COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING AND TAKE-HOME BENEFITS FROM ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

BY

Zekeri, Abu (Ph.D)
Senior Lecturer, Department of Business and Entrepreneurship,
Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences,
Kwara State University, Malete.
zekeriabu2007@yahoo.com
08033782728

Issa, Abdulraheem (Ph.D)
Senior Lecturer, Department of Business and Entrepreneurship,
Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences,
Kwara State University, Malete.
issaabdulraheem@yahoo.com
08060637110

&

Shu'aibu, Nasir
Postgraduate Student, Department of Business and Entrepreneurship,
Faculty of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences,
Kwara State University, Malete.
shuaibunas@gmail.com
08063107113

Abstract
This paper underscores the place of competency-based learning as an approach in the development of entrepreneurial behaviour. It discusses the concept of entrepreneurial competencies which is geared towards developing necessary skills for empowering learners for effective teamwork management, and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on identified opportunities. When fully grounded in these skills, citizens would be empowered to be self reliant, and be obsessed with self-employment for job creation. Anchored on qualitative research methodology, the paper looked at the concept of competency-based learning as an approach, and its' relevance to entrepreneurial behaviour as it affects teamwork management and opportunity recognition competency skills with theoretical framework underpinned in skills acquisition theory. Findings of the study revealed that many businesses in Nigeria face difficulties because the necessary manpower to provide the right type of skills, knowledge, and competencies is inadequate. The study concluded that competency-based learning as an approach in revamping the economy is indispensable. It is therefore, recommended that Management of organizations should give their teams the autonomy to operate freely, and there should be enabling atmosphere to discover opportunities.

Key words: Benefits, Competency, Entrepreneurship, Skills, Training.

Introduction

In the present economic situation and realities, the knowledge of academic subject is insufficient for a school graduate. Students are increasingly required to possess skills and abilities which would make them employable after school. Generally, entrepreneurship is seen as a major engine of economic growth and job creation. The viability of a business is a function of many attributes, one of which is competence. Entrepreneurship training is significant towards enhancing national development because it equips learners with relevant skills, knowledge, abilities, values and behaviour pattern which enable them to be active entrepreneurially.

Competency-based learning approach is aimed at creating a mindset of entrepreneurial obsession in students by means of providing them with skills, knowledge and ability which would enable them to be relevant in entrepreneurial activities. The competence of an entrepreneur is a necessary ingredient which adds value to the fortunes of business organizations. Entrepreneurs' competencies are rudiments to the establishment and survival of prospective business organizations because practical business skills and experience are required to inculcate entrepreneurial skills (Albornoz-Pardo, 2013)

One of the challenges with Nigeria educational system is that students in tertiary institutions are not equipped with necessary information which enables them to be effective entrepreneurs (Ruth, 2020). In the long run, competency-based learning approach has a great value and positive effect on both individuals and the economy. These values therefore aid individuals to be obsessed with self-employment and job creation.

Competency-based learning is seen as a way by which student's skills and abilities are enhanced that can be used to make things happen. With competency-based learning, school leavers have the ability to acquire entrepreneurial traits which can influence their entrepreneurial behaviour (Ediagbonya, 2013).

Capacity of productivity in Nigeria has been below international best standard practices and this phenomenon could perhaps, be traced to absence of effective teamwork management (Abdulraheem & Sanusi, 2020). Possession of the right attributes is a major step to becoming an effective entrepreneur. Teamwork is the ability to work with others towards a shared goal, participating actively, sharing responsibility and rewards, and contributing to the capability of the team.

Identifying and exploiting new opportunities helps businesses survive, thrive, and remain competitive in their markets. Where this is widespread, the entire economy enjoys sustainable development (Zizile & Tendai, 2018). However, it is saddening to realize that most school leavers neither possess the competence to find new products for old customers, nor the ability to find new ways to please old customers (Sanchez, 2012). If an entrepreneur actively seeks and recognizes opportunities, there is the possibility that old markets or customers would be provided with new products (Gustavo & Fernando, 2019).

