

**BUSINESS EDUCATORS' COMPETENCIES AS CORRELATE OF
BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURSHIP
INTENTIONS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH EAST,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study investigated business educators' pedagogical and information and communication technology (ICT) competencies as correlates of business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria. The persistent rise in graduate unemployment among business education graduates in the region, despite the entrepreneurship orientation of the programme, motivated the inquiry. Two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses tested at the 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The correlational survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 113 business educators drawn from seven public universities offering business education programmes in the five states of the South East geopolitical zone. The entire population was studied through the census method as the population was considered manageable. Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments: The Business Educators' Competencies Questionnaire (BECQ) and the Entrepreneurship Intention Questionnaire (EIQ). The instruments were validated by three experts and their reliability was established through a trial test using Cronbach Alpha, yielding coefficient values of 0.82 and 0.84 for the pedagogical and ICT competence clusters of BECQ, with an overall coefficient of 0.82, and 0.79 for the EIQ. Out of 113 copies of the questionnaire administered, 94 copies were retrieved and used for analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The findings revealed a very high positive and significant relationship between business educators' pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions ($r = 0.828, p < 0.05$) and a high positive and significant relationship between business educators' ICT competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions ($r = 0.714, p < 0.05$). The study concluded that

business educators' pedagogical and ICT competencies are important correlates of business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria. It was recommended, among others, that university administrators and education authorities should organise regular professional development programmes targeted at strengthening business educators' pedagogical and ICT competencies, and that government and university management should provide adequate ICT infrastructure to support effective entrepreneurship teaching and learning.

Keywords: *Business Educators, Pedagogical Competence, ICT Competence, Entrepreneurship Intentions, Business Education Students.*

Introduction

University education represents the highest level of formal education and is designed to prepare students for various academic and professional fields. Universities in Nigeria are responsible for producing skilled professionals, developing learners' intellectual capacities and fostering both physical and mental abilities through teaching, research and the dissemination of knowledge (Aluede et al., 2019). Among the academic offerings at the tertiary level is the business education programme, a branch of vocational education aimed at preparing students for careers in business and equipping them with the competencies needed to teach business-related skills, attitudes and knowledge (Umezulike, 2021). Otamiri and Otomiewo (2022) defined business education as occupational training that prepares students to be productive in classrooms, paid employment, or as independent business owners. Adeleke (2021) further described business education as both education for business and education about business, while observing that business education at the tertiary level encompasses three specialisations, namely Accounting Education, Marketing Education and Office Technology and Management.

Business education at the university level prepares students for roles as teachers, administrators in public and private sectors, or independent business owners (Abdullahi et al., 2022). Olatoye et al. (2020) added that business education aims to offer practical vocational training to enable students deliver effective services in office and distributive roles while equipping them with the skills and attitudes necessary for entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship serves as the foundation of any capitalist economy, with the growth and sustainability of such economies heavily reliant on the success of entrepreneurial activities. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on entrepreneurship due to its crucial role in fostering economic growth, reducing poverty and generating employment through the promotion of business activities, financial investments and innovation (Obananya, 2023). Within the business education programme, several entrepreneurship courses are offered to cultivate the entrepreneurial mindset of students before graduation (Nwokike et al., 2018). However, achieving these objectives has remained a challenge in Nigerian universities, particularly in South East Nigeria, as evidenced by the high unemployment rate among business

education graduates, which Egberi (2024) attributed to the absence of entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates.

Entrepreneurial intention refers to an individual's aspiration to engage in entrepreneurial ventures and describes a mindset that focuses a person's attention and actions towards pursuing self-employment rather than seeking conventional paid employment (Aladejebi, 2018). Chhabra et al. (2020) defined entrepreneurial intention as the mindset that ultimately drives an individual to generate a new business idea and pursue a career in entrepreneurship. It involves a willingness to acquire knowledge, participate in entrepreneurial activities and establish a new venture with the aim of becoming self-employed (Odiri, 2019). Importantly, entrepreneurial intention is not an innate trait but can be developed through proper education and training (Aladejebi, 2018). Entrepreneurial intention among business education students in South East Nigeria, however, appears to be critically low, contributing to the youth unemployment crisis that has dire consequences for young graduates of the region (Nwosu, 2019).

