

The Mediating Role of Technopreneurial Knowledge in the Relationship between Technopreneurship Education and Technopreneurial Intention among Business Education Students in Edo State

Peranan Pengetahuan Teknousahawanan sebagai Perantara dalam Hubungan antara Pendidikan Teknousahawanan dan Niat Teknousahawanan dalam Kalangan Pelajar Pendidikan Perniagaan di Negeri Edo

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ABSTRACT - Given the increasing levels of graduate and non-graduate unemployment in the country, the need to explore digital approaches to creating and sustaining businesses has become a necessity. The focus of this study was to establish the mediating role of technopreneurial knowledge in the relationship between technopreneurship education and technopreneurial intention among business education students in Edo State. Four research questions were posed, each with a corresponding hypothesis, which were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The study used a correlational survey research approach. The study's population included 382 business education students from the University of Benin and Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma. A questionnaire termed 'Technopreneurship Education, Technopreneurial Knowledge and Technopreneurial Intention Questionnaire (TETKTIQ)' was used. Two experts validated the instrument. After administering the instrument to 15 business education students at Delta State University, Abraka, Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the instrument's reliability, yielding a coefficient of .85. The data collected were analysed using simple linear regression and the SPSS Process Macro. The findings revealed that technopreneurship education and technopreneurial knowledge were significant predictors of technopreneurial intention among business education students in Edo State. The finding also revealed a significant relationship between technopreneurship education and technopreneurial knowledge. The finding further revealed that technopreneurial knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between technopreneurship education and technopreneurial intention among business education students in Edo State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that there is an urgent need to restructure the curriculum to emphasise technopreneurship in tertiary institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The business landscape has changed due to the rapid growth of technology, making the usage of digital devices to support and promote corporate operations necessary. Technopreneurship has also emerged as a result of this development (Elnadi & Gheith, 2023; Ediagbonya et al., 2024a). Digital entrepreneurship and "technopreneurship" are interchangeable terms. Technopreneurship, according to Mohammed et al. (2023), is the practice of leveraging digital media and other information and communication technologies to impact changes in the competitive landscape. The primary distinction between traditional and digital entrepreneurship is the degree to which digital technology is incorporated into the various venture activities along the value chain (Elnadi & Gheith, 2023; Wibowo et al., 2024; Ediagbonya et al., 2024d). Other similarities between the two types of entrepreneurship include the identification of opportunities, the generation of innovative ideas, and the commercialization of goods or services (Ediagbonya, 2022a; Ediagbonya, 2022b; Ediagbonya, 2022c; Ediagbonya, 2022d; Mir et al., 2022; Ediagbonya et al., 2024b).

The need to pursue digital entrepreneurship has been driven by growing awareness of technopreneurship. People's desire to start and run a technopreneurship has grown, particularly among students pursuing business education. The desire to invest in digitally enabled business platforms is referred to as digital entrepreneurial intention (DEI), also known as technopreneurial intention (TI) (Sahrah et al., 2023; Ediagbonya et al., 2024c). Researchers have characterized technopreneurial intention as an individual's readiness and desire to use technology or the internet to start a business (Al Amimi & Ahmad, 2023; Xin & Ma, 2023; Ediagbonya et al., 2024a).

Technopreneurship Education (TE) and Technopreneurial Knowledge (TK) are two of the elements that influence business education students' technopreneurial intention. The systematic process of teaching, training, and preparing students with the competencies, knowledge, and abilities needed to recognize, develop, and oversee business prospects in the digital economy is known as technopreneurship education (Elia et al., 2020). Through TE, people can learn how to use digital tools, platforms, and ecosystems to create new enterprises or revolutionize already-existing ones. TE aims to teach entrepreneurial skills through digital platforms and integrate digital technologies into the entrepreneurial process (Ediagbonya et al., 2024a; Ediagbonya et al., 2024d). This educational approach leverages resources, virtual environments, and online learning tools to enhance learning and prepare students for the digital economy. In order to facilitate the efficacy of entrepreneurial education, studies by Ediagbonya et al. (2024a) emphasized the significance of combining digital technologies, creative educational techniques, and inclusive practices. According to research by Ediagbonya et al. (2024a), TE can increase people's awareness of starting digital entrepreneurial firms, particularly among business education students. In other words, TE fosters the environment necessary to gain the technopreneurial knowledge (TK) required to start digital businesses.

