

Entrepreneurship Curriculum Content and Entrepreneurial Mindset Among Nigerian Graduate

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Abstract

Introduction: Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria since its introduction is yet to actualize its main objective of dislodging the mindset from seeking employment after graduation to the creation of jobs through the establishment of new business ventures. Higher educational institutions in Nigeria have increasingly integrated entrepreneurship courses into their curricula. However, the effectiveness of these courses in fostering entrepreneurial mindset among graduates remains underexplored.

Objectives: This paper is designed to examine the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship curriculum content in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among 105 graduates from Nigeria HEIs.

Methods: Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyse the data.

Results: The findings showed that all four factors - foundation knowledge, practical skill development, real-world application, and ethical and social responsibility contribute to fostering an entrepreneurial mindset.

Conclusions: Hence, the paper recommends that these four factors be incorporated as modules in the entrepreneurship curriculum- within the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS). Focus on practical learning to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and real-world entrepreneurial challenges; ultimately aiming to groom young entrepreneurs to change the Nigerian story by thinking production rather than a consumer nation.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurial Mindset, Entrepreneurship Curriculum, Youth Entrepreneurship, SDG8, SDG4

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria since its introduction in the 2007/2008 academic session is yet to actualize its main objective of shifting the mindset of young graduates from seeking employment to creating jobs through establishing new business ventures (Wale-Oshinowo et al., 2019). The entrepreneurship curriculum has been criticized for the non-achievement of its overarching objective among graduates (Akhueomonkhan et al., 2013). This concern has generated public outcry for the review and possible overhaul of the current entrepreneurship

curriculum content, which will be in tandem with what is obtainable in advanced economies, including the emerging BRICS economies to facilitate the economic development and growth the country yearns for (Tahir & Burki, 2023).

Entrepreneurship has a more critical role in developing economies as it is seen as an engine of economic progress, job creation, and wealth creation, and is responsible for stimulating economic growth (Fadeyi et al., 2015). It is consistent in the literature on entrepreneurship education that entrepreneurial activities are a strong indicator of economic development and

more entrepreneurs, as the key to economic growth (Ahmed et al., 2020; Gürol & Atsan, 2006; Hanandeh et al., 2021; Sheriff & Muffatto, 2014). According to Santoso et al. (2021), entrepreneurship education is a veritable tool capable of boosting productivity, growth, and national prosperity that can reposition and transform failed states to become envy among nations. The introduction of entrepreneurship education (EE) in Nigerian tertiary institutions was necessitated to curb the incidence of graduate unemployment since government-generated paid employment (formal sector), was next to nothing when compared with the high graduate turnover from the universities. Hence, entrepreneurship education has been accepted as an important way of integrating more young people into the economic environment (Beeka & Rimmington, 2011). According to (Wale-Oshinowo et al., 2019), the introduction of EE was to fortify graduates across different disciplines with the requisite knowledge and skills to set up viable businesses along their professional lines. This they averred brought high expectations that among the 50,000 graduates who would have been well impacted and gone through entrepreneurship education, ten thousand (10,000) graduates at least, would create new ventures of their own between the periods of 2006 – 2010.

However, from 2011, there was a growing national concern over its relevance in addressing issues of graduate unemployment, economic development, and growth in Nigeria (Anene & Imam, 2011); (Raimi & Gabadeen, 2012); (Akhueomonkhan et al., 2013); (Attah et al., 2013); (Nwekeaku, 2013); (Akinyemi et al., 2012) and (Fasanya, 2012). The running curriculum content seems to be impotent in stimulating the mindsets of students as it is primarily, theoretical rather than practical which lacks the potential to stir up innovative ideas. The evolution of curriculum development and revision in Nigeria was heralded by the Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) in 1989 but later in 2007, the Nigerian University System (NUS) curriculum was reviewed to accommodate changes in teaching and learning and to bring it at par with global trends. This led to the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standard (BEMAS) guide for teaching entrepreneurship education in Nigeria with ten

areas of focus as prescribed by the National Universities Commission (NUC). After the review in 2007 which brought about BEMAS and its prescribed areas of focus in entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) replaced the BEMAS effective from September 2023. This was a result of various clamour for a revised curriculum that situates the gaps in skill, competence, and knowledge of graduates. The advent of the CCMAS according to the executive secretary of the National Universities Commission (NUC), Prof. Abubakar Adamu Rasheed, was to meet both national and international requirements with specific modelling of comparable graduates that is aligned to the 21st Century with ICT-oriented knowledge, artificial intelligence, skill acquisition, and soft skills in the areas of entrepreneurship re-engineering, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and innovative pedagogy (National University Commission, 2022; Vanguard, 2023).

2. Objectives

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship curriculum content in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among 105 graduates from Nigeria higher education institutions (HEIs).

