

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CURRICULUM DESIGN AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION FOR EFFECTIVE SKILLS ACQUISITION IN THE DIGITAL TVET ERA

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Abstract

This study examined the alignment between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education for effective skills acquisition in the digital Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) era. Guided by three specific purposes and research questions, the study investigated the level of alignment between entrepreneurship education curricula and classroom practice, identified factors responsible for existing gaps, and proposed strategies for improving implementation to enhance student outcomes. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 110 lecturers (47 males and 63 females) from the Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, all of whom were studied. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire validated by experts and tested for reliability using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded a coefficient of 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test was employed to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that classroom practice reflects entrepreneurship curriculum objectives to a moderate extent, with strengths in content coverage and use of practical examples, but weaknesses in deep experiential engagement and authentic assessment. The gap between curriculum design and classroom practice was attributed to inadequate resources, insufficient funding, limited lecturer preparedness, weak industry collaboration, and structural constraints. The study further identified increased funding, lecturer capacity building, industry partnerships, experiential learning, mentorship, and digital integration as key strategies for improvement. The study recommended the need for improved curriculum–practice alignment through increased funding for practical entrepreneurship facilities, continuous lecturer professional development, strengthened industry and community partnerships, adoption of experiential and competency-based assessment approaches, and strategic integration of digital tools.

Keywords: Classroom Practice, Curriculum Design, Digital TVET, Entrepreneurship Education, Skills Acquisition,

Introduction

Quality education is widely acknowledged as a critical driver of sustainable development globally. It is a fundamental human right, as affirmed by the United Nations, with sustained global attention directed toward ensuring that young people receive high-quality education that equips them with relevant knowledge and skills capable of enhancing economic

productivity. This global concern is clearly reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal Four, which prioritizes inclusive and equitable quality education for all (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2016).

Consequently, education is therefore a central mechanism for accelerating socio-economic development at both individual, national and international levels. Furthermore, education serves as an effective means of transmitting knowledge, skills, values, and appropriate attitudes to individuals, while also preparing them to participate responsibly and productively in society (Adesemowo & Sotonade, 2023). In line with this view, Ugwunali and Okorieocha (2025) emphasized that education empowers individuals with the capacity for self-reliance and enables them to contribute meaningfully to national development.

Ogunyiriofo, as cited in Sabdat (2023), conceptualized education as the totality of experiences that bring about cognitive transformation in individuals by expanding their knowledge base, fostering insight, developing diverse abilities and competencies, and enhancing self-confidence. In recognition of this transformative role, the Federal Republic of Nigeria has consistently emphasized education as a critical instrument for national development (FRN, 2013). It underpins sustainable human and capital development and serves as a foundational pillar for a nation's long-term growth and stability. Through education, individuals acquire the competencies required for effective participation in society and for making meaningful contributions to national development. Beyond the transmission of basic knowledge and skills for personal advancement and improved livelihoods, education empowers citizens to fulfill their social responsibilities within the family, community, and the broader development agenda of the nation. Thus, education is expected to ensure practical and occupational skills in individuals that support societal advancement. As noted by Ilojeme and Okorieocha (2021), one major aspect of education that inculcates practical skills in individuals is Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) occupies a strategic position in contemporary education systems as a mechanism for equipping individuals with relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes, and competencies required for effective participation in the labour market and broader society. TVET is commonly defined as the organised provision of education and training that prepares learners for specific occupations, trades, or professions while simultaneously fostering transferable skills that enable mobility across jobs and sectors (Okorieocha et al. 2024).

UNESCO (2022) conceptualises TVET as a means of empowering individuals for work and life by combining technical skills with digital literacy, problem-solving ability, and ethical work values. This positions TVET as both a driver of productivity and innovation and a tool for social inclusion, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. According to Okolie et al., (2021), TVET is similarly understood as an education and training pathway designed to produce skilled manpower for national development.

Several Nigerian scholars emphasise that TVET plays a critical role in addressing youth unemployment, skills mismatch, and underemployment by aligning training provision with labour-market needs (Okolie et al., 2021; Yusuf & Afolayan, 2023). The Federal Government of Nigeria, through regulatory and quality assurance bodies such as the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), frames TVET as a competency-based system aimed at producing graduates who are not only technically proficient but also capable of self-reliance and entrepreneurship (NBTE, 2024).

