



## **PRACTICAL SKILL-ORIENTED SECONDARY EDUCATION ENTREPRENEURSHIP CURRICULUM AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN A DEPRESSED ECONOMY, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined practical skill-oriented secondary education entrepreneurship curriculum and capacity building for sustainable development in a depressed economy in Nigeria. The research design employed was ex-post facto research design. The entrepreneurship education curriculum comprising 4 themes namely: salesmanship, business entrepreneurship opportunities, clothing and textile and modeling education revised by NERDC (2012) was used. A total of 4 themes and 12 topics that made up of entrepreneurship curriculum content were assessed to determine the inclusion of the practical skill components. Content assessment of the entrepreneurship education curriculum for practical skill components at each level was conducted under themes and topic. The observation shows that practical skill components is not incorporated in these topics. This study therefore concluded that practical skills component in secondary education curriculum is a major concept that would enable learners to acquire practical skills for self-reliance leading to capacity building for sustainable development in a depressed economy. The study therefore recommended among other things that practical skills components be incorporated in the entrepreneurship education curriculum at secondary education level.

**Keywords:** Practical skills, curriculum, entrepreneurship education, capacity building, sustainable development, depressed economy.



## Introduction

The need for improved level of educational participation for overall development of Nigerian society has been recognized. Practical instructional curriculum has become an established as well as a recognized mode or means of education guide in view for changing socio-economic needs and the emergence of educational demands of the new millennium. The practical oriented curriculum of education emerged as a result of a long search for an educational system that could be provided to individuals to become relevant to themselves and the entire society. According to Zaripova, Zinurova, Parunov and Galyamov (2019), practical oriented teaching is aimed at developing students educational programmes not in the audience, but in real life situations, the formation of students' professional competencies by performing real practical tasks during study time in leading specialized organisations.

Thus, the process of formation of professional competencies, the formation of students as future specialists is focused, systematical and in phases. A role it played by practical-oriented training is significantly and it contributes to an earlier choice of a place for future work (Zaripova, Zinurova, Porunov & Galyamov (2019). This means that, the type of curriculum that is needed as a guide to follow for educating learners in the contemporary Nigeria's depressed economy is the practical oriented curriculum. This type of curriculum, when exposed to learners at the secondary education level, will equip them with the relevant skills and attitude that will enable them become self-employed and selfreliant even if they cannot continue with their education beyond secondary level of education. This will lead to sustainable national development in Nigeria in the face of the depressed economy.

When individuals are empowered through functional education, that is skills based oriented curriculum, they are better equipped with the knowledge and skills to:

- Engage in practical activities for daily living even before graduation; Understand their interest (likes and dislikes) and vocation; Live responsible lives and be focused in life; Live successful live; Contribute meaningfully to the family and the society; - Live peaceful lives and endure challenges in life.

Following the above, Nigeria joined other nations in their march towards worthwhile educational investment and reforms for national progress, growth and development. Then adjusted her educational system especially at the secondary school level of education to encompass diversified curriculum that would integrates academics with entrepreneurship subjects in a view to empowering individuals for self-employment. In line with this, the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) (FRN, 2012) revised secondary education curriculum to incorporate entrepreneurship education. The main trust of this is to re-engineer the curriculum with entrepreneurship education, information and communication technology (ICT) skills and civic education. This is because these areas have been widely acknowledged as potent and liable tools for self-employment, job creation, wealth creation as well as peaceful co-existence (FRN, 2007).

According to Ajaiye (2007), curriculum is a tool through which the needs, aspirations, interest and objectives of a society are articulated and as learning experience for the development of an individual through teaching and learning process. To Gbamanja (2002), curriculum is an organization or a prescribed pattern of subject matter which include issues in the society about the child's and knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to achieve set objectives. Thus Ughamaelu



(2006), pointed out that the general purpose for planning and developing a curriculum is to have an instrument of education for a society which can foster its ideals and values and subsequently lead to the maximum attainment of its social, economic and other needs and aspirations.

The planned curriculum is in a form of written document the embodiment of assumptions and suggestions to guide the actions of the teachers and learners. Thus, if the curriculum is not properly planned and effectively implemented in the teaching and learning process, it will have its laudable goals and objectives defeated (Efedi & Moemeke, 2009). It is on this note that, Ivowi (2009), refers to curriculum as a tool designed for educating a person in order to change the orientation, behaviour, actions and values of learners not only to develop self, but also the world around them. Curriculum as an educational process, therefore, equips an individual with enabling knowledge and skills to be productive in the dynamic society. If the curriculum of entrepreneurship education at the senior secondary school level is skilled-based, learners would be equipped with the relevance skills needed in the contemporary Nigerian society for survival. This will enable them to be productive thereby contributing for themselves and the society. The introduction of curriculum at the secondary school, therefore, is meant to equip learners with the necessary skills to be productive in life thereby becoming self-employed and self-reliant as well as contribute positively to the development of the society.

