



## Project Method of Teaching Entrepreneurship Education for Self Reliance among Business Education Students in Tertiary Education in Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*The paper elucidated on mechanisms in project method and the teaching of entrepreneurship education for self-reliance among Business Education Students in Nigeria. Project work focuses on applying, not imparting, specific knowledge or skills, and on improving student involvement and motivation in order to foster independent thinking, self-confidence, and social responsibility. The article expressed the types of projects, potentials as well as limitation of project method of teaching. Steps of project method highlighted in the paper include creating situation, selection of the problem, planning and execution of the project. Theory of constructivism was used in the work to relate the principles of project method. Concept of Business Education, Concept of Entrepreneurship Education, Project as a Teaching Method in Entrepreneurship Education. This paper elucidated roles of the Business Education Teacher in Project method of teaching. Essentials for a good project were also discussed in the work. Like other teaching methods in education project holds an important landscape in entrepreneurship education. It was recommended among others that lecturers should adopt the project method of teaching in entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary education.*

**Keywords:** Project method, entrepreneurship education, self reliance and Business Education

### **Introduction**

Project method is a medium of instruction where students are given a number of projects or situation to work on. The students choose their project on their own then they plan to execute the project collectively. In this style of teaching the teacher works as a guide and not a dictator but a working partner. Projects methods is a problematic act which is carried out and completed in natural settings. It lays great emphasis on taking the people into confidence and nothing is imposed upon the students from the teacher or guide, who take the responsibility of the work. In project method of teaching the curriculum content and the technique are considered from the student's point of view as such this method is a completely student-centric where students learn things by experience.

The project method is an educational enterprise in which students solve a practical problem over a period of several days or weeks. It may involve building a rocket, designing a playground, or publishing a class newspaper. The project may be suggested by the teacher, but



they are planned and executed as far as possible by the students themselves, individually or in groups. Project method actively engages students in the learning process for effective mastery of the subject matter and promotion of a positive attitude towards the subject. Project methods focuses on applying, not imparting, specific knowledge or skills, and on improving student involvement and motivation in order to foster independent thinking, self-confidence, and social responsibility (Kilpatrick, 2015).

### **Types of Projects Method of Teaching**

Project is any undertaking, carried out individually or collaboratively and possibly involving research or design, that is carefully planned.

According to Kilpatrick (2015) there are four types of projects. They are:

1. **Constructive Project:** In constructive project, students are given opportunity to construct ideas about businesses they can establish when they are out of school. Practical tasks such as conducting feasibility study, writing business plan, starting a business, inventing business ideas, setting of real small business ventures, workshops, presentations and study visits are done in this type of projects.
2. **Aesthetic Project:** Appreciation powers of the students are developed in this type of project through beautification of things that are appealing to them. These projects are generally allotted in the aesthetic fields of life. E.g. in music, drawing, painting art and culture.
3. **Project Problem-solving:** These projects are given to solve the problems related to any life-situation or related to any subject. Problems such as how to start and manage a small scale business, how to maintain books of accounts and how to send an email or letter are some problems students would likely be expose to in the project method of teaching. Some Business Education students graduate from the higher institution without prior knowledge on how to send an email, maintain books of accounts, have ideas about running business in real life. Applying project method of teaching impact students with the necessary skills to be self reliant as they could be the ones to choose a particular project they want to embark on and would be scored by the lecturer at the end of the project. These problems if solved will make a student efficient for social-life.
4. **Drill Project:** In drill project, emphasis is on mastery of skill and knowledge of the students. It increases the work efficacy and capacity of the students. The drill type projects involve an activity that aims at acquiring greater skill.

### **Potential of Project Method**

- i. Project method gives freedom to the students
- ii. It has potentials to drive social values
- iii. It promotes learning through practical problem solving
- iv. It trains students for social adjustment.
- v. It trains students for a democratic way of life\



- vi. It leads to satisfaction of completing the whole work (Kilpatrick, 2015)

### Limitations in Project Method

- i. It is time consuming and limited by availability and cost of materials (Kilpatrick, 2015).
- ii. The method provides opportunity only for the practical enthusiast
- iii. It may be too ambitious; beyond the students capacity
- iv. Projects may be adopted or abandoned at will
- v. The project approach often results in an incomplete mastery of the tools of learning, which are essential to students education later.
- vi. It leave gap in students knowledge.