In this 21st century characterized by technological advancement and economic restructuring, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has become a very important component for equipping youths with the skills necessary for employment and self-reliance. Thus, in a developing nation like Nigeria, the importance and relevance of TVET cannot be over emphasized (Ideozu & Puyate, 2022). This is because according to Imogie (2014), no nation can develop to its fullest and keep pace with trends in science and technology without effective and efficient TVET system.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) clearly states that TVET is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Thus, the main aim of TVET is to develop skills in learners that are practical in nature.

Effective skills acquisition is a central concept in modern education especially in TVET) and entrepreneurship education, where the primary expectation of learning is the development of usable, transferable, and sustainable skills. Skills acquisition extends beyond participation in instructional activities to encompass the learner's ability to demonstrate mastery, apply skills in authentic contexts, and adapt acquired competencies to evolving workplace and entrepreneurial environments. Effective skills acquisition is therefore conceptualised as a structured and outcome-oriented process through which learners develop competencies that translate into employability, productivity, self-reliance, and lifelong learning (World Bank, 2023). Effective skills acquisition is anchored in competency-based learning principles, which emphasise demonstrable performance rather than mere exposure to content (Okolie et al., 2021).

Competency-based education and training assumes that learning is effective only when learners can perform defined tasks to acceptable occupational standards, integrating practical skills with relevant theoretical knowledge and professional attitudes (Odewumi & Dekom, 2020). In Nigeria, effective skills acquisition is reinforced through the Nigerian Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF), which conceptualises skills as assessable learning outcomes that can be acquired through formal, non-formal, and informal learning pathways. The NSQF defines effective skills acquisition in terms of clearly articulated competencies, occupational standards, and progression routes that enable learners to demonstrate what they know and can do, irrespective of where learning occurred (Federal Ministry of Education [FME], 2023; NBTE, 2024). This framework underscores the idea that skills acquisition becomes effective only when learning outcomes are explicit, assessment is credible, and certification is meaningful to employers and society. Thus, such skills could further be developed through entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education refers to structured learning experiences designed to enhance individuals' entrepreneurial mindset, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours, enabling them to identify opportunities, mobilise resources, innovate, and create value in various social and economic contexts (Kuratko, 2020). Contrary to traditional vocational training that prioritises technical skills for specific jobs, entrepreneurship education emphasises an integrative, learner-centred pedagogical approach that nurtures both cognitive and affective domains associated with entrepreneurship (Fayolle & Gailly, 2021). At the core of entrepreneurship education is the recognition that entrepreneurial capability is not merely an innate trait but can be developed through intentional pedagogical processes, curricular content, and experiential learning. This conceptualisation is grounded in constructivist and

experiential learning theories, which posit that learners actively construct meaning through engagement with authentic tasks, reflective practice, and social interactions (Neck & Greene, 2011).

Accordingly, entrepreneurship education goes beyond knowledge transmission to include critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, opportunity recognition, risk-taking, resilience, and adaptability which are essential in both business start-ups and intrapreneurial roles in organisations (Kuratko, 2020). Thus, such objectives could be achieved successfully when the curriculum is designed to meet these objectives.

Curriculum design is commonly understood as a deliberate and systematic process involving the identification of learning goals, selection and organisation of content, determination of instructional strategies, and development of assessment mechanisms that collectively guide teaching and learning. In TVET, curriculum design assumes even greater significance because of its direct implications for skills acquisition, employability, and workforce readiness in increasingly complex and digitalised economies (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2020). Traditional curriculum models were largely content-oriented, focusing on the transmission of prescribed knowledge. However, recent educational reforms have shifted attention toward learner-centred, outcomes-based, and competency-oriented curriculum design approaches, which prioritise what learners are expected to know, do, and demonstrate upon completion of a programme (Posner, 2022).

In Nigeria, curriculum design in TVET and entrepreneurship education is guided by national policy instruments such as the National Policy on Education, which emphasises skills development, self-reliance, and entrepreneurship as core educational objectives (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023). Regulatory agencies such as the NBTE further shape curriculum design through accreditation standards, minimum benchmark curricula, and quality assurance frameworks (Agwu & Eze, 2021). These policy directions reflect a national commitment to repositioning education as a tool for economic diversification and youth empowerment (Okoye et al., 2022).

