

Enriching Entrepreneurship Education: Unravelling the Effect of Entrepreneurial Storytelling on Entrepreneurial Intention through Entrepreneurial Passion, Self-Efficacy, and Attitude

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education is critical to a nation's economic growth and development, but the challenge lies in enriching it to ensure that individuals resonate with the idea of entrepreneurship. This study examines the effect of entrepreneurial storytelling on entrepreneurial intention, with a focus on the mediating roles of entrepreneurial passion, self-efficacy, and attitude. The study utilized cross-sectional data from a sample of 364 students at Delta State University in Nigeria, and the partial least squares technique was employed to test the hypotheses. The study found that entrepreneurial storytelling had no direct effect on entrepreneurial intention but had indirect effects through the interplay among entrepreneurial passion, self-efficacy, and attitude. The study concluded that entrepreneurial storytelling partially enhances entrepreneurial intention by strengthening entrepreneurial passion, self-efficacy, and attitude.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Attitude, Entrepreneurial Education, Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurial Passion, Self-efficacy, Storytelling.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship supports national growth and development by leveraging opportunities for economic efficiency and incubating innovations for value creation. This notion is perceived as particularly important, as it has prompted the teaching of entrepreneurship in higher education institutions in Nigeria, which aims to foster employment, productivity, and wealth creation. Therefore, the challenge is to enrich entrepreneurship education so that individuals continue to resonate with the idea of seeking alternative employment or starting a new business. To create context for active learning, entrepreneurship education should be presented in a way that appeals to the mind or arouses the interest of young people (Fellnhöfer, 2018). Potential entrepreneurs need to receive an engaging entrepreneurship education to sustain the growing trajectory of entrepreneurial activity in Nigeria. Research has shown that the formation of entrepreneurial intentions is a precursor to entrepreneurial behaviors and actions (Liu, Ma, & Li, 2019). Entrepreneurial intention (EI) refers to the willingness or interest to become an entrepreneur or self-employed. Studies (Wijayati et al., 2021; Lv et al., 2021) suggest that entrepreneurship education can provide a foundation for students' EI by strengthening their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The formation of EI is a challenging yet necessary step in becoming an entrepreneur; therefore, it is crucial to identify its antecedents for development and maintenance. Entrepreneurship education is an important antecedent. For entrepreneurship education to have a consistent and enduring impact, it

must be continuously enhanced and aligned with the imperative of elevating and accelerating entrepreneurial activities in the country, thereby promoting sustained economic growth and development. This necessitates unravelling the pedagogical content and processes that actually trigger entrepreneurial action. Studies have not yet agreed on the specific content and methods (Liu et al., 2019).

We suggest that incorporating storytelling—i.e., the narration of an independently created account of events—into entrepreneurship education lends itself to understanding attitudinal and behavioral changes among potential entrepreneurs (Mitra & Sameer, 2022). Fellnhöfer (2018) observed that the effects of entrepreneurial storytelling (hereafter referred to as storytelling) have only begun to emerge, as studies have focused on other teaching methods, such as role-playing and group discussion, in shaping the entrepreneurial culture and capabilities among individuals. Research has presented contradictory findings on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in promoting individuals' propensity to start a business (Liu et al., 2019; Adeel et al., 2023), with its effect varying from increasing to decreasing or becoming negative (Cui & Bell, 2022). These divergent views may be connected to the examination of entrepreneurship education as a single, holistic concept, which ignores the variations in pedagogy and content in different educational programs. In education, there is an array of approaches designed to nurture, motivate, and strengthen competencies. Arguably, the diverse and complex nature of entrepreneurship education poses challenges to its effective development. Because of this, storytelling warrants a closer look to know

whether it provides a practical learning context for orienting individuals to entrepreneurship. Storytelling can be examined through a behavioral lens, and it has numerous implications for entrepreneurial practices that have yet to be fully explored in empirical research (Liu et al., 2019; Davis et al., 2021; Brattström & Wennberg, 2022).

One key question that remains unaddressed in research is the role that storytelling plays in developing EI among Nigerian students. The limited answers to this question are surprising, given that entrepreneurship education and training rank high on Nigeria's policy agenda, and little research has been conducted to evaluate their impact. In 2022, the FATE Foundation reported an overall entrepreneurial index score of 58%, which is slightly above average. Specifically, the score for skill acquisition was 48%, which was below average. As of 2024, the overall entrepreneurial index declined to 46%, which is below average. The score for skill acquisition also fell to 38.7% (Adeyemi et al., 2022; 2024). This observation suggests that entrepreneurial education and other skill acquisition programs may not be contributing as effectively as they could, and we have yet to realize their potential in the country fully. Researchers must ensure the best outcomes of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria by making quality adjustments and improvements that foster the proper entrepreneurial orientation, attitudes, and behaviors. The cultivation and stimulation of entrepreneurial spirit and thinking through education are key to unlocking the benefits of entrepreneurship for the Nigerian economy.

