

# SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR YOUNG NIGERIAN STUDENTS: A COURSE EVALUATION USING THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP STANDARD TEST

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## ABSTRACT

*Even though various business schools have developed curricula on business entrepreneurship, more curricula on social entrepreneurship are needed to close the entrepreneurship gap existing in the social enterprise sector of Nigeria. This paper describes a course which was developed geared at stimulating social entrepreneurial behaviour and acquiring skills and knowledge necessary to develop their ideas into social enterprises. This study aims to assess the impact of the educational experience on learners in a before and after study design using the social entrepreneurship test tool. The results, which were analysed using paired samples t-test, showed that giving the students the educational experience has significantly increased their perceived mastery of social entrepreneurship skills. It also reveals that social entrepreneurship competency can be taught to younger learners and pave the way for continuing research on incorporating social entrepreneurship into entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level in Nigeria, aiming at offering new possibilities for social impact regardless of professional disciplines.*

**Keywords:** Social Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship Process, Social Entrepreneurship Standard Test, Social Entrepreneurship Education, Creative Education.

## INTRODUCTION

Our education system is responsible for preparing young people to build successful lives and addressing the prevalent social, economic and environmental problems posing severe challenges worldwide. Educators at all levels can help young people engage with the world around them and envision what might be different; hence it becomes a critical instrument for achieving sustainable development through the empowerment of human capital with vital competencies such as entrepreneurship (Alao & Alao, 2021). Entrepreneurship education is at the core of both individual's and society's economic development; therefore, national governments are spending much money and paying attention to the stimulation of entrepreneurial and innovative behaviour through educating their citizens (García-González & Ramírez-Montoya 2021). The application of entrepreneurial concepts and principles by an entrepreneur in creating social practices leading to a change in society, no matter the size, refers to social entrepreneurship. Since entrepreneurship usually involves the entrepreneur's capacity to see opportunities and transform them into an exciting proposition, a social entrepreneur sees opportunities in social issues and is concerned with meeting the needs of communities.

Social entrepreneurship (hereafter, SE) involves the creativity, imagination and innovation often associated with entrepreneurship, focusing on addressing persistent social

problems (Shadrack, 2015). SE is more than an economic activity – it gives society positive world-changing solutions, maximising social benefits. Statistically, only about 3.15% of entrepreneurship is social enterprise in Nigeria, but the importance of social enterprises to the growth and development of the country cannot be overstated (Osabohien et al., 2022). As an emerging field that involves the development of new approaches and business models to solve society's toughest challenges, SE is considered one of the measures that may be viable to complement the government's strides in enhancing efficient, sustainable and rapid rural development in Nigeria (Madu & Yusuf, 2015).

Educational institutions play a significant role in developing early entrepreneurial competencies, manifesting as an entrepreneurial activity. SE education is an emerging area of investigation within the entrepreneurship literature, much less in the Nigerian educational sphere. In fact, Shadrack (2015) stated that SE in Nigeria faces a knowledge dearth and solicited scholarly interest, debate and contribution in the field. Generally, much progress in entrepreneurship (business) education in Nigeria is being made by incorporating entrepreneurship courses at higher institutions and trade subjects at secondary schools (Dike & Effanga 2020; Ngerem & Ezikpe, 2016). However, SE differs from business entrepreneurship because SE focuses on social impact and business success (Shadrack, 2015; Madu & Yusuf, 2015). Ogbo et al. (2019) noted that even business schools that have developed curricula on entrepreneurship lack social entrepreneurship; this lack of knowledge presents a substantial challenge for social enterprises in finding competent and skilled promoters. In order to introduce the concept of SE and build SE skills towards equipping students for the future while increasing the awareness of the relevance of change makers for societal development, the SE course was designed as a special extracurricular for young Nigerian students. The goal of the course is for students to see themselves as change agents, entrepreneurs, and innovators ready to tackle the social problems they are passionate about, whether during the program or beyond, thus closing the opportunity gap through education.

