

RESETTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA'S COLLEGES OF EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

This paper advocates for a comprehensive overhaul of Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum to address the dynamic needs of nations. The current curriculum often prioritises generic entrepreneurial skills over context-specific knowledge, hindering graduates' ability to drive national development. This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to comprehensively explore resetting entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigeria's colleges of education for national needs. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The population comprises educators, students, policy makers and entrepreneurs in Plateau Central. A sample of 100 respondents was drawn through purposive sampling technique; additionally, a stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure representation across the colleges of education in Plateau State. The data collected through a questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings indicate among other things that the current state of entrepreneurship education curriculum requires a reset and that experiential learning is imperative in colleges of education's entrepreneurship curriculum. This study recommended a curriculum reset to align with national priorities, incorporating Sustainable Development Goals, digital transformation, and regional needs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Curriculum Reform, National Needs.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, Entrepreneurship education is an essential aspect of the country's efforts to foster self-reliance, reduce unemployment, and promote economic growth. Over the years, entrepreneurship education has gained prominence as a means of empowering students and individuals with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to create and manage small businesses. Entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in fostering innovation, economic growth, and job creation (Audretsch, 2012). However, the current Curriculum often falls short of addressing the evolving needs of the nation (Kuratko, 2016).

The Nigerian government recognises the importance of entrepreneurship in national development and has implemented various policies to support entrepreneurship education. The National Policy on Education highlights the need for entrepreneurial skills in the Curriculum to prepare graduates' for self-employment. Young entrepreneurs were empowered by Programs such as YouWin! and N-Power by providing funding, training, and mentorship opportunities (Agbonlahor, 2016). Additionally, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) introduced the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) program to provide corps members with practical skills and entrepreneurial knowledge, helping them transition into the workforce as self-employed individuals (Ogundele et al., 2012).

Entrepreneurship education is increasingly integrated into the curricula of Nigerian Tertiary institutions. Many universities and polytechnics offer courses in entrepreneurship, and some have established Entrepreneurship Development Centers (EDCs) to provide hands-on training and mentorship. These centers are designed to expose students to real-life entrepreneurial practices and provide support in business plan development and startup management (Ediagbonya, 2013).

Tailoring the Curriculum to address regional and local economic development challenges can ensure relevance and impact (Gibbs, 2017). Incorporating indigenous knowledge and cultural entrepreneurship can promote inclusive and Sustainable development (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). It is imperative to reset the entrepreneurship education Curriculum to equip students with the necessary skills, knowledge, and mindset to drive national development (Bacigalupo et al., 2016).

Beyond the government, several private sector organizations and NGOs have been instrumental in promoting entrepreneurship education. The Tony Elumelu Foundation and FATE Foundation are notable for providing seed funding, business training, and mentorship to budding entrepreneurs. Junior Achievement Nigeria (JAN) has also been actively involved in teaching entrepreneurship in secondary schools, preparing students to develop entrepreneurial mindsets early in life (Adejimola & Olufunmilayo, 2009). Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria also focuses on vocational and technical training. Vocational education, which involves hands-on skills in trades like welding, fashion design, carpentry, and information technology, equips students with the practical expertise to start small-scale businesses. This type of training is essential for non-graduates' and youths who are interested in developing trade skills for entrepreneurial ventures (Oseni, 2017). Entrepreneurship education has been instrumental in addressing unemployment and promoting economic diversification. Many graduates' of entrepreneurship programs have gone on to establish successful businesses, contributing to job creation and economic growth (Ojeifo, 2012). The rise of digital entrepreneurship and the growing importance of sectors such as fintech, agribusiness, and e-commerce present new opportunities for entrepreneurship education to evolve and become more innovative (Adeoti, 2019).

Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria plays a crucial role in shaping a future workforce that is self-reliant, innovative, and capable of contributing to the country's economic development. However, there is a need for more investments in infrastructure, funding, and a shift in societal attitudes towards entrepreneurship.

The growing importance of entrepreneurship education in addressing unemployment and fostering economic development in Nigeria is undeniable. However, recent studies indicate that the current entrepreneurship Curriculum in Colleges of Education is not adequately preparing students to meet the demands of today's rapidly evolving entrepreneurial landscape (Olokundun et al., 2018). To address this gap, there is a clear need to reset and redesign the entrepreneurship Curriculum in Nigerian Colleges of Education to reflect current realities and trends in the global economy.

