

# PEER INFLUENCE AND LOCUS OF CONTROL AS DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL STUDIES PRESERVICE TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN SOUTHWESTERN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated Social Studies pre-service teachers peer influence and locus of control in entrepreneurship education in southwestern Nigeria. The multi-stage procedure was used. Three states (Lagos, Ogun and Oyo) that had both federal and state colleges of education were purposively selected from southwestern Nigeria. Six colleges of education (two per state-one federal and one state) were purposively selected). The purposive sampling technique was used to select 600 social studies pre-service teachers (100 per college). The instruments used were Entrepreneurial Locus of Control ( $r = 0.81$ ) and Entrepreneurial Peer Influence ( $r = 0.84$ ) scales. Data Collected were coded and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and each of the research questions was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that pre-service teachers' locus of control ( $r = .088$ ) had positive weak relationships with their attitude to entrepreneurial concepts in social studies and it also revealed that that pre-service teachers' peer influence ( $r = .372$ ) had positive weak relationships with their attitude to entrepreneurial concepts in social studies.*

*Based on these findings, it is recommended that lecturers should pay attention to these factors for positive attitude to Entrepreneurship Education among Social Studies Preservice teachers.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship education, peer influence, locus of control, pre-service teachers, social studies

## INTRODUCTION

One of the contributions of Social Studies towards solving societal problems is through entrepreneurship education. Through entrepreneurship education, the individual is trained to rely less on paid employment, rather he/she is prepared to even be an employer of labour. In so doing the individual school leavers are equipped with the knowledge and skill to mitigate the incidence of penury through being exposed to activities and learning that are potentially capable of giving them the necessary economic wherewithal to live a fruitful and responsible life capable of contributing to social and holistic growth of the nation. That is why Ajitoni and Olajojo (2007) conceptualised entrepreneurship education as a form of educational programme designed to set the foot of the society on the path of an enduring growth that could make it viable for sustainable acceleration to development.

According to According to Sobel (2008), the process of entrepreneurship involves sensitising people with numerous new ways of harnessing and combining resources to create utilities for the overall benefit of all and sundry. The common position of the myriads of meanings given to entrepreneurship education is that entrepreneurship education is aimed at ultimately contributing to individual's self-

reliance thereby making him/her less dependent on others for means of livelihood.

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Another trending scenario is a situation where young school leavers are provided with employment opportunities but are found unemployable in large numbers in Nigeria. This unhealthy development is partly due to lack of targeted investments in key labour-intensive areas (Oyewunmi and Adeniyi, 2013), and largely owing to the obsolete curricula of the tertiary institutions, which largely focus on knowledge dissemination rather than knowledge application. The consequence is that the instructional programmes in higher schools are not tailored towards making the products of such institutions to depend less on paid jobs.

Even though, Nigerians keep struggling to have the essential post-secondary education, it is no longer news that a vast majority of graduates of Nigerian colleges of education, polytechnics and ivory towers find it difficult to get jobs on yearly basis, while about 10% of such school leavers are so underemployed (Ethothi, 2007). This is tantamount to producing higher education school leavers who lack basic competencies to enable them to participate in the process of turning poverty to wealth thereby moving the society to the enviable part of

development. The question then arises: Why is a larger percent of the youths who are leavers of Nigerian tertiary institutions remain unemployed or employable? The country's spiraling unemployment challenge has become so hydra-headed and sky-rocketed that it has given rise to a plenitude of social menace and malaise that have engulfed the nation among which are cases of insurgencies as witnessed in the north-east; reports of banditry that have taken over the northwest and the middle belt; as well as cases of abduction and kidnapping that have witnessed colossal loss of lives and property across all geopolitical zones of Nigeria. About 16 out of every 100 youth are unemployed in Nigeria (Ajitoni and Olajojo, 2017). Another trending scenario is a situation where young school leavers are provided with employment opportunities but are found unemployable in large numbers in Nigeria. This unhealthy development is partly due to lack of targeted investments in key labour-intensive areas (Azikwe, 2013), and largely owing to the obsolete curricula of the tertiary institutions, which largely focus on knowledge dissemination rather than knowledge application. The consequence is that the instructional programmes in higher schools are not tailored to make the recipients self-employed.