This research aimed to look at the outcome of engaging Nigerian Secondary school students in the social entrepreneurship process actively in a creative and collaborative learning environment. First, the SE course was designed, and the education experience was carried out. Since building SE competency is the goal of the educational experience, how much entrepreneurship is nurtured should also be measured. Therefore, the SE standard test was used to measure learners' ability, motivation, knowledge and skills before and after taking the social entrepreneurship course. The application of the test would give the educators knowledge of the effectiveness of the course, as well as the degree of change in learners' potential capability for social entrepreneurial endeavours.

The article presents a theoretical background on social entrepreneurship education, the design of the SE course and the standard entrepreneurship test. Next, the methodological path for analysing the pre-and post-test results is presented. The results obtained are then reported. The article ends with a discussion and a conclusion.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### Social Entrepreneurship in Nigeria

As a concept, SE is developing significant interest and enthusiasm among scholars and researchers as a tool for sustained social change. Social entrepreneurs bring social innovations in their drive to tackle observed societal deficiencies. Undoubtedly, innovations, new technologies

and methods are needed if the world's social problems are to be tackled sustainably (Shadrach, 2015). Addressing the daunting social and environmental challenges facing our societies and planet will require a generation of social innovators and change makers, more so for a developing country like Nigeria struggling with many social issues. Social entrepreneurs are those who deliver value within society, with a primary focus on people and development rather than profit. SE is one of the measures that may be viable to complement the government's strides in enhancing efficient, sustainable and rapid rural development in Nigeria. This is necessary because more than the government alone is needed in providing all the needed apparatus meant for development since it stands for value creation and addition to bringing social changes and services to the society without necessarily a profit motive (Madu & Yusuf, 2015).

The definition of SE points out the distinction between social entrepreneurs and for-profit entrepreneurs. While social entrepreneurs aim to ensure economic well-being, for-profit entrepreneurs can engage in harmful practices for profit-making (Osabohien et al., 2022). SE strives to combine the heart of business with the heart of the community through the creativity of the individual by stepping in to evolve creative solutions to address social problems; therefore, developing the social enterprise sector is a relevant tool for achieving sustainable societal change in Nigeria (Shadrack, 2015). From the findings of the study by Osabohien et al. (2022) on the impact of SE on future employment in Nigeria, only about 3 per cent of firms in Nigeria are social enterprises. This shows that most business owners prefer to own businesses with profit maximisation as their primary objective rather than get involved in social entrepreneurship, which aims to maximise societal and economic well-being. So, the authors posit that a unit increase in establishing social enterprise can contribute to future employment levels in Nigeria by 21 per cent within five years. That is to say, SE is a significant driver of future employment in Nigeria.

SE is an emerging field that involves the development of new approaches and business models to solve society's toughest challenges. As noted by Ogbo et al. (2019), the government can no longer afford to provide social welfare to its citizens, as there has been increased poverty and unemployment, with many seeking alternative ways of earning a living. Social entrepreneurship is one of the measures that may be viable to complement the government's strides in enhancing efficient, sustainable and rapid rural development in Nigeria (Madu & Yusuf, 2015). Cultivating social entrepreneurial spirit and a problem-solving mindset is critical to ensuring that tomorrow's leaders are equipped to face the most pressing challenges we currently face and will continue to face as we work towards creating an inclusive and just society.

### **Need for Social Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Entrepreneurial education is one of the most critical inputs for the well-being of any society. Education is a powerful instrument of social progress without which an individual or a nation can attain the growth necessary for development. Educational entrepreneurship's ultimate goal is increasing students' ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. In other words, through education, students can deploy their creative ability for their excellence and that of the larger society. Therefore, through the training, students can become valuable members of their society, which is given to social entrepreneurs. It can be argued that business entrepreneurship; currently taught in Nigerian schools, is adequate, but as seen in the literature, there is a difference between business and social entrepreneurship; majorly in the focus of mission and vision (Shadrack, 2015).

