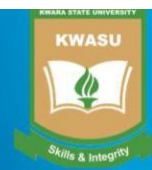


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DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND PASSION AS PREDICTORS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS' DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION IN EDO STATE

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Abstract

The increasing level of unemployment is very worrisome and most people have mobile devices that seem to be used for only pleasure when business opportunities abound on the internet. The purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which a person's intention to engage in digital entrepreneurship is influenced by their level of passion and education in the field. This study, which included 382 business education students from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, and the University of Benin, used a correlational survey research approach. The "Digital Entrepreneurship Education, Passion, and Digital Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (DEEPDEIQ)" was the instrument used to collect data. The reliability of the instrument was evaluated using the Cronbach alpha, and the result obtained was 0.82. According to the results, entrepreneurial passion significantly predicted business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State ($R^2 = .620$, $F(1, 242) = 395.390$, $P < .05$, $t = 19.884$, $\beta = .788$, $SE = .115$). Digital entrepreneurship education significantly predicts Edo State business education students' propensity to engage in digital entrepreneurship ($R^2 = .351$, $F(1, 242) = 130.979$, $P < .05$, $t = 11.445$, $\beta = .593$, $SE = .073$). Also, entrepreneurial passion and digital entrepreneurship education jointly predicted business education students' intention to launch digital businesses in Edo State. The study therefore recommends that the theoretical and practical elements of teaching digital entrepreneurship should be combined to promote improved student performance.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial passion, Digital entrepreneurship education and digital entrepreneurial intention*

Introduction

A new field that is receiving a lot of attention due to global technological advancement is called "digital entrepreneurship" (DE). It is defined as entrepreneurial activities that use digital technologies to launch, grow, and manage new business ventures. This domain includes a lot of different things, like digital business models, online platforms, digital marketing, and the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the entrepreneurial process (Hynes & Richardson, 2007; Rippa & Secundo, 2019; Sahut et al., 2021). According to Vineela (2018), a digitally-driven business is one that uses digital channels to conduct its operations. The author also emphasized that the business models and distribution tactics used by the companies for product marketing and distribution are the primary distinction between digital and traditional entrepreneurship. Students who engage in digital entrepreneurship improve their job prospects and contribute to economic growth and innovation by gaining real-world experience, honing their problem-solving abilities, and launching their businesses while still in school (Ediagbonya, 2023b). The kind of education received has a significant impact on digital entrepreneurship. As a result, digital entrepreneurship education has to be prioritized in higher education.

The goal of digital entrepreneurship education (DEE) is to include digital technologies into the entrepreneurial process and educate entrepreneurial skills using digital platforms. In order to improve the learning process and get students ready for the digital economy, this educational strategy makes use of digital materials, virtual environments, and online learning tools. In contrast to traditional entrepreneurship education, DEE places a strong emphasis on using various online platforms and technology. Content is adapted within the framework of teaching students how to launch a new business, identify entrepreneurial opportunities, and launch a digital business, which marks the transition from traditional entrepreneurship education to digital entrepreneurship education (Nowinski et al., 2019; Ratten & Usmanji, 2021). Research has shown that digital entrepreneurship education (DEE) can foster digital entrepreneurial self-efficacy among business education students. DEE provides knowledge about how to build a business on a digital platform and offers a new perspective on what the digital entrepreneurial lifestyle is, how it can be linked to their current way of life, and how its diversity needs to be considered in digital entrepreneurship education (Clinkard, 2018; Wibowo et al., 2023). Recent studies have highlighted the importance of integrating digital tools, innovative pedagogical approaches, and inclusive practices to enhance the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. Research has shown that digital entrepreneurship education can make business education students to be more passionate about launching digital entrepreneurial ventures.

A person's strong predisposition for chosen activities is reflected in their entrepreneurial passion (EP), which has philosophical foundations. EP is the passion for entrepreneurship that a person has, shaped by their entrepreneurial upbringing, according to Baum and Locke (2004). During required entrepreneurial courses in school, this background may have included Digital Entrepreneurial Education (DEE). Entrepreneurial passion (EP) was defined by Cardon and Kirk (2015) as the awareness, strong, and positive feelings that entrepreneurs experience while they embark on new ventures. According to Mueller et al. (2017), EP encourages entrepreneurs to meet obstacles head-on and grow their business by helping them stay resilient. Ediagbonya (2023a) asserts that EP promotes creativity, perseverance, and success by bringing entrepreneurs' thoughts and actions into alignment. EP promotes the willingness to engage time and resources in beginning a firm, overcoming obstacles, and reaching success. It also fosters a strong sense of identity through entrepreneurial activities (Hu et al., 2022). Studies have

demonstrated the strong correlation between EP and a range of entrepreneurial outcomes, including as the establishment and performance of businesses, funding accessibility, and entrepreneurial perseverance (e.g., Mueller et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2021; Schwarte et al., 2023; Ediagbonya, 2023a). It is this EP that stimulates the intention of business education students towards launching digital entrepreneurship.

