

**ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AND SELF-
EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY
OF NIGERIAN UNDERGRADUATES**

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ABSTRACT: Despite the integration of entrepreneurial programmes into university curricula, graduate unemployment rates continue to rise. This study examines the influence of entrepreneurship education on undergraduates' aspirations for self-employment within the Faculty of Education at the University of Ilorin. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research investigates how exposure to entrepreneurship education affects students' self-employment aspirations. The study focused on 400-level undergraduates during the 2022/2023 academic session, comprising approximately 2,733 students. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 453 final-year undergraduates, ensuring a 95% confidence level with a 0.05 margin of error. The study utilised a correlational survey design to examine relationships between variables, and stratified random sampling categorised the Faculty of Education into nine departments. A researcher-designed questionnaire and semi-structured interview were used to collect data. A retest-retest method was used to obtain a reliability index of 0.78 for the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was used to present the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings show a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment aspirations, mediated by entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Qualitative insights reveal that factors such as entrepreneurial mindset, perceived feasibility, and social influences play crucial roles. The study underscores the importance of integrating experiential learning into the curriculum and designing programmes that enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy to support students' entrepreneurial aspirations effectively. It was recommended, among others, that universities should expand their entrepreneurial programmes to include more practical, hands-on courses. These courses should give students real-world experiences and simulate actual business challenges. Also, education programmes should aim to boost students' confidence in their entrepreneurial skills. This can be achieved through mentorship initiatives, interactive workshops, and networking events that connect students with experienced entrepreneurs. And institutions should offer financial support options like grants or low-interest loans to help students overcome financial barriers. Additionally, providing access to resources such as incubators and co-working spaces can greatly assist student entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Self-Employment Aspirations, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Entrepreneurial Decision-Making,

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship education has emerged as a transformative force in Nigerian higher education, dynamically responding to the urgent need to curb youth unemployment and stimulate economic growth. Unlike traditional classroom learning, this educational paradigm integrates experiential activities such as workshops, mentorship programmes, and real-world business simulations. Its core objective is to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset in students, fostering creativity, innovation, and proactive problem-solving. Equipping undergraduates with entrepreneurial skills and mindsets prepares them for self-employment and improves their capacity to navigate the complexities of the global economy.

Despite the increasing integration of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities, limited research examines how different components of entrepreneurial education—such as experiential learning, mentorship, and financial literacy—affect self-employment aspirations. Furthermore, while studies highlight the importance of entrepreneurship education, there is little empirical research on whether these programmes translate into successful business ventures or remain aspirational for students. Many institutions have introduced entrepreneurship courses as part of their curricula, yet the impact of these interventions on students' actual career trajectories remains unclear. While studies indicate that exposure to entrepreneurship education enhances students' confidence and willingness to pursue self-employment, structural constraints such as financial barriers, inadequate institutional support, and prevailing sociocultural norms continue to shape students' entrepreneurial aspirations (Adewumi et al., 2023). Consequently, there is a need to assess whether existing educational frameworks are adequately addressing these challenges and whether entrepreneurship education alone is sufficient to drive self-employment among graduates.

Understanding the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education requires examining how it influences self-employment aspirations, which refer to individuals' willingness and intention to establish their own businesses rather than seek salaried employment (Wardana et al., 2020). Multiple factors, including personal characteristics, educational experiences, sociocultural contexts, and exposure to entrepreneurial role models, influence these aspirations. Understanding the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment aspirations is essential for policymakers, educators, and researchers to design effective educational interventions and support systems that encourage entrepreneurship (Salau et al., 2021). However, while entrepreneurship education has been widely promoted as a means of fostering self-employment, empirical findings on its effectiveness remain mixed, necessitating further investigation into its long-term impact.

Several studies suggest that entrepreneurship education positively influences students' aspirations for self-employment. For instance, research published by Afolabi et al. (2021) indicates that exposure to entrepreneurship education significantly enhances students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy, increasing their likelihood of considering self-employment as a viable career option. Similarly, Salau et al. (2021) argue that Nigerian universities must redesign their entrepreneurship curricula to better align with students' practical needs, reinforcing the argument that while entrepreneurship education is beneficial, its effectiveness depends on how well it is implemented.

These studies suggest that entrepreneurship education when delivered effectively, can play a crucial role in shaping students' confidence and willingness to pursue self-employment.

