

# Evaluating the Entrepreneurship Pedagogy and Support Landscape in Secondary Schools In Nigeria

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**Abstract:** The study examines the entrepreneurship pedagogy and support landscape in secondary schools in Kaduna metropolis. Through the application of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, critical stakeholders including teachers, quality directors, school principals and proprietors were interviewed to determine the state of entrepreneurship education/training in Nigeria, using Kaduna metropolis as case study. Findings reveal poor articulation of national entrepreneurship curriculum, inadequate facilities and resources in the schools visited. Subsequently, some far-reaching suggestions and recommendations were offered to improve entrepreneurship pedagogy in Nigeria in general.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship education, Secondary school, Nigeria, Kaduna, Curriculum

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## 1. Introduction

The impact of entrepreneurial activities and the creation of new businesses on the economic growth of a country and the generation of jobs are recognised worldwide (Sánchez, 2012). Some studies (e.g., Olokundun et al., 2014; Ojo, 2021) have surmised that entrepreneurship competence is relevant for all areas of working and business life, in both new and established activities and enterprises. It is expected that job creation will increase when young people (e.g., secondary school students) are given sound entrepreneurship education and training, for it is today's pupils and students that will create the values and workplaces of the future. It is due to its importance that governments all over the world are paying attention to entrepreneurship education and ensuring its inclusion into schools and colleges curriculum. The key concepts of entrepreneurship can be taught at any time in a person's life, but the values and attitudes that produce a successful entrepreneur are more likely to develop if they are explored and nurtured at a tender age. Teaching children (and young people) about entrepreneurship offers a career path, but more importantly, students learn of the economic and social benefits that entrepreneurs provide to their families, to their communities and their country (Appalachian Regional Commission, 2004).

Nigeria is experiencing a youth bulge (UNDP, 2018) such that the country is regarded as a 'country of the young' with almost half the entire population (46%) currently under the age of 15 (UNICEF, 2019). A sizeable percentage of these young people are especially vulnerable and live in extreme poverty (Ojo, 2019). According to Virk et al. (2024), Nigerian youth face multiple challenges, including poverty, unemployment, and underemployment, limited educational opportunities, and health challenges. The challenges facing Nigeria today is to make education meaningful and more inclusive to this set of young people around the country. Education is widely accepted as one of the most critical means of overcoming the challenges of development, poverty, and inequality. But, from every available study and statistics youth (and general) unemployment is endemic in Nigeria. For example, 55.4% of young people aged 15% to 35% are without work in Nigeria (Al Jazeera, 2019). The number of out of school children and unemployed youth/teenagers in the country is alarming. For instance, there are 727,000 out-of-school children in Kaduna State alone (Alhassan, 2019). The facts on the ground (e.g., high youth unemployment figures, business failures, extreme poverty, etc.) could indicate weak uptake of entrepreneurship among the youth. Subsequently, it could be inferred that the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria's institutions of learning are far from being satisfactory; such that the current quality of education in the country leaves much to be desired.

Studies (e.g., Ajagbe et al., 2016; Ojo, 2021) suggest that the development level of entrepreneurship education and training in many centres of learning in Nigeria may not be mature enough to meet the needs of entrepreneurial practice. Therefore, the perfection of the entrepreneurship education and training system is essential to raise the level of entrepreneurship education and training for the promotion of the entrepreneurial qualities and abilities of students and learners. Invariably, effective entrepreneurship education and training will be particularly useful in a state like Kaduna, which is battling with the challenges of the social menace posed by unemployed youths (Akhaine, 2016). Thus, the key question on focus is: What is the state of entrepreneurship education in Kaduna secondary schools? But the specific question is: Do the current entrepreneurship education

methods and implementation effective in secondary schools in Kaduna? The paper is organised into five sections: (a) conceptual framework - entrepreneurship education, and training (b) contextual interrogation - challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria (c) methodology (d) findings and analysis (e) summary, implications, recommendations, and conclusion.