Now that the reality of graduate unemployment and national poverty has dawned on the government, institutions, parents, teachers, students, and, indeed, employers of labour, the need to sweeten and garnish Nigeria's current educational programmes with entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and positive attitude cannot be underplayed.

Entrepreneurial spirit is the much-needed pivot for sustainable economic growth, increased productivity, and the reduction in unemployment and poverty alleviation in Nigeria's social, political and economic systems. Without mincing words, and without the fear of equivocation, Nigeria is blessed with a lot of natural resources waiting to be harnessed. It is a little wonder that Nigeria is ranked among the ten richest nations in the world in terms of its natural resources (Baba, 2013). Yet, the blights of poverty, poor infrastructure, low industrialisation and widespread unemployment are biting hard on over 70 percent of the citizens. The main divide between these abundant resources and their conversion into wealth is a knowledge gap, and this gap can only be filled by entrepreneurship education (Ajitoni and Olajojo, 2017). Entrepreneurship combines creativity with innovation and presents opportunities in every challenge.

In Nigeria, due to the rate of unemployment which has soared astronomically and poverty level which has increased tremendously, it is not surprising; therefore, that social studies curriculum at colleges of education has been expanded to include entrepreneurial concepts. The main goal of widening the scope of the subject is to acquaint the students at colleges of education with the techniques of organising and managing small businesses of their own. Entrepreneurial concepts in social studies also aim at equipping pre-service teachers with requisite knowledge and skill to become self-reliant (NCCE,2017). Teaching entrepreneurial concepts in social studies has the potentials of boosting employment opportunities in Nigeria. This is to say that pre-service teachers at Nigeria's colleges of education may no longer need to look for the 'white

collar job' or depend on agencies and individuals for job placement because they would have been fully harmed with knowledge, skills and attitudes to live on their own.

Such knowledge and skills would assist them in establishing and managing small businesses on their own. Entrepreneurship education is could ultimately serve as a form of education for vocations and consumers in cultural societies (Elliot, *et al.* 2005). Students and other beneficiaries of entrepreneurship education learn the wholesome ways of planning for their future by establishing a firm source of living in the short run. Also, through this sensitisation programme, beneficiaries are exposed to how they can initiate and begin practical small and medium scale businesses that would make them employers of labour rather than being job seekers in a country where job opening could not accommodate the teeming population of graduates churned out of tertiary institutions on yearly basis.

Entrepreneurial concepts are, therefore, those aspects of the social studies that provide the individual the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and understanding needed by school leavers cope with the demand of employment market either as someone who produces goods and services or as someone who consumes goods and services produced. In this wise, if in general social studies education is thought of as the adjustment of the individual to the environment, entrepreneurial education must be seen as a component of the subject that enables the individual to adjust to the business and socio-economic environment. It is education about business and education for business. While the business sector is the engine for national economic development, entrepreneurship education is the oil that lubricates the engine of that development.

Entrepreneurship is not limited to skill acquisition. Entrepreneurship education helps in the realisation of the national goal of attaining the development of a great and dynamic economy as well as a nation for one-self and for others. It also includes the engendering of ingenuity and innovativeness. The mainstay of economies all over the globe is the cottage businesses which can take the form of small, medium and sometimes large-scale enterprises. This is exactly the by-product of entrepreneurship. When businesses succeed, it reduces penury through provision of job opportunities, thereby contributing to the overall national growth. Notwithstanding rigorous training and workshops are the requirement of a successful entrepreneurship (Fakunle, 2010).