Additionally, the present study aims to assess if specific personal factors connect individuals to a goal-directed state using storytelling. The personal factors include entrepreneurial passion (EP), entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ES), and entrepreneurial attitude (EA). EP refers to the positive feelings and emotions that individuals experience when involved in entrepreneurial activities. ES is a mental state characterized by having the confidence to establish and run a business. EA is a mental state that is defined by a readiness to pursue new opportunities, take risks, and engage in activities that establish enterprises. These personal factors may be essential in encouraging individuals to identify with, align with, and participate in entrepreneurial activities. This is because they exhibit productivity and perseverance in the face of the increasing uncertainties and challenges that are associated with entrepreneurship. Research indicates that they are capable of predicting intentions and behaviors (Ononye et al., 2022); however, it is unclear whether storytelling, as a component or method of entrepreneurial education, affects these internal states. This study is less likely to adopt a definitive stance due to the scarcity of research. The research would also investigate the association between these personal factors

to establish indirect pathways by which storytelling informs change in EI. Arguably, the individual factors can be linked in a way that enhances each other, thereby amplifying the benefits of storytelling on EI. In doing so, the study addresses the request of Yi and Duval Couetil (2021) for additional empirical research to evaluate the impact of entrepreneurship education and ascertain its entrepreneurial outcomes.

We make two significant contributions to the entrepreneurship literature. First, there is ample research on the effect of entrepreneurial education on EI; however, a need exists to break down this complex concept, as different educational approaches are employed to convey entrepreneurial knowledge. Studying specific individuals' responses to pedagogical content and approaches is one way to assess the benefits of storytelling in entrepreneurship education. Hence, the utility of storytelling in promoting EI among students is an empirical question that we intend to examine. Second, previous research on storytelling has not rigorously examined its sequential and straightforward mediation effects on EI within a single research framework. Only one study (Liu et al., 2019) was relevant in documenting the simple mediation effect, suggesting research of this nature is at its nascent stage. The research provides clarity on the mediational pathways through which the storytelling-EI relationship may be significant. We put into perspective the centrality of personal factors in conveying the effect of contextual factors on EI. To the best of our knowledge, these personal factors have not been used in the multiple and chain mediation paradigm before, and they represent an original contribution to existing research. There is also a practical implication, as educational or training institutions can leverage the findings to revise pedagogical content and processes, making entrepreneurship education more appealing to young people. Given the foregoing, the research aims were to (1) determine the effect of storytelling on EI; (2) assess how EP mediates storytelling effect on EI; (3) demonstrate how ES mediates storytelling effect on EI; (4) determine how EA mediates storytelling effect on EI; and (5) ascertain whether storytelling effect on EI is sequentially mediated by the personal factors—EP, ES, and EA.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Storytelling and Entrepreneurial Intention

Storytelling provides a structured account or narration of entrepreneurial-related events or a sequence of chronological events that have a moral (lesson or inference), character, setting, and plot (Brattstrom & Wennberg, 2022; Hall et al., 2021). Case-based teaching is often employed in sharing entrepreneurial stories; however, there are situations where invitations are extended

to entrepreneurs (role models) to share their stories vividly, allowing others to learn from and benefit from them (Liu et al., 2019). As a persuasive communication tool, it can appeal to individuals' hearts and minds by enabling them to connect, enact, share in, and interact with others' perspectives. The sharing of history and experiences provides a veritable means to learn, acquire new insights, and develop oneself. Storytelling selectively distills a complex web of activities into a simplified and coherent picture of an entrepreneur's venture or journey (Kimmit et al., 2023). It is one of the ways of sharing tacit knowledge comprising discovery, creativity, and innovation (Ononye, 2021). Because personal knowledge is often shared through storytelling, it can reduce uncertainty and provide clarity on a given entrepreneurial issue by making connections through pattern recognition and comprehension (Hall, Harrison, & Obilo, 2021; Ononye, 2021). Entrepreneurial stories that align individuals with developmental trends enable them to set both cognitive and pragmatic expectations about their engagement in entrepreneurial work. In this way, they can link their intentions with these stories to develop their legitimacy as a nascent entrepreneur.