Several factors have been advanced as critical determinants of business education students' entrepreneurial intentions. One key factor is the limited entrepreneurial knowledge among young graduates (Nwosu, 2019). While another is the deficiency in information about the traits of successful entrepreneurs and the strategies needed for self-employment (Obananya, 2023). Of central importance, however, are the competencies of business educators. Business educators in Nigeria are professionally trained individuals who facilitate business education and prepare students for various careers in the business sector. They are transmitters of skills and knowledge, equipping students with the competencies and attitudes needed to succeed in the business world (Musa, 2020). To perform these roles effectively, business educators must possess a comprehensive set of competencies. Competency encompasses knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and behaviours essential for enhancing performance or achieving a level of proficiency that qualifies an individual to perform a specific role effectively (Pepple & Enuoh, 2020). Oyerinde et al. (2020) noted that competencies in business subjects comprise the tasks, skills, attitudes and values vital for achieving success in life or securing a livelihood. While numerous competencies are essential for effective instruction in business education, this study focuses on two key competencies, namely pedagogical competence and information and communication technology (ICT) competence.

Pedagogy involves the methodologies and strategies business educators employ to facilitate effective learning. Oyinloye and Umoru (2022) described pedagogy as the dynamic interaction between educators, learners, the learning environment and instructional activities. Pedagogical competence reflects an educator's ability to deliver subject content effectively, adhering to principles such as transitioning from familiar to unfamiliar concepts, moving from concrete to abstract ideas and simplifying topics from foundational to complex (Murkatik et al., 2020). This competence includes knowledge, performance and skills required to manage the entire teaching process, from planning lessons to evaluating learning

outcomes (Sahana, 2018). For business educators, pedagogical competence includes instructional planning and delivery, classroom management, evaluation techniques and communication skills (Ementa & Nwankwo, 2023).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competence, on the other hand, is equally crucial for 21st century business educators. ICT in education encompasses various technologies such as computers, online learning tools, interactive resources and other digital platforms. Okechukwu and Agbo (2021) highlighted the significance of ICT in business education, noting its role in enabling students to operate computers, store and retrieve data and engage in active and independent learning. ICT competencies for business educators are defined as the knowledge and skills required to incorporate technology into teaching effectively, providing learners with opportunities for enhanced engagement and independent exploration (Ikhwuka et al., 2021). Such competencies empower educators to leverage digital tools to enrich their instructional methods and foster a technologically informed learning environment. Despite the recognised importance of these two competencies, the relationship between business educators' pedagogical and ICT competencies and the entrepreneurial intentions of business education students in public universities in South East Nigeria has not been empirically established. This gap motivated the present inquiry.

Statement of the Problem

Graduates of business education programmes are expected to be creators of jobs and managers of successful businesses, as their training is designed to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to become self-reliant. During their studies, business education students are exposed to various entrepreneurship courses meant to cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets and prepare them for self-employment. However, this goal has not been fully realised among graduates of business education programmes from universities in South East Nigeria. This situation is evident in the rising unemployment rate among graduates of business education programmes, which continues to be a major concern in the region. The inability of these graduates to create jobs for themselves and others stands as a significant challenge to the broader economic growth of South East Nigeria.

While several studies have been conducted to examine ways to curb the rising unemployment problem, these studies have largely focused on the failure of business education graduates to venture into entrepreneurship in general terms. None of the studies, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, has specifically explored the relationship between business educators' pedagogical and ICT competencies and how these factors correlate with students' entrepreneurial intentions in public universities in South East Nigeria. The link between these two specific dimensions of educators' competencies and the entrepreneurial intentions of business education students has not been empirically established. The need to fill this gap and provide context-specific evidence for policy and instructional decisions in the region constitutes the problem of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate business educators' competencies as correlates of business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between business educators' pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria; and
2. examine the relationship between business educators' information and communication technology competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between business educators' pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between business educators' information and communication technology competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between business educators' pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between business educators' information and communication technology competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Methods

The study adopted the correlational survey research design. The correlational research design was considered appropriate because, rather than examining a causal relationship between two or more variables, it looks at the degree, patterns and intensity of relationships between variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2022), which is precisely what the study sought to do. The study was conducted in South East Nigeria, one of the six geopolitical zones of the country, comprising the states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. The region was chosen because of its strong educational orientation, the high concentration of public universities in the zone, and the growing emphasis on entrepreneurship as a strategy for addressing youth unemployment and stimulating economic development in the region.

The population of the study consisted of 113 business educators drawn from seven public universities offering business education programmes in South East, Nigeria. The universities included Abia State University, Uturu; Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus; Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki; Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu; Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike; and University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The census method of sampling was employed because the population was considered manageable in size. This is consistent with Nworgu (2015), who asserted that when a population is small and manageable, the entire population can be studied without sampling.

Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments, namely the Business Educators' Competencies Questionnaire (BECQ) and the Entrepreneurship Intention Questionnaire (EIQ). The BECQ contained 20 items spread across two clusters relevant to the present paper: 10 items on business educators' pedagogical competence (Cluster B1) and 10 items on business educators' information and communication technology competence (Cluster B2). The EIQ contained 13 items on students' entrepreneurship intentions. Both instruments were structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA = 4), Agree (A = 3), Disagree (D = 2) and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1).

Face and content validation of the instruments was carried out by three experts: two from the Department of Vocational Education and one from the Department of Educational Foundations, all from the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam. The experts assessed the clarity, relevance and suitability of each item, and their suggestions on rephrasing ambiguous items and separating double-barrelled statements were incorporated into the final version of the instruments. The reliability of the instruments was established through a trial test administered to 20 business educators in public universities in South-South Nigeria who were not part of the study population but possessed similar characteristics with the target population. The Cronbach Alpha method was used to analyse the trial-test data, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.82 for the pedagogical competence cluster and 0.84 for the ICT competence cluster of BECQ, with an overall coefficient of 0.82. The EIQ produced a reliability coefficient of 0.79. These values indicated that the instruments were reliable for the study.

The researcher, with the assistance of six trained research assistants drawn from the seven public universities, administered 113 copies of the instruments to the respondents in their offices. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to minimise attrition, and data collection lasted for two weeks. Of the 113 copies administered, 94 copies were retrieved in good condition and used for analysis, representing a return rate of approximately 83%. Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), which was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The interpretation of the correlation coefficient followed the guideline of Price et al. (2017), where 0.00 to 0.20 indicates a very low relationship, 0.20 to 0.40 a low relationship,

0.40 to 0.60 a moderate relationship, 0.60 to 0.80 a high relationship, and 0.80 and above a very high relationship. The null hypothesis was rejected where the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$) and not rejected where it was greater than 0.05. Analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 26.

Results

The results of the study are presented in line with the research questions and the corresponding null hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between business educators' pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Business Educators' Pedagogical Competence and Business Education Students' Entrepreneurship Intentions in Public Universities in South East, Nigeria

Variables		Business Educators' Pedagogical competence	Business Education Students Entrepreneurial Intentions	Remark
Business Educators' Pedagogical competence	Pearson Correlation	1	0.828**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	Very High Positive Relationship
	N	94	94	
Business Education Students Entrepreneurial Intentions	Pearson Correlation	0.828**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	94	94	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 1 reveals that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is $r = 0.828$. This shows that a very high positive relationship exists between business educators' pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria. The finding suggests that when business educators possess strong pedagogical competence, the entrepreneurship intentions of business education students tend to be higher.

Hypothesis 1 (Ho1): There is no significant relationship between business educators' pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

As shown in Table 1, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient ($r = 0.828$) was significant at $p = 0.000$, which is less than the 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study consequently established that there is a significant positive relationship between business educators'

pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between business educators' information and communication technology competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Business Educators’ Information and Communication Technology Competence and Business Education Students’ Entrepreneurship Intentions in Public Universities in South East, Nigeria

Variables		Business Educators’ ICT competence	Business Education Students Entrepreneurial Intentions	Remark
Business Educators’ ICT competence	Pearson Correlation	1	0.714**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	High Positive Relationship
	N	94	94	
Business Education Students Entrepreneurial Intentions	Pearson Correlation	0.714**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		
	N	94	94	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data in Table 2 reveals that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient is $r = 0.714$. This shows that a high positive relationship exists between business educators' information and communication technology competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria. The finding indicates that when business educators possess strong ICT competence, business education students are more likely to develop higher entrepreneurship intentions.

Hypothesis 2 (Ho2): There is no significant relationship between business educators' information and communication technology competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Data in Table 2 further reveal that the Pearson Correlation Coefficient ($r = 0.714$) was significant at $p = 0.000$, which is less than the 0.05 alpha level. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study consequently established that there is a significant positive relationship between business educators' information and communication technology competence and business education students' entrepreneurship intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of the findings is presented in line with the two research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Relationship between Business Educators' Pedagogical Competence and Business Education Students' Entrepreneurship Intentions