## **2. Conceptual Matters - Entrepreneurship Education and Training**

Nowadays, entrepreneurship educators view entrepreneurship as a valid concept in all human activities, not just in business (Kirby, 2004). Accordingly, entrepreneurship is defined broadly, including enterprising behaviors, even outside the business context. But the key question remains - can entrepreneurship be taught? According to some authors (e.g., Low, 2001; Woollard et al., 2007), entrepreneurship can indeed be taught and learned though its success depends on internal (individual) and external (contextual) factors (Davidsson, 2003), and should also be related to the development of entrepreneurial behaviour (Fayolle & Gailly, 2013). In this sense, an enterprising person may not necessarily be an entrepreneur and his/her skills and characteristics may be exercised in different contexts (e.g., in a social context as a family or local community) instead of in the market. The academic training aspect of entrepreneurship is important to expose students to new ideas and trends in management and business in the process of obtaining a formal education. In the fast-changing competitive environment, it is no longer enough to know how to perform a specific activity. The ability to create new knowledge is also vital. Entrepreneurship education and training enhance an entrepreneur's absorptive capacity, thereby also influencing his/her capability to acquire and create new knowledge and enabling him/her to better articulate and structure the knowledge-transfer process. The theoretical knowledge in entrepreneurship education/training should emphasise skills like critical thinking, creativity, communication, user orientation, and teamwork as well as using domain-specific and linguistic knowledge. Hitherto, a positive impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial outcome measures has been reported in many studies. For instance, in a review of literature, Mwasalwiba (2010: 35) found that most studies agreed that "entrepreneurship education has some positive impact on students." Similarly, scholars such as Martin et al. (2012) found a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship skills, intentions, and outcomes, although there were potential pitfalls in methodologies in most of the studies (Lorz et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, there are several approaches to teaching entrepreneurship as various researchers proposed assorted methods in delivering entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to students (Fiet, 2000a; Fiet, 2000b). Some of these approaches extended from conventional methods such as textbooks (Fiet, 2002), examinations (McMullan & Cahoon, 1979) to unconventional methods like a business plan (Audet, 2000), life histories of working entrepreneurs (McKenzie, 2004); guest lectures (Klandt & Volkmann, 2006), and field study or visits to business organisations (Cooper et al., 2004). Notwithstanding the differences in curriculum and delivery approaches, the ultimate aim of entrepreneurial programs is to stimulate entrepreneurship awareness among students to increase their interest in entrepreneurship. Taken together, the debate has moved beyond whether entrepreneurship can or should be taught to focus on how to constantly improve entrepreneurship content and delivery to meet the needs of students (e.g., Gendron, 2004).

## **3. Contextual Interrogation - Challenges of Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Ojo (2021) contends that education in general, and secondary education in particular, seems not to have been properly structured in Nigeria. For instance, the philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment that will provide occupational orientation, technology acquisition, job creation and work discipline is lacking. The failure of secondary education to inculcate these ideas in students has led to wastages in terms of both human and natural resources. This is because youths are not sufficiently equipped with the skills to utilise the natural resources around them (Ojo, 2021). Likewise, Genty et al. (2014) argue that, though there exist several entrepreneurial training institutions in Nigeria, there is no sustainable entrepreneurship system in place. This is because most entrepreneurial training institutions adopt the traditional model of entrepreneurship training. The traditional model of training is either theoretically orientated or geared towards practical skills development. Hence, students and trainees do not acquire creativity and innovation skills and lack risk-taking aptitude. As such, entrepreneurship students and trainees are not proactive in nature and their ability to identify business opportunities is inadequate (Genty et al., 2014). Olokundun et al. (2014) also suggest that the problem of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria seems to be inappropriate structuring. For instance, the philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment that will provide occupational orientation, technology acquisition, job creation and

work discipline seems to be lacking. The failure of entrepreneurship education to inculcate these ideas in students has led to wastage in terms of both human and natural resources.