### Steps of Project Method

Before embarking on a project there are certain steps that needs to be followed as discussed in this section, this include but not limited to;

- i. **Creating Situation:** In the first step teacher creates the proper situation to the students in the class. The teacher shares the knowledge about the project method procedure, steps, and uses with the students. After that sharing knowledge, the teacher provides proper motivation through conversation about the day to day life problems to the students (Kilpatrick, 2015).
- ii. **Selection of the Problem:** Here, the teacher helps the students to select the problem and guide them. The students are given freedom to choose the topic or problem based on their interest and ability. Before choosing the topic the principles should be taken into an account (Kilpatrick, 2015).
- iii. **Planning:** The teacher discuss with the students about the problem through various angles and points. The teacher should create the situation of the discussion with the students and they are allowed to discuss freely and openly. After the free expression of the student's opinion about the problem, the teacher writes down the whole program of action stepwise on the blackboard. The grouping is made by the teacher based on the interest and ability of the students (Kilpatrick, 2015).
- iv. **Execution:** At this point the students start their works. They collect the relevant information/data and materials at first. And start working on the project assigned to them by the teacher.

There is need for a theory that relates with project method of teaching. The theory gives an insight of what is expected of entrepreneurship education lecturers regarding project method of teaching. Constructivism as a theory of knowledge argue that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experience and their ideas. During infancy, it was an



interaction between human experiences and their reflexes or behaviour pattern Piaget called this system of knowledge schemata. Writers who influenced constructivism include John Dewey, Maria, Montessori, Wladyslaw Strzeminski, Jean Piaget, Herbert Simon, Paul Watzlavvick, Ernest Von Glasersfeld, Edgar Morin and so forth. However, formalization of the theory of constructivism is generally attributed to Jean Piaget, who articulated mechanism by which knowledge is internalized by learners. The author suggested that through processed process of accommodation and assimilation, individual construct new knowledge from their experiences. When individuals assimilate, they incorporate the new experience into an already existing framework without changing that framework. This may occur when individuals' experiences are aligned with their internal representations of the world, but may also occur as a failure to change a faulty understanding; for example, they may not notice events, may misunderstand input from others, or may decide that an event is a fluke and is therefore unimportant as information about the world.

According to the theory, accommodation is the process of retraining one's mental representation of the external world to fit need experiences. It is important to note that, construction is not a particular ideology, construction is a theory describing how learning happens, regardless of whether learners- are- using their, experience to understand a lecture or following the instructions, the theory of constructivism suggests that learners construct knowledge out of their experience. However, constructivism is often associated with pedagogic instructions that promote active learning or learning by doing. The learner as a unique-individual; social constructivism view each learner as a unique 'individual with unique needs and background; the learner is also seen as a complex and multidimensional. The theory encourages the learner to arrive at his or her version of the truth, influenced by his or her background, culture or embedded worldwide. According to this theory, it is thus important to take into account the background and culture of the learner throughout the learning process. The responsibility for learning should reside increasingly with the learner.

The theory suggests that knowledge is first constructed in a social context and is appropriated by individuals. According to constructivists, the process of sharing individual perspectives- called collaborative elaboration;results in learners constructing understanding together that would not be possible alone. The theory view learning as an active process where learners should learn to discover principles, concepts and the facts for themselves; hence the importance of encouraging guess work and instinctive thinking in learners. Other constructivist scholars agree with this and emphasize that individuals make meanings through the interactions with each other and with the environment they live in, Thus knowledge is a product of humans and is socially and culturally constructed agrees that learning is a social process. The author further states that learning is not a process that only takes place inside minds, nor is a passive



development of behaviour that is shaped by external forces and that meaningful learning occurs when individual are-engaged in social activities.

This theory is also of the view that the instructor and the learners are equally involved in learning from each other as well. This means that the learning experience is both subjective and objective and requires that the instructor's culture, values and background become an essential part of the interplay between learners and task in the shaping of meaning. Learners compare their version of the truth with that of the instructor and fellow learner's truth. Learners with dynamic skills and background should collaborate in tasks and discussion to arrive at a shared understanding of the truth in a specific field. Also, they stressed the need for collaboration among learners, in direct contradiction to traditional competitive instructions.