Additionally, scholars have emphasised the importance of experiential learning in fostering entrepreneurial aspirations. A study by Idowu (2023) found that students exposed to practical entrepreneurial training through start-up incubators and business simulations demonstrated significantly higher levels of confidence and risk-taking ability compared to those who received only theoretical instruction. This underscores the need for universities to incorporate hands-on learning experiences that allow students to engage directly with the entrepreneurial process. Practical exposure enables students to develop problem-solving skills and resilience, which are essential for navigating the uncertainties of self-employment.

Conversely, some studies highlight persistent challenges that limit the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. Osei (2023) observed that young Africans, including Nigerians, continue to face economic struggles such as inflation, job insecurity, and limited access to financial resources, making self-employment a less viable career option despite their entrepreneurial training. Similarly, Okonkwo et al. (2022) found that systemic barriers, including difficulties in accessing start-up capital and regulatory constraints, prevent many graduates from successfully transitioning into entrepreneurship. These findings suggest that while entrepreneurship education enhances students' aspirations, external economic and institutional factors often act as deterrents, limiting their ability to translate these aspirations into reality.

The influence of family and socio-cultural expectations also plays a crucial role in shaping students' self-employment aspirations. In many Nigerian households, career success is traditionally associated with stable, salaried employment rather than entrepreneurial ventures. Research by Eze et al. (2021) discovered that family pressure and societal norms often discourage students from pursuing self-employment, even when they have received entrepreneurial education. This indicates that entrepreneurship education alone may not be sufficient to drive self-employment unless accompanied by broader societal changes that normalise and support entrepreneurship as a career path.

Financial constraints further exacerbate the challenges faced by aspiring entrepreneurs. Akinwale et al. (2023) opined that despite acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge, many students struggle to secure start-up capital due to stringent loan conditions, lack of financial literacy, and limited access to investor networks. While entrepreneurship education fosters business acumen, the absence of accessible funding mechanisms prevents students from translating aspirations into tangible businesses. This indicates that financial support structures must complement entrepreneurship education to enhance its effectiveness. This highlights the need for government policies and university-led initiatives that provide accessible funding opportunities for student entrepreneurs. Without adequate financial support, the entrepreneurial aspirations fostered by education may not translate into actual business ventures.

Given these insights, it is evident that while entrepreneurship education has the potential to shape students' self-employment aspirations, its effectiveness is contingent upon several external factors, including curriculum design, financial accessibility, and socio-cultural acceptance. Existing

research, such as Na-Allah et al. (2022), suggests that experiential learning approaches enhance entrepreneurial intentions, yet economic instability, family influences, and institutional barriers continue to act as constraints. Addressing these limitations requires a multi-faceted approach that combines robust educational frameworks, financial support systems, and societal reorientation towards entrepreneurship as a viable career path.

This study will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore how different aspects of entrepreneurship education—such as entrepreneurial mindset, perceived feasibility of self-employment and family and social influences—contribute to students' self-employment aspirations. By investigating these relationships, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence on the barriers and enablers of entrepreneurial success among Nigerian undergraduates. The findings will contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving entrepreneurial education in Nigerian higher institutions, ensuring that it not only inspires students but also equips them with the necessary tools and support systems to successfully transition into self-employment.

Statement of the Problem

The university serves as a pivotal institution in shaping future teachers and professionals in education. Recently, there has been a notable push to integrate entrepreneurship education into the curricula of Faculty of Education programmes aimed at fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and encouraging self-employment ambitions among undergraduates. Existing literature predominantly focuses on the broader student population, lacking specific insights into how these dynamics manifest within the Faculty of Education context.

While studies indicate a positive impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions and aspirations for self-employment, little is known about how specific university contexts—such as career guidance, access to entrepreneurial resources, and faculty support—affect this relationship within the Faculty of Education. Additionally, understanding the distinct entrepreneurial behaviours and outcomes among Faculty of Education undergraduates compared to their peers in other disciplines remains a crucial gap in current research. Furthermore, existing studies primarily rely on quantitative measures, overlooking the nuanced perspectives and experiences of Faculty of Education students regarding the influence of entrepreneurship education on their career aspirations and self-employment plans.

Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by exploring how entrepreneurship education relates to self-employment aspirations among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, considering the unique institutional contexts within this academic discipline. By doing so, it seeks to provide deeper insights into the role of education in nurturing entrepreneurial attitudes and aspirations among future teachers and professionals in the field.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and self-employment aspirations among undergraduates in the Faculty of Education. Specifically, the study investigated the:

1. The level of self-employment aspirations of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education
2. Relationship between self-efficacy, entrepreneurial mindset and self-employment aspirations of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education

Research Questions

1. What is the level of self-employment aspirations of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education?
2. What is the relationship between self-efficacy, entrepreneurial mindset and self-employment aspirations of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a sequential exploratory mixed-method design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The rationale for employing mixed methods lies in comprehending the extent of the correlation between entrepreneurial education and students' aspirations for self-employment, alongside identifying the factors influencing these aspirations. The sequential explanatory design involves initiating quantitative data collection followed by qualitative inquiry. The initial phase entailed conducting a survey to gather numeric data, which, according to Wipulanusat et al. (2020), falls within the quantitative paradigm. This approach is associative as it examines correlations between two continuous variables within the same participant group without determining causal relationships in the dependent variable (Wipulanusat et al., 2020).

The population for this consists of all undergraduates in University of Ilorin while the University of Ilorin, while the target population comprised undergraduates within the Faculty of Education at the University of Ilorin, specifically targeting those in their 400-level during the 2022/2023 academic session, estimated at 2,733 students. To ensure a representative sample, a multistage procedure was employed. At the first stage of sampling, a stratified sampling technique was used to categorise the University of Ilorin into faculties; a purposive sampling technique was employed, selecting final-year undergraduates based on their exposure to entrepreneurship education and imminent entry into the job market, which significantly influences their aspirations for self-employment. A total of 453 undergraduates participated in the study, chosen to achieve a 95% confidence level with a margin of error set at 0.05, as advised by the research advisor in 2006.

The study employed a correlational survey design deemed appropriate for examining relationships between variables. The population under study encompassed all undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin, while the specific target was undergraduate students within the Faculty of Education. Stratified random sampling was utilised to categorise the Faculty of Education into nine departments, ensuring representation from various academic disciplines. In addition to the survey, the second phase of the research involved conducting interviews with seven students selected from each department within the Faculty of Education at the University of Ilorin.

Two instruments were employed for data collection. The first instrument was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled the Entrepreneurship Education, Self-concept and Self-employment

Aspirations Questionnaire (ESSAQ). This questionnaire consisted of four sections labelled A, B, C, and D. Section A gathered demographic information about the respondents, while Section B assessed their knowledge of entrepreneurship education. Section C focused on gathering data about self-concept, and Section D explored respondents' self-employment aspirations. The ESSAQ underwent validation by experts in the Sociology of Education and Research, Measurement and Evaluation Departments, ensuring both face and content validity. Its reliability was assessed through a test-retest method involving the administration of the questionnaire twice with a three-week interval to 40 final-year students from another faculty at the same university who were not part of the main study sample. The obtained data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics, yielding a coefficient of 0.78, indicating high reliability.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, were utilised to summarise the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Inferential statistics, specifically Multiple Regression analysis, were applied to examine the hypotheses formulated in the study. The second data collection method involved semi-structured interviews developed by the researcher. The study acknowledged potential issues in the interview process, such as personal bias, excessive talking by the interviewer, inadequate listening, and inadvertently suggesting answers. These challenges were recognised as limitations of the study. To mitigate these effects, the interview questions were piloted with a group of students from different academic levels. This trial phase enabled the researcher to refine interviewing techniques and become more attuned to nonverbal cues that could influence the quality of responses. Moreover, various recording devices, including paper and pen, camera, and voice recorder, were employed to capture and document responses from the interviewees effectively.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers took measures to ensure that participants fully understood the study's objectives, procedures, and potential risks or benefits before voluntarily agreeing to participate. Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity was paramount, achieved by securely storing data and using unique codes or pseudonyms to conceal identities. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing penalties, and provisions were made to offer support to those who experienced distress. The study was designed with principles of beneficence and non-maleficence in mind, prioritising benefits over risks and striving to avoid causing harm. Fair participant selection criteria were implemented to promote inclusivity and prevent discrimination. Debriefing sessions were offered to participants to clarify the study's purpose and share its findings with them. Data collected were strictly used for the study's objectives, and any incentives provided were offered in a non-coercive manner.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Answering Research Question

Research Question One: What is the level of self-employment aspirations of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education?

Based on their survey responses, respondents' self-employment aspirations were categorised into three levels: High, Moderate, and low.