Arguably, entrepreneurship education will convey more meaning if real-life entrepreneurial stories support other explicit or conventional knowledge. This is especially true for topics or subjects that require depth and detail (Vivek & Nanthagopan, 2023). Winskell and Enger (2014) contend that transportation (i.e., absorption or immersion into a message or information) into a story can transmit beliefs and values that actively shape and align individuals' thinking, identities, expectations, and actions towards entrepreneurship. Thus, storytelling develops the entrepreneurial culture among individuals. Storytelling also elicits emotional and cognitive responses because individuals attempt to connect with and comprehend the imagined realities presented in a given story. It is expected that the feelings and knowledge derived from the story will inform behavior, thereby contributing to transformative learning (Taufik & Ernawati, 2021; Tyler, 2007). The story's structure allows individuals to contextualize essential themes or ideas and apply them to situations in their personal lives (Kromka & Goodboy, 2019). One of the manifest outcomes could be entrepreneurial intention (EI). EI demonstrates an intent to pursue a career as an entrepreneur and consciously plans to start a business in the future. Feasibility, intentionality, and the propensity to act regarding the exploitation of opportunities and risk-taking determine this state of consciousness (Lv et al., 2021). It also predicts how individuals behave and act in the entrepreneurial process. In this way, EI is a cognitive process that involves mental decisions before starting a new business. Several studies (Dakoumi & Abdelwahed, 2014; Feltnhofer, 2018; Liu et al., 2019)

suggest that entrepreneurial storytelling inspires EI among students. This led to the formulation of the first hypothesis.

H₁: Entrepreneurial storytelling positively and significantly affects entrepreneurial intention.

2.2. Mediation of Entrepreneurial Passion

Entrepreneurial passion (EP) is an intense positive emotion or feeling that directs and guides an individual's effort and identity in the entrepreneurial process. Passion influences the situations in which individuals can plan, develop, and operate (Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023). Their enthusiasm stems from their attachment, love, and longing to engage in entrepreneurial activities. The unwavering desire to pursue a career as an entrepreneur drives them to invest time and energy in its realization. The passion for engagement in entrepreneurial activities is based on the founding dimension, which focuses on the process of establishing a new business. Several studies on EI have documented the contextual relevance of emotional perception. For instance, Hoang and Trong Luu (2024) found that EP mediated the relationship between entrepreneurial education and EI. Liu et al. (2019) utilized a contextual framework to examine the storytelling-EI link and found that EP is a significant mediator of this link. Therefore, EP is an outcome obtained from educating people through entrepreneurial storytelling, and it evolves in such a way that people develop a strong desire to start a new business. Consequently, the second hypothesis is as follows:

H₂: Entrepreneurial passion mediates the significant and positive effect of entrepreneurial storytelling on entrepreneurial intention.

2.3. Mediation of Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ES) refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to mobilize both tangible and intangible resources to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Ononye et al., 2022). It is the belief an individual has in his/her strength to successfully initiate and execute entrepreneurial activities for the attainment of valued outcomes. Individuals with self-confidence are internally motivated and willing to engage in learning to achieve their life's planned milestones, despite uncertainties and challenges. Building ES requires preparation, hard work, and perseverance. Studies indicated that ES has a substantial contextual value in relationships involving EI. For instance, Liu et al. (2019) found that ES moderates the relationship between storytelling and EI. While this research confirms the contextual importance, this is not the only way ES affects this relationship. It can also operate in a mediating capacity, as demonstrated by Yousaf et al. (2021), who

found that ES successfully channels the influence of entrepreneurship education on EI. Al-Qadasi et al. (2024) recently supported this finding. It can be inferred that the effective assimilation of relevant entrepreneurial information from storytelling may enhance one's confidence in their ability to initiate the entrepreneurial process. Therefore, the third hypothesis is:

H₃: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy mediates the significant and positive effect of entrepreneurial storytelling on entrepreneurial intention.

2.4. Mediation of Entrepreneurial Attitude

Entrepreneurial attitude (EA) is a mental state of readiness to start and run a business. This definition suggests that individuals with EA can recognize new opportunities and take risks in unique ways to create value and economic benefits. EA is malleable and can change as one interacts with the environment. This means that attitudinal change toward a behavior is based on the cognitive information received from our interactions and observations. Education influences EA because it aims to shift one's understanding and mindset towards a given activity. As the attitude towards entrepreneurship improves due to better experiences and increased trust in the information, the behavioral intention of individuals towards entrepreneurial activities becomes stronger. Existing studies have operationalized EA as a mediator, and the findings indicate that it significantly intervenes to increase EI, just as other mediators do. For example, Yousaf et al. (2021) found that entrepreneurship education improves EA to influence EI. A recent study (Al-Qadasi et al., 2024) also confirmed this indirect relationship. The acquisition of new information from storytelling can reshape individuals' perceptions and feelings about entrepreneurship, potentially leading to attitude formation and change towards associated activities. These findings led to the formulation of the fourth hypothesis.