Moreover, in many institutions and training centres in Nigeria, there seems to be little understanding of what entrepreneurship education and training is or should be. For instance, many academics and trainers equate entrepreneurship with vocational training, and as such, artisans are engaged to teach/coach students/learners vocational trades like carpentry, mechanics, bakery, catering, photography, etc. Likewise, most academics do not perceive themselves as entrepreneurs and they tend to be uni-disciplinary and entrench themselves firmly within their 'academic tribes'. The inadequacy of entrepreneurship education and training in Nigerian schools has been mentioned in the literature. For example, previous studies (e.g., Mohammed, 2015; Olokundun et al., 2014) have found that some schools in Nigeria offer entrepreneurship education that was not effective at motivating students to start their businesses. This is largely because the method of teaching was not practical oriented and lacked real-life experience.

#### **4. Methodology**

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in a two-phase mixed methodology in this study. The adoption of a quantitative research design, in which a questionnaire was used as a research instrument, allows data collection that permits anonymity and precludes possible interviewer biases. This research design also allows a respondent sufficient time to consider answers before answering and encourage more respondents to participate in the study (Kumar, 2014). The use of many respondents/participants in a study permits generalisation and data provided by questionnaires are easy to analyse and interpret compared to data obtained from qualitative data (Kumar, 2014). Besides, the anonymity around the application of the questionnaire tends to elicit information that may not be obtained through other methods. Thus, in phase 1 of the fieldwork, a quantitative approach was applied.

On the other hand, the qualitative design was applied in Phase 2 since it aligns largely with the aims and objectives of the study, which principally focussed on examining the dynamic qualities of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools in the Kaduna metropolis. Informants were purposively selected from Kaduna State Ministry of Education's three Zonal Quality Assurance Divisions, namely, Sabon Tasha zone, Rigachukun zone, and Abakpa zone to ensure adequate representation.

##### *Phase 1*

The main questionnaire is broken up into two sections. Section 1 focuses on personal questions, which are effectively 'qualifying' questions concerning teaching entrepreneurship. The section also relates to the geographic (location), demographics, the experience, and qualifications of the teachers. Section 2 deals with the actual, 'where', 'what', and 'how' the teachers teach entrepreneurship in the classroom. The section also has questions on the curriculum, teachers' interpretation thereof, and the extent to which teachers deviate from the theoretical curriculum and introduce a 'practical' element. To ensure the validity of the instrument used three experts in the subject area were approached for their comments. They were asked to examine the instrument with regard to its relevance to the study, technicality and clarity of the items in describing issues of entrepreneurship education/training in secondary schools in Nigeria. The researchers amended the instrument in line with their comments. To maximize the reliability of the instrument, the researchers ensured that questions were unambiguously framed to enhance clarity of apprehension and meaning.

##### *Phase 2*

The second stage of the methodology is the face-to-face interview sessions with fifty (50) selected respondents from the three categories of interest; zonal education quality directors (2), school principals (14), and entrepreneurship teachers (34). The questions were open-ended to facilitate much deeper interrogation. The qualitative approach largely helps to deeply examine the dynamic qualities of entrepreneurship education in secondary schools in Kaduna. The follow-up interviews were conducted to assess the qualitative data received in the survey.

#### **4.1 Data Collection Process**

Participants' responses were collected, collated, and analysed. The researchers referred back to the respondents if reasons are not clear or a reason has emerged that the researchers were unaware of its existence (Saunders et al., 2012). A convenient sample of sixteen (16) schools was selected from the three zonal quality assurance divisions in the Kaduna metropolitan area as described above. Five schools were randomly selected from each zone; however, Queen Amina College (Sabon Tasha zone) was added because it is a girls' boarding secondary

school and one of the best and oldest (established in 1940) secondary schools in Northern Nigeria (Opera News, 2021). Next, eight (8) private secondary schools were selected through referrals, and four (4) secondary schools owned by the military were also added to add depth to the samples. A total of twenty-eight (28) secondary schools were in the sample list.

Questionnaires were administered to teachers of entrepreneurship in all the selected twenty-eight secondary schools. The schools were grouped under three rubrics: Public, private, and military-owned schools. There are sixteen (16) schools from the public category, four (4) from the military-owned schools, and eight (8) from the private category. The schools were selected based on certain considerations, the first is the security consideration. Due to the high level of insecurity in Kaduna in general and around schools in particular (Gabriel, 2021), only schools within the Kaduna metropolis were chosen. The second criterion is the schools must have both junior secondary school (JSS) and senior secondary school (SSS) levels as some schools only have the JSS level. Schools under the public category are clustered into three zonal quality assurance divisions: Rigachukun zone, Sabon Tasha zone, and Abakpa zone.