Objectives of the Study:

The study has the following objectives:

a. To assess the relationship between competency-based learning and student's teamwork management competency skill acquisition in entrepreneurship education.
b. To examine the relationship between competency-based learning and student's opportunity-recognition competency skill acquisition in entrepreneurship education.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Competence:

The term competence has been defined by various authors differently, but the central values of these definitions always focus on the same meaning. The opinions of the writers can be said to vary mainly in language and situational application rather than in substance. Block et al. (2013) sees competence as viable entrepreneurial activities of income generation and employment creation. Lackeus (2015) refer to competencies as possessing the skills, knowledge and behaviour that influence the willingness and ability of entrepreneurial engagement.

Gustavo and Fernando (2019) stressed on the significance of competencies. To them, competence is the practice of what one knows in a given situation, influenced by work relations, organizational culture, and other factors. Therefore, competence should be translated into action by the mobilization of knowledge in varying circumstances. Gustavo and Fernando (2019) further sees competence as being made up of three mutually complementary elements: people taking the initiative and responsibility for professional situations with which they are faced; practical intelligence of situations that is supported by acquired knowledge and transforms that knowledge as the diversity of situations increases; and the capacity to mobilize networks of actors around the same situations, sharing challenges and accepting areas of responsibility. Therefore, competence is the initiative and taking of responsibility for problems and events faced in professional situations.

To Chell (2013), competency is a comprehensive construct encompassing skills and various attributes that are significant to carrying out specific task. Competencies are therefore goal oriented. Paul and Andrew (2009), says that competence is conceptualized in terms of skills, attitudes, knowledge, abilities, behavior and personality traits exhibited in the context of a carefully chosen set of achievable professional tasks which are of good appropriate level of generality. Aimhzan et al. (2015) defines competency in terms of the significance attached to education by calling them “educational competences. According to the definition, “educational competences is a set of semantic orientations, knowledge, skills and experience of the student’s activity in relation to certain range of objects of the reality which is necessary for the implementation of personally and socially meaningful productive activity.

Concept of Competency-Based Learning:

Competency-based learning is an approach to education that focuses on the student’s demonstration of desired learning outcomes and is carried out through Student Centered Learning (Dewi, 2019). Here, student’s progression through curriculum at their own pace, depth, etc is a major concern (Febriana, 2017). Fatoki (2014), noted that competency-based learning is an approach which aims to achieve objectives such as encouraging learners to exhibit positive attitude towards self-employment, identify business opportunities, portray a desire to create jobs and demonstrate managerial skills for running successful enterprises.

Baharuddin (2017) argues that competency-based learning is a student-centered form of approach whereby learners progress to more and advanced task upon mastering the necessary skills. As noted by Kyndt and Baert (2015) “entrepreneurs and their competences are central to the success of business organizations. Entrepreneurship is not limited to special individuals with certain personality traits because it is the combination of acquired attitude, personality, environment, experience and learning on the competitive behaviour required by entrepreneurs to drive the market process (Arogundade, 2011).

In his submission, Baharuddin (2017) observed that under competency-based learning, assessment processes are designed in the form of a scoring rubic which includes assignments, skills, attitudes, and appreciation that students must have in carrying out learning tasks in accordance with a particular job. Febriana (2017) complements the preceding position when he suggested that the competency requirements needed by the workforce are segmented into two large groups, namely technical skills and employability skills. According to him, technical skills is the ability in the field of work which includes knowledge and skills, while employability skills are the ability to manage work attitude and behaviour skills which covers attitude and knowledge of the nature of work.

Entrepreneurial Competencies:

Business environment is becoming ever more complex, and entrepreneurs becoming more creative and innovative. However, the growth of any business will be truncated without being competent. Therefore, it is important that the entrepreneurs act proactively within the environment in order to diminish the negative consequence of the challenging business environment (Pepple & Enuoh, 2020).

Entrepreneurial competencies are the combination of individual behavior and attitudes which enable entrepreneurs to achieve and sustain business success (Capote & Amparo, 2015). Farnaz et al. (2010) held that entrepreneurial competence is the combination of all essential traits for sustainable success and entrepreneurship including, values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, abilities, skills, wisdom, expertise and behavioral tendencies. As observed by Adamu (2015), intellect is a specific competency, and the main intellect for a successful entrepreneur is one that contains balanced analytic, creative, and operational capabilities.