The entrepreneurial landscape has shifted significantly in recent years due to the rise in the digital economy, globalisation, and technological advancements. However, many Colleges of Education in Nigeria still operate with outdated curricula focusing on traditional business models, with little emphasis on digital entrepreneurship, innovation, and tech-driven businesses (Ibidunni et al., 2020). The content taught does not match the skills required in today's market. To bridge this gap, the Curriculum must be redesigned to include digital marketing, e-commerce, fintech, and innovation-driven entrepreneurship. Additionally, the incorporation of technological tools such as artificial intelligence, blockchainblock chain, and data analytics into entrepreneurship education will better prepare students to thrive in the digital economy (Igbinoba & Oke, 2019).

Current entrepreneurship programs in many Nigerian Colleges of Education remain overly theoretical, with little focus on practical, hands-on experience. This creates a significant skills gap, insofar as students graduate without the practical skills required for the successful launch and sustained operation of a business (Olokundun et al., 2018). A reformed Curriculum should emphasise experiential learning through business simulations, internships, and partnerships with local entrepreneurs. Programs such as start-up incubators and entrepreneurship boot camps provide students with the real-world experience essential for developing problem-solving skills, manage risk, and fostering innovation (Igbinoba & Oke, 2019). This experiential approach is essential for fostering entrepreneurial mindset that can translate classroom learning into successful business ventures.

Nigeria's socio-economic context presents unique challenges for entrepreneurs, including poor infrastructure, fluctuating government policies, and limited access to finance. However, many entrepreneurship education programs continue to use imported models that may not reflect these realities (Olugbola, 2017). There is a need to reset the Curriculum to focus on the local business environment, ensuring that students understand and can navigate the specific challenges they may face when starting a business in Nigeria. This can be achieved by focusing on locally relevant sectors such as agriculture, renewable energy, and small-scale manufacturing. Additionally, the Curriculum should integrate strategies for overcoming infrastructural challenges, accessing finance, and leveraging government policies that support entrepreneurship (Olorundare & Kayode, 2014).

Another crucial aspect of resetting the entrepreneurship Curriculum is the training of educators. Many teachers in Nigerian Colleges of Education lack up-to-date knowledge of modern entrepreneurial practices, limiting their ability to effectively deliver the Curriculum. According to Ibidunni et al. (2020), the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education largely depends on the competence of the educators delivering it. A reformed Curriculum should therefore include regular professional development programs for educators, focused on modern business practices, digital tools, and innovative teaching methods. This would enhance the quality of instruction and ensure that educators are equipped to deliver an updated, relevant Curriculum.

Developing an entrepreneurial mindset is critical for the success of entrepreneurship education. The current Curriculum often emphasises technical business skills, with less focus on fostering creativity, risk-taking, resilience, and problem-solving which are key components of an entrepreneurial mindset (Nwambam et al., 2018). A reset Curriculum should prioritize activities that encourage innovation, creativity, and critical thinking. It should also address failure as a learning opportunity, instilling resilience and adaptability in students as they prepare to enter the uncertain world of business. It is based on the foregoing that this study is undertaken.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria's Colleges of Education is widely recognized as a critical tool for addressing unemployment, fostering innovation, and promoting economic growth. However, despite the inclusion of entrepreneurship in the Curriculum, there is growing concern that the current educational framework is outdated and misaligned with the realities of the Nigerian economy and the global entrepreneurial landscape. The existing Curriculum often focuses on theoretical knowledge rather than practical skills, and it lacks components that address modern entrepreneurial trends such as digital innovation, technological advancements, and sustainability (Igbino & Oke, 2019).

The Curriculum fails to address the specific needs of Nigeria's economy, such as the growth potential in sectors like agriculture, renewable energy, and small-scale manufacturing. Many graduates are ill-prepared to face the unique challenges posed by the Nigerian business environment, including poor infrastructure, limited access to funding, and fluctuating government policies. Furthermore, the lack of adequate teacher training in contemporary entrepreneurship practices exacerbates the gap between Curriculum content and the skills required for successful business ventures (Olokundun et al., 2018).

Without a Curriculum that reflects national needs and global trends, Colleges of Education in Nigeria may continue to produce graduates who are not equipped to leverage entrepreneurial opportunities. This underscores the urgent need to reset and redesign the entrepreneurship Curriculum to provide students with practical skills, innovative thinking, and an entrepreneurial mindset that can drive national development. Failure to address these Curriculum deficiencies may perpetuate the high rates of unemployment and hinder the economic transformation of the country.