H₄: Entrepreneurial attitude mediates the significant and positive effect of entrepreneurial storytelling on entrepreneurial intention.

2.5. Sequential Mediation of the Personal Factors

There is no consensus on how storytelling influences EI because this area remains relatively underdeveloped in research. Arguably, like entrepreneurial education, the relationship between storytelling and EI may be more complex than straightforward, as underlying mechanisms may determine its effectiveness. Previous research suggests that we can use EP, ES, and EA as mediators. However, some studies reflect the dynamics among them and show their relatedness. Studies that integrate EP, ES, and EI show that ES is the mechanism

by which EP influences EI (Cardon & Kirk, 2013; Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023; Li et al., 2020; Neneh, 2020). Lee and Herrmann (2021) identified ES as an outcome variable of EP, suggesting that having a passion for entrepreneurship makes individuals confident in their intentions and actions to start a business. Yousaf et al. (2021) demonstrated that ES and EA play significant roles in how entrepreneurship education impacts EI, and they found that both ES and EA have a positive influence on this relationship. Taking cues from this research, we not only applied EP and ES as possible mediators but also extended the intervening pathway to include EA. Moreover, our focus was not on entrepreneurship education, but on entrepreneurial storytelling, as we sought to deconstruct the pedagogy and content that are significant for fostering entrepreneurial intent.

The social cognitive career theory suggests that an individual's intention to take an action in a specified context is based on the influences of personal factors (e.g., EP, ES, and EA), which are caused by contextual factors (e.g., education). Contextual factors can directly and indirectly affect EI (Tran & Korflesch, 2016), suggesting that the contextual information conveyed by storytelling influences it in two ways. Based on the narrative transportation theory, storytelling has a potent effect when it absorbs the individual (i.e., the story receiver) in the processing and interpretation of the story, and conveys them to an imagined world. As individuals create meaning concerning cause, consequences, and goal attainment, they experience affective and cognitive responses that can modulate their beliefs, attitudes, and intentions (Hall et al., 2021). According to Davis et al. (2021), individuals who seek a mental connection to a given field are more likely to be influenced by messages shared in a narrative format than in didactic presentations. This statement may explain how storytelling, as a pathway towards purposeful behavior change, derives its emotional and cognitive impact. Knowledge from storytelling permeates the mental states of individuals and triggers attitudinal and behavioral changes (Ononye, 2021; Winskell & Enger, 2014). Owing to this fact, we expect storytelling to affect not only entrepreneurial intention, as already documented in the existing literature, but also to foster other personal variables, thereby establishing an indirect link. This indirect link argument finds support in the empirical studies of Li et al. (2020) and Yousaf et al. (2021). Considering the interplay among EP, ES, and EA, we argue that the storytelling effect on EI is achieved by engendering mental connections through the personal factors. Therefore, we proposed three hypotheses to illustrate the sequential mediation argument.

H_{5a}: The positive and significant effect of entrepreneurial storytelling on entrepreneurial intention is mediated by entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

H_{5b}: The positive and significant effect of entrepreneurial storytelling on entrepreneurial intention is mediated by entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial attitude.

H_{5c}: The positive and significant effect of entrepreneurial storytelling on entrepreneurial intention is mediated by entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial attitude.

Fig. 1 summarizes and represents the formulated hypotheses, which outline the direct and indirect effects of entrepreneurial storytelling on EI. The plain line represents the direct effect, and the dotted lines indicate the indirect pathways by which it occurs.