Entrepreneurs engaging in social entrepreneurship are inspired by a need to make a difference in their local socio-economic circumstances. Social enterprises are seen as changemakers and effective means to achieve labour market integration, social inclusion and economic development. A positive working environment characterises social enterprises, a cooperative approach, and a high amenability to changes (Ogbo et al., 2019). Social entrepreneurship differs very much from traditional, conventional commercial entrepreneurship in terms of nature, motivation and purpose, as well as orientation towards sustainable development practices (García-González & Ramírez-Montoya, 2021). A social entrepreneur recognises a social problem and uses entrepreneurial principles to organise, create, and manage a venture to make social change. Whereas business entrepreneurs typically measure performance in terms of profit and return, social entrepreneurs assess their success in terms of the impact they have on society (Osabohien et al., 2022; Madu & Yusuf, 2015)

Since Social entrepreneurship is emerging as a viable alternative to the traditional institutional setups for making a sustainable impact and reaching the underserved needs of the low-income population, it becomes imperative for the Nigerian education system to exploit it as a tool for sustainable development. From previous research, the role social entrepreneurs play and the impact of social enterprises predicate the importance of developing the sector, and one sure way is through education. Therefore, it is unsurprising that existing literature points to a need for more social entrepreneurship education as one of Nigeria's most significant problems plaguing the social enterprise sector (Ogbo et al., 2019; Shadrack, 2015).

In fact, in a study to determine the level of awareness of business entrepreneurship students in Lagos state tertiary schools, Alao & Alao (2021) stressed the importance of empowering business education students with social entrepreneurial skills in order to solve social issues and empower students with competencies needed to achieve the sustainable development goals, while making money through entrepreneurship. The study found that students have little to no knowledge of the subject matter and that most schools are yet to incorporate it into their curricula. The authors noted that the ill-empowerment situation has grave consequences on students' future well-being and the Nigerian economy's holistic transformation. Furthermore, upon researching the extent of social entrepreneurship and its impact on future employment in Nigeria, Osabohien et al. (2022) recommended that the teaching of social entrepreneurship across all levels of education is significant to build competencies and developing the social enterprise section of Nigeria; which will in turn drive employment and the overall growth of the economy. Therefore, this study seeks to explore ways to fill this educational gap by developing a social entrepreneurship course and assessing the effectiveness of the educational experience on secondary school students' competencies.

### **The Social Entrepreneurship Course Design**

Education is meant to help students grow and develop, provide them with desired skills and professional abilities, assist them in acquiring the necessary understandings, concepts, values and attitudes to manage future tasks and show them how to be productive members of society in which they are born, grow and live. As such, with high-quality education programmes, it is possible to ensure the effective first-class teaching needed to raise students' academic achievements and foster further national development. The goal of this social entrepreneurship course is for students to see themselves as change agents, entrepreneurs, and innovators ready to tackle any problem they are passionate about, whether during the program or beyond, thus closing the opportunity gap through education. The main idea is that participants can explore

how social entrepreneurship is changing the world and how each can be a part of that change through the teaching and application of the SE process in the class environment using creative pedagogy. The class activities will allow students to exchange and foster ideas on social entrepreneurship and apply an entrepreneurial way of thinking to yield social impact. The course's overall goal is to build change makers' mindset in the learners because Changemakers are active and resilient social entrepreneurs or innovators who can design and implement innovative solutions for social and environmental problems (García-González & Ramírez-Montoya, 2021).

