



**BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND REALITIES IN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND GENERAL STUDIES CURRICULUM
WITHIN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

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Abstract

Nigerian tertiary institutions increasingly integrate Entrepreneurship Education (EE) within General Studies Education (GSE) to promote graduate employability and innovation. However, a significant gap exists between the expectations and realities of EE/GSE implementation. This paper analyzes the challenges hindering effective EE/GSE delivery, including outdated curricula, limited staff development, underfunded practical exposure, and weak assessment of entrepreneurial competencies. Drawing on national policy documents and prior scholarship, we synthesize the challenges and map them onto a conceptual model linking inputs, pedagogy, and outcomes. The paper proposes a framework to align curricular intent with institutional capacity, emphasizing targeted curriculum redesign, structured industry partnerships, and lecturer professional development. We argue that these interventions can improve student skills and entrepreneurial intention. A prioritized, measurable action set is proposed for regulators and institutions, including curriculum audit cycles, funded practice components, lecturer training benchmarks, and outcome-based assessment. This study contributes to the discourse on EE/GSE in Nigerian tertiary institutions, offering a practical alignment framework and indicators to guide improvement efforts. The findings have implications for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders seeking to enhance graduate employability and entrepreneurship. By bridging the



gap between expectations and realities, Nigerian tertiary institutions can foster a new generation of entrepreneurs and innovators equipped to drive economic growth and development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, General Studies, Tertiary Institutions, Curriculum Development, Education

Introduction

Entrepreneurship Education is increasingly recognized as a strategic imperative as a means for economic development and job creation for the learner. Entrepreneurship education and General Studies Education (GSE) are strong weapons that can be used to improve economic conditions and society development. In other word, it is a key element for any individual or nation aiming to be competitive in the knowledge-based global market based on the fact that it has been generally perceived as a method of promoting economic growth, creativity, self reliance and innovation. Entrepreneurship education is an effective tool for building up entrepreneurship intention, thereby increasing the number of entrepreneurs, and reducing the rate of unemployment (Abioye 2020)

Education is the process of promoting learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. It can take place in formal ways such as school and informal settings like home. GSE is an education program that was tailored toward

exposing students to social, cultural, and national environments. While Tertiary institution refer to post-secondary education where diplomas, certificates, and Degrees are awarded to students after completion of their programs. The expectations of entrepreneurship education and GSE are to provide practical or functional skills to learners that can assist them in being self-reliant. More so, entrepreneurship education should be able to equip students with functional skills that will aid them in identifying lawful business opportunities within their locality.

To address the issues of unemployment, poverty, and social vices among graduates in Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE), and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) integrated entrepreneurship education into General Studies Education Curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education, and General Studies Education

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Entrepreneurship Education is an educational system required to impart functional entrepreneurial skills to students in order to fight poverty, hunger, unemployment, and social vices. It's a system of education that enhances creativity and innovation among students to become self-reliant through the invention of a new product. It's also a kind of education that imparts entrepreneurial skills to students to identify lawful business opportunities within their locality which can contribute to the economic growth of an individual and nation. It's a specialized and all-around training program designed by education authorities to change the worldview of students from job seekers to wealth creators by developing their latent talents and potential (Ojah 2023). Entrepreneurship Education seeks to provide students with knowledge, skills, and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of settings (Wikipedia 2022). More so, entrepreneurship education is the type of education given to a person that helps him to equip the cognitive knowledge, psychomotor, and affective skills to explore and exploit an opportunity into a viable venture, establish, and manage the venture successfully (Eretan, and Omotoso 2024))

Bolaji (2019) said that education is a process, a long life process, a direction, a preparation for life, and a product among others. According to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (2014) as cited in Bolaji (2019), education is the act of developing the intellect, critical thinking abilities, and social, and cultural understanding of one's self.

General Studies are courses meant to expose students to greater awareness about other disciplines of study to make them perform better in their chosen field of study (Ogbu 2020). It's a catalyst for economic development and job creation in any society and it involves rebranding the education culture to the end of guaranteeing a comprehensive educational system - re-engineering arising from the obvious deficiencies of the existing educational system (Dike & Effanga 2020). It's an interdisciplinary program highly desirable in a changing world and provides greater flexibility in creating a functional curriculum for all undergraduates in different fields of study (Anah, Obi, and Iwuji 2017). Tertiary institutions are the institutions that provide education to students after secondary school in Universities, Colleges of Education, and



Polytechnics including institutions offering correspondence courses (Ogbu 2020).

Aims of Entrepreneurship Education

The aims of Entrepreneurship Education as identified by Amodi and Eze (2019) are;

- To get knowledge useful to entrepreneurial
- To increase capacities in the use of techniques in the examination of business situations and in the creation of action plan
- To identify and stimulate entrepreneurship skills
- To develop empathy and support for all issues of entrepreneurship
- To develop attitudes toward change
- To promote new start-ups and other ventures.

While Paul (2005) in Akpan (2021), equally identified the following as aims of entrepreneurship education

- To provide the graduate youths with enough training and support that will enable them to establish a career in small and medium-scale businesses
- To create a smooth transition from a traditional to a modern industrial economy.

- To offer functional education for youths that will enable them to be self-employed and self-reliant.
- To catalyze economic growth and development.
- To reduce the high rate of poverty
- To create job opportunities.
- To reduce rural-urban migration.

The Objectives of General Studies Education

The General Studies Education objectives as stipulated by the National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE 2012) are:-

- Participate meaningfully in discussions covering a wide spectrum of disciplines.
- Appreciate and analyze Nigerian/human history and culture as overall as articulate their relative impact on educational and socio-economic development.
- State, explain and critically analyze the national objectives and how to achieve them.
- Acquire through independent research the skills, and information for appreciating the basis and nature/character of human knowledge, values, and actions and



to use knowledge/information in solving problems.