Our respondents/participants were 84 entrepreneurship teachers, 28 school principals, 3 zonal quality assurance directors, and three private schools' proprietors in the Kaduna metropolis. All the 84 teacher-respondents were given a survey questionnaire to fill, and the researchers carried out 50 face-to-face interviews comprising 34 teachers, 14 principals and 2 zonal quality assurance directors. Each interview lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. The researchers paid due attention to ethical issues. All the respondents/participants gave informed consent approval and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. For the sake of convenience, a standardised, open-ended questionnaire was used to gather data (Cohen et al., 2011). The questionnaire was given to the informants after approval was received from the Zonal Quality Assurances Divisions and individual School Principals. The teachers filled in the responses and returned to the researchers the same day or at a later day. In this way, they were able to respond to the questions at a time most convenient to them (Greeff, 2011). This data collection method had its advantages and drawbacks. The questions were close-ended and prevented detailed prodding; however, this drawback was ameliorated in phase 2's face-to-face interviews.

Content analysis of the national entrepreneurship subjects' curricula was also conducted to identify the structure and challenges they contain in providing useful guidelines for teaching entrepreneurship in secondary schools. This helped to enhance methodological crystallisation (Strydom & Delpont, 2011). Respondents/participants' responses were collected, collated, and analysed. However, it must be mentioned that the quantitative data collected were analysed and converted into meaningful and acceptable information by the use of simple percentages scores.

## **5. Results and Discussions of Findings**

Following the completion of the fieldwork, scores were collated from the questionnaire forms and field notes from interviews with the respondents of the schools visited, into a dataset. Three main themes were distilled from the data, these are dysfunctional entrepreneurship curriculum calibration, the landscape of entrepreneurship education in Kaduna secondary schools, and resources and state of resources in Kaduna secondary schools.

### **5.1 Dysfunctional Entrepreneurship Curriculum**

Findings reveal that the current national curriculum and methods of teaching in many schools in Kaduna metropolis are defective and not fit for purpose. First, there is no uniformity in the structure or organisation of entrepreneurship elements of the various 'entrepreneurship subjects' listed in the national curriculum. For instance, the themes for the subjects are not uniform; while some emphasise classroom pedagogy (e.g., Radio, Television and Electronic), a few others highlight practical actions (e.g., Haircare and Hair Products). In some modules, students' activities include a visit to business premises. Yet, students' activities for some hands-on modules/subjects do not mention visits to existing businesses. For example, practical-oriented modules/subjects such as Plumbing and Pipefitting listed actions such as (a) participate in grouping to show the differences between the organisation of the business units (b) attempt solving problems on record keeping and books of entries in small scale business transactions. There is no mention of visits or invitations of experts as guest lecturers.

Furthermore, the contents of some entrepreneurship modules/subjects do not align with the listed students' activities. For example, there is a disparity between the contents of Entrepreneurship in Salesmanship module mentioned in the curriculum, such as (1) Documents of trade (2) Terms of trade (3) Balance of payment; and students' activities listed for the module, which includes: (1) defines entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship (2)

Lists difference between the two concepts (3) List the problems associated with entrepreneurship (4) Explain how a salesman can be a successful entrepreneur.

Aside from the incongruity of the curriculum, researchers also noticed that entrepreneurship teachers and school managements in many of the schools visited do not align their teachings to the curriculum. Some of the reasons adduced include inadequate finance, especially in carrying out practical aspects of the module/subject (e.g., Agriculture – fishery, catering and craft practice). In addition, a lack of qualified entrepreneurship teachers was mentioned.

## **5.2 The Landscape of Entrepreneurship Education in Kaduna Secondary Schools**

In Nigeria, three distinct groups are involved in the development and promotion of entrepreneurship education programs in secondary schools. These are the governments (Federal and State), Non-governmental agencies (NGOs), and private institutions/organisations (mostly private schools). Secondary entrepreneurship education programs and curriculum, thus, differ both in consistency and form. Some secondary schools in the State may have a state-wide curriculum, while others rely on resources available at a particular school. In the latter case, an experienced or particularly interested teacher/instructor might offer an entrepreneurship course in one school that is not available elsewhere in the State.