SE is a complex concept that must include four core elements: empathetic problem discovery, creative problem solving, materialisation, and social impact (Suhong Park et al., 2019). Based on the preceding, the SE course takes the learner through four steps, and learners are evaluated based on assignments submission, team contributions and final proposal presentation. The following Table 1 briefly explains the SE process:

<b>Table 1</b>		
<b>SE PROCESS</b>		
<b>Step</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Details</b>
1	Empathetic problem finding	Learners will work together to discover and define a social problem they can empathise with through creative activities like creative thinking, interview, research and root cause analysis.
2	Creative problem solving	After reaching a sufficient understanding of the problem, learners apply idea-deriving methods like brainstorming to get feasible solutions to the problem. A creative solution is decided in consideration of urgency, effectiveness and feasibility by team members. Additionally, existing solutions are also investigated in order to make the final idea unique and innovative.
3	Materialization	At this stage, the core entrepreneurial principle is applied; implementation of an enterprise's idea and practical business aspects. Learners will create blueprints describing their social enterprise using business modelling tools and action plans for execution, as well as make a prototype of the enterprise using various tools.
4	Social impact	To assess the social impact of their proposed solution, learners will pitch their enterprise idea to experts and receive feedback. The social impact can be assessed based on the feedback from experts on each idea. Learners were also introduced to investment sources avenues like crowdfunding.

Entrepreneurship Education requires creative pedagogy that places the learner at the centre of the educational process and enables them to take responsibility for their learning to experiment and learn about themselves. Entrepreneurship requires action; whether it is conceptualised as the creation of new products or processes, entry into new markets, or the creation of new ventures, it typically involves personal initiative and commitment. For this reason, students cannot be expected to learn the craft of entrepreneurship by sitting down passively and absorbing endless facts, information and figures from the teacher (Dike & Effanga, 2020). A shift in pedagogy is needed in order to make entrepreneurship indeed an applied discipline; therefore, adopting practical activities in the learning environment is considered as best practice in entrepreneurship teaching in Nigerian schools to stimulate students' interest and drive to engage in business start-ups (Olokundun et al., 2018). Additionally, low awareness of social problems and their relation to individuals, poor capacity for change-making, and inadequate exposure to practical issues and processes to solve them are some of the challenges faced by the social enterprise sector in Nigeria (Ogbo et al., 2019). Hence, exposing learners to real social issues through creative pedagogies like contextual teaching, active learning, collaborative learning and flipped learning methods adopted for this course equips them with

knowledge of social issues in their local community and building their entrepreneurial competency. In addition to equipping learners with entrepreneurial competencies, the creative methods adopted in the class ensure learner-centred collaborative learning, further developing other relevant skills needed in today's workforce. It is designed to provide a socially relevant academic experience in order to help students gain in-depth insights into economic and social value creation across several sectors/areas, including poverty alleviation, energy, health and sustainability through various class activities that foster creativity, such as brainstorming, root cause analysis, research, reporting, team presentation and modelling.

### **Teaching the Social Entrepreneurship to Secondary School Students**

Secondary education is an important level of education in Nigeria. The strategic position of secondary schools as a changeover bridge between primary and tertiary institutions, receiving primary school leavers at one end and turning out its products as potential freshmen for tertiary education, makes it imperative that its product must be well-equipped to face the challenges in the society (Musa & Aliyu 2022). Entrepreneurial education would encourage and improve students' ability to work with others in a team; acquire joint-venture initiatives; introduce students to small business concepts and opportunities; and encourage them to start business ventures and play an essential role in job creation. Through the teaching of entrepreneurship skills, it is believed that Nigerian secondary school graduates would assume more responsibilities in job creation and give a sharper focus on the field to the students on graduation to be beneficial to them and functional to the Nation (Ngerem & Ezikpe, 2016). The imperative of Entrepreneurial Education in Nigeria for self-reliance and national development can never be over-emphasized. Nigerian school curricula at all levels are developed with an entrepreneurial mindset (Dike & Effanga, 2020). Therefore, providing them with an entrepreneurship educational experience that focuses on social issues at this level may lead to the creation of change-makers and the development of the social enterprise sector. Moreover, giving students at this level the learning opportunities to develop and cultivate entrepreneurial competencies like creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, and business acumen is in line with the objective of entrepreneurship education laid out in the national policy on education (Ngerem & Ezikpe, 2016).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Developing critical entrepreneurship competence is more than just a question of knowledge acquisition. Since entrepreneurship education is about developing the ability to act in an entrepreneurial manner, attitudes and behaviours are more important than knowledge about how to run a business. As many educational programs targeting the development of entrepreneurship capabilities in young learners are implemented, there is a need to develop assessment tools that can be used to evaluate these programs appropriately. Over the years, many assessment tools were designed by researchers, one of which is the General Measure of Enterprising Tendency test, which was first developed in 1987-1988 by Sally Caird and Mr Cliff Johnson at Durham University Business School (Caird 2013). The basic premise of the test is that the enterprising person shares entrepreneurial characteristics and may be nurtured via education and training and assessed. Similarly, García-González & Ramírez-Montoya (2021) developed an assessment instrument that the authors used to evaluate Social entrepreneurship mastery for their research in Mexico.