This study seeks to examine the gaps in the current entrepreneurship Curriculum and propose strategies for resetting it to align with the national economic priorities and global best practices.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study focused on Resetting Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum in Nigeria's Colleges of Education for National Needs. Specifically, the objectives were to:

- a. to examine the current state of entrepreneurship education Curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions.
- b. to identify the national needs and priorities that the Curriculum should address.
- c. to determine the role of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education Curriculum

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions guided the study:

- a What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current entrepreneurship education Curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions?
- b.What are the national needs and priorities that the entrepreneurship education Curriculum should address?
- c. What determines the role of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education Curriculum?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to comprehensively explore resetting entrepreneurship education Curriculum in Nigeria's colleges of education for national needs. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The population of the study comprised all Educators, Students, policy makers and Entrepreneurs in Plateau Central. A sample of 100 respondents were drawn through purposive sampling technique for interviews while for the surveys, a stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure representation across different educational institutions, disciplines and in the zones. The data collected through questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Question One: What is the current state of entrepreneurship education Curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Mean responses and standard deviations on the current state of entrepreneurship education Curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions

S/NO	ITEM	X	SD	DECISION
1.	Entrepreneurship Curriculum focused on sectors such as agriculture and renewable energy is essential for Nigeria's development.	2.30	.60	Disagree
2.	The entrepreneurship Curriculum emphasises Sustainable development and social entrepreneurship to address national challenges.	2.06	.50	Disagree
3.	Collaboration between educational institutions, government, and industry is established for successful Curriculum reform	2.30	.60	Disagree
4.	The current entrepreneurship education Curriculum in the institution is aligned with Nigeria's economic needs.	2.03	.30	Disagree
5.	The entrepreneurship Curriculum incorporates practical skills relevant to starting a business in Nigeria.	2.09	.69	Disagree
6.	The current Curriculum adequately prepares students to face the challenges of Nigeria's business environment.	2.06	.74	Disagree
	Total	2.14	0.074	Disagree

The results presented in Table 1 revealed the mean responses regarding the role of the current state of entrepreneurship education Curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions. The results revealed that the mean score for six items ranged from 2.03 to 2.30, and the corresponding Standard deviations ranged from .60 to .74 respectively. The total revealed a mean score of 2.14 and a corresponding standard deviation of 0.074. This implies that the respondents generally disagreed about the effectiveness of the current entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions. In contrast, the corresponding standard deviations indicate low variability meaning that the respondents' responses regarding current state of entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions are consistent and closely clustered around the mean.

Research Question Two: What are the national needs and priorities that the entrepreneurship education Curriculum should address?

Table 2: Mean responses and standard deviations on the national needs and priorities that the entrepreneurship education Curriculum should address

S/NO	ITEMS	X	SD	DECISION
7.	There is a need to reform the entrepreneurship Curriculum to include more focus on digital innovation and technology.	2.65	.75	Agree
8.	The Curriculum should prioritize skills that support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to reduce unemployment.	2.80	.69	Agree
9.	Entrepreneurial training in renewable energy and green technologies is essential to meet Nigeria's sustainability goals.	2.50	.63	Agree
10.	The entrepreneurship Curriculum should equip students to address Nigeria's infrastructure gaps, such as in transportation, housing, and energy.	2.75	.89	Agree
11.	The Curriculum should address social entrepreneurship, focusing on businesses that solve critical social problems like health, education, and poverty reduction.	2.66	.71	Agree
12.	There is a need for the Curriculum to teach financial literacy and management skills to address issues of poverty and economic inequality.	2.76	.90	Agree
13.	The Curriculum should focus on creating employment opportunities for youth, who make up a large percentage of Nigeria's unemployed population.	2.79	.84	Agree
	Total	2.73	0.066	Agree

The results presented in Table 2 revealed the mean responses regarding the national needs and priorities that the entrepreneurship education curriculum should address. The results revealed that seven items had mean scores that ranged from 2.65 to 2.80, while the corresponding Standard Deviations ranged from .63 to .84 respectively. The total revealed a mean score of 2.73 and a corresponding standard deviation of 0.066 which implies that the respondents generally agree on the national needs and priorities that the entrepreneurship education Curriculum should address as raised on the table. The corresponding standard deviations indicate very low level of variability meaning that the respondents' responses regarding the national needs and priorities that the entrepreneurship education Curriculum should address are highly consistent.

Research Questions Three: What is the role of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education Curriculum?