According to Ediagbonya et al. (2024b), technopreneurial knowledge is the collection of knowledge, skills, attitude (KSA), and cognitive frameworks needed to recognize and seize business opportunities in a digital environment by utilizing technologies like artificial intelligence, social media, and data analytics to generate value. TK may be divided into three main categories: ecosystem awareness (e.g., using open-source networks), digital literacy (e.g., using cloud computing), and entrepreneurial mindset (e.g., evaluating risk in AI-driven models). The TK people gain from exposure to TE is a major factor in encouraging them to start digital businesses. Digital knowledge, often expressed as digital literacy, is the focus of digital enterprises. The modern world is technologically advanced, and individuals who can keep up with the times are those with digital literacy, which enables them to use various devices and technologies to run and promote their businesses. Researchers have found that the majority of undergraduate students at higher education institutions own mobile devices and are active on social media platforms, where they engage in a variety of entrepreneurial activities.

Technopreneurial intention has been associated with a number of antecedents, such as educational support (Al Amimi & Ahmad, 2023), social media (Wibowo et al., 2023), technopreneurship education (Wibowo et al., 2023; Ediagbonya et al., 2024a), digital entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Ediagbonya et al., 2024d), digital entrepreneurial alertness (Wibowo et al., 2023; Ediagbonya et al., 2024b), and technopreneurial knowledge (Wibowo & Narmaditya, 2022; Wibowo et al., 2023; Ediagbonya et al., 2024b). Scholars have conducted extensive research, yet a gap remains. The mediating role of technopreneurial knowledge in the relationship between technopreneurial education and technopreneurial intention among business education students has not been examined in any prior research. This work has addressed the identified gap.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent to which technopreneurial knowledge mediates the relationship between technopreneurship education and technopreneurial intention among business education students in Edo State. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. If technopreneurship education is a significant predictor of business education students' technopreneurial intention in Edo State.
2. If technopreneurship education is a significant predictor of business education students' technopreneurial knowledge in Edo State
3. If technopreneurial knowledge is a significant predictor of business education students' technopreneurial intention in Edo State.
4. If technopreneurial knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between technopreneurship education and business education students' technopreneurial intention in Edo State.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

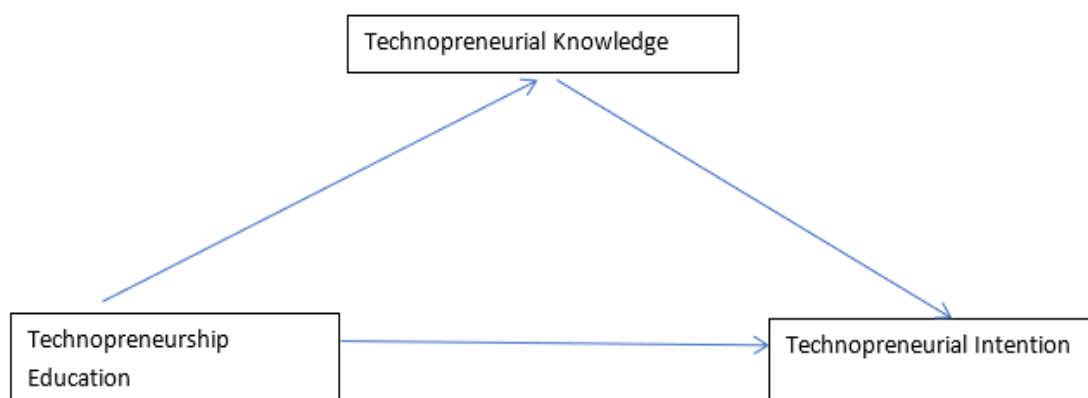


Figure 1. Conceptual model on the mediating role of technopreneurial knowledge in the technopreneurship education and technopreneurial intention relationship

A conceptual model that aims to describe the linkages and relationships between the variables under research is shown in Fig. 1. Technopreneurship education is the independent variable in this paradigm, technopreneurial knowledge is the mediator, and technopreneurial intention is the dependent variable. According to this framework, business education students who receive technopreneurship education will gain a deeper understanding of technopreneurship, which will further impact their desire to start digital businesses. This study was primarily designed to determine whether technopreneurial knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between technopreneurship education and technopreneurial intention, and to establish the interactions among the study variables. This was proven in the research.