Digitalisation has emerged as a transformative force in curriculum design, redefining both the content and delivery of education. In the digital TVET era, curriculum design increasingly incorporates digital tools, online learning platforms, virtual simulations, and blended learning approaches to enhance access, flexibility, and engagement for better classroom practices. Classroom practice constitutes the practical expression of curriculum intentions through teaching, learning, and assessment activities that occur within instructional environments. It extends beyond conventional classroom settings to include workshops, laboratories, simulated environments, digital platforms, and supervised workplace learning experiences. In the digital TVET era, classroom practice is increasingly mediated by digital technologies that shape how instruction is delivered, how learners engage with content, and how competencies are developed and assessed. As such, classroom practice in the digital TVET era may be conceptualised as the enactment of competency-oriented teaching and learning processes through blended, technology-enhanced, and digitally supported pedagogical approaches (UNESCO, 2022).

The digital transformation of education has significantly altered the nature of classroom practice, especially in TVET where learning-by-doing remains central. Digital classroom practice is no longer limited to the use of computers or online platforms for content delivery; rather, it involves the strategic integration of digital tools to support demonstrations, simulations, collaborative learning, feedback, and assessment of practical skills. International scholarship emphasises that digitalisation in TVET must enhance, rather than replace, hands-

on learning by creating flexible learning pathways that combine physical practice with virtual and technology-supported experiences (European Commission, 2022).

However, this perspective underscores the importance of aligning pedagogy, technology, and competency standards in digital TVET classrooms. It is upon this background that this study seeks to critically examine and address the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education in order to promote effective skills acquisition within the digital TVET era.

Statement of the Problem

In an ideal educational setting, entrepreneurship education within the framework of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is expected to function as a coherent and practice-oriented system in which curriculum design, classroom practice, and skills acquisition are closely aligned. Well-designed entrepreneurship curricula should clearly articulate competency-based learning outcomes that reflect contemporary labour-market realities, digital transformation, and the need for self-reliance. These curriculum intentions are expected to be translated into classroom practices characterised by learner-centred pedagogy, experiential learning, effective use of digital tools, authentic assessment, and strong linkages with industry and entrepreneurial ecosystems. When this alignment is achieved, learners are adequately equipped with practical, transferable, and entrepreneurial skills that enable them to create value, adapt to changing economic conditions, and contribute meaningfully to national development.

However, in many entrepreneurship education programmes, the reverse is the case. Although curriculum documents and policy frameworks increasingly emphasise entrepreneurship, competency-based education, and digital skills development, classroom practice often remains largely theoretical, teacher-centred, and examination-driven. The integration of digital tools, experiential learning strategies, and authentic assessment methods is frequently constrained by limited infrastructure, inadequate instructional resources, insufficient teacher capacity, and weak industry collaboration. As a result, a persistent gap exists between curriculum design and classroom practice, whereby the intentions and aspirations embedded in entrepreneurship curricula are not effectively enacted in everyday teaching and learning processes.

If this gap between curriculum design and classroom practice is not deliberately addressed, the consequences for skills acquisition and broader socio-economic development are likely to be profound. Learners may complete entrepreneurship education programmes with substantial theoretical knowledge but lack the practical competence, confidence, and adaptability required to initiate and sustain entrepreneurial ventures or function effectively in the modern workplace. This misalignment undermines the credibility of entrepreneurship education, increases graduate unemployment and underemployment, and weakens the role of TVET as a strategic tool for economic diversification and youth empowerment.

Furthermore, failure to align classroom practice with digitally oriented curriculum expectations risks producing graduates who are ill-prepared for the demands of the digital economy, thereby widening existing skills gaps and limiting national competitiveness. Consequently, there is a compelling need to critically examine and address the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education in order to promote effective skills acquisition within the digital TVET era.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to bridging the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education for effective skills acquisition in the digital TVET Era. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the extent to which the entrepreneurship education curriculum aligns with practical classroom delivery in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
2. Ascertain the key factors responsible for the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education.
3. Identify strategies for improving the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions in order to enhance student outcomes and effective skills acquisition.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does entrepreneurship education curriculum aligns with practical classroom delivery in Nigerian tertiary institutions?
2. What are the key factors responsible for the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education?
3. What are the strategies for improving the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions in order to enhance student outcomes and effective skills acquisition?