Table 3: Mean responses and standard deviations on the role of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education Curriculum

S/NO	ITEM	X	SD	DECISION
14.	The entrepreneurship education program in my institution offers sufficient hands-on experience for students.	2.70	.72	Agree

S/NO	ITEM	X	SD	DECISION
15.	Experiential learning (e.g., internships, business simulations) is necessary for effective entrepreneurship education.	2.63	.83	Agree
16.	There should be more opportunities for students to participate in start-up incubators or entrepreneurship boot camps.	2.80	.72	Agree
17.	The current Curriculum provides adequate opportunities to develop practical business skills like financial management and marketing.	2.73	.83	Agree
18.	The entrepreneurship educators in my institution are adequately trained to deliver entrepreneurship education effectively.	2.60	.72	Agree
19.	Educators should undergo regular professional development to stay updated with modern entrepreneurial practices.	2.53	.83	Agree
20.	The teaching methods used in entrepreneurship education (e.g., case studies, interactive learning) are effective in engaging students.	2.70	.72	Agree
21.	The inclusion of industry experts as guest lecturers would enhance the learning experience for students	2.83	.83	Agree
	Total	2.72	0.076	Agree

The results presented in Table 3 revealed the mean responses regarding the role of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education Curriculum. The results revealed that 8 items had mean scores that ranged from 2.53 to 2.83, while the corresponding Standard deviations values ranged from .72 to .83 respectively. The grand total revealed a mean score of 2.73 and a corresponding standard deviation of 0.076 simply imply that the respondents generally agree on the role of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education Curriculum. While the corresponding standard deviations values revealed very low level of variability which simply means that the respondents' responses regarding the role of experiential learning in entrepreneurship education Curriculum are extremely consistent.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data collected and analyzed on resetting entrepreneurship education Curriculum in Nigeria's Colleges of Education examine and validate the need for Curriculum reforms in line with national economic needs. This section provides an evidence-based perspective on the gaps in the current entrepreneurship Curriculum and the outcomes of past efforts to improve it. It also explores how specific empirical findings can inform the restructuring of entrepreneurship education to address the realities of the Nigerian economy.

The findings of research question one revealed that the entrepreneurship education Curriculum needs a reset because the Curriculum gaps are misaligned with National Needs. The findings based on respondents' responses indicated a mean score of 2.14 and corresponding standard deviation of 0.074. This aligns with research conducted by Ojeifo (2013) who found that the entrepreneurship Curriculum is heavily theoretical, with minimal emphasis on practical skills and hands-on experience. Insufficient practical engagement has led to graduates' being poorly prepared for real-world business challenges, particularly in sectors critical to Nigeria's development, such as agriculture, technology, and manufacturing. Olokundun et al. (2018) also conducted a survey among students and educators in tertiary institutions revealed that most entrepreneurship programmes lack content, focusing on local economic opportunities. For instance, while agriculture remains a dominant sector in the Nigerian economy, only 12% of the entrepreneurship curriculum focused on agricultural enterprises. This finding suggests a severe misalignment between the Curriculum and Nigeria's national economic priorities, which depend heavily on agriculture and other small-scale industries.

The findings from research question two revealed a mean score of 2.73 and a corresponding standard deviation of 0.066, indicating that respondents agreed on the importance of resetting the entrepreneurship education Curriculum to enhance skill acquisition and graduate preparedness, with a focus on national needs and

priorities that the entrepreneurship education Curriculum should address in Nigeria. Adejumo and Olokundun (2018) emphasise that the current Curriculum often overlooks critical sectors such as agriculture, technology, and manufacturing, which are essential for driving national economic growth. For instance, while agriculture remains a significant contributor to Nigeria's GDP, less than 15% of entrepreneurship programs focus on agribusiness skills. This disconnect has resulted in graduates who are less prepared to leverage the vast opportunities within these sectors, ultimately hampering national efforts to diversify the economy away from oil dependence. The empirical data also emphasise that integrating practical and industry-relevant content is vital for addressing unemployment, especially among the youths, who constitute over 60% of the country's population. Similarly, Ayatse and Nnamani (2019) opined that entrepreneurship education must prioritize digital literacy and innovation, as these are crucial to positioning Nigeria within the global economy. The rise of digital platforms and e-commerce presents vast opportunities for economic development, yet the existing Curriculum has not adequately prepared students to exploit these emerging trends. Furthermore, empirical findings show that social entrepreneurship which focuses on addressing pressing societal issues such as health, education, and poverty reduction which should be central to Curriculum reforms. Considering Nigeria's social challenges, a Curriculum that equips students with the skills to address economic and social problems is necessary for holistic national development. These studies affirm the need for a reset Curriculum that aligns with Nigeria's broader development goals.