3. Methods

A descriptive survey research design was adopted to gauge the quality of entrepreneurship education received from their various institutions through the lens of NYSC (National Youth Service Corps) members deployed to Irepodun local government area of Kwara State. A purposive random sampling technique was used to select 105 Corp members. It is assumed that all Corp members must have acquired an array of entrepreneurial skills since it has been mandated for all tertiary institutions by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to offer EDS at all levels in Nigeria. The questionnaire for this study has closed-ended questions because this technique helps the respondents to make quick decisions. Also, closed-ended questions helped the researcher to code information simply for analysis and presentation. The scales were designed with a 5-item Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree. The foundational knowledge scale was adapted from the work of Imam (2011); the

practical skill development (Raimi & Gabadeen, 2012); real-world application scale (Udeozor et al., 2019); the ethical and social responsibility scale (Olokundun et al., 2018); at the same time, the entrepreneurial mindset scale (Wale-Oshinowo et al., 2019).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. Internal consistency reliability test was conducted with the aid of the Bartlett test, the Eigenvalue of the Principal Component, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), Percentage of the Variance, and Cronbach Alpha to determine their psychometric soundness (see Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Results of the Measurement Instruments Validation

Scale	No of Items	Bartlett Test	KMO	Eigenvalue of the principal Component	% of the variance	Cronbach α
Foundational Knowledge Questionnaire	5	p = .000 (significant)	0.878	3.628	72.41%	0.83
Practical Skills Development Questionnaire	5	p = .000 (significant)	0.775	2.575	85.26%	0.79
Real-world Application Questionnaire	4	p = .000 (significant)	0.857	3.572	93.56%	0.81

Ethical and Social Responsibility Questionnaire	4	p = .000 (significant)	0.704	2.278	72.99%	0.72
Entrepreneurial Mindset Questionnaire	5	p = .000 (significant)	0.684	2.198	70.89%	0.71

Source: Researcher's Result (2024)

4. Results

Table 2: SEM (Direct Effect)

Path	Beta-value	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis	Remark
EMS <- FK	.1255	2.12	0.034	H1	Supported
EMS <- PSK	.2460	3.24	0.001	H2	Supported
EMS <- RWA	.3853	4.83	0.000	H3	Supported
EMS <- ESR	.2767	4.54	0.000	H4	Supported

Note: EMS = Entrepreneurial mindset, FK = Foundation knowledge, PSK = Practical skill development, RWA = Real-world Application, ESR = Ethical and Social Responsibility

Source: Researcher's Result (2024)

5. Discussion

Table 2 illustrates that the Beta-value for Foundation Knowledge (FK) is 0.1255, with a t-value of 2.12 signifying its statistical significance. The p-value of 0.034, was below the threshold for

significance of 0.05, which provides evidence supporting the hypothesis (H1) that there is a substantial relationship between Foundation Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Mindset (EMS). This implies that Foundation Knowledge significantly and positively influences Entrepreneurial Mindset. By providing aspiring entrepreneurs with the fundamental principles (requisite knowledge) necessary to comprehend the complexities of starting and managing a business, students can make informed decisions, identify opportunities, and mitigate risks effectively.

For Practical Skill Development (PSK), $\beta = 0.2460$, t -value = 3.24, and p -value = 0.001. The positive β value affirms that the relationship between Practical Skill Development and Entrepreneurial Mindset is positive; the t -value revealed it is well above the critical threshold of 1.96 statistical significance of the relationship and with the p -value; indicates that the relationship is highly significant. This underscores the importance of honing skills such as communication, leadership, problem-solving, creativity, resilience, and adaptability. Through experiential learning methods like simulations, case studies, role-playing, and internships, aspiring entrepreneurs can develop the practical competencies essential for navigating the challenges of entrepreneurship. Thus, there is strong support for hypothesis (H2) asserting a strong positive association between the need for practical skill development and the stimulation of entrepreneurial mindset among graduates.

Furthermore, the results highlight real-world application's positive and statistically significant impact on EMS ($\beta = 0.3853$, $p = 0.000$). This underscores the crucial role of gaining experience by applying entrepreneurial skills in real-world scenarios to develop an entrepreneurial mindset. Similarly, ethical and social responsibility exhibited a positive and highly statistically significant impact on EMS ($\beta = 0.2767$, $p = 0.000$), emphasizing the importance of considering ethical and social responsibility in shaping entrepreneurial mindset development among students.

6. CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence supporting the crucial role of various factors in shaping an entrepreneurial mindset. Specifically, Foundation Knowledge (FK) and Practical Skill Development (PSK) exhibited statistically significant positive relationships with Entrepreneurial Mindset (EMS). The real-world application of entrepreneurial skills and the consideration of ethical and social responsibility also proved to be highly influential in fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among students. These findings indicate that all four factors - foundation knowledge, practical skill development, real-world application, and ethical and social responsibility - contribute to fostering an entrepreneurial mindset. Hence, tertiary institutions, the National Universities Commission (NUC), and policymakers interested in entrepreneurial mindset development should concentrate on cultivating these aspects in entrepreneurship education content.

7. RECOMMENDATION

i. The NUC, higher education institutions in Nigeria and the policymakers should design and implement these four factors of the entrepreneurship curriculum content (foundational knowledge, practical skill development, real-world application, and ethical and social responsibility) through the engagement of practicing entrepreneurs as teachers to stimulate entrepreneurial mindset among students.

8. PRACTICAL IMPLICATION

The practical implications of these findings are substantial for individuals, educational institutions, the National Universities Commission (NUC), and policymakers aiming to foster an entrepreneurial mindset. This holistic approach ensures a well-rounded preparation for students to emerge as entrepreneurs. Policymakers in education and entrepreneurship should consider these findings when formulating policies related to curriculum design, training programs, and support for entrepreneurial initiatives.

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