

**INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETENCIES IN  
BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS**

**Prof. Anthony U. OBAYI**

Department of Entrepreneurial Studies  
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture  
UMUDIKE, Abia State

and

**Blessing T. ASEMEBO & Felix O. ARIWAODO**

Department of agricultural and vocational education  
(Business Education Programme)  
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture  
UMUDIKE, Abia State

**Abstract**

Strategies for developing entrepreneurship skills should engage students in experiential learning. The need to develop entrepreneurial skills among students in the classroom has taken a global dimension due to growing graduate unemployment and economic recession. School-industry link is one of the pedagogic practices to enhance students learning of entrepreneurial skills in the classroom. Business education teachers should be exposed to the different strategies of teaching entrepreneurship education which will help both secondary and tertiary schools achieve their mission of making students innovative, creative and competent in their areas of specialization. This paper looks at the concept of innovative instructional strategies for developing entrepreneurship competencies in business education students. It establishes the importance of school-industry links in imparting entrepreneurial skills to students in the classroom, and examines different strategies for inculcating entrepreneurship skills. It also identifies some challenges for developing entrepreneurship competencies in business education students and strategies for developing entrepreneurial skills in classroom.

**Introduction**

Business education is a subset of vocational education that deals with business opportunities. Similarly, business education is primarily education for vocation. It is of great importance to individuals and the economy of a nation. It is concerned with education of individuals for and about business. It is an aspect of educational programme offered at the intermediate and higher institutions of learning to prepare

students for careers in business. The broad aim of business education, according to Chekwude (2015) is to train the youth and unemployed persons for jobs and also to help workers update their job skills. The content and training of business education has traditionally been too theoretical because of Nigeria colonial heritage, though business education stresses the acquisition of skills and knowledge to enable the recipients to become gainfully employed and useful in the economic reformation of the society that is encouraging entrepreneurship (Jimoh-Kadiri, 2010).

### **Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and to run an enterprise successfully (Suleiman, 2006). The entrepreneurship spirit is a pre-requisite to an entrepreneurial society and culture. This spirit is required for the overall economic growth of any nation especially developing ones like Nigeria. This is in line with the view of Nwangwu (2006) that entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual or a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity to produce goods and services for public consumption. In the words of Dangote in Odjegba (2005) entrepreneurship is built on vision, focus and determination. It is built on standards management practices, enabling environment, access to funds.

Entrepreneurship education is simply defined as the process of providing individuals with the concepts and skills to recognize opportunities that others have overlooked and to have the insight, self-esteem and knowledge to act where others have hesitated (Jimoh-Kadiri, 2010). According to Ordu (2015), entrepreneurship education is the teaching and learning process aimed at providing learners with the ability to recognize market opportunities, create business enterprise and operate such business outfit successfully. Teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education are focused on the development of necessary knowledge, self-employability skills and competencies in students. It draws the interest of students who want the opportunity to operate their own business, make money and be successful. Entrepreneurship education emphasizes imagination, creativity and risk taking in business. The focus of entrepreneurship education is to equip students with productive work life and self-reliance.

### **Types of Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is classified into the following types:

#### **a. Small Business Entrepreneurship-**

Businesses here involve hairdressers, grocery stores, travel agents, consultants, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, etc. These people run or own their own business and hire family members or local employee. For them, the profit would be able to feed their family and not making 100 million business or taking over an industry.

They fund their business by taking small business loans or loans from friends and family.

**b. Scalable Startup Entrepreneurship-**

This start-up entrepreneur starts a business knowing that their vision can change the world. They attract investors who think and encourage people who think out of the box. They hire the best and the brightest employees. They require more venture capital to fuel and back their project or business.

**c. Large Company Entrepreneurship-**

These huge companies have defined life-cycle. Most of these companies grow and sustain by offering new and innovative products that revolve around their main products. The change in technology, customer preferences, new competition, etc., builds pressure for large companies to create an innovative product and sell it to the new set of customers in the new market. To cope with the rapid technological changes, the existing organizations either buy innovation enterprises or attempt to construct the product internally.

