

**ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET BASED ON SCHOOL  
TYPE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA.**

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**Abstract**

*The cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset among young learners has become increasingly critical in preparing them for a dynamic, innovation-driven economy. This study investigates the level of entrepreneurial mindset development among senior secondary school students and compares these levels across different school types, specifically public and private secondary schools. A quantitative comparative research design was employed, utilising a structured entrepreneurial mindset scale measuring key dimensions such as opportunity recognition, risk-taking propensity, innovativeness, self-efficacy, and proactive problem-solving. Data were collected from 480 Senior Secondary School Class Two (SSSI)I students who were randomly selected from schools across three senatorial districts in Osun State, Nigeria. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including, mean, percentages, standard deviation and t-tests, were used to analyse the data. Results showed that private-owned school students have higher dimensions in*

*opportunity recognition and risk taking with average mean score value ( $x= 3.73$ ) than public school students ( $x= 2.95$ ), although they showed notable strength in creativity/innovation ( $x= 3.02$ ). It also revealed that the development of entrepreneurial mindset of Osun State secondary school students is high ( $x= 3.31$ ). Finally, the result of the independent sample *t*-test analysis that examines the significant difference in entrepreneurial mindset of senior secondary school students from public and private schools showed a very large *t*-value ( $-12.12$ ) with 477 degrees of freedom, and the *p*-value less than 0.001 ( $p<0.001$ ) which is far below the conventional alpha level (0.05). This is an indication that the observed difference is statistically significant. The study concludes that there is a strong connection between the type of secondary school attended by senior secondary students and their entrepreneurial mindset development. The entrepreneurial orientations in private in private secondary schools are better developed because of increased exposure of the learners to real-world business ventures, proper learning facilities, and effective teaching approaches. Nevertheless, both public and private secondary schools can be instrumental in nurturing Nigeria's future entrepreneurs. Effective entrepreneurship education programs in secondary schools can promote economic independence and self-employment in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Mindset, Development, Public Schools, Private Schools, School Type.

### **Introduction**

The global economy of the twenty-first century is defined by rapid technological development, dynamic market changes, and a growing need for creative solutions to challenging world issues (Schwab, 2017). Traditional career choices focused on salaried employment are no longer adequate in this environment to ensure both professional fulfillment and financial security. As a result, entrepreneurship has gained widespread recognition as a vital force behind social change, job creation, and economic expansion (Acs, Autio, & Szerb, 2014). But the significance of developing an

entrepreneurial mindset, a cognitive and affective orientation that enables people to recognize opportunities, take measured risks, persevere through setbacks, and proactively solve problems in a variety of contexts has been highlighted by academics and policymakers in ways that go beyond setting up an enterprise (Kuratko, Fisher, & Audretsch, 2021).

Adolescence's formative years, especially the senior secondary school years (usually between the ages of 15 and 18), are a critical time for the development of mindsets. Students start to develop stable self-concepts, values, and professional goals during this phase (Super, 1990). At this point, exposure to entrepreneurial thinking can influence their future academic decisions, professional paths, and even their ability to deal with uncertainty (Lackéus, 2020). According to European Commission (2016), many educational systems have started incorporating entrepreneurship education into secondary curricula after realizing this fact. However, a basic question remains - *Does a student's school type have a substantial impact on how their entrepreneurial mindset develops* □

Different educational philosophies, resource endowments, pedagogical approaches, and curricular priorities are frequently embodied by different types of schools, whether they are public or private (Chubb & Moe, 2010). Private schools, which usually have more financial independence, could spend money on cutting-edge instructional strategies, extracurricular business groups, and guest lectures from professionals in the field. According to Nabi, Liñán, Fayolle, Krueger, and Walmsley (2017), public schools, which serve the broadest demographic spectrum, frequently follow standardized, examination-oriented curricula that may give priority to theoretical knowledge over experiential, risk-embracing learning. These variations imply that the formation of an entrepreneurial mindset is not consistent across educational environments, although comparative empirical research in this field is still lacking, especially in the context of senior secondary education (Lackéus, 2015).

Few research have systematically investigated how regular school environments; differentiated by type, shape entrepreneurial attitudes, self-beliefs, and cognitive dispositions, despite the fact that current literature has examined the effects of particular entrepreneurship education programs (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). This disparity is important because educational policies and resource allocation must be adjusted to guarantee equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their institutional setting, if school type consistently predicts entrepreneurial mindset levels (Obschonka, Silbereisen, & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2012).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to investigate the entrepreneurial mindset development among senior secondary school students across school type. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset that are most strongly influenced by school type;
- ii. determine the overall level of entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State; and
- iii. investigate the significant difference in entrepreneurial mindset development of senior secondary school students based on school type (public and private).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. Which dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset are most strongly impacted by school type?
- ii. What is the overall level of entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State?