Materials and Method

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State. The population of the study consisted of 110 respondents comprising 47 male lecturers and 63 female lecturers of the Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The entire population was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was validated by three experts, one from the department of Agricultural and Vocational Education, one from the department of Industrial Technology Education, and one from Measurement and Evaluation unit in the department of Science Education, all in University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State. The reliability of the instrument was estimated by administering copies of the questionnaire to 15 lecturers in the College of Education in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Abia State. The responses were recorded, scored and subjected to Cronbach Alpha Method which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents using Google forms which ensured automatic recording of the responses. Data analysis was computed with a computer software programme; statistical program for social sciences (SPSS). For decision purposes, any mean score of 2.50 was accepted and below 2.50 was rejected. Also, if the t-calculated value is greater than the t-critical, the null hypotheses were rejected but if otherwise, the null hypotheses were accepted.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One: To what extent does classroom practice reflect the objectives of the entrepreneurship education curriculum?

Table 1: Alignment Between Curriculum Objectives and Classroom Practice

S/N	ITEM	Mean	SD
1	The entrepreneurship curriculum content is adequately covered during lectures.	3.8	0.9
2	Lecturers make explicit connections between curriculum goals and class activities.	3.6	1.0
3	Practical business examples are integrated into classroom teaching regularly.	4.1	0.8
4	Students are given opportunities to develop business plans and prototypes.	3.9	0.7
5	Assessment methods reflect real-life entrepreneurship practices.	3.5	1.1
6	Classroom teaching incorporates experiential learning (e.g., field trips, simulations).	3.7	0.9
7	Students are involved in actual business/start-up projects.	3.4	1.2
8	The learning outcomes of the curriculum are clearly achieved through current practices.	3.6	1.0
Grand Mean		3.7	

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that classroom practice moderately reflects the objectives of the entrepreneurship education curriculum in Nigerian tertiary institutions, as evidenced by a grand mean score of 3.7. Respondents generally agreed that curriculum content is adequately covered during lectures and that lecturers make efforts to link curriculum goals with classroom activities. The frequent use of practical business examples and opportunities for students to develop business plans further suggests a positive orientation toward skills-based instruction. However, the results also reveal noticeable gaps in deeper experiential components of entrepreneurship education. While experiential learning activities are moderately incorporated, student involvement in actual business or start-up projects and the use of assessment methods that mirror real-life entrepreneurial practices remain limited. Overall, the findings suggest that although curriculum intentions are reflected to a reasonable extent in classroom practice, greater emphasis on authentic entrepreneurial engagement and practice-oriented assessment is required to strengthen alignment and enhance effective skills acquisition.

Research Question 2: What are the key factors responsible for the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education?

Table 4.2: key factors responsible for the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education

S/N	ITEM	Mean	SD
1	Lack of teaching materials and practical resources.	4.2	0.8
2	Insufficient funding for entrepreneurship labs and activities.	4.1	0.9
3	Poor training or preparedness of lecturers on experiential delivery methods.	4.0	0.8
4	Overcrowded classrooms and limited time for practical work.	3.9	1.0
5	Disconnect between theoretical content and market realities.	3.7	1.1
6	Lack of collaboration with industry experts and entrepreneurs.	4.1	0.7
7	Rigid institutional policies that limit curriculum flexibility.	3.6	1.2
8	Limited access to mentorship and incubation programs.	3.8	1.0
9	Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of teaching outcomes.	3.5	1.1
10	General lack of student motivation or entrepreneurial mindset.	3.7	0.9
Grand Mean		3.86	

The findings in Table 4.2 indicate that several institutional, pedagogical, and structural factors significantly contribute to the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice in entrepreneurship education, as reflected by a high grand mean score of 3.86. The most

prominent challenges identified include lack of teaching materials and practical resources, insufficient funding for entrepreneurship laboratories and activities, inadequate lecturer preparedness for experiential teaching methods, and weak collaboration with industry experts and entrepreneurs. Structural issues such as overcrowded classrooms and limited time for practical work further constrain effective implementation. In addition, disconnects between curriculum content and market realities, limited access to mentorship and incubation programmes, rigid institutional policies, and inadequate monitoring of teaching outcomes also contribute to the observed gap. Overall, the results suggest that the curriculum–practice disconnect is largely systemic and requires coordinated institutional, pedagogical, and resource-based interventions to improve entrepreneurship education outcomes.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies for improving the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions in order to enhance student outcomes and effective skills acquisition?