**d. Social Entrepreneurship-**

This type of entrepreneurship focuses on producing product and services that resolve social needs and problems. Their only motto and goal is to work for society and not make any profits.

**Characteristics of Entrepreneurs:**

Not all entrepreneurs are successful; there are definite characteristics that make entrepreneurship successful. A few of them are mentioned below:

**1. Ability to take a risk-**

Starting any new venture involves a considerable amount of failure risk. Therefore, an entrepreneur needs to be courageous and able to evaluate and take risks, which is an essential part of being an entrepreneur.

**2. Innovation-**

One should be highly innovative to generate new ideas, start a company and earn profits out of it. Change can be the launching of a new product that is new to the market or a process that does the same thing but in a more efficient and economical way.

**3. Visionary and Leadership quality-**

To be successful, the entrepreneur should have a clear vision of his new venture. However, to turn the idea into reality, a lot of resources and employees are required. Here, leadership quality is paramount because leaders impart and guide their employees towards the right path of success.

**4. Open-Mindedness-**

In a business, every circumstance can be an opportunity and used for the benefit of a company. For example, Paytm recognized the gravity of demonetization and

acknowledged the need for online transactions would be more, so it utilized the situation and expanded massively during this time.

**5. Flexibility-**

An entrepreneur should be flexible and open to change according to the situation. To be on the top, a businessperson should be equipped to embrace change in a product and service, as and when needed.

**6. Knowledge of Product-**

A company owner should know the product offerings and also be aware of the latest trend in the market. It is essential to know if the available product or service meets the demands of the current market, or whether it is time to tweak it a little. Being able to be accountable and then alter as needed is a vital part of entrepreneurship.

**Importance of Entrepreneurship**

**1. Creation of Employment-** Entrepreneurship generates employment. It provides an entry-level job, required for gaining experience and training for unskilled workers.

**2. Innovation-**

It is the hubs of innovations that provides new product ventures, market, technology and quality of goods, etc., and increase the standard of living of people.

**3. Impact on Society and Community Development-**

A society becomes greater if the employment base is large and diversified. It brings about changes in society and promotes facilities like higher expenditure on education, better sanitation, fewer slums, a higher level of homeownership. Therefore, entrepreneurship assists the organisation towards a more stable and high quality of community life.

**4. Increase Standard of Living-**

Entrepreneurship helps to improve the standard of living of a person by increasing the income. The standard of living means, increase in the consumption of various goods and services by a household for a particular period.

**5. Supports research and development-**

New products and services need to be researched and tested before launching in the market. Therefore, an entrepreneur also dispenses finance for research and development with research institutions and universities. This promotes research, general construction, and development in the economy.

**The Challenges for Developing Entrepreneurship Competencies in Business Education Students**

Despite the profound benefits of entrepreneurship education, it is still not fully blown in Nigeria. The problems that hinder the development of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria include the following:

### **1. Finance**

There is need for substantial funds for teachings in practical terms for entrepreneurship education; for financing startups and expansion of business ventures in order to produce successful entrepreneurs. These funds could come from internal sources like personal savings, financial support from friends, relations, traditional co-operative groups and societies or externally from institutions like banks, government agencies and nongovernmental organizations.

These sources do not guarantee funds for youths start-up and business expansion for the following reasons. The funds from internal sources are largely inadequate due to high poverty level. The graduates have little or nothing on themselves. On the other hand, accessing funds from external sources is difficult due to demand for collaterals by these agencies, and, in some cases requirements for part funding of the total money required for an entrepreneurship activity. The youths do not have these collaterals nor the part funding. The failure to present these denies them access to the funds required for the business ventures.