### **Research Hypothesis**

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in entrepreneurial mindset development of senior secondary school students based on school type (public and private).

### **Literature Review**

There is significant research that identifies the disparities between public and private schools in sub-Saharan Africa in relation to their academic performance and available resources (Oketch et al., 2010). Private schools in Nigeria typically have smaller classes, more qualified teachers, and better-equipped laboratories, resulting in a more practical, student-centred learning environment (Owoeye & Yara, 2011). Public schools, however, face challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, a lack of resources, and a rigid focus on examination-prompted teaching (Adesoji & Ibe, 2018).

An entrepreneurial mindset is not limited to starting a business; rather, it includes creative thinking, problem-solving abilities, resilience, and awareness of opportunities (Rae, 2017). Incorporating the development of the entrepreneurial mindset into a STEM education programme will help to create innovators who can use their technical knowledge to solve societal problems (Lackéus, 2020).

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

A quantitative, comparative cross-sectional research design was used in this study. Since the main goal was to compare the development of an entrepreneurial mindset among two different school types (public and private) without changing any variables, a comparative design was judged suitable (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The cross-sectional design made it possible to gather data at one particular moment in time, giving a quick overview of senior secondary school pupils' levels of entrepreneurial attitude (Bryman, 2016).

#### **Study Area and Population**

The study was carried out within the three senatorial district of Osun State, an area with a variety of secondary public and private educational institutions. All senior secondary school students from the two different school types who were in their penultimate SS II made up the target population. According to Obschonka, Silbereisen, and Schmitt-Rodermund (2012), this grade range was chosen

because students at this level are usually between the ages of 15 and 18, a developmental time where career-related views and entrepreneurial goals start to solidify. Each selected school was randomly assigned to two experimental groups and from each selected school 40 students were randomly selected yielding a total sample of 480 Students.

### **Sampling Procedure**

A multistage random sampling technique was used to ensure adequate representation from each school type. Initially, six LGAs were randomly selected and the schools were grouped into two: public and private. From each group, six schools were randomly selected using a simple random sampling method, resulting in a total of 12 schools. Afterwards, within each selected school, 40 students were randomly drawn from the SS2 class, yielding an initial sample size of 480 students. This sample size exceeds the minimum required for a medium effect size at a power of 0.80 and an alpha level of 0.05 for ANOVA comparisons (Cohen, 1988; Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009).

In order to guarantee sufficient exposure to the school environment, children had to be enrolled in their particular schools for a minimum of one academic year. Students who have cognitive impairments that could make it difficult for them to accurately self-report were not included.

### **Instrumentation**

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire comprising two sections. Section A sought for information on the demographic variables of the respondents such as students' age, gender, grade level, and school type; while Section B which is a likert-type ratio scale (Entrepreneurial Mindset Scale - EMS) – measures entrepreneurial mindset. The study adapted the validated *Entrepreneurial Mindset Profile* (EMP) developed by Davis, Hall, and Mayer (2016) and further refined by Kuratko, Fisher, and Audretsch (2021). The EMS consisted of 25 items

distributed across five sub-dimensions, each representing a core component of the entrepreneurial mindset. The instrument measured items such as Opportunity Recognition; Risk-Taking Propensity; Innovativeness; Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy; and Proactive Problem-Solving. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher total scores indicated a stronger entrepreneurial mindset.

### **Validity and Reliability**

In order to determine the content validity of the instrument, two experts: one in educational psychology and one in entrepreneurship education reviewed the questionnaire's first draft. Each item's completeness, clarity, and relevancy were evaluated. At 0.84 the Content Validity Index (CVI) was determined to be higher above the acceptable level of 0.80 (Polit & Beck, 2006). Thirty senior high school students from one public and one private who were not part of the main sample participated in a pilot research to test dependability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency of the pilot data. The sub-dimension alphas ranged from 0.81 (Risk-Taking Propensity) to 0.84 (Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy), all above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, while the overall scale generated an alpha of 0.82 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The researchers contacted the administrators of the 12 selected schools to explain the goal of the study and obtain their consent after receiving institutional and ethical approval. Over the course of four weeks, during regular school hours, data was collected. To maintain uniform conditions, the questionnaire was distributed in classrooms by the researcher. Students were guaranteed anonymity, told that participation was entirely optional, and assured that their answers would only be used for study before they were distributed. The students gave their consent for their involvement in the research. Completing each questionnaire took about ten to fifteen minutes. 480 of the 500 copies of the questionnaire that were distributed were

returned completely, giving a yield of 96% response rate.