Onstenk (2003), considered the following competencies as defined for entrepreneurs by the International Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (ICEE):

a. The ability to recognize and analyze market opportunities.
b. Ability to establish linkages with business persons and other stakeholders for mutual learning, collaborative understandings and other joint activities aimed at achieving common objectives.
c. Ability to communicate, identify mentally, persuade and discuss with customers, clients, suppliers, competitors, service providers, and other stakeholders in the business environment.
d. To be able to live with daily insecurity.
e. Ability to deal with the world of entrepreneurship.

Sarwoko (2016) averred that entrepreneurs' competences lead small and medium-scale establishments to a larger capacity and strategic vision, which can affect performance and growth strategy. Mitchelmore and Rowley (2010) observed that entrepreneurial competencies concentrate more on personal features and traits of the entrepreneur, notably such as the knowledge and skills that enable an entrepreneur to run a business competently. As such, their concept of entrepreneurial competencies is as a group of characteristics that are relevant to successful entrepreneurship and often associated with the development of new and small ventures.

Pepple and Enuoh (2020) gave an analysis to identify the entrepreneur's competencies that can be linked to the role played by entrepreneurs. These are:

Teamwork management competency

Teamwork management skill has to do with the ability to work together and cooperate with others to develop ideas and turn them into action, network, solve

conflictions, and face up to competition when necessary (Giovanna et al., 2018). Stone and Pemberton (2002) states that it involves the ability to collaborate and the willingness to display initiative, introduce new and efficient practices and methods in order to optimize the work process, organization, and management of tasks and resources. An entrepreneur has to keep an eye on the atmosphere in the team and ensure that every team member feels comfortable and there is no tension between the colleagues. Jenssen and Greve (2002) opined that an entrepreneur should be able to take responsibility, recognize, and acknowledge the achievements of team members and inspire others by their own exemplary dispositions.

Opportunity-recognition competency

This is the ability to recognize the presence of opportunity, and taking advantage of the opportunity. This competency is associated with the ability of an entrepreneur to seek, develop, and assess high quality opportunities that are available in the market (Morris et al., 2013). Morris et al. (2013) further emphasize that it is the capacity to perceive changed conditions or overlooked possibilities in the environment that present potential sources of profit or return to a venture. In the words of Shepherd and Wiklund (2005), entrepreneurs are required to often engage in the search for products and services that could add value for the end users because the decision to exploit the opportunities largely depends on the entrepreneurs' knowledge of customer demand.

Entrepreneurial Competencies Level:

Competencies in entrepreneurial activities consist of different levels which include motivation and characteristics, social role and self-concept, knowledge and skills. According to Farnaz et al. (2010), levels of entrepreneurial competencies are demonstrated by those who start a business or make certain changes in the existing position of an organization or those who add value by identifying current opportunities in the society.

There are levels through which students must pass to become specialist experts according to Competencies Model (Farnaz et al., 2010). Skilful performance is not only a measure to evaluate the result of a simple and superficial behaviour, but also includes the method by which a person processes information before, and acts accordingly in order to achieve desired outcomes. This method is used to determine the levels in order to identify training levels which is needed for every entrepreneurial competency (Gillies & Howard, 2003).

Levels of performance model

Level	Title	Description
1	Novice	The person does not have any experience in this field or just has a little experience. So he/she can only perform it under direct training and guidance.
2	Learner	The person has some experience in this field and is able to perform it under minimum daily supervision, but still needs training or guidance in case of encountering new situations.
3	Competent	The person performs regularly in this field and is able to act effectively without daily supervision, but may temporarily need training or support in case of encountering unusual situations.

4	Skillful	The person possesses skill or experience in this field and can only act under the manager's supervision. The person is also able to teach how to work to others.
5	Expert (Specialist)	The person is absolutely skillful and has several-years experience in this field. He/she possess intuitive understanding and does not need a supervisor.

Source: Fernaz**,** Reza**,** and Abdol**,** 2010.

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education is a type of education that shapes peoples' mindset and also provides the skills and knowledge that are required to develop in entrepreneurial culture (Adamu, 2015). Onu (2006) sees entrepreneurship education as a type of education which provides learners with the basic knowledge, skills, attitude, and ideas for self-reliance.

Through the inculcation of entrepreneurial skills, recipients become proficient in career related areas and launch them into the business world with a view to overcoming the problem of unemployment and over-dependency on white collar jobs (Kehinde, 2019). UNESCO (2008) noted that entrepreneurship education is made up of all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of how to access and transform opportunities of different kinds. It goes beyond business creation; it is about increasing student's ability to anticipate and respond to societal changes.