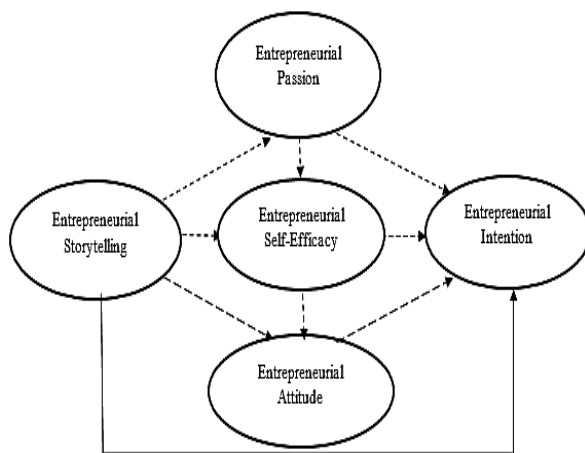


Figure 1. Research model

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and Research Design

The cross-sectional survey design was adopted to elicit responses from final-year undergraduates in the Faculty of Management Sciences at Delta State University in Delta State, Nigeria. These students, during the course of their study, are exposed to entrepreneurial topics and courses that form part of their curriculum. Wijayati et al. (2021) observed that entrepreneurial concepts, such as EA and EI, appear to be higher among business students than among non-business students. The curriculum's emphasis on entrepreneurial concepts, theories, cases, and practices could account for this variation. This reinforced the selection of students who were business inclined.

The researchers obtained informed consent for voluntary participation from 396 randomly sampled students. The participants were presented with a questionnaire, which was accompanied by a cover letter. The cover letter clearly outlined the research details, including a paragraph that ensured the anonymity of responses. The researchers administered the questionnaire personally on-site. They were also available to

clarify any comments or questions raised during the filling of the questionnaire. The administration and collection of the questionnaire were conducted in February 2025. Out of the 396 questionnaires, 2 had missing responses and were excluded from the data analysis. The demographic profile of the 394 usable responses revealed that 179 (45.4%) were males and 215 (54.5%) were females, with a mean age of 21.3 years. Regarding the field of study, 103 (26.1%) were in accounting, 156 (39.6%) were in business administration, 74 (18.8%) were in banking and finance, and 61 (15.5%) were in marketing.

3.2. Measures

The questionnaire used was derived from validated measurement scales from previous research. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), was used to measure the latent constructs. Following the use of validated scales, a pilot study was conducted on 20 students randomly selected from the target university to assess reliability using the Cronbach's alpha score. We also sought the expert opinions of three management scholars to ensure the face validity of the questionnaire. From their observations, the questionnaire was easy to comprehend, straightforward, concise, and relevant.

The development of the storytelling scale aligns with Yueh and Zheng's (2019) information processing framework. This framework considers storytelling an important informational process that helps foster change in individuals. The process encompasses exposure, attention, comprehension, acceptance, retention, and utilization. We developed six questions, each reflecting an activity in the process. Sample items are "Storytelling helps me to be attentive" and "I believe that there are entrepreneurial stories that encourage me to become an entrepreneur." The storytelling scale had a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.76.

We adapted the EP measurement scale, which consists of five questions, developed by Cardon et al. (2013). One of the sample items is "I am motivated to figure out how to make existing products and services better." The EP scale had a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.81. Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) provided the four-question ES measurement scale. One of the sample items is "I am convinced that I can successfully discover new business opportunities." The ES scale had a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.78. The EA and EI scales were taken from Liñán and Chen (2009). The EA and EI measurement scales each consisted of five questions. A sample item of EA is, "A career as an entrepreneur is entirely fascinating to me." One of the sample items of EI is "I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur." The EA and EI scales had Cronbach's alpha scores of

0.75 and 0.84, respectively. The scales are widely accepted and used in several related studies (e.g., Ferreira-Neto et al., 2023; Li et al., 2020; Yousaf et al., 2021).

3.3. Data Analysis Method

The survey data obtained were analyzed using the partial least squares structural equation modeling technique (PLS-SEM), which was performed with SmartPLS 4. The two-step procedure for estimating the measurement and structural model was followed. The recommended scores in Hair et al. (2022) for structural equation modelling were used to interpret the results. Furthermore, the bootstrap method, using 5,000 subsamples, was employed to determine the significance of the proposed relationships among the latent constructs.

4. Result

The study conducted a preliminary analysis to screen the data before initiating the two-step PLSM procedure. We used two evaluation indices—the Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett test of sphericity—to ascertain the factorability of the dataset. Generally, KMO values above 0.6 indicate that the sample data are acceptable for factor analysis, and BT values significant at $p < 0.05$ indicate that the relationships between the variables are significant for this analysis. The SPSS 20.0 software aided these tests. The KMO values (storytelling = 0.71, EP = 0.83, ES = 0.69, EA = 0.76, and EI = 0.65) exceeded the cut-off score of 0.60. The Bartlett test values for the constructs were significant at $p < 0.05$. These results suggest that the study can run factor analysis on the dataset. Furthermore, the study notes that the use of PLSM places little emphasis on the normality of the data, but ascertaining that it is normally distributed is important to avoid unstable estimations. According to Hair et al. (2022), normally distributed data is achieved when the skewness is between -2 and +2. The skewness statistics of the variables ranged from -1.93 to 1.87, which is within the permissible limit and indicates no significant deviation from normal data distribution.

