and business plan development. These activities provide experiential platforms through which students translate abstract entrepreneurial knowledge into behavioural competence. Thus, experiential learning mechanisms may explain how classroom-based entrepreneurship instruction can move beyond cognitive awareness to behavioural capability.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour explains how attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control influence intention, which subsequently predicts behaviour. TPB recognises the role of perceived behavioural control (self-efficacy) in enabling actual behavioural performance. However, the widely observed intention-behaviour gap suggests that positive entrepreneurial intention does not automatically translate into entrepreneurial action. This paper extends the TPB perspective by shifting emphasis from intention to directly observable behavioural outcomes.

Ferreira and Pinheiro (2018) examined the use of the Circular Business Plan as an active teaching methodology to foster entrepreneurial skills and attitudes in higher education. The study employed an exploratory qualitative approach involving 160 participants who developed 48 business ideas in small groups. The findings underscore the value of experiential tools in entrepreneurship education, supporting the use of active methodologies to strengthen opportunity recognition and business planning, principles that align closely with the experiential Entrepreneurship Education intervention employed in the present study with Nigerian junior secondary school students. The reviewed study is related to the present one,

as it highlights the role of experiential teaching methods in developing opportunity recognition and business planning. However, it focused on higher-education students, whereas the present study focuses on junior secondary school students.

Oghenerukevwe and Firima (2025) examined the relationship between feasibility analysis and entrepreneurial venture creation in Rivers State. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. The design was a correlation. A total of 69 entrepreneurs were sampled from 37,409 registered fast-food owners in Rivers State. The Feasibility Analysis Scale and Entrepreneur Venture Creation Scale were validated by three experts, with reliability indices of 0.77 and 0.72, respectively, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive statistics addressed the research questions and hypotheses were tested using Pearson product-moment correlation at the 0.05 significance level. The results revealed a strong and significant positive relationship between environmental and technical feasibility analyses and entrepreneurs' venture creation in Rivers State. Oghenerukevwe and Firima's study is relevant to the present research, as it emphasises the importance of feasibility analysis for successful venture creation. However, it focused on practising entrepreneurs rather than students, and it did not examine the role of the educational intervention in developing feasibility analysis skills.

DeTienne and Chandler (2004) examined the impact of experiential entrepreneurship education on opportunity identification among 130 senior-level undergraduate business students in the western United States, employing a variation of the Solomon Four-Group experimental design to control for threats to internal validity. Their study implemented the Experiential Entrepreneurship Classroom (SEEC) model. Pretests and post-tests were administered at the second and thirteenth weeks of the semester and student-generated opportunities were evaluated by two independent coders, yielding high interrater reliability ($r = 0.85$). The findings indicated that the SEEC model significantly enhanced students' ability to identify and evaluate business opportunities, demonstrating that hands-on interventions can foster key entrepreneurial competencies. DeTienne and Chandler's study is related to the present research as it shows that experiential entrepreneurship education can improve students' business opportunity identification skills. However, their study focused on addressing opportunity identification within a university context. The present study adapts and examines experiential Entrepreneurship Education for secondary students to develop broader entrepreneurial skills.

In Rivers State, socio-economic challenges such as youth unemployment, poverty and economic dependency continue to raise concerns regarding the preparedness of young people for productive economic participation. Although entrepreneurship education has been integrated into the junior secondary school curriculum, there is limited empirical evidence on the effectiveness of experiential entrepreneurship education in developing entrepreneurial behaviours among students at this level. Specifically, little is known about whether experiential entrepreneurship education can significantly improve students' competencies in opportunity identification, feasibility analysis and business plan writing. Therefore, this study was undertaken to examine the effect of experiential entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial behaviours of junior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the integration of entrepreneurship education into Nigeria's junior secondary school curriculum through subjects such as Business Studies, Basic Technology, Digital Literacy, Agriculture and other vocational areas, concerns persist regarding its effectiveness in developing practical entrepreneurial competencies among students. Entrepreneurship teaching in many schools remains largely theoretical, thereby limiting students' chances to gain practical skills like opportunity recognition, feasibility assessment, and business plan