### **2. Inadequate Equipment and Technology**

The cost of equipment is quite high and cannot be offered by most Nigerians especially young graduates. This makes for difficulty in development of entrepreneurship as technology is closely related to entrepreneurship. It therefore calls for a need for the provision of affordable technologies.

### **3. Economic Pressure from Parents**

There is often great pressure from some Nigerian parents who prefer their children making money in the short term over long term benefits of education. This makes it difficult for youths to devote enough time required for training in entrepreneurship. It is also as a result of such pressures that Nigeria is faced with a high rate of child labour without any skill in entrepreneurship.

### **4. Education**

Entrepreneurship demands a talented workforce. Our system of education fails to provide the necessary foundation for such a work force. Our schools up to the tertiary level presently do not have a well-developed curricular that emphasizes initiatives to increase accountability.

### **5. Entrepreneurial Attitude**

The wealth resources and rich endowment of mineral resources for Nigeria have largely allowed the Nigerian populace and even the government to be complacent. A great majority of the Nigerian people has utopian ideas; live in affluence in some cases more imaginary than attained. Furthermore, since it is believed that there is a strong climate for entrepreneurs, there is little or no worry about entrepreneurship education. The necessary drive for an entrepreneur is not there and this leads to

poor performance in entrepreneurship. Supporting this view is the assertion by Akpa (2007) that an average entrepreneur is rugged and aggressive.

## **6. Data**

Data for entrepreneurship education has been lacking. There is little or limited programme design for entrepreneurship education.

## **7. Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities**

Due to inadequacy of facilities like good roads, electricity, access to information, water supply etc. there is increased problem confronting the development of entrepreneurship education. There is difficulty of communicating ideas and wares with other areas. Without sales entrepreneurship cannot be fully blown.

## **8. Cultural Barriers**

Entrepreneurship requires a culture that respects risk taking. Without the willingness to take risks it is not possible to create value from knowledge. The culture of risk taking in Nigeria needs to be properly addressed in view of its diverse cultures which often cause a barrier to investments.

## **9. Research and Linkages**

Success in entrepreneurship depends critically on openness and linkages with innovation systems in other countries. This is so because strong innovation systems depend both on local environment and global connectedness. The level of linkages between our research centres and universities with the outside world is still not fully developed. This is highly essential for entrepreneurship to thrive.

## **Strategies for Developing Entrepreneurship Skills in Classroom**

Many scholars, writers and researchers have advanced ways of equipping students with entrepreneurship skills in the classrooms at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Akani (2011) lists some strategies that will help in developing entrepreneurship skills in students as follows:

- a. Organizing internship programme for students.
- b. Organizing seminars, workshops for students.
- c. Practical counseling on entrepreneurship and skill acquisition for students.
- d. Accessibility of loan that is granting soft loans to graduates to enable them start of their various business.
- e. Rewarding students that perform well in entrepreneurship and skills acquisition activities.

Mohammed and Funtua (2009) also identify some methods on developing skills in the student in classroom as: -

1. Activity Based method
2. Learner or child centred method
3. Problem solving method



4. Science -Technology- Society

5. Excursion method

6. Demonstration method.

If these are fully utilized according to Umanu and Adu, a combination of all or few of these can provide the necessary skill to the students/pupils. Teachers are encouraged to maximize much of, if not all the above as opined by Ivowi (2006).

In addition to the above listed methods of developing the required skills, there are other essential ingredients necessary for effective skills development in students/pupils in the classroom.

These according to Umanu and Adu (2009) include:

**a. Motivation –**

The teacher needs to motivate his students/pupils during teaching and learning in the classroom to learn the necessary skills for future application in the entrepreneurial process. The motivation could be both intrinsic and extrinsic. Once interest is developed learning will follow.

**b. Encouragement –**

The teacher needs to encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills. These could be achieved through;

1. providing child-friendly environment to the pupils/students.
2. Displaying a role model attitude to his pupils/students.
3. Exposing the pupils/students to challenging opportunities.
4. Providing times for exploration through excursions and its likes.