Entrepreneurship education becomes very significant machinery to meet national goal because obtaining an entrepreneurial education serves as a tremendous advantage to increasing the chances of success as an entrepreneur (Sule, 2014). Entrepreneurship education goes beyond just teaching someone to run a business, it is about encouraging creative thinking and promoting a high sense of self-work and accountability (Kehinde,2019).

Objectives of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education is concerned with the development and survival of both the individual and the society. It is a tool through which socio-economic and political development could be achieved if it is properly planned, funded and implemented. Obayi (2017) spelt out the objectives of entrepreneurship education as follows:

a. To provide the youth graduates with adequate training that will enable them to be creative and innovative.
b. To create employment and self-employment opportunities.
c. To provide graduates with adequate training in opportunity recognition abilities.
d. To provide graduates with enough training in risk management to make uncertainty bearing possible and easy.
e. To stimulate industrial and economic growth of rural and less developed area.

The above objectives are evident that this type of education will produce quality school leavers that will foster job creation if given all it requires and properly implemented. This is possible when school leavers are self-reliant by establishing their own business enterprises. On the other hand, entrepreneurship is known for its' impact on economic growth while accelerating the technological development and employment rate (Schott et al, 2015). Therefore, entrepreneurship education represents a key solution for stabilization of negative labour market conditions. Entrepreneurship

education denotes the development of some skills or qualities and is not necessarily directly linked to the creation of new businesses (Zdolsek & Sirec, 2018).
Through entrepreneurship education, students develop entrepreneurial competencies and change their attitude toward entrepreneurship (Schott et al, 2015).

Theoretical Review

Theory of Skill Acquisition

The study adopted Skill acquisition theory which was propounded by Crossman in the year 1959. He asserted that practice leads to performance improvement. He suggested further that as an entrepreneur, when faced with a new task, there are various strategies that can potentially be used and with practice of the task, we monitor the outcome and produce as a result of various strategies used. With time, we come to favour the more efficient strategy. These procedures are used more often to speed up performance. According to Dekeyser (2007), it is a theory of skill acquisition which advocated "Practice" as symbol of performance improvement ranging from cognitive to psychomotor skills. This theory claims that learners commence learning something through mainly explicit processes, and through subsequent sufficient practice and exposure, proceed to implicit processes (VanPatten & Benati, 2010). The theory proposes that practice leads to more efficient procedures for performing a task.

Methodology

This study has employed qualitative research methodology. This denotes that the data used in conducting this research was anchored on secondary sources such as published and unpublished materials, scholarly journals, and internet base-line.

Findings

The general findings regarding competency-based learning in entrepreneurial education teaching is that it delivers a number of advantages for entrepreneurship. Competency-based learning as an approach which aims to achieve objectives such as encouraging learners to exhibit positive attitude towards self-employment, identify business opportunities, portray a desire to create jobs and demonstrate managerial skills for running successful enterprises in relation to range of objects of the reality which is necessary for the implementation of personally, and socially meaningful productive activity.

Conclusion

A competency-based learning approach to entrepreneurship training is a valuable way to fostering a viable economic activity (Hayton & Kelley, 2006). Whereas trait-based approaches have focused on stable individual features as predictors of entrepreneurial behaviour, a competency framework emphasizes the relevance of characteristics that can influence organizational effectiveness. It is expected that the support and stimulation of entrepreneurial competencies will increase the strength of the entrepreneurial climate.

Recommendations

1. Management of organizations should endeavour to give teams the autonomy in decision making, as this will give them the opportunity to have various options at their disposal from which favorable choice can be made.
2. Entrepreneurs should thrive to discover opportunities by observing technological, economic, and social trends which help a business stay relevant and successful over long-term.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study provides valuable collection of ideas that can be of importance to other writers, entrepreneurs, educators, and students in comprehending the nature of effect and relationship between competency-based learning, entrepreneurship education outcome, and entrepreneurship behavior. Most studies considered knowledge, ability, apprenticeship training, and personality traits as attributes; this study considered effective teamwork management and opportunity-recognition as entrepreneurial behavior. This study has therefore contributed to knowledge by pointing out that there is a significant relationship between competency-based learning and entrepreneurship behavior.

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