The findings of the study revealed that business educators' pedagogical competence has a very high positive and significant relationship with business education students' entrepreneurial intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria ($r = 0.828$, $p < 0.05$). This finding is in agreement with Eunah et al. (2024), who reported that entrepreneurship pedagogy, particularly experiential learning, design thinking, problem-based learning and collaborative pedagogy, positively influenced entrepreneurial intention among secondary school students in Gweru Urban, Zimbabwe. Nguyen and Tran (2025) similarly found that business educators' teaching competencies, especially in experiential learning, opportunity recognition, collaborative teaching methods and practical business simulations, positively influenced entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students in Vietnam. Santos and Lima (2025) also established that educators' competencies in fostering self-efficacy, innovation, project-based learning and mentorship were positively correlated with entrepreneurial intentions among business administration students in Brazil. In the same vein, Alkhatib et al. (2025) revealed that business educators' competencies in digital tools, collaborative learning, mentoring and real-world problem-solving positively influenced entrepreneurial intentions among MBA students in Jordan. This finding may have resulted because pedagogically competent business educators expose students to practical learning experiences, entrepreneurial thinking, collaborative activities and real-life business problem-solving. Engagement with these learning conditions may have strengthened students' entrepreneurial self-belief, enhanced opportunity recognition skills, improved innovative thinking and encouraged positive attitudes towards venture creation.

Furthermore, the finding that there is a significant relationship between business educators' pedagogical competence and business education students' entrepreneurial intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria, indicates that pedagogical competence is an important factor influencing students' entrepreneurial intentions irrespective of contextual differences. This result is consistent with Salas et al. (2024), who found that business education significantly influenced entrepreneurial competence, which in turn had a strong influence on entrepreneurial intention among university students in Peru. It also agrees with Eunah et al. (2024), who reported that entrepreneurship pedagogy had a statistically significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention. Nguyen and Tran (2025) further showed that teaching competencies significantly predicted entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students, while Santos and Lima (2025) confirmed that educators' competencies were significant correlates of entrepreneurial intentions across student populations.

Relationship between Business Educators' ICT Competence and Business Education Students' Entrepreneurship Intentions

The findings of the study also revealed that business educators' information and communication technology competence has a high positive and significant relationship with business education students' entrepreneurial intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria ($r = 0.714$, $p < 0.05$). This finding is in agreement with Alkhatib et al. (2025), who reported that business educators' competencies in digital tools and collaborative learning positively influenced entrepreneurial intentions among MBA students in Jordan. Nguyen and Tran (2025) similarly found that educators' teaching competencies, particularly in experiential learning, opportunity recognition, collaborative teaching methods and practical business simulations, positively influenced entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduate students in Vietnam. Mukesh and Pillai (2025) also established that educators' competencies in problem-based learning, opportunity identification, collaborative learning and real-world case studies were positively correlated with entrepreneurial intentions among students in Indian technical institutes. This finding may have resulted because business educators with strong ICT competence are able to integrate digital tools, online resources, virtual simulations and technology-driven collaborative platforms into teaching. Engagement with these ICT-supported learning environments may have enhanced students' exposure to contemporary business practices, improved opportunity recognition skills, strengthened innovative thinking and increased confidence in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures.

Furthermore, the finding that there is a significant relationship between business educators' ICT competence and business education students' entrepreneurial intentions indicates that ICT competence is an important factor influencing entrepreneurial intentions irrespective of differences in learning context. This result is consistent with Alkhatib et al. (2025), who found that educators' digital competencies significantly predicted entrepreneurial intentions among MBA students. It also agrees with Nguyen and Tran (2025), who reported that teaching competencies, including the effective use of technology-supported instructional strategies, had a statistically significant relationship with entrepreneurial intentions. Mukesh and Pillai (2025) further confirmed that educators' competencies significantly influenced students' entrepreneurial intentions across different technical and professional learning environments.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that business educators' pedagogical competence and information and communication technology competence are important correlates of business education students' entrepreneurial intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria. The results indicate that students who are taught by business educators with strong pedagogical and ICT competencies are more likely to demonstrate higher entrepreneurial intentions, including confidence in opportunity identification, willingness to take entrepreneurial risks and

readiness to engage in business start-up activities. This suggests that strengthening business educators' pedagogical and ICT competencies is closely associated with the development of entrepreneurial intentions among business education students. It is therefore imperative that deliberate measures be put in place to improve these two specific competencies of business educators in order to enhance the entrepreneurship intentions of business education students in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University administrators and education authorities should organise regular professional development programmes, seminars and workshops aimed at strengthening business educators' pedagogical competence. Such programmes should emphasise learner-centred teaching methods, practical entrepreneurship instruction and innovative pedagogical approaches, given their strong relationship with students' entrepreneurial intentions.
2. Government, university management and relevant stakeholders should ensure continuous training and capacity building of business educators in information and communication technology. Improving educators' ICT competence will enhance the integration of digital tools into entrepreneurship education and support the development of students' entrepreneurial intentions in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

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