preparation. Furthermore, many existing studies in Nigeria have focused mainly on tertiary institutions and have examined cognitive variables such as entrepreneurial intention, attitudes and self-efficacy rather than observable entrepreneurial behaviours. These studies also rely heavily on cross-sectional surveys and self-reported data, with limited use of performance-based assessments or experimental designs. In Benue State, where youth unemployment and socio-economic challenges are prevalent, there is little empirical evidence comparing students exposed to experiential Entrepreneurship Education with those not exposed using measurable behavioural outcomes. An experiential entrepreneurship education is known to equip learners with practical skills, foster innovation, and shape entrepreneurial behaviour. This study, therefore, adopts a quasi-experimental approach to examine the effect of experiential Entrepreneurship Education on the entrepreneurial behaviour of junior secondary school students in Benue State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the difference in opportunity identification scores between students exposed to experiential entrepreneurship education and those not exposed?
2. What is the difference in feasibility study performance between students exposed to experiential entrepreneurship education and those not exposed?
3. What is the difference in business plan writing performance between students exposed to experiential entrepreneurship education and those not exposed?

Hypotheses

- H₀₁:** Exposure to experiential entrepreneurship education does not significantly affect students' opportunity identification performance.
- H₀₂:** Exposure to experiential entrepreneurship education does not significantly affect students' feasibility study performance.
- H₀₃:** Exposure to experiential entrepreneurship education does not significantly affect students' business plan writing performance.

Methods

A quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 310 public junior secondary schools with an estimated student population of about 163,358 in Rivers State, Nigeria. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, four schools and 150 students were selected and assigned to experimental ($n = 73$) and control ($n = 77$) groups. Data were collected using the Students' Adaptive Entrepreneurial Behaviour Test (SAEBT) and the Students' Adaptive Entrepreneurial Behaviour Evaluation Scale (SAEBES), which were validated by experts and yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79 on SAEBT and .899 on SAEBES using Cronbach's Alpha. The experimental group participated in an eight-week experiential entrepreneurship education programme focusing on opportunity identification, feasibility analysis and business plan writing, while the control group received conventional instruction. Pre-test and post-test assessments were conducted, and data were analysed using mean scores, standard deviations and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at the 0.05 level of significance, with pre-test scores used as covariates.

Results

Research Question One: Is there a significant difference in opportunity identification scores between students exposed to experiential entrepreneurship education and those who are not?

Table 4.1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Experimental and Control Groups on Opportunity Identification

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Experimental	73	6.03	0.93
Pre-test Control	77	5.93	0.96

Post-test Experimental	70	16.60	0.99
Post-test Control	72	6.06	0.90

Adjusted Mean Difference = 5.35

The pre-test mean scores show that both groups were comparable before the intervention. However, the post-test results reveal a substantial increase in the experimental group's mean score (16.60), while the control group's score remained virtually unchanged (6.06). This indicates that experiential Entrepreneurship Education significantly enhanced students' skills in identifying business opportunities.

Research Question Two: Is there a significant difference in feasibility study performance between students exposed to experiential entrepreneurship education and those who are not?

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Experimental and Control Groups on Conduct of Feasibility Study

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Experimental	73	9.15	1.28
Pre-test Control	77	9.17	1.26
Post-test Experimental	70	21.24	0.95
Post-test Control	72	9.14	1.29

Adjusted Mean Difference = 5.86

The pre-test results indicate that both groups had similar baseline competencies in conducting a business feasibility study. Following the intervention, the experimental group recorded a significant increase in mean score (21.24), while the control group remained almost unchanged (9.14). This suggests that entrepreneurship education significantly improved students' ability to evaluate business ideas systematically.

Research Question Three: Is there a significant difference in business plan writing performance between students exposed to experiential entrepreneurship education and those who are not?

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Experimental and Control Groups on Business Plan Writing

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Experimental	73	6.58	0.98
Pre-test Control	77	6.57	0.95
Post-test Experimental	70	22.02	0.85
Post-test Control	73	6.58	0.97

Adjusted Mean Difference = 7.27

The pre-test scores indicate equivalence between the experimental and control groups. However, the post-test results show a dramatic improvement in the experimental group (Mean = 22.02), while the control group's score remained unchanged. This confirms that experiential Entrepreneurship Education significantly enhanced students' competencies in writing a business plan.

Hypothesis One: Exposure to experiential entrepreneurship education does not significantly affect students' opportunity identification performance.