Additionally, the study conducted a check for standard method bias (CMB) due to the simultaneous collection of all variables in the dataset. We used Harman's single factor for this assessment. The study found that a single factor emerged in 39.62% of the covariance, which is less than the recommended score of 50%, indicating no significant CMB problem. The variance inflation factor (VIF) results, as shown in Table 1, further supported this finding. According to Kock (2015), VIF values below 3.3 indicate that the model is free of problematic collinearity. The VIF also reveals the degree of multicollinearity, indicating the extent to

which the variables are highly correlated. Hair (2022) suggested that the acceptable limit is less than 5. The values indicate that multicollinearity posed no challenge within the framework, making it more likely to obtain stable and reliable estimations from the data analysis.

Table 1. Measurement model results

	FL	CR	AVE	VIF
1. Storytelling	0.83 – 0.91	0.84	0.66	1.81
2. EP	0.76 – 0.82	0.89	0.61	1.03
3. ES	0.81 – 0.89	0.93	0.68	1.29
4. EA	0.79 – 0.87	0.81	0.75	1.60
5. EI	0.73 – 0.86	0.90	0.73	0.79

Note: EP = entrepreneurial passion; EA = entrepreneurial self-efficacy; EA = entrepreneurial attitude; EI = entrepreneurial intention; FL = factor loads; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted; VIF = variance inflation factor

Having successfully conducted the preliminary tests, the study initiated the two-step PLSM procedure for structural equation modelling. The first step involves assessing the measurement model's reliability and validity using specific quality criteria. As mentioned in the previous section, we interpreted the data using the guidelines provided by Hair et al. (2022). Table 1 shows that the standardized loading for each construct exceeded the minimum limit of 0.70, suggesting that an acceptable level of item reliability was achieved. The items were closely related and significant to their respective constructs. The composite reliability test yielded satisfactory construct reliability among the constructs. The values exceeded the cut-off point of 0.70 for all the constructs. The average variance extracted (AVE) values, which measure convergent validity among the constructs, met the recommended criterion of being greater than 0.50. The results in Table 2 also confirmed that satisfactory discriminant validity was realized using the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The correlation coefficient of each construct exceeded the interconstruct correlations.

The predictive quality of the model was ascertained with R^2 , the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the normed fit index (NFI). Table 3 shows that changes in storytelling, EP, ES, and EA accounted for 66% of the improvement in EI. According to Chin et al. (2008), scores above 0.66 are considered strong, indicating that the five-factor model had strong predictive power. Furthermore, the SRMR value (0.06) is less than the maximum permissible value, suggesting that there were no discrepancies in the correlation matrices and the model fit was good. The model fit was further confirmed by the NFI, which was above the acceptable level of 0.80.

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Table 2. Discriminant validity

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Storytelling	0.76				
2. EP	0.34	0.74			
3. ES	0.43	0.25	0.77		
4. EA	0.46	0.37	0.42	0.81	
5. EI	0.20	0.31	0.48	0.56	0.79

Note: EP = entrepreneurial passion; EA = entrepreneurial self-efficacy; EA = entrepreneurial attitude; EI = entrepreneurial intention

Table 3. Summary of PLSM results - direct

Paths	β (p-value)	Remarks
1. Storytelling→EI	0.08 (0.14)	Rejected
2. EP→EI	0.10 (0.06)	Insignificant
3. ES→EI	0.25 (0.00)	Significant
4. EA→EI	0.41 (0.00)	Significant
5. Storytelling→EP	0.37 (0.00)	Significant
6. Storytelling→ES	0.28 (0.00)	Significant
7. Storytelling→EA	0.35 (0.00)	Significant
8. EP→ES	0.40 (0.00)	Significant
9. ES→EA	0.43 (0.00)	Significant
R^2	0.69	Strong
SRMR (< 0.08)	0.06	Good fit
NFI (> 0.80)	0.84	Acceptable fit

Note: EP = entrepreneurial passion; EA = entrepreneurial self-efficacy; EA = entrepreneurial attitude; EI = entrepreneurial intention; $P < 0.05$

Tables 3 and 4 present the structural model estimates to determine the significance of the paths and test the hypotheses. The results indicate that the effect of storytelling on EI is positive but insignificant ($\beta = 0.08$; $p > 0.05$). Therefore, H1 was rejected. ES ($\beta = 0.25$; $p < 0.05$) and EA ($\beta = 0.41$; $p < 0.05$) were related with EI, with EA having the strongest effect, followed by ES. The EP-EI link ($\beta = 0.10$; $p > 0.05$) was positive but insignificant. However, storytelling exerted a significant influence on these personal factors—EP ($\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.05$), ES ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.05$), and EA ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the personal factors related to each other well, as their effects were both positive and significant. EP affected ES ($\beta = 0.40$; $p < 0.05$), which in turn affected EA ($\beta = 0.43$; $p < 0.05$).