The SE standard test used in this study was designed by Professor Suhong Park at Pusan National University in 2022 based on the four steps of the social entrepreneurship process in the course content. The test aims to evaluate the degree of entrepreneurial competency cultivated after receiving training by checking six aspects: entrepreneurship spirit, acceptance of environmental change, empathetic problem finding, creative problem solving, materialization and social impact. The characteristics of items corresponding to each sub-factor can identify motivation, knowledge/skills, and will/behaviour accordingly. The validity and reliability of the test tool were established by other professors in the Department of Education at Pusan National University. The following Table 2 summarizes the contents of each section of the social entrepreneurship standard test.

<b>Table 2</b> <b>SE TEST</b>		
section	No. of items	main content
Empathetic problem finding	15	This section evaluates the ability, motivation, knowledge and skill in discovering and defining problems that anyone can relate to in the society.
creative problem solving	16	This section evaluates the ability, motivation, knowledge and skill using creativity to develop new ideas and solutions to problems.
Materialization	15	This section evaluates the ability, motivation, knowledge and skill creating concrete implementations (prototypes) of abstract ideas, develop sustainable solutions and understanding of transforming activities (business model and action plan).
Social impact	15	This section evaluates the Interest, knowledge, and effort related to sharing one's idea not just as a thought, but as a product socially.
Entrepreneurial Mindset	16	This section evaluates the interest and knowledge of philosophical basics of Entrepreneurship like spirit of ownership, creative destruction and challenge.
Acceptance of environmental change	13	This section evaluates the motivation, knowledge and utilization of emerging technology in a changing environment.

The test tool was delivered using a survey questionnaire in a one-group pre-posttest research method on a 1–5 Likert scale, where 1 is “*strongly disagree*”, and 5 is “*strongly agree*.” This study’s overall internal consistency, using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, was favourable for the pre-test ( $\alpha=0.79$ ) and the post-test ( $\alpha 0.87$ ). The survey was implemented as an online questionnaire using Google Forms, and survey links were shared with the participants before and after the educational experience. In addition to the test items, a general matters section was added to get participants’ demographic information and consent for information and intellectual property use.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For this research, the null hypothesis( $H_0$ ) that there is no significant difference in the pre-and post-test results was tested using paired samples t-test, similarly used by (García-González & Ramírez-Montoya, 2021). The formula below was used for computing the t-value:

$$T = \frac{Md}{\frac{S_d}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

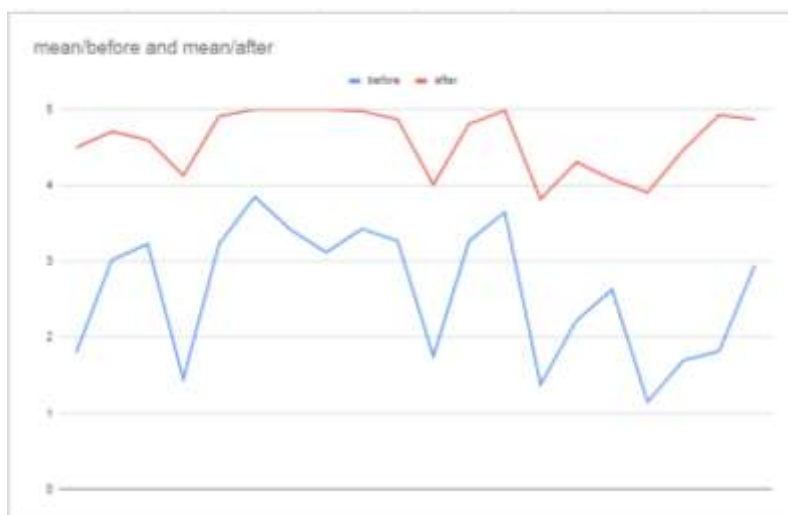
Where: T= t value

Md= mean of differences

Sd= the standard deviation of the differences of the paired data values

N=20

The following Figure 1 and Table 3 describes the results of the paired sample t-test:



**FIGURE 1**  
**PRE-AND POSTTEST MEAN**

Table 3 T statistics			
Md	Sd	t	p
1.9780	2.0578	4.2991	0.0004

From Figure 1 above, the score of participants in the post-test survey was significantly higher than the pre-test scores. This showed that the educational experience has helped improve their social entrepreneurial competency, thereby achieving the course objectives. Furthermore, testing the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between pre-test and post-test results, Table 3 above showed that the probability is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is discarded, and it can be concluded that this SE course has a strong, positive and statistically significant effect on learners' perceived mastery of SE competency.

The result presented in this study has many implications. For instance, it confirms that teaching SE to all students can increase their SE competency development, thereby achieving the national education goal of building self-reliant, enterprising, socially aware Nigerians who are capable of bringing change to their society (Musa & Aliyu 2022). In addition, teaching SE to secondary school students not only raises their awareness of social issues but also instils in them the knowledge of their role as changemakers and the necessary skills required to set up social ventures, as evident from this study. This is in line with the study done by Dike & Effanga (2020), which emphasized the importance of SE education in developing young learners'



competency. This also reveals that SE can be taught to younger learners and pave the way for continuing research on incorporating SE into entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level in Nigeria, aiming at offering new possibilities for social impact regardless of professional disciplines.

As with educational experience, the methods used must be considered to achieve the learning goals. Creative pedagogy was adopted in the educational experience delivery and can be said to have contributed to the increase in students' perceived mastery of the SE competency. This proves that using creative teaching methods is crucial for teaching entrepreneurship courses, as noted in previous research (Dike & Effanga, 2020; Ogbo et al., 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Educational entrepreneurship's ultimate goal is increasing students' ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes. In other words, through educational entrepreneurship, students are equipped to deploy their creativity ability for good and the benefit of the larger society. This study adds to the continuing research on entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and opens the door for research on incorporating SE in entrepreneurship education for secondary school students.

The SE course was designed to build a changemakers mindset in the learners. Changemakers are active and resilient social entrepreneurs or innovators ready to tackle any problem they are passionate about, whether during the program or beyond, through SE competency capacity development. The objective of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the course in improving the SE skills of the learners using the SE standard test tool as an assessment tool. This study showed that teaching the SE course has significantly increased the learners' perceived mastery of SE skills. Thus, the course's and the study's overall goal has been achieved.

It is necessary to undertake more studies to improve the course generally. For instance, a study that considers the students' perception of the course contents and pedagogy, which can be done through qualitative methods. Since the perceptions of competency may influence entrepreneurial intent, conducting studies where performance is analyzed from a more holistic perspective would be appropriate. Also, it is necessary to conduct more studies on the results of giving learners in lower levels of secondary school similar pedagogical intervention, as well as, incorporating it in the curriculum. Similarly, further research should be carried out to evaluate the social impact of the acquired SE competence mastery in society regarding social venture establishment, participation in change-making activities, and contributing to the development of the social enterprise sector.

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