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Daodu (2007) reasons that in order to develop economic literacy in students and make them informed citizens, it is very necessary for them to have barest understanding of the dynamics of the mercantile nature of the society. An individual must possess the minimum entrepreneurial knowledge and competencies

required for effective functioning in the world of work. Entrepreneurship education is, therefore, introduced to higher institutions with a view to providing students with the wherewithal to engage in productive activities which will enable them to be a master player in the combination and utilisation of natural resources to chart a path of continuous growth for the society. Entrepreneurship education must therefore be given the necessary attention in the curricula of Nigerian schools. At present, entrepreneurship education is taught as a General Studies Education (GSE 224) course in colleges of education. As a compulsory course, it is a pre-requisite for graduation and certification. In other words, irrespective of the courses of study chosen by the students in colleges of education, they must pass GSE 224 if they will graduate and collect certificates.

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Despite the crucial role of entrepreneurial education in social and economic development of the individual and the nation at large, reports (Fakunle, 2010; Ajitoni and Olajo,2017), evidence have shown that Social Studies pre-service teachers at colleges of education in southwestern Nigeria exhibit poor learning outcomes in entrepreneurial education as a core course. This is reflected in the inability of many college students to graduate as a result of poor performance in the course. The deficiency of many college students is further revealed in their inability to translate the knowledge acquired in the course to live a viable economic and productive life after graduation.

Previous studies aimed at improving learning outcomes in entrepreneurial education among preservice teachers focused largely on predisposing factors such as social skills and self-efficacy in entrepreneurial education. However, there have been little emphasis on the factors such as peer influence and locus of control as determinants of social studies preservice teachers' attitude to entrepreneurship education in Southwestern Nigeria.

Locus of control, like any other psychological constructs, could make or mar learners' efforts to succeed in a learning task. Araromi (2014) views it as the belief that factors within and without the learner could be

implicated for success or failure in any task. When the learner holds the view that the cause of his or her success or failure in schoolwork is traceable to him or herself, he/she tends to work hard to record good performance. On the other hand, if the learners hold the view that his success or otherwise are due to factors beyond him/her, he/she tends not to make effort to succeed. The learner tends to believe that no amount of effort can change his fortune. Consequent upon these, the former tends to blame him/herself for failure and praise him/herself for success. In the same vein, the latter tends to exonerate him/herself from any blame arising from his/her failure, while he /she attributes success to others whom he/she believes are responsible for it (Araromi, 2014).

In a study, Fakeye (2011) discovered that learners' beliefs about the source of his success or failure was directly connected with their English Language achievement, but the performance of learners with internal and external locus of control did not show any disparity in their performance in English Language. In the same manner, Hasan and Khalid (2014) reported that high ability students revealed higher tendency to attribute success or failure to factors within them, when compared with their colleagues with low ability who are always quick to blame their failure and adduce their success to factors beyond them. This showed that low achievers despite with an internal academic locus of control are achieving low grades. But Mkpae (2014) in his own report identified that students who adduce their fortune to factors within them were different in academic success in English and mathematics when compared with their counterparts whose belief was that their

success or failure is due to factors outside them.

These findings are inconclusive on the correlation between the internally imposed and externally- imposed locus of control. Moreover, the concept has not been given adequate focus in relation to entrepreneurship concepts in Social Studies hence this study. It is against this backdrop that one can conclude that the level of success or failure recorded by individuals in commercial activities is a function of his level of confidence in his ability to succeed. Therefore, it could be inferred from this observation that, if one works on how to improve his/her self-efficacy one is indirectly contributing towards his/her success in whatever commercial tasks he/she engages in (Fakeye, 2011). However, the extent to which self-efficacy would predict achievement in and attitude to entrepreneurship education among students at colleges of education has not attracted much research efforts in southwestern Nigeria.

Peer influence, a social factor, has to do with how one's friends and age groups make input into our thought and decision-making process either positively or negatively. With specific reference to this study, it is the extent to which learners capitulate to the dictates of his friends and classmates in according positive or negative disposition to entrepreneurship education and how such results in high or low performance in the course. Adebakin, (2014) describes the construct as one of the ways that the group that a learner belongs to makes him or her behave or act in a particular manner. Peer influence is therefore one way in which the friends or associates of learners controls his emotion or feelings to see things or act in a

particular way irrespective of whether or not they are right or wrong (Adediran, 2014).