Entrepreneurship education is the incorporation into the syllabus (from curriculum) steps involve in starting a new business base on a recognized business opportunity as well as operating and maintaining a business. For one to be a successful entrepreneur, he needs to learn the skills. This means entrepreneurship education is concerned with the acquisition

of knowledge that culminates to an individual becoming self-employed, self-reliant and to create job and wealth for himself. It is the form of education which involves learners in acquiring skills, knowledge and competency that will enable them to use the available resources for firm career making service or being employers of an organization. According to Iyekekpolor (2007), the goal of this kind of education is entrepreneurship, that is the production of an individual who is self-reliant and an employer of labour.

In view of the above, entrepreneurship plays an in the national development of a nation it introduced as a compulsory course in the curriculum of the Nigerian educational institutions such as secondary schools, colleges of educations, polytechnics and universities. According to Odei (2010), this measure is aimed at addressing the problems of graduate unemployment and strategically repositioning the Nigerian economy for leadership in Africa. Nwosu (2007) observed that the need to consider entrepreneurship as a means of job creation is anchored on the fact that government alone cannot provide all the jobs that school leavers required. Thus the major aim of introducing entrepreneurship education curriculum in secondary school curriculum is that students having successfully complete the senior secondary education, should have acquired the relevant skills to enable them create jobs and generate wealth leading to sustainable development. Entrepreneurship education was introduced in school curriculum due to persistent increase in the level of unemployment especially for the youth Agatue & Unandi, (2011). Entrepreneurship is the capacity to harness the right quantity quality and combination of resources that are consistent with profit making under risk and uncertainty. It is a dynamic and social process where individuals solely or in group identify that possibilities and utilized them by transforming ideas into practical



and goal-oriented activities in a socio-cultural and economic context. It involves educating learners through inculcating a range of skills and attitudes and ability to think creatively, work with teams, manage risk and handle uncertainty. This is supported by the fact that changing “mind self” is part of entrepreneurial pipeline which start in education and runs through research and running enterprises (Uwen, 2012).

An individual with basic entrepreneurship skills can manage himself/herself by setting up a personal business and so become self-employed as well as being employer of labour. Thus, the curriculum content of entrepreneurship education should enable individuals to acquire the necessary practical skills needed to become self-employed and self-reliant in a chosen field of endeavor. This implies that the curriculum content of entrepreneurship education of secondary schools should be practically oriented to enable learners acquire practical skills and become self-employed upon graduation (Ukeje, 2010). The acquisition of the practical skills by learners will go a long way to enable the graduates engage in the production of goods and services in an economy (Nigerian economy) leading to sustainable national development. This will have a multiplier effect of cushioning the effect of the present depression being experienced in the nation (Nigeria).

However, despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria’s school curriculum, massive graduate’s/youth unemployment is on the increase in the contemporary Nigerian society. This could be as a result of several factors which include government policies, inadequate provisional entrepreneurship education teachers in the area of skills acquisition, inadequate capital to start a business venture, the predominantly theoretical oriented nature of the senior

secondary education entrepreneurship education curriculum among others. This can be seen in the following themes: Salesmanship, Business entrepreneurship opportunities, clothing and textile and modeling education curriculum extract of the senior secondary education curriculum. These contents are predominantly theoretically based. Is then means the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship would be predominantly theoretical as well. As such, learners can hardly be equipped with the relevant entrepreneurship skills that would enable them set up a productive venture to become self-employ. This implies that the teaching of entrepreneurship education at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria cannot be effective due to the predominantly theoretically oriented nature of entrepreneurship education curriculum.

Following the above, Adejimola and Olufunmilayo (2009) reported that about 80% of the graduates in Nigeria finds it difficult to get employment elsewhere. At the same time much has not been done in trying to bring collaboration between the entrepreneur and the institutions. In the same vein, Baba (2013) posits that about 80% of the Nigerians find it difficult to get employment elsewhere. This is corroborated by the National Bureau of Statistics (Damillale, 2015) that unemployment rate as increased from 8.2% to 29.9% in the third quarter of 2015. This could be as a result of the predominantly theoretical oriented entrepreneurship education curriculum of senior secondary school level of education leading to predominantly theoretical instructions that learners are exposed to. Thus, with an indication that practically oriented curriculum of entrepreneurship education at the senior secondary education level of education will equip learners with the relevant practical skills when exposed to, learners will acquire the relevant life-long practical skills for self-employment when





exposed to than the current predominantly theoretical oriented curriculum. Hence the need to incorporate practical strategies in the entrepreneurship education curriculum at the secondary level of education. Teachers of entrepreneurship education curriculum, thus, have the task of transforming theoretical or cognitive concepts in entrepreneurship education curriculum into psycho-productive skills to enable learners acquire the practical skills and become independent in a given career choice (Ekele, 2015).