Digital Entrepreneurial Intention (DEI) refers to a person's desire and motivation to launch an online business leveraging digital technologies, social media and e-commerce to increase visibility and reach a wider consumer base (Al-Mamary & Alraja, 2022; Sahrah et al., 2023). Digital entrepreneurial intention refers to the willingness and preparedness of individuals to start a digital business enterprise (Vejayaratnam et al., 2019; Ediagbonya, 2022; Akhter et al., 2022; Nikzad & Vafaian, 2022; Al Amimi & Ahmad, 2023; Xin & Ma, 2023). Because digital entrepreneurship is so simple to utilize, most students, especially those studying business education are participating in it more and more (Ramadani et al., 2021). Websites and social media platforms can be used to carry out digital entrepreneurship, which are defined as enterprises that are started and run using information technology to enable digital access to already-existing organizations (Zaheer et al., 2019). Nowadays, it is not unusual to see students on campuses flaunting various firms on social media as a means of pursuing digital entrepreneurship.

Research has connected DEI to a number of antecedents, including digital entrepreneurship education (Alkhalaleh, 2021; Wibowo & Narmaditya, 2022; Wibowo et al., 2023) and entrepreneurial passion (Al Halbasi et al., 2022; Elnadi & Gheith, 2023; Maziriri et al., 2023). There is still a gap in this field despite the efforts made thus far. The relationship between entrepreneurial passion and digital entrepreneurship education and digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State has not been thoroughly studied, if at all. This study addressed the identified gap.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered:

- 6 What is the relationship among Business education students' digital entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial passion and digital entrepreneurial intention?
- 7 Is digital entrepreneurship education a significant predictor of Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State?
- 8 Is entrepreneurial passion a significant predictor of Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State?
- 9 Do digital entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial passion jointly predict Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State?

Hypotheses

The 0.05 threshold of significance was used to design and test the following hypotheses.

8. Digital entrepreneurship education is not a significant predictor of Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.
5. Entrepreneurial passion is not a significant predictor of Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.
6. Digital entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial passion do not jointly predict Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State

Method

This study employed a correlational survey design to determine the extent to which digital entrepreneurial education and passion predict the digital entrepreneurial intention of business education students in Edo State. The participants comprised all 382 business education students at Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma and the University of Benin. Given the study's comprehensive scope, a sampling approach was unnecessary. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire named the Digital Entrepreneurship Education, Passion, and Digital Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (DEEPDEIQ). This instrument was divided into two sections: Section A addressed the respondents' profiles, while Section B focused on the two independent variables (digital entrepreneurial education and passion) and one dependent variable (digital entrepreneurial intention). Fifteen items were adapted from existing scales for this study, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The digital entrepreneurship education component included five items adapted from Wibowo et al. (2023), such as "Digital entrepreneurship education is mostly provided by university or schools in the nations." The digital entrepreneurial intention component consisted of seven items from the same source, including "I believe that I can have an online business in the near future." The entrepreneurial passion component included three items from Cardon et al. (2013), such as "It is exciting to figure out new ways to solve unmet market needs that can be commercialized."

The face and content validity of the instrument were assessed by experts in business education, and their feedback was incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was evaluated using the Cronbach alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82 after being administered to fifteen business education students at Delta State University in Abraka, Delta State. Data collection was facilitated through an online Google Form, resulting in 244 completed questionnaires, representing 63.9% of the total population. With the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), the data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis with the assistance of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

The results of the data analysis are presented in this section with respect to research question one and hypotheses testing of the study variables.

Research Question One: What is the relationship among Business education students' digital entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial passion and digital entrepreneurial intention?

Table 1: Correlation Matrix showing the relationship among Digital Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Passion and Digital Entrepreneurial Intention (N=244)

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3
DEE	4.13	0.70	1		
EP	4.18	0.78	.498**	1	
DEI	4.07	0.82	.593**	.788**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note: DEE - Digital entrepreneurship education; EP - Entrepreneurial passion; DEI - Digital entrepreneurial intention

The relationships between digital entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial passion, and intention are shown in Table 1. The correlation coefficients between the variables range from .498 to .788. The intents of business education students to pursue a digital business revealed a moderate positive correlation with the study of digital entrepreneurship ($r=.593$, $n=244$). There was a strong correlation ($r=.788$, $n=244$) between the entrepreneurial passion of digital entrepreneurs and their intention to become digital entrepreneurs. The association between entrepreneurial passion and digital entrepreneurship education was moderate ($r=.498$, $n=244$)

Hypothesis One: Entrepreneurial passion is not a significant predictor of Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.

Table 2: Entrepreneurial passion influencing DEI

Mode		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	9.460	.971		9.747	.000
	Entrepreneurial Passion	2.278	.115	.788	19.884	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Entrepreneurial Intention

Note: $R^2 = .620$, $Df = 1, 242$, $F = 395.390$, $P < .05$, $t = 19.884$, $\beta = .788$

Source: Authors' Work (2024)

Table 2 on regression shows that entrepreneurial passion explained 62.0% of the variance ($R^2 = .620$, $F(1, 242) = 395.390$, $P < .05$, $t = 19.884$, $\beta = .788$, $SE = .115$). It was discovered that students' intentions to pursue digital entrepreneurship were significantly predicted by their level of entrepreneurial passion in the field. As a result, the investigation rejects hypothesis 1. In other words, business education students in Edo State's digital entrepreneurial intention are significantly predicted by their entrepreneurial passion.

