

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AS PREDICTORS OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS' SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION IN EDO STATE

¹Kennedy EDIAGBONYA ²Friday Ekahe ABANYAM, ³Gideon Daniel ODIBO,
⁴Clement Imoyera ULOKO, & ⁵Tracey Obehi UGURU

Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma, Edo State

*Corresponding Author: ken@aauekpoma.edu.ng
+2347037558574

Abstract

Amidst escalating social challenges and widespread graduate unemployment, the imperative of exploring alternative employment avenues through entrepreneurial endeavors aimed at addressing societal issues becomes indispensable. This study investigates the influence of social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and perceived social support on the intention of business education students in Edo State to engage in social entrepreneurship. The research posed two guiding questions and formulated two corresponding hypotheses, tested at a significance level of 0.05. Employing a correlational survey research design, the study encompassed a population of 382 business education students from the University of Benin and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. The research utilized a questionnaire titled "Social Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Perceived Social Support and Social Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (SEPSSEIQ)", validated by two experts. Reliability analysis, using Cronbach's alpha, yielded a coefficient of 0.81 after administration to 15 business education students at Delta State University, Abraka. Data collected were analyzed through simple linear regression. Results indicated that social entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly predicts the intention of business education students in Edo State to engage in social entrepreneurship ($R^2 = .065$, $F(1, 242) = 16.826$, $P < .05$, $t = 4.102$, $\beta = .255$). Additionally, perceived social support emerged as a significant predictor of students' social entrepreneurial intention in the state ($R^2 = .050$, $F(1, 242) = 12.863$, $P < .05$, $t = 3.586$, $\beta = .225$). Consequently, the study recommends an emphasis on the practical component of social entrepreneurship education programs to foster greater inclination among individuals towards venturing into business.

Keywords: Business education, social entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social support, social entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneurial intention

Introduction

Social Entrepreneurship (SE) is a novel field that is increasingly gaining attention from researchers and academics with a view to addressing social problems. Before now, entrepreneurship education has been introduced as a compulsory course to be offered by all undergraduates irrespective of their disciplines or specializations (Ediagbonya, 2013; 2022a; 2022b 2022c). The main reason for the introduction of entrepreneurship education was to check the increasing level of unemployment, empowering the learners with the competency needed to create jobs and to reduce the poverty level in the nation (Ediagbonya, 2022a). The teaching of entrepreneurship education fosters social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship has continued to attract research interest across the globe. The roots of social entrepreneurship lie in the evolution of the private business sector. Though for a long time, the symbiosis of government, business and non-profit organizations addressed the needs, yet inequalities and loopholes still existed, particularly in the under-developed nations (Tiwari, Bhat, & Tikoria, 2017; Ediagbonya, 2022c). Social entrepreneurship is a process that begins with perceived social opportunity, transfers it into an enterprise model, determines and achieves the wealth essential to execute the enterprise, initiates and grows

the enterprise and yields the future upon goal achievement of the enterprise's goal (Tiwari, Bhat, & Tikoria, 2017). Social entrepreneurship can be the best healer for our society, as it is the first and foremost a practical response to unmet individual and societal needs', as well as it is the simultaneous pursuit of economic, social and environmental goals by enterprising ventures (Haugh, 2007; Tran, & Korfflesch, 2016; Ruiz-Rosa, Gutierrez-Tano, & Garcia-Rodriguez, 2020). Social entrepreneurship entails the utilization of innovation to solve social problems (Sivathanu, & Bhise, 2013; Ruiz-Rosa, Gutierrez-Tano, & Garcia-Rodriguez, 2020; Hattab, 2022). Social entrepreneurship is described as the use of innovative means to create and exploit opportunities that yield sustained solutions to social problems. Similarly, Tran and Korfflesch (2016) stressed that social entrepreneurship aims at creating social value or addressing social issues by innovative solutions. Individual intention to launch social entrepreneurship is borne out of the desire to contribute meaningfully to the development of the society via socio-economic strategies.

Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) can be defined as the decision made by an entrepreneur to create a new business in creating social changes. Social entrepreneurial intention is described as individual's intention to create an innovative business venture that yields sustained solutions to social problems. In addition, it is meant as a state of mind such as a desire, a wish and a hope that steers the endeavor of entrepreneur towards a new business concept (Rozar, Razik, Sidik, & Bahrein, 2020). This is in agreement with Tran and Korfflesch (2016) that summarized social entrepreneurial intention as a rooted belief, catalyst, desire, determination and engagement for an entrepreneur or a person to assemble a social enterprise. The need to venture into social entrepreneurship is often influenced by several factors such as social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and perceived social support (Hockerts, 2018).

Social Support (SS) is understood as the resources that people obtain from their social relationships and use when they face difficulties (Kim et al., 2013; Nielsen, 2020). Sarason et al. (1987) defined social support as the Prior research demonstrates how support obtained from social surroundings has behavioural consequences and affects individual's likelihood of entering the entrepreneurial process and performing during it. Pierce et al (1996) described social support as instrumental support and emotional support. The author further stressed that instrumental support is provision of help or service as well as information and advice; while emotional support is understood as individuals' encouragement of others and expression of love and liking. In a similar vein, Tardy (1985) classified social support as available and enacted social support. Available support refers to the perceived quantity and quality of support the individual has access to; while enacted support refers to the actual utilization and expression of support. Sarason et al (1987) defined social support as the intensity of interaction of an individual with his/her friends and family to whom he/she feels attached. Generally, social support refers to the perceived belief and expectations a person has regarding the advice, guidance and assistance that he/she will obtain from his/her social group. Social support goes beyond expectations to actually provide an enabling social environment that encourages and fosters entrepreneurial behaviours. For example, it is one thing for family/friends to expect an individual to become an entrepreneur versus those that go further to provide start-up finance and technical support for the individual's new venture.

Social support helps prospective entrepreneurs in setting up and operating their business (Leon, descals, & Deminguez, 2007). According to Levesque (2014), social support can be obtained in the form of instrumental support (e.g. tangible resources, material aid), appraisal/informational support (e.g. advice, guidance, and feedback), emotional support (e.g. expression of care, the reassurance of worth, empathy, affection) or financial support (e.g. financial assistance in the form of loans or gifts). Studies (Ismail et al. 2013; Sahban, Ramalu, & Syahputra, 2016) have categorized social support into two main dimensions (support by family; and support by peer groups). The social support obtained from family and friends is vital for translating a person's belief about their capability to accomplish a set of tasks and increases a person motivation and desire to start a business (Lee et al, 2011; Neneh, 2020). This social support received by prospective entrepreneurs has a way of boosting the entrepreneurial self-efficacy of individuals in launching an entrepreneurial venture

Self-efficacy is not specific to a particular person but is associated with a particular challenge or related tasks in a specific domain (Bandura, 1977). For example a person may have a high sense of self-efficacy related to their competence in job search, but low self-efficacy related to mathematical ability (Zhang et al, 2020). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy can be defined as the strength of a person's self-confidence that he/she is able to successfully carry out various entrepreneurial roles and tasks (Amofah et al, 2020); roles and tasks in entrepreneurial activities including innovation, marketing, management, risk-taking and finance related to their line of business (Newman et al. 2019). ESE is similar to the Social Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (SESE) except for the fact that SESE has emphasis on the social context. Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to a person's perception of their ability to be an entrepreneur (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994). SESE expresses the strength of an individual's belief that he or she has the skills and ability to perform the roles and tasks of a successful social entrepreneur (Zhang et al, 2020).

There has been increasing research interest in the field of social entrepreneurship with a view to establishing a relationship among social entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social support and social entrepreneurial intention. Scholars have empirically established a link between social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social entrepreneurial intention. The studies by Mair and Noboa (2006), Akhter, Hossain and AlAsheq (2010), Hockerts (2015), Cavazos-Arroyo, Puerite-Diaz and Agarwal (2017) found that social entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly predicted social entrepreneurial intention. Recent studies by Tiwari, Bhat and Tikoria (2017), Aure (2018a, 2018b), Rambe and Nodofirepi (2019), and Kruse (2019) revealed that social entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a significant predictor of social entrepreneurial intention. In an empirical study conducted by Akhter, Hossain and AlAsheq (2010), Hockerts (2017), Aure (2018a), and Rambe and Nodofirepi (2019), the authors found that social support is a significant predictor of social entrepreneurial intention. The study by Kruse (2019) also established a positive relationship between social support and social entrepreneurial intention. However, the study did not find a significant relationship between social support and social entrepreneurial intention. The majority of the research done so far, according to the review, was done outside the scope of this topic, and there are few or no studies connecting social entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and social support with Business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State. By examining social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social support as predictors of Business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State, this study has significantly filled a gap in the literature.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent to which social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and perceived social support predict business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State. Specifically, the study sought to find out if:

1. social entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a significant predictor of Business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.
2. perceived social support is a significant predictor of Business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. Is social entrepreneurial self-efficacy a significant predictor of Business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State?
2. Is perceived social support a significant predictor of Business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy is not a significant predictor of Business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.
2. Perceived social support is not a significant predictor of Business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Social Cognitive Theory

Social cognitive theory (SCT) lends credence to this study. Students who take an entrepreneurship class may want to launch a business after graduation, presuming that this is a deliberate and well-considered decision. According to the SCT (Bandura, 1977; Ediagbonya et al, 2024a), intention is a stronger predictor of a person's choice of career. As a result, finding entrepreneurial chances is a better indicator of choosing entrepreneurship as a career (e.g., Bacq et al., 2017). To understand why students might choose to start their own enterprises after graduating from college, it is essential to understand the social cognitive influences on EI. SCT is the most suitable theory for this study, in our opinion, because it provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing one's actions and their results in relation to personal, cognitive, behavioral, and environmental elements (Ediagbonya et al 2024a; Ediagbonya et al, 2024b). Using SCT, it is possible to discover students' aspirations to start their own business, which may be influenced by the combination of environmental inputs, individual characteristics, and behavioral outcomes (Biraglia & Kadile, 2016). According to SCT, people act in ways that help them achieve their goals. Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social supports are researched in terms of a variety of personal and environmental characteristics respectively (Biraglia & Kadile, 2016; Bacq et al., 2017). In terms of behavioral outcomes, we look into the students' plans to launch their own firms after graduation, or EI. The three-way reciprocal interplay between a person's personal inputs, their environment, and their past experiences is what leads to behavior, according to SCT.

In the context of the current study, past experiences could be seen as previous learning opportunities that students gained as a result of exposure to required entrepreneurship education. These learning opportunities could have an effect on students' future EI by increasing their social entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This would suggest that graduates need to know the steps to take and how to execute it in order to launch their own enterprises. As a result, the more often students participate in or carry out particular entrepreneurial development activities or actions, the more likely it is that they will have the ability and capacity to launch and sustain an entrepreneurial venture. According to the current study, one sort of behavior that could be influenced by students' experiences engaging in entrepreneurial activities is their decision to pursue an entrepreneurial or business career after graduating from college. Based on the aforementioned, this theoretical framework emphasizes the critical individual inputs (contextual elements), particularly social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and the environmental inputs of social support as the fundamental predictive variables driving SEI (Ediagbonya et al, 2024b).

Method

This study utilized the correlational survey design since it was basically an enquiry into the extent to which social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and perceived social support predicts business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State. The population of this study consists of all business education students in University of Benin and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. The total population was 382. The entire population was used for the study. Since the entire population was used, there was no sampling technique. The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was used in eliciting information from the respondents and it was titled: *Social Entrepreneurial Self-*

Efficacy, Perceived Social Support and Social Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (SEPSSEIQ). It was divided into two parts – A and B. Part A was made up of the demographic variables of the respondents such as sex and institution; while Part B was made up of thirteen (13) opinion statements designed in a Likert Scale showing: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD) weighted 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The social entrepreneurial self-efficacy component was made up of three items adapted from Hockerts (2015). One of the items in the instrument reads ‘I am convinced that I personally can make a contribution to address societal challenges if I put my mind to it’. The perceived social support component was made up of three items adapted from Hockerts (2015). One of the items in the instrument reads ‘If I planned to address a significant societal problem, people would back me up’. The Social Entrepreneurial Intention (SEI) component was made up of three items adapted from Hockerts (2017). One of the items in the instrument reads ‘I expect that at some point in the future, I will be involved in launching an organization that aims to solve social problems’.