Skills according to Iorbee, Amenger and Madugu (2010), are the expertise, practice ability, dexterity and fact exhibited by an individual in a given career. It is the expertise, practiced ability or proficiency displayed in the performance of a task. Skill is a well-established habit of doing things by people (Mojekwu, 2010). To possess a skill is therefore to demonstrate the habit of acting, thinking and behaving in a specific activity in such a way that the process becomes natural to the individual through repetition or practice. Surman (1993) assert that the quality of skill training in Nigeria educational institutions is low. There is undue emphasis on the theory certification rather than on skill acquisition and proficiency testing. As a result, entrepreneurship skill is hardly acquired due to lack of nonincorporation of practicals in entrepreneurship education curriculum.

Skill is an ability possessed to carry out activities with ease and accuracy. It is the ability to perform well in a task as a result of one's exposure to training and practice. No matter the level of gifted, an individual may hardly be skilled in a task without exposure, training or practice. Thus Abariko and Olabiyi (2015), refer to skill as the outcome of the training given to a learner or an employee to make him perform more expertly and easily on his job by using his knowledge effectively and

readily in execution of his performance. According to Nnachi (2007), one can be skilled in writing, reading, sewing, cooking, baking and trading. Skilled person in certain jobs are individuals that have undergone some extensive training in such a job and have mastered the activities that leads to successful performance in the job. Skill, therefore, involves mastery as a result of training, exposure or practice (Nnachi, 2007).

In view of the above, it is pertinent that the incorporation of practical strategy in the curriculum of entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level of education can be of great impact to the learners and the Nigerian society in general. This is so because when such a curriculum is implemented, it may lead to the acquisition of practical skills. The practical skills acquired will build the capacity of the learners in the production of goods and services. This can enable learners to become self-employed and self-reliance in life time. This will also further have a multiplier effect of bringing sustainable national development in the nation (Nigeria). The sustainable national development would cushion the effect of the depressed economy currently being experienced in the nation.

Capacity building is the improvements in an individual, organization, facility (or capabilities to produce, perform or display). It is the process of developing and strengthening the skills, institutions abilities, process and resources that organisations and communities need to survive, adapt and thrive in a fast-changing world. Graduates need encouragement to start and sustain their business and become successful entrepreneurs. They need various capacity building training programmes and infrastructure development to assist and support them. Capacity building training programmes can be described as the various learning activities organized to improve knowledge, skills, attitudes and business



ability with young entrepreneurs to enhance them entrepreneurial abilities, skills and competencies to achieve business success (Boldureanu et al, 2020). Building the capacity of learners through practice would be a recognition that various government agencies and institutions are aware of the importance of empowering them and enhancing their knowledge, skills and the business transaction ability of young entrepreneurs and therefore need to properly equip them for success in business. This will go a long way to bring about sustainable national development in Nigeria.

Development can be referred to as a process of providing an improvement, growth or progress in the lives of people. Agwu (2016), posits that development can be in different forms which include: educational, economic, social and political development. It is aimed to bring about genuine human development, either inform of material, improvement, economic growth or reformation of institute and infrastructure. Sustainable development quoted from “Our common future” also known as the Brundtland refers to it as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs (Mc Chesney, 1991). The definition of sustainable development is viewed in a broad form focusing on intergenerational equitable and balance that includes, economic, social, educational, environmental aspect. Thus for development to be sustained, there should be continuous balance in the interest of different groups within the same generation and among different generations.

The contemporary Nigerian society is facing challenges in all the three dimensions of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental and lots of people are living in abject poverty and income inequality. This has resulted into a lot of social problems, unsustainable

production, huge economic and social costs (Anyanwu, 2017). These have resulted to a lot of problems ranging from hunger, malnourishment, armed banditry, kidnapping, bunkering and corruption. Viewing from the role of entrepreneurship in the development of a nation, it is regarded as an indispensable tool for sustainable development. It is an important window to wider opportunities.

Following the above, it is pertinent that practical oriented senior secondary education entrepreneurship education curriculum would lead to the production of graduate who can embark on the production of goods and services in the nation leading to sustainable development. As such, Nigeria will be liberated from the current depression given that learners are properly exposed to it. This is so because learners acquiring the requisite skill that would enable them become self –employed and self-reliant. Depression occurs when there is general decline in the economic activities. These include considerable reduction in the production of goods and services, employment, income, demand and prices. The general decline in economic activities that leads to a fall in bank deposit and credit expansion stops because businessmen are not willing to borrow and the bank rate fall considerably. Thus, depression is characterized by mass unemployment, general fall in prices, profit, wages, interest rate, consumption, expenditure, investment, bank deposit and loans. Factories are closed down and construction of all type of capital goods, building is on the standstill (Jhinga, 2003).