**c. Improvisation –**

The costly nature materials to use couple with the problem of damages and insufficient power supply in Nigeria presently calls for improvisation, which is in form of drawing of a chart or using transparent tumbler as a break.

**Other Strategies for Developing Entrepreneurship Skill include**

The use of some methods such as student centred methods, team/teaching, collaborative learning and field trip during teaching in the classroom.

1. To encourage student to be creative and discover things by themselves under the guidance of the teacher.
2. Encouraging students to set up a mini-enterprise before graduating by organizing holiday workshop based which they will be rewarded of excellent performance on out-standing efforts.
3. Organizing Regular visitation to local entrepreneurs in the community.

Visiting local entrepreneurs will enable the students become familiar with entrepreneurial and management task and thus give the students opportunity to have contacts they can draw upon to pursue and realize their entrepreneurial aspiration to actualize their dreams.

## **Conclusion**

The lecture method of teaching is predominantly used to teach entrepreneurship education in both secondary and tertiary schools and for teaching method to be effective in learning of entrepreneurship; it should be supported with effective strategies. The strategies for teaching and learning of entrepreneurship should engage students in experiential learning whereby they observe, interpret, analyse, make decision and consider consequences. Effective entrepreneurship education in business education should focus on the strategies which business education teachers have considered effective when teaching entrepreneurship in order to enhance instruction in the course.

## **Recommendations**

In order to instill requisite entrepreneurial skills into Business education students, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Business education teachers should be exposed to the different strategies of teaching entrepreneurship education which will help tertiary institutions achieve their mission of making undergraduates innovative, creative and competent in their areas of specialization.
2. Business education lecturers should continue to employ the identified strategies in teaching and learning of entrepreneurship since most of the strategies are considered effective.
3. Business education students should be exposed to direct interaction with “real life” business situations, dramatization, social interaction and role playing by close exposure to role models having been taught with the identified effective strategies.
4. Curriculum planners should incorporate the right teaching strategies into the curriculum to make curriculum contents more innovative with emphasis on practical applications which will contribute significantly to the packaging of adequate entrepreneurship education curricula.
5. Seminars, workshops, symposia and in-service training should be frequently organized for business educators for teaching entrepreneurship by the appropriate authorities. This will expose teachers to the latest strategies of teaching and learning of entrepreneurship in business education.
6. Facilities, equipment and machines needed for teaching entrepreneurship education should be made available to both teachers and students by government and stakeholders in education

## **References**

- Akani, O. (2011). *Science and technology education curriculum and entrepreneurship skills acquisition at the senior secondary school level; Problems and prospects*. A paper presented at 24th Annual conference of curriculum organization of Nigeria, held at Benue State University.



- Chekwude, E.A. (2015). Traditional pedagogy to innovative pedagogy in business education: A challenge to business educators. *ABEN Conference Proceedings*, 2(1), 86-94.
- Ivowi, U.M.O (2006). Re-engineering primary education for scientific and technological skills acquisition. In A.U Mohammed & I.A Funtua (2009). *Developing Entrepreneurial skills through integrated science. STN 50th Annual Conference* pp 245-248.
- Jimoh-Kadiri, S.O. (2010). Methods of inculcating entrepreneurship skills into business education students in tertiary institutions in Edo State. *Intellectualism – A Multidisciplinary Journal*. (3) 85-90.
- Nwangwu I.O. (2006) *Fundamentals of entrepreneurship in educational management*. Enugu: Cheston Agency Ltd.
- Odjegba, E. (2005) “Building Nigeria’s entrepreneurship: What stakeholders say about essential ingredients”. *Sunday Vanguard*. July 3.
- Suleiman, A.S. (2006) *The business entrepreneur: Entrepreneurial development, Small and medium enterprises*. 2nd edition Kaduna: Entrepreneurship Academy publishing