Table 3: strategies for improving the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions in order to enhance student outcomes and effective skills acquisition

S/N	ITEM	Mean	SD
1	Provide regular training and workshops for entrepreneurship lecturers.	4.3	0.7
2	Increase funding for entrepreneurship labs and practical programs.	4.4	0.6
3	Establish partnerships with local businesses for student internships.	4.2	0.8
4	Integrate more hands-on projects and simulations in teaching.	4.1	0.9
5	Encourage institutions to develop on-campus business incubators.	4.0	0.8
6	Embed mentorship and peer learning in entrepreneurship courses.	4.1	0.7
7	Adapt the curriculum regularly to reflect changes in the business environment.	3.9	1.0
8	Encourage entrepreneurship clubs and competitions among students.	4.0	0.9
9	Use digital tools and platforms to enhance entrepreneurial learning.	3.8	1.1
10	Promote community-based projects to build real-world entrepreneurial experience.	4.2	0.8
Grand Mean		4.10	

The findings in Table 3 indicate strong agreement among respondents that multiple strategies are necessary for improving the implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions, as reflected by a high grand mean score of 4.10. Key strategies include increased funding for entrepreneurship laboratories and practical programmes, regular training and capacity building for lecturers, and the establishment of partnerships with local businesses to provide internship opportunities. Respondents also emphasised the importance of integrating hands-on projects, mentorship, peer learning, and community-based entrepreneurial activities into teaching. Although slightly lower, there was still considerable agreement on the need for regular curriculum review and the use of digital tools to enhance entrepreneurial learning. Overall, the results suggest that a coordinated approach combining resource investment, lecturer development, industry collaboration, experiential learning, and digital integration is essential for enhancing student outcomes and effective skills acquisition.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide a coherent understanding of the dynamics between curriculum design, classroom practice, and effective skills acquisition in entrepreneurship education within Nigerian tertiary institutions. Findings relating to Research Question One indicate that classroom practice reflects the objectives of the entrepreneurship education curriculum to a moderate extent, as evidenced by the grand mean score of 3.7. Respondents

acknowledged adequate coverage of curriculum content, frequent use of practical business examples, and opportunities for students to develop business plans and prototypes. This suggests that entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions is not entirely theoretical and that deliberate efforts are being made to align teaching with curriculum objectives. This finding aligns with the position of Fayolle and Gailly (2021), who argue that contemporary entrepreneurship education increasingly incorporates applied learning components aimed at developing entrepreneurial competence rather than merely transmitting business knowledge.

However, the results also reveal notable weaknesses in deeper experiential dimensions, such as student involvement in actual business or start-up projects and the use of assessment methods that fully reflect real-life entrepreneurial practices. These gaps support earlier observations by Okolie, Igwe, and Nwosu (2021) and Kennedy (2022), who reported that entrepreneurship education in many Nigerian institutions remains constrained by traditional pedagogical approaches that prioritise classroom instruction over authentic enterprise engagement. From a competency-based education perspective, this partial alignment suggests that while curriculum objectives are conceptually understood, their translation into consistent and practice-oriented classroom experiences remains uneven.

The findings for Research Question Two provide further insight into the underlying causes of this misalignment. The high grand mean score of 3.86 indicates strong agreement that the gap between curriculum design and classroom practice is driven by systemic and interrelated challenges. Prominent among these are lack of teaching materials and practical resources, insufficient funding for entrepreneurship laboratories, inadequate lecturer preparedness for experiential delivery methods, and weak collaboration with industry experts and entrepreneurs. These findings strongly echo the arguments advanced by UNESCO (2022) and the World Bank (2023), which emphasise that effective TVET and entrepreneurship education require sustained investment, institutional capacity, and strong industry linkages. The identification of lecturer preparedness as a major contributing factor reinforces the view that curriculum reform alone is insufficient without corresponding investment in teacher professional development.

As UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) notes, teachers are the primary agents through which curriculum intentions are enacted, particularly in digitally mediated and competency-based learning environments. Similarly, the influence of overcrowded classrooms, rigid institutional policies, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation highlights the structural nature of the curriculum–practice gap. These constraints limit opportunities for personalised instruction, practical engagement, and reflective assessment, thereby weakening effective skills acquisition despite well-articulated curriculum goals.

Findings from Research Question Three offer a constructive response to these challenges by identifying strategies perceived as effective for improving entrepreneurship education implementation. The high grand mean score of 4.10 reflects a strong consensus that enhancing student outcomes and skills acquisition requires coordinated, multi-level interventions. Increased funding for entrepreneurship laboratories, regular training and workshops for lecturers, and partnerships with local businesses for internships were identified as the most critical strategies. This aligns with global best practices that position entrepreneurship education as ecosystem-driven, requiring collaboration between educational institutions, industry, and the wider community (UNESCO, 2022; World Bank, 2023). The emphasis on hands-on projects, mentorship, peer learning, incubation centres, and community-based entrepreneurial activities further reinforces experiential learning as the

cornerstone of effective entrepreneurship education. These findings are consistent with experiential learning theory and contemporary entrepreneurship education literature, which stress that entrepreneurial skills are best developed through action, reflection, and engagement with real-world uncertainty (Fayolle & Gailly, 2021). The moderate agreement on the use of digital tools and regular curriculum adaptation suggests growing recognition of the importance of digitalisation and responsiveness to market changes, although infrastructural and capacity constraints may still limit full implementation in practice.

Collectively, these findings affirm the central argument of this study: that the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions is not primarily hindered by weak curriculum design, but by insufficient alignment between curriculum intentions and classroom realities. While curricula increasingly reflect contemporary expectations related to entrepreneurship, digital competence, and employability, classroom practice is constrained by resource limitations, pedagogical capacity gaps, and systemic institutional challenges. Consequently, effective skills acquisition remains partial and uneven. By linking curriculum design, classroom practice, and skills acquisition as mutually reinforcing elements, the findings support calls for a more integrated approach to entrepreneurship education reform. Strengthening alignment requires not only curriculum review, but also sustained investment in teaching resources, lecturer development, industry engagement, assessment reform, and digital infrastructure.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study concludes that although entrepreneurship education curricula in Nigerian tertiary institutions are well articulated and moderately reflected in classroom practice, a significant gap persists between curriculum design and instructional implementation. This gap is largely driven by systemic challenges such as inadequate resources, insufficient funding, limited lecturer preparedness for experiential and digital pedagogy, weak industry collaboration, and structural constraints within institutions. Consequently, effective skills acquisition among students remains uneven. The findings emphasise that meaningful entrepreneurship education requires more than curriculum reform; it demands deliberate alignment of curriculum intentions with classroom practice, supported by adequate institutional capacity, experiential learning opportunities, and strategic use of digital tools to enhance student outcomes in the digital TVET era.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Curriculum developers and institutional managers should ensure that entrepreneurship education curricula are explicitly aligned with classroom practices by embedding clear guidelines for experiential learning, practical projects, and competency-based assessment.
2. Regular training, workshops, and professional development programmes should be organised to equip entrepreneurship lecturers with the pedagogical and digital skills required to implement experiential, learner-centred, and technology-enhanced teaching strategies.
3. Government, institutional authorities, and relevant stakeholders should provide adequate funding for entrepreneurship laboratories, workshops, simulations, and start-up support activities to enable effective hands-on learning.

4. Tertiary institutions should establish and strengthen partnerships with local businesses, entrepreneurs, and industry experts to provide internship opportunities, mentorship, guest lectures, and real-world entrepreneurial exposure for students.
5. Assessment practices should be restructured to reflect real-life entrepreneurial activities, such as business plan development, product prototyping, pitch presentations, and community-based projects, alongside improved monitoring and evaluation of teaching outcomes.
6. Institutions should encourage entrepreneurship clubs, competitions, incubation centres, and mentorship programmes to foster student motivation, creativity, and sustained entrepreneurial engagement.
7. Digital platforms and tools should be strategically integrated into entrepreneurship education to support simulations, collaboration, feedback, and access to wider entrepreneurial ecosystems, while ensuring equitable access and infrastructural support.

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