- Develop critical thinking and immigration to apply Basic mathematics in solving problems of everyday life.
- Acquire proficiency in the use of the English Language for effective communication.
- Enhance the study of other subjects to promote professional competence.
- Use the computer to be functional in the contemporary ICT world.

On the other hand the National Universities Commission (NUC 2017) as cited in Ogbeide (2018) identified the following as objectives of General Studies Education.

- Acquisition, development, and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and society.
- Development of intellectual capacities of individual to understand, appreciate, and to promote peaceful co-existence.
- Production of graduates with broad knowledge of the Nigerian nation, and people to inculcate in the mutual understanding and patriotism.

- Exposing graduates of Nigeria to the rudiments of ICT for computer literacy and ability to live usefully in their ICT age.
- Preparing students for life with opportunities for job creation and entrepreneurial skills.
- Production of graduates capable of communicating effectively, both oral and written.

The Goals of Tertiary Education in Nigeria

The National Policy on Education (2013) specifies the following goals of tertiary education in Nigeria

- ❖ To contribute to national development through high-level manpower training
- ❖ Provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities for formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of Nigerian
- ❖ Provide high-quality career counseling and lifelong learning opportunities
- ❖ Prepare students with knowledge and skills for self-reliance



- ❖ Reduce skills shortages through the production of relevant skilled workers
- ❖ Promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship, and community service
- ❖ Forge and cement national unity
- ❖ Promoting national and international understanding and interaction.

Challenges facing Entrepreneurship Education and GSE in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

The integration of Entrepreneurship Education and GSE into the Curriculum in Nigerian Tertiary institutions confronted with many challenges. Among the challenges are;

- Outdated curriculum: The curriculum for Entrepreneurship Education and GSE may not be confirmed with the modern needs created by technological advancement. In other words, it may not be able to equip the students with relevant practical skills to meet the current needs of society.
- Inadequate funding: Many tertiary institutions in Nigeria are facing

limited resources, which hinder the implementation of effective Entrepreneurship Education and General Studies programs. Underfunding of most of the tertiary institutions, both the Federal Government and State Government, make it difficult to provide the necessary teaching materials and infrastructure required to impart functional/relevant skills to students. Inadequacy of funds is responsible for creating a non-conducive learning environment where learners sit on the bare floor (Akpan, 2021)

- Inadequate training for lecturers: Inadequate professional development training programs for lecturers in charge of Entrepreneurship and General Studies hinder effective teaching of the program.
- Insufficient practical experience: Entrepreneurship Education and General Studies focus too much on theoretical concepts without providing practical skills that can enhance students learning. The dearth of lecturers in the field of entrepreneurship to make the course practically interesting and goal-



oriented as opposed to too much focus on theoretical instructions and the common use of the traditional talk chalk chart method of communicating knowledge and information as well as learning (Akpan 2021)

Bridging the gap between Expectations and Realities of Entrepreneurship Education and General Studies Education in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Nigerian Tertiary institutions can bridge the gap between Expectations and Realities in Entrepreneurship Education and General Studies Education by equipping students with the knowledge and functional skills they need to succeed in the business they decide to choose. So to bridge the gap between Expectations and Realities of Entrepreneurship Education and General Studies Education in Nigerian Tertiary institutions requires different methods. Here are some of the steps that could assist in bridging the gap.

- ❖ Curriculum update to integrate practical aspects of entrepreneurship and real-world case studies relevant to the Nigerian situation instead of laying emphasis on Entrepreneurship

Education requires the use of active learning methods that place the learner at the center of the educational process and enable them to take responsibility for their own learning to experiment and learn about themselves (Dike and Effanga 2020)

- ❖ Partner with industries to provide students with practical experiences and opportunities for internships through students Industrial Works Experience Scheme (SIWES)
- ❖ Integrating problem-solving and critical thinking into Entrepreneurship Education and General Studies Education Curriculum. Such as Basic Mathematics.
- ❖ Encourage using modern technology to enhance the learning experience of students by providing enough funds to purchase modern facilities and provide the necessary infrastructure
- ❖ Assessment of the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship education and General studies program through feedback from students and industries where students do their Industrial training through supervisor(s).



❖ Providing professional development opportunities for the lecturers that handle the Entrepreneurship Education and General Studies Education program. Lecturers need professional competencies to be able to guide students through the learning process rather than traditional methods, communicating knowledge and information mainly through chalk and talk (European Commission 2013) as in Dike and Effanga 2020).

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship Education and General Studies Education should promote research and innovation in relevant areas that contribute to economic development. It should be able to provide students with the support they need to pursue business ventures. Lastly, it should be able to promote creativity and critical thinking through experience from different disciplines.

Recommendation

- Regular curriculum updates or review should be taken as priority.
The implementation of such updates

- should be followed strictly to enhance advancement in learning
- Industry partnership and sponsorship of research and training in our higher institution should be encouraged. This will take care of inadequate funding for training programmes for students and the researchers
- Integrating problem solving and critical thinking approach can help in great deal in resolving issues of problems militating against expectations and realities of inclusion of entrepreneurship education and general studies education
- Introduction and installation of modern technology in teaching, practical training, learning and research will lead to acquisition of relevant skills acquisition and innovations by the learners leading to self-reliant
- Adequate funding of universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of education will encourages research and findings that may lead the country to economic development
- Training and retraining of personnel on functional education that will



Impact on accusation of skillful knowledge and innovation that leads to self-reliant should be encourage in all our higher institutions

- Students must be made to acquire or learn compulsorily a vocational trade course or subject apart from which they were admitted as a prerequisite for graduation.

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