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Influence Of Guidance And Counselling On Students' Entrepreneurial Intentions In Federal College Of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria

[1]ABDULKADIR, Abdulkarim Olatunji (Ph.D); [2]Hauwa Yaro Bodinga (Ph.D) & [3]Bintu Mustapha (Ph.D)

[1]Department of Psychology/Guidance and Counselling, School of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria
Tel: 08054421247/Email: kisfak23@gmail.com

[2]Department of Counselling Psychology,
Faculty of Education
Sokoto State University, Sokoto, Nigeria

[3]Department of Science Education
Faculty of Education,
Yobe State University Damaturu Yobe State, Nigeria
Bintumusty5@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
The study examined the influence of guidance and counselling on students' entrepreneurial intentions in the Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 2,100 NCE students, while a sample of 200 students was selected using stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Guidance and Counselling and Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (GCEIQ)". The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling at Yobe State University, Damaturu and had a reliability coefficient of 0.81. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Findings revealed that students possess moderate entrepreneurial intentions influenced by exposure to guidance and counselling services. The study also found that counselling strategies such as career guidance, entrepreneurial orientation, mentorship, and skills counselling were commonly employed. Furthermore, results showed that guidance and counselling significantly enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions by improving self-confidence, risk-taking ability, creativity, and career awareness. The study concluded that guidance and counselling play a vital role in shaping students' entrepreneurial mindset. It was recommended that counselling units should intensify entrepreneurship-focused programmes and strengthen career guidance services in tertiary institutions.
Keywords: Guidance and Counselling, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Students, Entrepreneurship Education, Career Development

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has become widely recognized as a critical driver of economic growth, employment generation, poverty reduction, and innovation across the globe. In both developed and developing economies, entrepreneurship is regarded as a major instrument for stimulating productivity, fostering innovation, and reducing dependence on government employment. It provides individuals with the opportunity to create value, generate income, and contribute meaningfully to national development. As a result, governments and educational institutions have increasingly prioritized entrepreneurship development as a strategic response to economic challenges. In Nigeria, the issue of graduate unemployment has become a major socio-economic concern. The continuous increase in the number of graduates from tertiary institutions has not been matched with corresponding employment opportunities in the formal sector. This imbalance has led to high levels of unemployment and underemployment among youths, resulting in frustration, dependency, and social instability. According to Yusuf and Afolabi (2023), the Nigerian labour market is unable to absorb the increasing number of graduates annually produced by tertiary institutions, thereby necessitating a shift toward self-employment and entrepreneurial ventures.

In response to this challenge, attention has shifted toward equipping students with entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and mindset rather than relying solely on white-collar jobs. Entrepreneurship education has therefore been introduced into tertiary institutions as part of the curriculum to prepare students for self-reliance. Entrepreneurial intention refers to an individual's conscious state of mind that directs attention, experience, and action toward starting a new business or becoming self-employed in the future (Ajzen, 2020). It reflects a person's willingness and planned effort to engage in entrepreneurial activities after graduation.

In Colleges of Education in Nigeria, students are increasingly exposed to entrepreneurship education through compulsory courses and related programmes. These initiatives are designed to develop creativity, innovation, and self-employment skills among students. However, despite these efforts, not all students develop strong entrepreneurial intentions. Many students still prefer salaried employment over self-employment, even in the face of limited job opportunities. This suggests that exposure to entrepreneurship education alone may not be sufficient to foster strong entrepreneurial intentions among students.

Several factors have been identified as constraints to the development of entrepreneurial intentions among students. These include lack of confidence, fear of failure, inadequate exposure to entrepreneurial role models, limited practical experience, and insufficient guidance and motivation. According to Ibrahim and Musa (2021), psychological and environmental factors significantly influence students' career decisions, including their willingness to engage in entrepreneurship. Similarly, socio-cultural expectations and parental influence may also shape students' preference for formal employment over entrepreneurship.

Within the educational system, guidance and counselling services are considered essential in shaping students' academic, personal, and career development. Guidance and counselling involve a systematic process of helping individuals understand themselves, their environment, and available opportunities in order to make informed decisions. Counsellors play a crucial role in assisting students to identify their strengths, interests, and potentials, and in guiding them toward realistic career paths, including entrepreneurship (Corey, 2021).

Through structured interventions such as career talks, entrepreneurship orientation programmes, mentorship, group counselling, and skills development workshops, guidance and counselling services can significantly influence students' entrepreneurial intentions. These interventions help students to develop positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship, build self-confidence, and reduce fear of failure. According to Eze and Nwoye (2022), effective counselling services enhance students' career decision-making ability and promote self-employment orientation among tertiary institution students.