Although storytelling did not achieve direct success on EI, we found the indirect effects to be quite promising. The specific indirect results indicated a strong and positive link between storytelling and EI, which was influenced by ES ($\beta = 0.11$; $p < 0.05$) and EA ($\beta = 0.26$; $p < 0.05$). However, the mediation of EP was insignificant ($\beta = 0.06$; $p > 0.05$). Therefore, H2 was rejected, and H3 and H4 were accepted. The results indicate that the sequencing of EP and ES ($\beta = 0.09$; $p < 0.05$), ES and EA ($\beta = 0.14$; $p < 0.05$), and EP, ES, and EA ($\beta = 0.17$; $p < 0.05$) all create important links that explain how storytelling affects EI. Therefore, H5a, H5b, and H5c were accepted. Importantly, the mediations were considered partial and indirect-only.

Table 4. Summary of the PLSM results – indirect

Paths	β (p-value)	Remarks
1. S→EP→EI	0.06 (0.36)	Rejected
2. S→ES→EI	0.11 (0.01)	Accepted
3. S→EA→EI	0.26 (0.00)	Accepted
4. S→EP→ES→EI	0.09 (0.02)	Accepted
5. S→ES→EA→EI	0.14 (0.00)	Accepted
6. S→EP→ES→EA→EI	0.17 (0.00)	Accepted

Note: S = storytelling; EP = entrepreneurial passion; EA = entrepreneurial self-efficacy; EA = entrepreneurial attitude; EI = entrepreneurial intention; $P < 0.05$

5. Discussion

The study found that storytelling alone was insufficient to directly develop EI among students. It may take more than storytelling for its effect to be consistent and enduring. A possible reason for this finding is that lecturers who may not be competent to explain the practice of entrepreneurship tell the stories. Individuals who practice it rather than teach it may convey entrepreneurship stories more effectively. In such a situation, students can closely interact with successful entrepreneurs to gain practical ideas and insights that will help them get started. According to Kromka and Goodboy (2018), storytelling offers numerous opportunities for instructors to establish personal connections with students, particularly when the stories are drawn from their own lives or experiences. Another reason for the insignificant effect is that storytelling is a crucial pedagogical aspect of entrepreneurship education. When combined with other elements, it may yield a more comprehensive and significant outcome. This finding differs from previous research (Dakoumi & Abdelwahed, 2014; Fellnhofner, 2018; Liu et al., 2019), which found storytelling to be highly beneficial for the development of EI. However, we found that storytelling effectively contributes to changes in students' mentality regarding their passion, confidence, and attitude towards entrepreneurship. While it can effectively inspire and shape EP, ES, and EA, not all of these mental states foster EI.

The study found that storytelling improves EP, but such improvement may not necessarily lead to a substantial change in EI. This insignificant result contradicted studies that reported EP as having contextual importance in the storytelling-EI link (Liu et al., 2019; Hoang & Trong Luu, 2024). Moreover, ES and EA are distinct outcomes of storytelling that help develop EI. The mediating role of ES aligns with Yousaf et al. (2021) and Al-Qadasi et al. (2024), who reported a significant mediation of ES in the relationship between entrepreneurship education and EI. It also supports Liu et al. (2019), who examined ES as a moderator, as we suggested that ES is contextually relevant and can play other roles in making storytelling effective for building EI. Additionally, EA demonstrated a significant mediation in the storytelling-EI relationship, which concurs with Yousaf et al. (2021) and Al-Qadasi et al. (2024), who reported a similar effect. Although previous research focused on entrepreneurship education, our simple mediation results suggest that educating students through stories enhances their confidence and attitude, thereby fostering their intentions to engage in entrepreneurial work.

The relationships among EP, ES, and EA are crucial in explaining how storytelling positively and significantly affects EI. Educating students through stories helps them develop and maintain strong mental states that relate to different aspects, cultivating intentions to start a business. These mental states serve as stepping stones for entrepreneurial stories that aim to effect change in the pursuit of an entrepreneurial career. Despite EP's weak effect, it plays a crucial role in helping either or both ES and EA develop EI by using adequate and appropriate stories to educate students. Contextualizing the dynamics of mental states to translate entrepreneurial stories into intentions may yield greater benefits for students. However, fostering changes in EA and ES is important because it elucidates how well storytelling guides and supports students' commitment to goal-directed behaviors aimed at starting businesses.