Table 1: Level of Self-Employment among Undergraduate Students

Level of Self-Employment Aspirations	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
High Aspiration	162	35.80
Moderate Aspiration	204	45.00
Low Aspiration	87	19.20
Total	453	100.00

Table one illustrates how self-employment aspirations are distributed among undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education. Among the 453 respondents, 162 (35.8%) expressed high aspirations for self-employment, 204 (45.0%) indicated moderate aspirations, and 87 (19.2%) reported low aspirations. These findings suggest that a significant majority of students (80.8%) hold moderate to high aspirations for self-employment, reflecting a generally positive self-perception among the surveyed students.

Hypotheses Testing

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy, entrepreneurial mindset and self-employment aspirations of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education

Table 2: Multiple Regression of Relationship among Self-efficacy, Entrepreneurial Mindset and Self-Employment Aspiration

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.654	.428	.425	0.83

According to the model summary, the multiple regression model reveals an R² value of .428. This suggests that about 42.8% of the variation in self-employment aspirations can be attributed to factors such as entrepreneurship education and self-concept.

Table 3: Multiple Regression of Relationship among Self-efficacy, Entrepreneurial Mindset and Self-Employment Aspiration

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	236.45	2	118.23	173.01	.001
Residual	315.90	451	0.70		
Total	552.35	453			

The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model is statistically significant (F(2, 450) = 173.01, p < .001), suggesting that the overall model fits the data well.

Table 4: Table showing coefficients of relationship among self-efficacy, entrepreneurial mindset and self-employment aspirations

Predictor Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.85	0.15		5.67	.001
Entrepreneurship Education	0.62	0.05	0.57	12.40	.001
Self-Concept	0.20	0.04	0.23	5.00	.001

In the coefficients table, it is evident that both entrepreneurship education and self-concept are strong predictors of self-employment aspirations ($p < .001$). Specifically, entrepreneurship education shows a higher Beta value (.57) compared to self-concept (.23), indicating that it plays a more influential role in predicting self-employment aspirations.

These findings underscore significant relationships among entrepreneurship education, self-concept, and students' aspirations for self-employment. Notably, entrepreneurship education emerges as the primary predictor of self-employment aspirations among undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results show that a significant proportion of the Faculty of Education's undergraduate students have moderate to high expectations for self-employment. Strong entrepreneurship education initiatives are responsible for this result. Through business planning, startup simulations, and internships, these programs probably give students real-world experience and knowledge. Opportunities for experiential learning of this kind are essential for increasing students' self-confidence and ambitions for independent work. This hands-on experience not only gives students the skills they need but also gives them confidence that they can be successful business owners. Nowiński et al. (2019) asserted that entrepreneurship education is crucial for fostering entrepreneurial intentions and capacities is reinforced by the high level of participation in these programmes, demonstrating that students are being effectively equipped for entrepreneurial careers.

A significant number of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education had moderate to high hopes for self-employment, according to the study's findings. The reason for this outcome is the existence of robust entrepreneurial education initiatives. Students likely get knowledge and experience from these courses, which include topics such as startup simulations, firm strategy, and internships. These kinds of experiential learning experiences greatly enhance students' self-confidence and aspirations for self-employment. This practical experience not only equips students with the necessary skills but also boosts their self-confidence in their ability to become profitable business owners. Strong participation in these programs suggests that students are being adequately prepared for entrepreneurial careers, according to Capelleras et al. (2019), who claim that entrepreneurship education is crucial for developing entrepreneurial aspirations and talents.

A vital aspect of the results is the students' strong sense of self, which is a major factor in their desire to work for themselves. Students who have a positive view of themselves are more likely to

think they can succeed in business endeavours, which leads to greater ambitions for working for themselves. This supports the idea put forth by Newton (2023) that a person's behaviours and goals are indeed influenced by their level of self-efficacy. High personal efficacy leads to better outcomes, challenging pursuits, and optimised performance, while low efficacy results in easier task choices and potential disengagement. Students who have a good self-concept are more likely to establish ambitious goals and persevere through setbacks—qualities that are crucial for success as entrepreneurs. This positive feedback loop implies that students who have a positive view of themselves are more interested in learning about entrepreneurship, which strengthens their goals.

The positive self-concept that the students demonstrated, which is crucial to their goals of working for themselves, is another important finding. Higher goals for self-employment are associated with students who have a positive self-concept and believe they can succeed in entrepreneurial endeavours. This is consistent with Newton's (2023) idea that an individual's behaviours and goals are largely determined by their level of self-efficacy, which is a fundamental aspect of their self-concept. Students who have a good self-concept are more likely to set ambitious goals and persevere in the face of setbacks—two qualities that are critical for success in entrepreneurship. Students with strong self-concept appear to be more interested in entrepreneurial instruction, which serves to reinforce their objectives further, according to this positive feedback loop.