The findings of research question three revealed a grand mean of 2.72 and a corresponding standard deviation of 0.076 agreed that the role of experiential learning and practical training in entrepreneurship education Curriculum is imperative. Studies have consistently shown that entrepreneurship education is most effective when it includes practical, hands-on experiences. For instance, research by Ediagbonya (2013) demonstrated that students who participated in business simulations, internships, and small enterprise projects during their entrepreneurship courses reported higher levels of entrepreneurial intention and were more likely to start their own businesses after graduation. Igbino and Oke (2019) observed that Nigerian Colleges of Education offer limited experiential learning opportunities. Their survey revealed that only 30% of students had engaged in practical entrepreneurship activities such as starting a business or developing a business plan. Also, Ekpoh and Edet (2016) found that many educators in Nigeria's Colleges of Education lack adequate training to teach entrepreneurship. Their research revealed that less than 50% of entrepreneurship teachers had received formal training in entrepreneurship education. Instead, many relied on outdated teaching methods that emphasised rote memorization over development of practical entrepreneurial skills. Nwangwu (2017) emphasised the need for continuous professional development for educators. The research found that teachers who attended entrepreneurship-focused workshops and exchange programs were more effective in using innovative teaching methods such as case studies, business simulations, and problem-solving activities which improved student engagement and boosted entrepreneurial intention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To effectively reset the entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigeria's Colleges of Education and align it with the country's national needs, the following recommendations have been proposed:

1. **Government and policy makers should overhaul Curriculum to reflect Eemerging Eentrepreneurial Ttrends:** The eEntrepreneurship Curriculum must be revampedreset to incorporate modern entrepreneurial practices such as digital innovation, e-commerce, fintech, and other technology-driven business models. Integrating subjects such as digital marketing, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and blockchain, the Curriculum will equip students with essential skills for the evolving digital economy, preparing them to launch and grow businesses in local and global markets.
2. **Entrepreneurship Curriculum should be contextualized by the government to address local needs:** The Curriculum must be tailored to reflect Nigeria's specific socio-economic conditions. Programs should prioritize sectors with high growth potential, such as agriculture, renewable energy, and small-scale manufacturing, which are essential to Nigerian economy. Additionally, students should also be equipped to navigate local challenges, including infrastructural deficits, access to finance, and

fluctuating government policies. This approach will ensure that the Curriculum aligns with national development goals and better positioned to combat unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

3. **Teachers and educators should emphasize Practical, Experiential Learning:** Theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient for preparing students for real-world entrepreneurship. Colleges of Education should adopt experiential learning approaches, including business simulations, internships, start-up incubators, and entrepreneurship boot camps. Providing opportunities for students to launch micro-enterprises or engage in internships with successful businesses will help bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical application. This will also develop critical skills such as risk management, problem-solving, and innovation.
4. **Management of Tertiary institutions should strengthen teacher capacity building:** The success of any Curriculum reform is contingent on the capability of educators. It is essential to provide continuous professional development and training programs for teachers on modern entrepreneurial practices, teaching methodologies, and the use of digital tools. Educators must be exposed to international best practices through workshops, exchange programs, and partnerships with successful entrepreneurs. This will equip educators to successfully implement the updated Curriculum and guide students in modern entrepreneurial practices.
5. **Management of colleges of education should create partnerships with industry and Government:** Collaboration between Colleges of Education, industries, and government is critical for the successful resetting of the eEntrepreneurship Curriculum. Establishing partnerships with businesses and governmental agencies facilitates resource sharing, internships, funding for student start-ups, and access to markets. Additionally, the government should be actively involved in policy-making that supports eEntrepreneurship eEducation reform by providing incentives, funding, and infrastructure to support entrepreneurial activities within Colleges of Education.
6. **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation of Curriculum should be put in place by all stakeholders:** A mechanism for continuous monitoring and evaluation must be established to assess the effectiveness of the reformed curriculum. This would involve regular feedback from students, educators, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum remains responsive to emerging trends and national needs. An advisory board consisting of experts in education, business, and government must be set up to regularly review and update the curriculum based on evolving economic conditions and global developments.

CONCLUSION

Resetting the entrepreneurship education Curriculum is crucial to address national needs, drive innovation, and foster sustainable economic growth (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). By aligning with national priorities, embracing digital transformation, fostering innovation, developing entrepreneurial mindset, and addressing regional needs, we can create a new generation of entrepreneurs equipped to drive national development. There is an urgent need to reset the Entrepreneurship Curriculum in Nigerian Colleges of Education to reflect the changing demands of the global economy. Incorporating digital skills, enhancing practical learning opportunities, focusing on local economic realities, integrating sustainability, building educator capacity, and fostering an entrepreneurial mindset are all essential to improving entrepreneurship education. By addressing these areas, Colleges of Education can better equip future entrepreneurs to contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's economic growth and development.

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