Table 4.4: ANCOVA Summary for Opportunity Identification

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Group	4332.006	1	4332.004	1997.000	.000
Pre-test	12.711	1	12.711	5.858	.017
Error	301.598	139	2.170		

R² = .935 (Adjusted R² = .934)

Partial Eta Squared (η^2) = .935 = Extremely large effect size

Since $p (.000) < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in opportunity identification. The intervention accounted for 93.5% of the variance, indicating an extremely strong impact of entrepreneurship education on students' opportunity recognition skills.

Hypothesis Two: Exposure to experiential entrepreneurship education does not significantly affect students' feasibility study performance.

Table 4.5: ANCOVA Summary for Feasibility Study Conduct

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Group	5947.613	1	5947.613	1780.000	.000
Pre-test	43.213	1	43.213	12.933	.000
Error	464.449	139	3.341		

$R^2 = .928$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .927$)

Partial Eta Squared (η^2) = .928 = Extremely large effect size

Since $p (.000) < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the conduct of the business feasibility study. The intervention accounted for 92.8% of the variance, demonstrating a very strong positive effect of experiential Entrepreneurship Education.

Hypothesis Three: Exposure to experiential entrepreneurship education does not significantly affect students' business plan writing performance.

Table 4.6: ANCOVA Summary for Business Plan Writing

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Group	9525.134	1	9525.134	2615.000	.000
Pre-test	51.494	1	51.494	14.137	.000
Error	506.309	139	3.643		

$R^2 = .950$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .949$)

Partial Eta Squared (η^2) = .950 = Extremely large effect size

Since $p (.000) < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a statistically significant difference between students exposed to the experiential Entrepreneurship Education and those in the control group who were not exposed to writing a business plan. The intervention accounted for 95% of the variance, indicating a very strong behavioural impact.

Discussion

The first finding showed that experiential Entrepreneurship Education significantly improved students' ability to identify business opportunities. Although both the experimental and control groups were similar at the pre-test stage, students exposed to the intervention recorded higher post-test scores, indicating enhanced ability to observe their environment, recognise market gaps and generate viable business ideas. This result supports the work of Sophie DeTienne and Gregory Chandler, who found that experiential entrepreneurship education improves opportunity recognition and it aligns with David A. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which emphasises learning through practical engagement and reflection. The second finding indicated that exposure to experiential Entrepreneurship Education significantly enhanced students' ability to conduct feasibility studies. Students in the experimental group demonstrated stronger competence in evaluating business ideas, assessing market potential, analysing resource requirements and identifying potential risks, while the control group showed minimal improvement. This suggests that experiential Entrepreneurship Education helps develop the analytical and evaluative skills required for entrepreneurial decision-making. The finding supports the study of Oghenerukevwe and Firima (2025) and further reinforces the assumptions of Experiential Learning Theory that meaningful learning occurs through active problem-solving and practical experience.

The third finding revealed that experiential Entrepreneurship Education significantly improved students' competence in business plan writing. Students who participated in the programme demonstrated the ability to translate entrepreneurial ideas into marketable business plans, unlike those in the control group. This indicates that instructional strategies such as guided planning frameworks, project-based learning and continuous feedback can effectively develop students' planning and strategic thinking skills. The finding corroborates earlier studies by Fernando Ferreira and Carlos Pinheiro and is consistent with Icek Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, which emphasises the role of self-efficacy in translating entrepreneurial intentions into practical action.

Conclusion

The study concludes that integrating experiential entrepreneurship education into the junior secondary school curriculum can significantly strengthen students' entrepreneurial behaviour. Such an approach has the potential to promote self-reliance, stimulate innovation and contribute to long-term socio-economic development, particularly in contexts such as Benue State, where youth unemployment remains a major challenge. Consequently, strengthening the implementation of experiential Entrepreneurship Education in secondary schools is essential for preparing young learners with the competencies required for productive participation in the economy.

Recommendations

1. Education authorities and curriculum planners should ensure the effective implementation of experiential Entrepreneurship Education programmes in junior secondary schools.
2. Teachers should incorporate experiential learning strategies such as business idea generation exercises, feasibility study projects and business plan development activities into entrepreneurship lessons.
3. Government and school administrators should organise regular training programmes for teachers and provide adequate instructional materials that support entrepreneurship education.

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