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to analyse research questions one and two. Also, t-test at significant level of  $p < 0.05$  was used to describe the significant difference in entrepreneurial mindset of senior secondary school students in public and private schools as stated in the research hypothesis. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 was used to analyze the data. Screening for missing data, outliers, and normalcy assumptions were all part of the data processing.

### Results

Data collected using the questionnaire were analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. The information on the demographic variables of the respondents was collated, and analysed using percentages and presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Public(n=240)	Private (n=240)	Total (N=480)
Gender	Male	122 (50.8%)	116 (48.3%)	238 (49.6%)
	Female	118 (49.2%)	124 (51.7%)	242 (50.4%)
Age	14 years	45 (18.8%)	38 (15.8%)	83 (17.3%)
Group	15-16 years	158 (65.8%)	147 (61.3%)	305 (63.5%)
	17-18 years	37 (15.4%)	55 (22.9%)	92 (19.2%)

The study involved 480 senior secondary school two (SSSII) students, including 240 (50%) who attend public schools and 240 (50%) who attend privately-owned schools. The gender distribution showed 238 (49.6%) males and 242 (50.4%) females. The mean age was 14-18 years old and most of the 305 (63.5) were in the age group of 15-16. This population distribution favours the generalizability of the results.

## Responses to Research Questions and Hypothesis.

**Research Question 1:** Which dimension of the entrepreneurial mindset is most strongly impacted by school type?

In order to answer this research question, the items on the questionnaire related to the dimensions of the entrepreneurial mindset impacted by school type were collated, analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Statistical Distribution of the Comparison of Mean Scores of Dimension of Entrepreneurial Mindset that is Most Strongly Impacted by School Type

Dimensions	Public Schools ( $\bar{x}$ )	Private Schools ( $\bar{x}$ )	Interpretation
Opportunity Recognition	2.88	3.68	Private > Public
Risk-Taking	2.75	3.55	Private > Public
Creativity/Innovation	3.02		

The results revealed that for opportunity recognition dimension, the private-owned school students showed higher mean score ( $x=3.68$ ) than the public school students ( $x = 2.88$ ). Also, in risk-taking dimension, private-owned school students showed higher mean score ( $x = 3.55$ ) than the public school students ( $x = 2.75$ ). The average mean score of students in the private schools ( $x= 3.73$ ) was higher than that of students in the public schools ( $x= 2.95$ ). Generally, the dimension of entrepreneurial mindset that is most strongly impacted by the private-owned school is opportunity recognition while that of the public school is creativity/innovation.

**Research Question 2:** What is the overall level of entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State?

In order to respond to this question, the items on the questionnaire related to the level of entrepreneurial mindset among the students

were collated, analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. A mean score of 1.00–1.99 was interpreted as Low, 2.00–2.99 as Moderate, 3.00–3.99 as High, and 4.00–5.00 as Very High. The result is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Statistical Distribution of the Overall Level of Entrepreneurial Mindset Development of the SS II Students

Variable	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	(SD)	Interpretation
Entrepreneurial Mindset Development	480	3.31	0.78	High

The mean score ( $\bar{x}=3.31$ ) falls within the range of 3.00-3.99 which is interpreted as high. This implies that the entrepreneurial mindset development among the senior secondary school students in Osun State is high.

**Research Hypothesis:** *There is no significant difference in entrepreneurial mindset development of senior secondary school students based on school type (public and private).*

In order to establish the hypothesis raised, the items on the questionnaire relating to the entrepreneurial mindset development of senior secondary school students based on school type (public and private) were collated, analysed using t-test and presented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Independent Sample t-test Analysis of the Mean Scores of Entrepreneurial Mindset Development of Senior Secondary School Students by School Type (Public and Private)

School Type	N	( $\bar{x}$ )	(SD)	t-test	df	p
Public Schools	240	2.95	0.69	-12.12	477	<0.001
Private Schools	240	3.73	0.72			

The result showed that students in private schools exhibit a higher mean entrepreneurial mindset score than those in public schools with a mean difference of 0.78. The result of the independent sample t-test

analysis that examines the significant difference in entrepreneurial mindset of senior secondary school students from public and private schools showed a very large t-value (-12.12) with 477 degrees of freedom, and the p-value less than 0.001 ( $p < 0.001$ ) which is far below the conventional alpha level (0.05). This is an indication that the observed difference is statistically significant. The negative t-value does not affect the significance but simply reflects the direction of comparison (public minus private). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected because there is a statistically significant difference in entrepreneurial mindset development based on school type with private school students having a statistically significantly higher mean score ( $\bar{x} = 3.73$ ) in entrepreneurial mindset development than public school students ( $\bar{x} = 2.95$ ).