Strong self-concept and entrepreneurship education work together to produce a mutually reinforcing atmosphere that greatly increases students' desires for self-employment. The results of the multiple regression analysis show that self-concept is a weaker predictor of self-employment aspirations than entrepreneurship education. This suggests that the structured and hands-on character of entrepreneurship education largely shapes self-perception matters and students' entrepreneurial goals.

This association is supported by Çetin et al (2018), who emphasise the significant impact that self-efficacy-enhancing entrepreneurship education programs can have on increasing students' entrepreneurial inclinations. Overall, the results highlight how crucial it is to incorporate thorough entrepreneurship education and support structures to encourage students to develop an improved entrepreneurial attitude and, eventually, equip them for successful careers in entrepreneurship.

Qualitative Analysis

What are the factors influencing the self-employment aspirations of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education?

Thematic Analysis: Factors Influencing Self-Employment Aspirations

This section provides a thematic analysis derived from in-depth interviews conducted with seven undergraduate students from specific departments within the Faculty of Education at the University of Ilorin. The analysis examines the research questions through a detailed discussion, seeking to reveal students' views on the factors affecting their self-employment aspirations. The responses from each interview were analysed to identify and extract pertinent themes that directly addressed the research questions. The research identified several themes and sub-themes that

clarify the factors influencing the self-employment aspirations of these students, organising the resulting concepts accordingly.

Themes Identified:

1. Entrepreneurial Mindset
2. Perceived Feasibility of Self-Employment
3. Family and Social Influences

Analysis and Discussion:

Theme 1: Entrepreneurial Mindset

Several respondents (1, 4, 5, 7) highlighted the impact of their entrepreneurship education on developing an entrepreneurial mindset. Respondent 1 expressed a newfound confidence and an ability to see business opportunities, directly attributing this shift to the entrepreneurship courses. Similarly, Respondent 4 noted that their education had taught them to think like an entrepreneur, which excites them about self-employment. Respondent 5 echoed this sentiment, although financial constraints dampened their immediate aspirations. Respondent 7 mentioned becoming more innovative and willing to take risks, underscoring the role of education in fostering a proactive and entrepreneurial approach. These insights align with Rasiah et al. (2019), who suggest that experiential learning in entrepreneurship education significantly boosts students' readiness for self-employment.

Many respondents (1, 4, 5, 7) emphasised how their degree in entrepreneurship helped them cultivate an entrepreneurial perspective. Respondent 1 credited the entrepreneurship courses for her increased confidence and her improved ability to recognise company prospects. Respondent 4 also mentioned that becoming self-employed thrills them since their schooling has educated them to think like entrepreneurs. Respondent 5 expressed a similar opinion, stating that their entrepreneurship degree provided them with the skills and mindset necessary to identify and seize business opportunities. Respondent 7 echoed these sentiments, highlighting how their education in entrepreneurship has equipped them with the tools to navigate the challenges of starting and running a business successfully. However, their short-term goals are tempered by budgetary limitations. Respondent 7 highlighted being more risk-taking and inventive, highlighting the importance of education in encouraging a proactive and entrepreneurial mindset. These observations are in line with those of Thomsen et al. (2019), who contend that practical learning greatly increases students' preparedness for self-employment in entrepreneurship education

Theme 2: Perceived Feasibility of Self-Employment

Respondents expressed varying levels of perceived feasibility regarding self-employment. Respondent 2 voiced concerns about the realism of self-employment due to financial risks and uncertainty, indicating low perceived feasibility. Conversely, Respondent 3 felt more optimistic, citing family support and acquired skills as factors that enhance the feasibility of self-employment. Respondent 5, despite an entrepreneurial mindset, did not find self-employment feasible due to

financial constraints. These responses suggest that while mindset is crucial, practical considerations such as financial stability and risk management heavily influence perceived feasibility. This perspective is supported by Urban (2020), who posits that self-efficacy and external support significantly impact one's belief in the feasibility of entrepreneurial endeavours.