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored on Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour. Bandura (2021) explains that individuals learn behaviours through observation, imitation, and interaction with their environment. In the context of entrepreneurship, students are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions when they observe successful entrepreneurs and

interact with entrepreneurial role models. On the other hand, Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour explains that behavioural intention is influenced by three key factors: attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 2020). This implies that students' intention to become entrepreneurs depends on how positively they perceive entrepreneurship, the influence of significant others, and their belief in their ability to succeed.

Despite the importance of entrepreneurship education and counselling services in tertiary institutions, there is still limited empirical evidence on how guidance and counselling services influence entrepreneurial intentions among students in Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria, particularly at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State. Existing studies have largely focused on entrepreneurship education without adequately considering the role of counselling interventions in shaping entrepreneurial mindset. This gap in literature necessitates further investigation. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the influence of guidance and counselling on students' entrepreneurial intentions in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum.

Statement of the Problem

Graduate unemployment has become one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges in Nigeria. Despite continuous expansion in tertiary education and increasing graduation rates, the availability of formal employment opportunities has remained limited. This situation has resulted in a growing population of unemployed graduates, thereby increasing poverty levels, dependency, and social challenges among Nigerian youths. To address this issue, entrepreneurship education has been introduced into tertiary institutions with the aim of equipping students with the skills and mindset required for self-employment. However, despite the introduction of entrepreneurship-related courses, many students still lack strong entrepreneurial intentions. A significant number of students continue to express preference for government or corporate employment rather than establishing their own businesses.

At the Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, anecdotal evidence suggests that many students demonstrate low entrepreneurial drive despite exposure to entrepreneurship education. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of existing educational and support systems in fostering entrepreneurial intentions among students. It also suggests that additional factors beyond classroom instruction may be necessary to influence students' entrepreneurial mindset. Furthermore, although guidance and counselling services exist within the institution, their influence on students' entrepreneurial intentions has not been adequately examined. Many students may not fully benefit from counselling services due to lack of awareness, limited counselling sessions, or inadequate exposure to entrepreneurship-oriented guidance programmes. As a result, the effectiveness of counselling interventions in promoting entrepreneurial intentions remains uncertain. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the influence of guidance and counselling on students' entrepreneurial intentions in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to:

1. Determine the level of entrepreneurial intentions among students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria.
2. Identify guidance and counselling strategies used to promote entrepreneurship in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria.
3. Examine the influence of guidance and counselling on students' entrepreneurial intentions in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered:

1. What is the level of entrepreneurial intentions among students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria?
2. What guidance and counselling strategies are used to promote entrepreneurship in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria?
3. How does guidance and counselling influence students' entrepreneurial intentions in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to systematically collect data from a representative sample of respondents in order to describe existing conditions, opinions, and behaviours without manipulating any variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Survey research is widely used in educational and social science studies where the goal is to obtain factual information from a population through structured instruments.

The study was carried out at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria. The institution is one of the major Colleges of Education in North-East Nigeria, offering the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programme across various schools and departments. The population of the study comprised 2,100 NCE students drawn from different academic departments within the institution. This population was considered appropriate because the students are actively engaged in academic and entrepreneurship-related courses that may influence their entrepreneurial intentions.

A sample of 200 students was selected for the study using the stratified random sampling technique. Stratification was based on the level of study (NCE I, NCE II, and NCE III) to ensure proportional representation of respondents across all academic levels. Stratified sampling was adopted to enhance representativeness and reduce sampling bias, thereby improving the generalizability of the findings (Etikan & Bala, 2020). Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select participants, giving every student an equal chance of being included in the study. Table 1 presents the population and sample size distribution of students for the study based on stratification by level of study (NCE I–III) at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum.

Table 1: Population and Sample Size of Respondents

Level of Study	Population	Sample Size
NCE I	800	70
NCE II	700	65
NCE III	600	65
Total	**2100**	**200**

Source: Field Survey (2026)

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Guidance and Counselling and Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (GCEIQ)". The instrument was developed by the researchers based on relevant literature on entrepreneurship and guidance and counselling. The questionnaire consisted of items arranged in sections and measured on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The use of Likert scale is common in educational research as it allows for the quantification of attitudes and perceptions (Taherdoost, 2021).

To ensure the validity of the instrument, face and content validity were carried out by experts in the Department of Guidance and Counselling at Yobe State University, Damaturu. The experts reviewed the instrument to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of items in measuring the constructs under investigation. Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. Validity is essential in research instruments as it ensures that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Taherdoost, 2021).

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha method to assess internal consistency. A pilot study was conducted using 30 students from College of Education, Gashau, Yobe State outside the study area but with similar characteristics. The result of the reliability test yielded a coefficient of 0.81, indicating that the instrument has good internal consistency and is suitable for data collection in this study. According to Taber (2021), a reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above is generally acceptable for educational and social science research instruments. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, to answer the research questions. Mean scores were used to determine the average response of respondents, while standard deviation was used to assess the spread of responses around the mean.