It is the wish of every parent or guardian to see his/her wards interact or associate with friends of impeccable characters. It is believed that when a child associates with colleagues who are well behaved, who are focused on their academic pursuits and who set clear goals for their lives, their wards will be positively influenced to emulate same. Conversely, if the child is unlucky to associate with a group of unruly students who would always come late to class or skip lessons for frivolous activities, such a child will develop unwholesome attitude to learning (Enu, 2016).

Many research reports in mathematics, summary writing, reading comprehension, grammar and vocabulary documented the positive role of peer influence in the improvement of achievement and attitude without focusing on its influence on learning outcomes in Entrepreneurship Education (GSE 224) among college of education students in southwestern Nigeria, hence, the investigation of peer influence as factors influencing academic achievement especially in entrepreneurship concepts in Social Studies.

Nafukho (2005) identified factors that affect conformity of members of certain group that could be used to explain factor that affect peer group influence. These factors are Information and trust: Because human beings are curious a lot, we often search for information from other people around us, so that we can effectively relate with the environment. For instance, some students may be influenced to engage in truancy based on the information given to them by their peer group.

This is because they believed and trust the group. In other words, the more confidence an individual has in the group or others around him, the higher the tendency to conform and to be influenced by the group's norms and values.

**Fear of deviance:** the fear of being deviant is a basic factor in almost all social situations. The fear of being rejected by the group as a result of deviance will make students to conform to the group decision. Because group has different punitive measures with which an individual can be made to feel isolated.

**Group cohesiveness:** The degree to which the group in which the individual finds himself is attractive determines how much the individual will conform to the group's norms and decisions. In a highly cohesive group, group influence is strong.

**Sex differences:** there is the possibility that how the group is composed will likely influence conformity, sex wise. For example, in a male dominated group there is possibility that females will conform more than males. Muthen and Muthen (2010) hypothesized that perhaps women are likely to conform more than men in issue that concern sports, cars and politics, whereas women are likely to conform more in issues involving fashion, cooking, perfume, child – care and others associated with female roles.

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**Research Questions**

1. Is there any significant relationship entrepreneurial locus of control and preservice teachers’ attitude to entrepreneurship education in southwestern Nigeria?
2. Is there any significant relationship entrepreneurial peer influence and preservice teachers’ attitude to entrepreneurship education in southwestern Nigeria?

**METHODOLOGY**

The research designed was survey design of correlational type. The multi-stage procedure was used. Three states (Lagos, Ogun and Oyo) that had both federal and state colleges of education were purposively selected from southwestern Nigeria. Six colleges of education (two per state-one federal and one state) were purposively selected). The purposive sampling technique was used to select 600 social studies pre-service teachers (100 per college). The instruments used were Entrepreneurial Locus of Control ( $r = 0.81$ ), Entrepreneurial Peer Influence ( $r = 0.84$ ) and Attitude to Entrepreneurship ( $r = 0.75$ ) scales. A letter was taken to the colleges of education where the research was carried out. The researchers sought the consent of the heads of departments of social studies to conduct the research. Briefing sessions was organised for preservice teachers participating in the study. These preliminary activities took two weeks. Training session was organised for the research assistants about the purposive selection of schools and collection of data through questionnaire. The instruments were administered to Social Studies preservice teachers drawn from six colleges on different days to ensure full participation of students in each college. The researchers were assisted by four research assistants to administer and supervise the administration of the instruments. Data

Collected were coded and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and each of the research questions was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**RESULTS**

*Answering the Research Questions*

Research Question 1: Is there any significant relationship entrepreneurial locus of control and preservice teachers’ attitude to entrepreneurship education in southwestern Nigeria?

**Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between ntrepreneurial Locus of Control and Preservice Teachers’ Attitude to Entrepreneurship Education in Southwestern Nigeria**

Variables	N	X	S.D.	r	Sig.	Remark
Entrepreneurial Locus of Control	599	66.97	11.62	.088 *	0.03 1	Significant
Preservice Teachers’ Attitude to Entrepreneurship Education	599	63.99	11.35			

Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 1 shows the relationships that exist locus of control and pre-service teachers’ attitude to entrepreneurial concepts in Social Studies. The result indicates that pre-service teachers’ locus of control ( $r = .088$ ) had positive weak relationships with their attitude to entrepreneurial concepts in social studies. The result implies that locus of control when improved upon, it brings about improvement in pre-service teachers’ attitude to entrepreneurial concepts in social studies.

**Research question 2:** Is there any significant relationship entrepreneurial peer influence and preservice teachers’ attitude to entrepreneurship education in southwestern Nigeria?

**Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between Entrepreneurial Peer Influence and Preservice Teachers’ Attitude to Entrepreneurship Education in Southwestern Nigeria**

Variables	N	X	S.D.	R	Sig.	Remark
Entrepreneurial Peer Influence	599	63.47	12.21	.372 *	0.000	Significant
Preservice Teachers’ Attitude to Entrepreneurship Education	599	63.99	11.35			

Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 2 shows the relationships that exist peer influence and pre-service teachers’ attitude to entrepreneurial concepts in Social Studies. The result indicates that pre-service teachers’ peer influence ( $r = .372$ ) had positive weak relationships with their attitude to entrepreneurial concepts in social studies. The result implies that peer influence when improved upon, it brings about improvement in pre-service teachers’ attitude to entrepreneurial concepts in social studies.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The result indicates that social studies pre-service teachers’ entrepreneurial locus of control was largely external. Furthermore, the roles of this construct in promoting business success have been confirmed in research. the different result obtained in this study might be due to the fact that the course content is more. This might be due to the fact that students who have external locus of control are open to innovative ideas, and they tend to use external standards for judging their improvement.

The result negates Fakeye (2011), Adebakin (2014) and Araromi (2014) who found in different studies that students had internal locus of control in English language, Summary writing and French, respectively. On peer influence, the result indicates that social studies pre-service teachers’ entrepreneurial peer influence was high. External influence may prove beneficial to entrepreneurs in the context of face-to-face interactions with many persons outside their companies—venture capitalists, potential customers and employees, to name just a few. Peer influence is a strong factor in the world of business.

A person that will succeed as an entrepreneur must be open to new ideas. These qualities will endear him to people and help him or her in wooing and winning customers. Effective interactions with others may assist entrepreneurs in performing such important tasks as raising needed capital, attracting and selecting competent employees, and persuading customers and suppliers to do business with their company under favorable terms. Finally, entrepreneurs with high peer influence get easier in contact with people they want to use for their benefit, than entrepreneurs with low social skills. These findings are akin to those of Fakeye (2011) and Araromi (2014) who found in separate studies that students peer influence in social studies was high. These socio-psychological factors influenced students’ achievement in different school subjects as English Language, Mathematics and Economics.

This finding also agrees with Olanipekun (2011) who reported that social relations and networks played an important role in the development of good entrepreneurs.

### CONCLUSION

The study investigated social studies preservice teachers' entrepreneurial self-efficacy and social skills in colleges of education in Southwestern Nigeria. Findings revealed that social studies pre-service teachers' entrepreneurial locus of control was largely external, while their peer influence was high. It could be concluded that when pre-service teachers have high peer influence and external locus of control, they are likely to develop the ability to see the positive potential opportunities that might accrue from new ventures and pursue those goals vigorously.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, recommendations are made that:

1. Career counselors should work on entrepreneurial locus of control and peer influence of the pre-service teachers for improved learning outcomes in entrepreneurship education.
2. College of education lecturers should foster group activities among the preservice teachers in order to improve on their peer influence and locus of control.

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