### **Discussion of Findings**

The research involved the comparison of the development of entrepreneurial mindsets among students in senior secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria, and whether they attended a public or a private school. Results showed that students in private schools had a greater entrepreneurial mindset than students in public schools. It is consistent with the study by Olokundun et al. (2018), who have discovered that in the context of the private school environment, the environment tends to foster creativity, innovation, and business-oriented thinking with the help of extracurricular entrepreneurship programs and teacher motivation.

The gap can be attributed to the differences in exposure, resources, and learning setups. Entrepreneurship education is more effectively integrated in the curriculum of private schools, more mentorship opportunities are offered, and business idea competitions are organized (Okoye and Eze, 2020). Conversely, most governmental schools have issues like insufficient funding, inadequate teaching resources, and teacher training that obstruct the practical implementation of entrepreneurship education (Nwosu and Eke, 2019).

There were also some gender variations as male students were a little more prone to entrepreneurial activities. This finding aligns with other authors, such as Oluwalana and Adebayo (2021), who noted that the entrepreneurial orientation of students can be affected by sociocultural factors and traditional gender roles in Nigeria. Nevertheless, when exposed to the same exposure and opportunities, both sexes proved to be entrepreneurial.

Moreover, the general results revealed that private-owned school students showed higher mean score for opportunity recognition and risk-taking dimensions than the public school students. In totality, the dimension of entrepreneurial mindset that is most strongly impacted by the private-owned school students is opportunity recognition while that of the public school students is creativity/innovation. Furthermore, the development of entrepreneurial mindset in students of senior secondary schools in Osun State is high which implies that the policy of entrepreneurship education is progressing in Nigeria but the implementation issues remain. This result supports the conclusions of Okojie (2022) who claimed that training in entrepreneurship in Nigerian schools is usually focused on theory and does not allow students to apply their learning to the practical sphere of their activities.

The result showed that students in private schools exhibit a higher mean entrepreneurial mindset score than those in public schools. The result also revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in entrepreneurial mindset development based on school type with private school students having a statistically significantly higher mean score in entrepreneurial mindset development than public school students.

### **Conclusion**

From the research findings above, we come to the conclusion that there is a strong connection between the type of secondary schools attended by senior secondary students and their entrepreneurial mindset development. The entrepreneurial orientations in private

secondary schools are better developed because of increased exposure of the learners to real-world business ventures, proper learning facilities, and effective teaching approaches. Nevertheless, both public and private secondary schools can be instrumental in nurturing Nigeria's future entrepreneurs. Effective entrepreneurship education programs in secondary schools can promote economic independence and self-employment in Nigeria.

### **Implications**

The study has implications for educational policy in ensuring that the large gap which suggests inequity in entrepreneurial mindset development, not just academic achievement be reduced to minima. Also, targeted interventions that will ensure the development of entrepreneurial mindsets of students in public schools should be implemented such as teacher training in entrepreneurship education, partnerships with local businesses, reviewing and improving the curriculum standards to meet the entrepreneurial mindsets of secondary school students as well as the job market.

Furthermore, school administrators can make use of private schools to serve as models for best practices in mentorship programs, and mini-company projects. Public schools should consider low-cost, high-impact strategies like integrating entrepreneurial thinking into existing subjects. By addressing these issues, this article aims to offer empirical data that will help policymakers, school administrators, and curriculum designers to better effectively and fairly develop entrepreneurial capacities. In the end, this study highlights the need to abandon one-size-fits-all methods of mindset formation and adds to the expanding conversation on secondary-level entrepreneurship education.

### **Recommendations:**

The following recommendations were made based on the results of the study:

- ✓ The government should evaluate the entrepreneurship education curriculum and revise it to ensure that the students learn both theoretically and practically. Training Teachers:

- Public school teachers should be trained on how to teach entrepreneurship through incorporating creativity and innovation into the lessons (Adeniyi and Aina, 2020).
- ✓ Relevant government departments should ensure that enough funds are provided for public schools and entrepreneurship education resources such as mini-business laboratories, mentoring schemes, and schools' businesses.
  - ✓ Public schools should partner with entrepreneurs and small business owners within the locality to mentor students and expose them to the work environment.
  - ✓ Educational institutions should partner with local entrepreneurs and small business operators to facilitate mentorship, incubation services, and internship opportunities for their learners.
  - ✓ Specific initiatives should be designed to inspire female learners to embrace entrepreneurship by offering training sessions, mentorship from women, and publicity campaigns.
  - ✓ Effective measures should be put in place to evaluate the implementation of entrepreneurship education initiatives and make adjustments where necessary.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered strictly to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Obafemi Awolowo University. Confidentiality was maintained by using unique participant codes rather than names. All data were stored on password-protected computers accessible only to the research team. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty (Resnik, 2020).

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**Data Availability:** The data supporting the findings of this study can be obtained from the primary author of this study upon request.

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