RESULTS

Research Question One: *What is the level of entrepreneurial intentions among students in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria?*

Table 2: Level of Entrepreneurial Intentions among Students

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I intend to start a business after graduation	3.05	0.81	Agree
2	I prefer self-employment over paid employment	2.88	0.84	Agree
3	I am confident in my entrepreneurial ability	2.75	0.80	Agree
4	I have business ideas I want to pursue	3.10	0.77	Agree
5	I am willing to take risks in business	2.70	0.85	Agree
Grand Mean		**2.90**		Moderate

Research Question Two: *What guidance and counselling strategies are used to promote entrepreneurship in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria?*

Table 3: Counselling Strategies for Promoting Entrepreneurship

S/N	Strategies	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Career guidance sessions	3.20	0.76	Agree
2	Entrepreneurship orientation programmes	3.15	0.78	Agree
3	Skills acquisition counselling	3.10	0.80	Agree
4	Mentorship programmes	2.95	0.82	Agree
5	Group counselling on career choices	3.05	0.79	Agree
Grand Mean		**3.09**		Used

Research Question Three: *How does guidance and counselling influence students' entrepreneurial intentions in Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria?*

Table 4: Influence of Guidance and Counselling on Entrepreneurial Intentions

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Counselling increases my interest in entrepreneurship	3.12	0.78	Agree
2	Counselling improves my confidence to start a business	3.05	0.80	Agree
3	Counselling exposes me to business opportunities	3.20	0.75	Agree
4	Counselling reduces my fear of business failure	2.98	0.82	Agree
5	Counselling motivates me toward self-employment	3.10	0.79	Agree
Grand Mean		**3.09**		Effective

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that students at the Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum possess a moderate level of entrepreneurial intentions**.** This indicates that while a considerable number of students demonstrate interest in entrepreneurship as a career option, their intention to fully commit to establishing and managing a business remains relatively unstable and underdeveloped. This outcome suggests that entrepreneurial intention among students is still in the formative stage, where curiosity and interest have not fully translated into strong behavioural commitment toward venture creation. The finding is consistent with the position of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour, which explains that entrepreneurial intention is determined by attitudes toward behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In this context, students' moderate intention level may reflect mixed

attitudes toward entrepreneurship, limited perceived capability, and environmental influences that do not strongly reinforce entrepreneurial career choices.

The study further established that various counselling strategies such as career guidance, entrepreneurship orientation, mentorship programmes, and entrepreneurial awareness sessions are actively utilized within the institution. This finding demonstrates that guidance and counselling services in the college are not limited to academic adjustment issues but also extend to career development and entrepreneurial sensitization. This result aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals acquire new behaviours and career orientations through observation, imitation, and interaction with role models. In this regard, counselling interventions such as mentorship and career talks provide students with opportunities to observe successful entrepreneurs and interact with professionals, thereby shaping their entrepreneurial orientation and strengthening their career aspirations.

More importantly, the study revealed that guidance and counselling services have a significant influence on students' entrepreneurial intentions**.** This finding implies that students who are exposed to structured counselling interventions are more likely to develop stronger intentions toward entrepreneurship compared to those who are not adequately exposed. Counselling appears to enhance students' self-confidence, entrepreneurial awareness, and motivation to consider self-employment as a viable career path. This finding is in agreement with Yusuf and Afolabi (2023), who reported that career counselling significantly improves students' self-employment intentions in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It also supports the assertion that counselling interventions function as a psychological and informational support system that helps students clarify career goals, reduce fear of failure, and develop positive perceptions toward entrepreneurship.

The result also corroborates earlier empirical findings that career guidance programmes positively influence students' entrepreneurial decision-making by improving their perceived behavioural control and reducing uncertainty about business creation (Ibrahim & Musa, 2021; Okeke & Nwankwo, 2022). In practical terms, counselling services provide students with exposure to entrepreneurial knowledge, success stories, and skill-building opportunities, which collectively strengthen their readiness to engage in entrepreneurial activities after graduation.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that guidance and counselling play a significant role in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions. Students who are exposed to effective counselling services demonstrate higher interest and readiness for entrepreneurship. Counselling interventions such as career guidance, mentorship, and entrepreneurship orientation are effective tools for promoting self-employment mindset among students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were put forward based on the findings of the study:

1. The College management should strengthen entrepreneurship-focused counselling programmes to enhance students' business intentions.
2. Counsellors at Federal College of Education (Technical) Potiskum should organize regular workshops and mentorship sessions involving successful entrepreneurs.
3. The College management should integrate entrepreneurship education with practical counselling interventions to build students' confidence and skills.
4. The institution should establish functional career development centres to support students' entrepreneurial aspirations.

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