METHODS

Since the goal of this study was to determine the relationships between the variables under investigation, a correlational survey methodology was employed. All 382 business education students at the University of Benin and Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma, Edo State, are involved in the study. There was no need for population sampling because the full population was used. A structured questionnaire served as the study's tool. This survey, called the *'Technopreneurship Education, Technopreneurial Knowledge and Technopreneurial Intention Questionnaire (TETKTIQ)*, was used to gather information from the respondents. The instrument was structured in two sections – A and B. Section A addressed the profile of respondents, while Section B addressed the independent, mediating and dependent variables for the study. A total of 18 items were adapted from existing scales for this

purpose. The Likert scale of 5-point was used, and it ranged from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The five items that were used in the digital entrepreneurship education component were taken from Wibowo et al. (2023). "Digital entrepreneurship education is mostly provided by universities or schools in the nations," says one of the items. The digital entrepreneurial intention component consisted of seven items from the Wibowo et al. (2023), including "I believe that I can have an online business in the near future." The digital entrepreneurial knowledge component consisted of six items adopted from Roxas (2014) and Younis et al. (2020). One of the items in the instrument reads 'I have adequate knowledge to manage a digital entrepreneurship.'

The instrument was distributed to professionals in business education, and the final version incorporated their suggestions for improvement. The Cronbach alpha was used to assess the instrument's reliability after it was administered to fifteen business education students at Delta State University in Abraka, Delta State. The results showed a coefficient of 0.85. The researcher sent links to a Google Form for respondents to complete online. The 244 questionnaires collected by the researcher from respondents represented 63.9 per cent of the total population. The regression analysis was employed to test hypotheses 1–3, while the SPSS Process Macro was used to test hypothesis 4.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that TE ($F(1, 242) = 130, 977$, $SE = .092$, $\beta = .836$, $t = 11.445$, 95% LLCI = .650 – ULCI = 1.011) had a significant positive influence on TI. The adjusted R-square (.348) reveals that 34.8% of the variance in TI is influenced by TE. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for TE influencing TI (bias = -.004, $p = .000$) were statistically significant. All in all, the results confirmed the author's expectations. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted in the study.

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

Pathways	SE(β)	F	T	Bias	R ²	AdjR ²	P	Bootstrap with BCa 95% CI	
								Lower Limit	Upper Limit
TE → TI	.092 (.836)	130.979	11.445	-.004	.351	.348	.000	.650	1.011
TE → TK	.077 (.752)	118.771	10.898	2.274	.329	.326	.000	.602	.904
TK → TI	.046 (.977)	1124.178	33.529	.001	.823	.822	.000	.887	1.066

Note: TE – Technopreneurship Education; TK – Technopreneurial Knowledge; TI – Technopreneurial Intention; AdjR² – Adjusted R-squared
 Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2025

Table 1 also reveals that TE ($F(1, 242) = 118,771$, $SE = .077$, $\beta = .752$, $t = 10.898$, 95% LLCI = .602 – ULCI = .904) had a significant positive influence on TK. The adjusted R-square (.326) reveals that 32.6% of the variance in TK is influenced by TE. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for TE influencing TK (bias = 2.274, $p = .000$) were statistically significant. All in all, the results confirmed the author's expectations. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is accepted in the study.

Further analysis also reveals that TK ($F(1, 242) = 1124.178$, $SE = .046$, $\beta = .997$, $t = 33.529$, 95% LLCI = .887 – ULCI = 1.066) had a significant positive influence on TI. The adjusted R-square (.822) reveals that 82.2% of the variance in TI is influenced by TK. The results of the 5000-resample bootstrap coefficients for TK influencing TI (bias = .001, $p = .000$) were statistically significant. All in all, the results confirmed the authors' expectations. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is accepted in the study.

Table 2: The mediating effect of DEK in the relationship between DEE and DEI

Pathways/Effects	Estimates (β)	SE	P	Bootstrap with BCa 95% CI	
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Total effect					
TE \longrightarrow TI	.8362	.0731	.0000	.6922	.9801
Direct effect					
TE \longrightarrow TK	.7516	.0690	.0000	.6158	.8875
TE \longrightarrow TI	.1517	.0457	.0010	.0617	.2417
TK \longrightarrow TI	.9107	.0349	.0000	.8420	.9794
Indirect effect					
TE \longrightarrow TK \longrightarrow TI	.6845	.0805	Sig	.5275	.8431

Note: TE – Technopreneurship Education; TK – Technopreneurial Knowledge; TI – Technopreneurial Intention; AdjR² – Adjusted R-squared
Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, 2025

The data in Table 2 reveal that the total effect of TE on TI is $\beta = 0.8362$ (SE = 0.0731; $p = 0.000$; 95% CI = [0.6922-0.9801]). Also, Table 2 reveals that the direct effect of TE on TK ($\beta = 0.7516$, SE = 0.0690; $p = 0.000$, 95% CI = [0.6158-0.8875]) were statistically significant. Table 2 also reveals that the indirect effect of TE on TI via TK ($\beta = 0.6845$, SE = 0.0805; $p < 0.05$, 95% CI = [0.5275-0.8431]) were statistically significant. However, since the direct effect of TE on TI ($\beta = 0.1517$, SE = 0.0457; $p = 0.010$, 95% CI = [0.0617-0.2417]) is statistically significant; the direct effect of TE on TK ($\beta = 0.7516$, SE = 0.0690; $p = 0.000$, 95% CI = [0.6158-0.8875]) is statistically significant; and the direct effect of TK on TI ($\beta = 0.9107$, SE = 0.0349; $p = 0.000$, 95% CI = [0.8420-0.9794]) is statistically significant, TK is regarded as a partial mediator in the relationship. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is accepted in the study.