Hypothesis Two: Digital entrepreneurship education is not a significant predictor of Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.

Table 3: Digital entrepreneurship education influencing DEI

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	11.241	1.523		7.382	.000
	Digital Entrepreneurship Education	.836	.073	.593	11.445	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Entrepreneurial Intention

Note: $R^2 = .351$, $Df = 1, 242$, $F = 130.979$, $P < .05$, $t = 11.445$, $\beta = .593$

Source: Authors' Work (2024)

Table 3 on regression shows that digital entrepreneurship education explained 35.1% of the variance ($R^2 =$

.351, $F(1, 242) = 130.979$, $P < .05$, $t = 11.445$, $\beta = .593$, $SE = .073$). It was discovered that students' intentions to launch digital entrepreneurship were significantly predicted by their education in the field. Based on this, the investigation rejects hypothesis 2. In other words, business education students' propensity to pursue digital entrepreneurship in Edo State is significantly predicted by their exposure to digital entrepreneurship education.

Hypothesis Three :Digital entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial passion do not jointly predict Business education students' digital entrepreneurial intention in Edo State

Table 4: *Digital entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial passion jointly influencing DEI*

Mode		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.895	1.157		4.230	.000
	Digital Entrepreneurship Education	.376	.060	.267	6.290	.000
	Entrepreneurial Passion	1.894	.123	.655	15.442	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Digital Entrepreneurial Intention

Note: $R^2 = .674$, $Df = 1, 241$, $F = 248.986$, $P < .05$

Source: Authors' Work (2024)

Table 4 on regression shows that digital entrepreneurship education explained 35.1% of the variance ($R^2 = .674$, $F(1, 241) = 248.986$, $P < .05$). It was discovered that students' intentions to pursue digital entrepreneurship were jointly predicted by their education and passion in the field. As a result, the investigation rejects hypothesis 3. In other words, business education students' propensity to pursue digital entrepreneurship in Edo State was jointly predicted by their exposure to digital entrepreneurship education and passion.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of first research question reveals that business education students' intention to engage in digital entrepreneurship was positively correlated with digital entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial passion. This finding is consistent with the findings of Elnadi and Gheith (2023) who established a positive correlation between entrepreneurial passion and digital entrepreneurial intention. It is also consistent with the findings of Colombelli et al. (2023) who established a significant relationship between digital entrepreneurship education and digital entrepreneurial intention.

The analysis of the first hypothesis reveals that students' intention to engage in digital entrepreneurship is strongly predicted by their level of entrepreneurial passion. Therefore, individuals with a higher passion for online platforms are more likely to focus on digital businesses. This finding is consistent with the research of Al Halbasi et al. (2022), Elnadi and

Gheith (2023), and Maziriri et al. (2023), which also identified a significant relationship between entrepreneurial passion and digital entrepreneurial intention.

The second result showed a relationship between Digital Entrepreneurship Education (DEE) and Digital Entrepreneurial Intention (DEI). This finding supports earlier studies (For instance, Qermane & Mancha, 2021; Wibowo & Narmaditya, 2022; Colombelli et al., 2023) which concluded that DEE imparts the necessary knowledge and skills for launching and growing a digital business. The underlying theory is that DEE enhances cognitive knowledge, which is often linked to the creation of new ventures, particularly digital enterprises emerging from academic institutions. Additionally, the results corroborate other research (e.g., Tshikovhi & Shambare, 2015; Karyaningsih et al., 2020; Saptono et al., 2020) that demonstrates a strong correlation between entrepreneurship knowledge and the aspiration to pursue digital entrepreneurship.

The third result from the multiple regression analysis indicates that digital entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial passion together predict the intention of business education students to engage in digital entrepreneurship. This suggests that both exposure to digital entrepreneurship courses and individual passion play crucial roles in motivating students to launch digital business ventures.

The findings suggest that the intention to pursue digital entrepreneurship is highly influenced by the digital entrepreneurship education that business education students receive, as well as their passion for technology-driven business ventures. Moreover, the study revealed that both digital entrepreneurship education and passion independently predict digital entrepreneurial intention, and they also jointly predict it. This implies that greater emphasis should be placed on digital entrepreneurship education, as it plays a crucial role in enhancing the passion of business education students for digital entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

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

1. In order to prepare their students for the challenging digital business environments, educators should consciously work to foster their students' identities, including their passions.
2. Stakeholders should invest more in promoting digital entrepreneurship education, given the technological nature of the current age.
3. The theoretical and practical elements of teaching digital entrepreneurship should be combined to promote improved student engagement in digital entrepreneurship.
4. It is critical to inspire students to launch their own digital enterprises using digital platforms.
5. Stakeholders ought to keep pushing for further study on digital entrepreneurship given the novelty of this field.

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