Generally, the teaching approach in most of the schools visited relies heavily on classroom lectures (i.e., theorising), only a handful of the schools engaged students in practical aspects of entrepreneurship education. Such practical aspects include applied tutoring, visits to real-life businesses, training excursions, and workshop/studio activities. These events and activities, which will help students to gain practical experience, have basis in learning theories such as action learning (Revans, 2011), problem-based learning (Barrows & Tramblyn, 1980), and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). Invariably, the introduction of these learning theories in entrepreneurship education (e.g., Scott et al., 2016) has amplified focus on the role of experience in the learning process (Mandel & Noyes, 2016). It was Freire (1996: 68-69) who argued that “learning comprises both an active side and a passive side, where mere action only leads to activism and mere reflection leads to verbalism”.

Consequently, students that are largely meant to imbibe the character and attitudinal disposition of entrepreneurs through hands-on entrepreneurial training events end up with only classroom entrepreneurship theorising. Thus, the main goal behind the national entrepreneurship education program appears to be defeated. This main goal aspires to develop students morally, mentally, and physically and to imbue them with the highest ideals of self-sufficiency, and self-efficacy to produce youths who are independent-minded and have the potential to develop an entrepreneurial mind-set to generate jobs for themselves and others.

## **5.3 Resources and State of Resources in Kaduna Secondary Schools**

Resources available for the delivery of quality entrepreneurship education in Kaduna secondary schools as observed and evaluated during the fieldwork are revealed in this section. Resources are classified under two widely used templates – tangible and intangible. The tangible resources include physical structures such as classrooms, teaching facilities (e.g., interactive board, projectors), finance, and entrepreneurship teachers. Intangible resources include such things as teachers’ experience (teaching and entrepreneurship), motivation, and capability. These items are discussed below.

## **5.4 Tangible Resources: Physical Structure and Condition of Schools and Teaching Facilities**

The physical conditions of many of the schools, especially the government-owned schools, visited are not in good shape. Some schools’ buildings have no roof (or leaking roofs) and students are at the mercy of the weather elements. Facilities such as classrooms, workshops, teaching aids and tools (e.g., interactive boards) are either not available or in deplorable conditions, particularly in many government-owned schools. Insufficient equipment necessary for entrepreneurship education coupled with non-optimisation of the few available ones is noted in many of the schools visited. Inadequate facilities are not limited to government-owned schools but cut across all categories of schools visited. Most schools (i.e., government schools) have over-crowded students and the number of entrepreneurship teachers in most schools (all categories of schools) is not adequate.

## **5.5 Intangible Resources: Relationship, Experience, and Capability of resource Personnel**

There is a general lack of motivation amongst entrepreneurship teachers in government schools compared to teachers in private or military schools. For example, entrepreneurship teachers in government schools are not enthused to go the extra length to inspire or encourage students’ entrepreneurial spirit. Most are unwilling to

organise students' visits to local businesses or invite role models to give lectures or engage students in entrepreneurial activities outside the school hours (compared to teachers in some private schools). For instance, none of the government-owned schools took the researchers' offer to give free entrepreneurship lectures to students as a goodwill gesture. Yet, this offer was enthusiastically accepted by all the private schools and most of the military-owned schools visited. In addition, some entrepreneurship teachers in the private schools do organise informal entrepreneurship training and encourage skills acquisition activities for students outside the class hours/period.

A major finding during this research is the realisation of the little or no understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship among almost all the respondents (teachers, administrators, principals, and owners). The general understanding of entrepreneurship among the respondents does not extend beyond business ownership or business start-up. It took the researchers considerable effort to explain the key principles and relatable characteristics of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship (e.g., innovativeness, hard work, discipline, and entrepreneurial mind-set) that are required to be emphasised in entrepreneurship education/training to the students. It is this mind-set and innovativeness that distinguish entrepreneurs from others (e.g., business owners and managers) and are present in people (e.g., intrapreneurs) who do not own or set up their businesses but exhibit entrepreneurial tendencies that bring value to organisations' activities. Quality entrepreneurship education and skills training can only be achieved, according to Jusoh et al. (2011), through creativity and innovation.