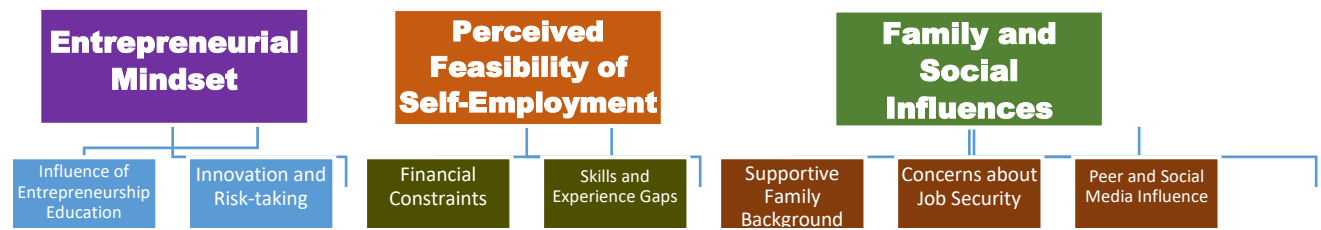
Diverse respondents indicated how feasible they thought self-employment would be. Due to financial risks and uncertainty, respondent 2 expressed concerns about the viability of working for themselves, suggesting a low perceived feasibility. Respondent 3, on the other hand, expressed greater optimism, citing gained skills and family support as elements that increase the viability of self-employment. Respondent 5 did not think self-employment was realistic because of financial limitations, even if they had an entrepreneurial spirit. These answers imply that although mentality is important, perceived feasibility is greatly influenced by pragmatic factors like risk management and financial stability. This viewpoint is corroborated by Na-Allah and Ahmad (2022), who suggest that one's belief in the viability of entrepreneurial ventures is greatly influenced by one's sense of self-efficacy and external support.

Theme 3: Family and Social Influences

Family and social influences emerged as significant factors in shaping self-employment aspirations. Respondent 3's experience with a supportive family running a small business contrasts with Respondent 4, whose parents are concerned about job security. Respondent 6 highlighted the influence of social media and entrepreneurial peers, which made self-employment seem achievable. Respondent 7 noted a familial preference for a stable job despite their own entrepreneurial aspirations fostered by a university education. These mixed influences suggest that familial and social environments play a critical role in either reinforcing or deterring self-employment aspirations. This finding is consistent with research by Powell et al. (2017), which emphasises the importance of social and familial support in entrepreneurial decision-making.

Influences from the family and the community were shown to be important in determining the desire for self-employment. Respondent 4's parents are worried about their son's work security, in contrast to Respondent 3's experience managing a small business with a supportive family. Respondent 6 emphasised how social media and peers who are entrepreneurs have an impact, making self-employment seem attainable. Respondent 7 pointed out that, in spite of their own university-cultivated business dreams, their families prefer steady employment. These conflicting factors imply that social and familial contexts are crucial in encouraging or discouraging the desire for self-employment. This result is in line with studies by Powell (2017), which highlight the significance of family and social support when making entrepreneurial decisions.

Factors Influencing Undergraduates' Students Self-Employment Aspirations



Researcher Field Survey, 2024

Conclusion

The outcome of the quantitative analysis revealed that a significant majority of students (80.8%) hold moderate to high aspirations for self-employment, reflecting a generally positive self-perception among the surveyed students. Also, there was a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education, self-concept, and students' aspirations for self-employment. Notably, entrepreneurship education emerges as the primary predictor of self-employment aspirations among undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education.

The thematic analysis underscores the complex interplay of factors influencing undergraduate students' self-employment aspirations. An entrepreneurial mindset fostered by education significantly boosts confidence and readiness for entrepreneurship. However, the perceived feasibility of self-employment is heavily influenced by financial considerations and risk perception. Family and social influences also play a pivotal role, either supporting or discouraging entrepreneurial aspirations. These findings suggest that while entrepreneurship education is vital, addressing financial barriers and fostering supportive familial and social environments are equally important to enhance students' self-employment aspirations.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, here are some recommendations to enhance entrepreneurial education:

1. Enhance Practical and Experiential Entrepreneurship Education. Universities should integrate hands-on learning, business incubators, and internships into the curriculum to equip students with real-world entrepreneurial skills.
2. Establish Financial Support Systems and Risk Mitigation Strategies. Institutions should provide startup grants, low-interest loans, and financial literacy training to help students manage financial constraints and risk perception.
3. Strengthen Family and Social Support Structures. Awareness campaigns, mentorship programmes, and networking events should be introduced to engage families and communities in supporting students' entrepreneurial aspirations.
4. By implementing these recommendations, universities can create a more supportive educational and social environment that fosters self-employment aspirations.

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