The Nigerian economy faces ripping effects of the global economic crises resulting to breakdown and decline in economic vigour. The effect find expression in downsizing, mass unemployment and crashes in money markets. This condition is made worst now by the recent Covid19 (in 2019), the cash crush/naira swap, a monetary policy to redesign naira in 2023, the current



government policy of removing fuel subsidy among others. All these have culminated in shrinking industrial output, low level of commercial activities, reducing unemployment opportunities for millions of Nigerians.

Dawodu (2008) pointed out that 66.7% of Nigerians are poor. Despite living in a country with vast potential wealth created by the huge avenues, which form 90% of the federally generated revenue. In a real sense, these people are unemployed thereby living in abject poverty and could not put their hands to work and service amidst untold hardship in the economy. One of the avenues to realizing the noble aspiration is to expose learners to practical skills oriented entrepreneurship curriculum. This

component is crucial now than ever in the face of globally depressed economy and mass unemployment.

### Methodology

The research design employed in this study was ex-post facto research design. The entrepreneurship curriculum revised by NERDC (2012) was used. Four new trade curriculums namely: salesmanship, clothing and textile, business entrepreneurship opportunities, and modeling education were selected for this study. These themes altogether contain 12 topics on entrepreneurship. The topics were examined for practical skill contents in all these curricula at all the levels (SS1 – 3).

### Result

Table 1: Practical Skill content in SS1 – 3 Entrepreneurship Curriculum

Theme	Topics	Practical Component	Skill
1. Salesmanship	(1). Meaning of entrepreneur	None	
	(2). Types of entrepreneur	None	
	(3). Role and qualities of entrepreneur	None	
	(4). Problems of entrepreneurship	None	
2. Business Entrepreneurship Opportunities	(5). Small scale entrepreneurs	None	
	(6). Medium and large scale entrepreneur	None	
3. Clothing and Textile curriculum	(7). Meaning of entrepreneurship	None	
	(8). Entrepreneurship skills in clothing and textile	None	
	(9). Small scale business and textile e.g. clothing, merchandising, interior decoration, apprentice training programme	None	
	(10). Renowned fashion design in Nigeria	None	
4. Modelling Education	(11). Meaning of modelling	None	
	(12). Role of different figures types in the art of modelling	None	



The above table has shown a total of four (4) themes and 12 topics in entrepreneurship education curriculum from SS1–SSIII. Both the themes and the topic did not incorporate practical skills component.

The report on the table illustrates that the entrepreneurship curriculum from the new trade areas did not incorporate practical skills component in its themes and topics. This implies that the teaching of these subjects has been predominantly theoretically based (conventional method). As a result, the objectives of entrepreneurship education of value-reorientation, wealth generation and empowering the citizenry as spell out by the NERDC (2012) cannot lead to the achievement of capacity building by the nation. In addition, the major aimed that students having passed through secondary education should acquire skills in a specific trade area to enable them create jobs and generate wealth cannot be achieved. The illustration of this study is in line with the earlier findings of Achor, Agogo and Dodo (2020), who found that the content of prevocational studies curriculum which is entrepreneurship based did not address internship training which is practical in nature. Thus it is dominated by theoretical teaching instead of practical teaching which equip students with the relevant skills for self-employment. This therefore, means that the present curriculum cannot lead the nation to achieve capacity building for sustainable national development in the depressed economy.

The illustration of this study also agrees with Okua (2013) who found out the teaching of prevocational studies for self-empowerment is not guarantee as its teaching is dominated by theoretical strategy. Thus, the illustration of this study imply that the aim of introducing entrepreneurship education in secondary school curriculum cannot be achieved. This is so because the teaching for practical

skills acquisition is not guarantee as it is predominantly taught theoretically. This therefore means that the capacity building for sustainable development in a depressed Nigerian economy cannot be achieved.

### Conclusion

The illustration of this study has led to the conclusion that entrepreneurship education curriculum in the new trade curriculum to train future entrepreneurs did not incorporate practical skill components. As a result, the curriculum is taught mainly through the theoretical approach rather than practical approach, which enhances acquisition of practical skills. In addition, practical skills component in curriculum enhances students' skill acquisition and capacity building for sustainable development in a depressed economy.

### Recommendations:

1. Curriculum planners and developers should incorporate practical skills concepts in entrepreneurship education curriculum especially for teaching trade curriculum.
2. Entrepreneurship education teachers should endeavor to teach the subject practically to enhance the acquisition of practical skills as this will lead to capacity building for sustainable development in a depressed (Nigeria) economy.

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