## **6. Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions**

### **6.1 Summary**

This study seeks to understand key issues related to entrepreneurship education in secondary schools in Kaduna metropolis, within the context of entrepreneurial learning, entrepreneurial pedagogy, and entrepreneurial skills acquisition. Towards this end, the study first synthesises the current national curriculum on entrepreneurship and anchors it in the context of entrepreneurship education and training for attaining a quality pedagogical template for students. Studies have shown that secondary schools are an important force influencing innovation systems and entrepreneurship (Fagerberg & Shrolec, 2009). It is assumed that students who are exposed to entrepreneurship education/training at the secondary school level will have basic entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes for starting economic, social, or cultural activities for their benefit as well as that of society.

Several issues that render entrepreneurship education and training inadequate in Kaduna State were identified (e.g., weak curriculum, inadequate funding, and inexperienced instructors). It is the case that entrepreneurship education and training ecosystems vary greatly in secondary schools but generally include key building blocks and scaffolds such as the national curriculum on entrepreneurship in Nigerian secondary schools. Given the context of the globalised knowledge economy we live in, it is logical to enrich entrepreneurship education and training field of action for the benefit of all. The attitude we take towards entrepreneurship education and training will have a large impact on economic growth in Nigeria, especially as entrepreneurship promotes individual creativity and economic dynamism. The creation of new enterprises, the commercialisation of new ideas and innovation are essential for the economy. Consequently, education for potential entrepreneurs needs to be robust and coordinated with educational, advice giving, and support programs that help enterprise leadership individuals (e.g., teachers and instructors) or teams understand what it takes to successfully impart knowledge to individuals to be able to manage successful entrepreneurial enterprises. A robust and broader approach will facilitate the efficiency of the investments that individuals, academic institutions, entrepreneurial and small business support organisations and governments make in entrepreneurship education and training events.

## **7. Recommendations**

Flowing from the data and data analysis, this study offers a series of recommendations that can help policymakers leverage the full potential of entrepreneurship education to advance Nigeria's development agenda. Thus, the following abridged recommendations are put forward to enhance entrepreneurship education, particularly in Kaduna State and generally in Nigeria.

- Build a Robust Entrepreneurship Education Ecosystem
- Revamp the National Entrepreneurship Curriculum
- Institute Effective Personal Development Plan Programs
- Create a System of Monitoring and Evaluation

- Facilitate and Encourage Entrepreneurial Activities

## 8. Conclusions

The Nigerian government has indicated a growing interest in interventions that foster entrepreneurship among the citizenry, making significant investments in entrepreneurship education and training. Positive relationships between entrepreneurial activity and innovation, and between entrepreneurship and job creation have been registered in several research studies. Effective entrepreneurship education offers potential rewards for individuals in both the formal and the informal sectors of the economy as it signifies self-efficacy, potentially more stable income flows, increased profits, and more secure employment. However, the question remains whether entrepreneurship can be taught and, if so, what is the best way to teach it. Several studies have reached mixed conclusions across a variety of outcomes related to entrepreneurship education and training courses. Findings are further complicated by the fact that training and education programs are delivered in diverse socio-cultural and educational contexts.

Nevertheless, the findings of this present study draw on both national and state-specific research, as well as on the experience of teachers/administrators of entrepreneurship education and students of entrepreneurship, using Kaduna as an exemplar. These findings and the others in this study should be very useful in filling some of the critical knowledge gaps that have made it difficult to know what is being taught, how is it taught, and with what general effect. The findings also point to specific gaps in the national entrepreneurship curriculum at the secondary school level. Finally, the study's findings can inform entrepreneurship education policy and program discourse at multiple levels, guide the investment decisions that government institutions and policymakers must make concerning entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level, and more clearly indicate in which direction further research in the entrepreneurship education field is most needed.

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