The link between TE and TI was shown in the first finding. Accordingly, there is a greater chance that business education undergraduate students will be more inclined to start digital businesses when the TE program is well implemented. This result supports a previous study that found that TE provides the knowledge and abilities required to start and expand a digital business (e.g., Wibowo & Narmaditya, 2022; Ediagbonya et al., 2024a; Ediagbonya et al., 2024d). The aforementioned research indicates that TE promotes student involvement in digital entrepreneurship.

In investigating the second hypothesis, it was found that TE is significantly related to the TK of business education students in Edo State. This means that when the TE program in tertiary institutions is implemented effectively, business education students will have the entrepreneurial knowledge needed to start digital enterprises. Additionally, the results support some other studies (e.g., Tshikovhi & Shambare, 2015; Karyaningsih et al., 2020; Saptono et al., 2020) that show a strong correlation between technopreneurship education and the technopreneurial knowledge of business education students.

The analysis of the third hypothesis showed that business education students' technopreneurial intention is significantly predicted by their technopreneurial knowledge. This suggests that business education students' understanding of technopreneurship plays a big part in encouraging them to start digital businesses in Edo State. It demonstrates that students studying business education will be more inclined to engage in technopreneurship after learning about the vast online opportunities. Wibowo (2023), Baskaran et al. (2023), Xin and Ma (2023), Aloulou et al. (2023), Alzougool (2024), Bui and Duong (2024), Nguyen et al. (2024), and Ediagbonya et al. (2024b) all found a significant correlation between technopreneurial knowledge and technopreneurial intention, and this finding supports their findings.

According to the results of the fourth hypothesis, TK has a major mediating role in the relationship between TE and TI among Edo State business education students. Although this research is novel, it suggests that TK is essential in encouraging students pursuing business education to start digital businesses.

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

- a. Redesigning and reorganising the nation's tertiary institutions' business education programs should be a top priority for their authorities. This will enable curricula to incorporate technopreneurship as a key component in preparing students to launch and run profitable digital businesses. The following should be incorporated into this restructuring: project-based learning, mandatory student-led digital enterprise ventures, incubation programs, and innovation hubs.
- b. By emphasising digital literacy, data analytics and AI applications, digital marketing and social media monetisation, cybersecurity, and online business ethics, institutions should create competency-based modules that encourage the acquisition of technopreneurial expertise.
- c. A deliberate effort must be made to increase instructors' and lecturers' ability to deliver the program's content. Lecturers should continue attending conferences and workshops to broaden their expertise and collaborate with IT professionals and industry specialists.
- d. The teaching and learning of business education curriculum content should intentionally use contemporary digital technology. To guarantee efficient teaching and learning procedures, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, simulation software, virtual business environments, and learning management systems (LMS) can be integrated.
- e. The government should work to incorporate technopreneurial education into national education policies and provide the infrastructure and financing required to guarantee the program's successful execution; and
- f. In order to provide internships and apprenticeship programs in digital entrepreneurial startups, higher education institutions are urged to work with tech corporations and digital enterprises. This will introduce the students to real-world entrepreneurial scenarios and potential coping mechanisms.

CONCLUSIONS

Technopreneurial education and technopreneurial knowledge both significantly influence the technopreneurial intention of business education students in Edo State, according to the study's findings, which also show that technopreneurial knowledge significantly mediates the relationship between technopreneurial education and business education students' technopreneurial intention. The findings suggest that instructors of technopreneurship-related courses should make a concerted effort to ensure their students possess technopreneurial knowledge, as it plays a significant role in encouraging them to start digital businesses. This study has made a novel contribution to knowledge by filling an empirical and literature gap in this particular area.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest in this study.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Kennedy Ediagbonya.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Supervision. **Tracey Obehi Uguru.**: Data curation, Investigation, Writing- Original draft preparation. **Charles Oghenero Erhirhie.**: Validation, Visualization, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

Data available on request due to privacy/ethical restrictions.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI was used in the writing of the manuscript.

ETHIC STATEMENTS

Not applicable.

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