The instrument was subjected to content and face validity. It was given to experts in Business education and their inputs to the draft instrument were incorporated into the final questionnaire. The cronbach alpha was used in ascertaining the reliability of the instrument after administering the instrument to 20 business education students in Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State and it yielded a coefficient of .81. The researcher utilized the online method of data collection via sharing of google form links to respondents. The researcher was able to retrieve the 244 questionnaires from the respondents which was equivalent to 63.9 per cent of the population. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used in the analysis. The hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using Simple Linear Regression Analysis.

Results

This section is basically structured to display the results from the analysis and the discussion of same.

Table 1 Linear regression estimates of the direct relationship between the study variables

Pathways		SE(β)	F	T	R ²	P
SESE	→SEI	.065 (1.219)	16.826	4.102	.065	.000
SS	→SEI	.056 (.225)	12.863	3.586	.050	.000

Note:– SS – Social Support; SESE – Social Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy; SEI – Social Entrepreneurial Intention; R² – R-squared

Source: Researchers’ Fieldwork, 2024

Table 1 reveals that SESE (F (1, 242) = 16.826, SE = .065, β = .255, t = 4.102, 95% had a significant positive influence on SEI. The R-square (.065) reveals that 6.5% of the variance in SEI is influenced by SESE. All in all, the results confirmed the expectations of the author. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected in the study. That is, Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a significant predictor of Business education students’ social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.

Table 1 reveals that SS (F (1, 242) = 12.863, SE = .056, β = .225, t = 3.586, 95% had a significant positive influence on SEI. The R-square (.050) reveals that 5.0% of the variance in SEI is influenced by SS. All in all, the results confirmed the expectations of the author. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected in the study. That is, social support is a significant predictor of Business education students’ social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of hypothesis one revealed that social entrepreneurial self-efficacy is a significant predictor of business education students’ social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State. It means that when business

education students perceived their skills and abilities to be suitable in business, they will be more willing to venture into business start-up that will help in addressing societal problems. The finding corroborates the findings by Mair and Noboa (2006), Akhter, Hossain and AlAsheq (2010), Hockerts (2015), Cavazos- Arroyo, Puerite-Diaz and Agarwal (2017) found that social entrepreneurial self-efficacy significantly predicted social entrepreneurial intention. Studies by Tiwari, Bhat and Tikoria (2017), Aure (2018a, 2018b), Rambe and Nodofirepi (2019), and Kruse (2019) also corroborates this finding in their various studies

The analysis of hypothesis two revealed that perceived social support is a significant predictor of business education students' social entrepreneurial intention in Edo State. It therefore means that when business education students are hopeful of receiving supports from family and peers, they will be more encouraged and willing to venture into business start-ups that will help to address the societal challenges and problems. This finding corroborates the findings by Akhter, Hossain and AlAsheq (2010), Hockerts (2017), Aure (2018a), and Rambe and Nodofirepi (2019) found that perceived social support significantly predicted social entrepreneurial intention.

Conclusion

The findings suggest that social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and perceived social support play significant roles in predicting the social entrepreneurial intention of business education students in Edo State. It was further observed that both social entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social support independently contribute to the prediction of students' intention to engage in social entrepreneurship in the state. These results indicate the importance of incorporating practical aspects of business formation into social entrepreneurship or entrepreneurship-related courses. By providing students with the necessary competencies, educators can enhance their social entrepreneurial self-efficacy, thus influencing their inclination towards launching a business. Moreover, the findings highlight the various avenues through which aspiring social entrepreneurs can seek support for establishing and succeeding in their ventures. Overall, this study fills an important empirical and literature gap in the field and contributes significantly to our understanding of the factors influencing social entrepreneurial intention among business education students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are therefore put forward:

- i. The practical component of social entrepreneurship education programme should be emphasized in order to make the people more inclined in venturing into business;
- ii. There is urgent need for curriculum review in higher institutions with a view to emphasizing social entrepreneurship;
- iii. Would-be entrepreneurs should build a formidable social network with a view to accessing support from family and peer groups; and
- iv. Researchers should be encouraged to conduct more studies in the area of social entrepreneurship..

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