Additionally, storytelling and EI relationships are stronger when mediated through EA in any way. We attribute this observation to the more substantial effect of EA on EI. Students who demonstrate good EA are likely more inclined to develop stronger EI. The sequential mediation findings somewhat align with those of Yousaf et al. (2021), who found that ES and EA provide a strong context through which entrepreneurship education affects EI. This study extended this framework by including EP and two sequential pathways (i.e., EP and ES, and EP, ES, and EA) to predict EI. The findings also support the social cognitive career theory, which states that the desire to pursue a specific career (entrepreneurship) is influenced by personal factors (EA, ES, and EP) that are affected by contextual factors,

like entrepreneurial storytelling. Furthermore, it validates the argument drawn from narrative transportation theory, which posits that storytelling immerses students in the processing and interpretation of storied information, conveying to them an imagined world. As students create meaning from different aspects of a story, they experience cognitive and affective changes that modulate their intentions and behaviors.

6. Conclusions

This study examined the impact of entrepreneurial storytelling on entrepreneurial intention among students at Delta State University, Nigeria, with a focus on entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial attitude as potential mediators. The findings of this study confirmed that storytelling had no direct effect on entrepreneurial intention. Instead, they did so indirectly through the purposeful interplay among entrepreneurial passion, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial attitude. Therefore, the indirect-only mediation model established the relevance of the specified intervening personal (or mental) states and the different roles they play in the relationship between the two concepts. Theoretically, research mainly focuses on the outcomes of entrepreneurship education, neglecting the distinctive effects of educational content (like stories) or approaches (like storytelling). Only a few studies (Dakoumi & Abdelwahed, 2014; Fellnhöfer, 2018; Liu et al., 2019) have examined the influence of storytelling on intention. Within the study's framework, we find that storytelling can increase students' intention to start a business through pathways of personal factors. As such, purposefully arousing and developing personal factors may create a consistent link between storytelling and entrepreneurial intention. This study extends the applicability of the social cognitive career theory (one of the commonly used theories to investigate the antecedents of EI) and the narrative transportation theory to the Nigerian context. The African region represents an under-researched area in entrepreneurship studies (Dvouletý & Orel, 2019).

From a practical perspective, entrepreneurship education and skill acquisition programs should incorporate and update entrepreneurial stories and narratives, which successful entrepreneurs can deliver, to ensure students are not only exposed to but also well-acquainted with the practicalities of any given entrepreneurial issue. The inclusion of entrepreneurs to present their success stories will enrich the learning experience and make classroom discussions more elaborate. It is essential to identify entrepreneurs whom students perceive as role models to spark their interest in entrepreneurship. Therefore, adjusting the learning model to involve successful entrepreneurs should be a strategic imperative for educators, school managers or administrators, programme coordinators, and policymakers. This

will make entrepreneurship education robust and enhance students' mental state of development. This is especially true for stories that are inspirational and compelling to them. It is essential to recognize that the quality of the story and its delivery can evoke distinct cognitive changes, which, when combined, enhance their inclination to initiate a venture. To ensure the efficacy of storytelling, stories should align with the different contexts in which individuals follow their path to become an entrepreneur. Stories should have an episodic structure, depicting important causal events to enable students to identify significant events as the story unfolds. Moreover, cognitive assessments can be conducted to accurately gauge the mental development of students for quality control and targeted interventions. In other words, the focus of storytelling should align with the development of several personal characteristics, namely enthusiasm for entrepreneurship, increased confidence in one's ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities, and fostering a positive mindset to prepare for entrepreneurship.

The limitations of this study include the use of cross-sectional data obtained through questionnaires to establish correlations among the variables. A triangulation study of this nature would have contextualized the findings more deeply for concrete inferences. The study made use of a homogeneous sample, which is undergraduates of Delta State University in Nigeria. The generalizability of the findings from such a sample may be questionable. Future research should expand the sample coverage by including other higher learning institutions in Nigeria. Possibly draw a sample from institutions with both public and private ownership structures to create a heterogeneous sample. The study focused only on mediators, which may not fully explain the context by which entrepreneurial storytelling impacts entrepreneurial intention. Studies should extend the framework by including moderators. For instance, researchers should consider the perceived entrepreneurial competency of educators when developing a moderated mediation model.

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