### **Concept of Business Education**

Business Education is one of the courses offered in the universities with the central aim of building the capacity of the students for enterprise development. One remarkable and important characteristic of Business Education programme is that its products can function independently as self-employed and employers of labour. Business Education programme prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within the business environment. It is an educational programme which involves acquisition of skills, knowledge and competences which makes the recipient/beneficiary self-reliant. Ezeani (2012) described Business Education as an umbrella under which all business programmes such as Marketing, Business Administration, Secretarial Studies and Accounting take a shield. The programme prepares students for a career in business where instruction is designed to prepare youths and adults for actual practice in the world of business. Entrepreneurship education seeks to empower students with new skills to be able to harness opportunities, be self-reliant and become job-creators and not job-seekers on graduation. The training on entrepreneurship education should therefore, be focused on developing capacities to collect, analyze, organize and critically evaluate information for business decision making. It was envisaged as conception, that entrepreneurship education will not only equip graduates with the skills and motivation for successful entrepreneurship, it was also to provide the needed support to boost private sector investment to curb the problem of unemployment among school leavers (Adenike, 2016).

### **Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

The objectives of entrepreneurship education could be classified into three categories: raising awareness, teaching techniques, tools and how to handle situations and supporting project bearers (Fayolle, 2017). Generally, entrepreneurship education aims to increase the awareness of entrepreneurship as a career option, and enhance the understanding of the process involved in initiating and managing a new business enterprise (Lee & Wong, 2017).

The educational system creates awareness of alternative career choices and broadens the horizon of individuals, equipping them with cognitive tools and enabling them to perceive and develop entrepreneurial opportunities.



Moreover, entrepreneurship education can help students see in new venture creation a possible career option, develop positive and favorable attitudes towards entrepreneurial situations and also entails proposing new career perspectives for part or all of one's professional life. Entrepreneurship education can constitute an essential tool in developing the entrepreneurial culture of students. Teaching entrepreneurship to individuals who are strongly committed to their venture creation project, to professionals and other practitioners committed to the field of entrepreneurship or to students who have neither intention nor a concrete project is very different in nature. Although some lecturers tend to overemphasize it, pedagogy is not an end per se. Pedagogy is a means to achieve objectives. As soon as objectives have been agreed upon and specific constraints have been identified, the right teaching methods can be selected (Fayolle & Gailly 2018). However, effectiveness of an entrepreneurship education program depends mostly on teacher's skill and knowledge of different teaching methods particularly entrepreneurship education teaching methods.

### **Project as a Teaching Method in Entrepreneurship Education**

There are many ways to offer entrepreneurship education, depending on the objectives of such education (Hytti and O'Gorman, 2014). If the objective of the education is to increase the understanding of what entrepreneurship education is about, the most effective way to accomplish the objective is to adopt project method of teaching. If the objective is to equip individuals with entrepreneurial skills, which are applicable directly to work, the best way is to provide education and training that enable individuals to involve directly in the entrepreneurial process, such as industrial training. Lastly, if the objective of the education is to prepare individuals to act as entrepreneurs, the most effective technique is to facilitate experiments by trying entrepreneurship out in a controlled environment, for instance through business simulation or role playing (Ahmad, Baharun & Rahman, 2014). Project method will involve setting of real small business ventures, workshops, presentations and study visits. These are termed "active" and is said to be more appropriate for nurturing entrepreneurial attributes among students. It is however also generally agreed that traditional methods such as demonstration method is less effective in encouraging entrepreneurial attributes. It seems such method actually make students become dormant participants. These methods prepare a student to work for an entrepreneur, but not to become one. If entrepreneurship education is to be learned as a career, it is best done using some kind of apprenticeship. Engaging in practical and having an opportunity to question, investigate, converse, and discuss with real-world entrepreneurs gives both knowledge and skills and also stimulates attitudes of students.

The teachers' main tasks are to provide theoretical knowledge on entrepreneurship and business planning, to instruct the students to find and test business ideas, and assess business opportunities and to consult group work and business plan writing. The students should realize the importance of preparing a business plan, gain an overview of the Business Plan structure and preparation process, and get some practice in writing a business plan on the basis of their own





business idea. Knowledge on how to implement a business idea, experience of business planning and information on the process of setting up an enterprise should motivate students to think about setting up their own business and as a result, bring more of them to entrepreneurship education (Venesaar, 2018). Project method of teaching should be applied in the teaching of Entrepreneurship Education for self-reliance of students. After a brief introduction of a particular topic, the teachers should assign projects to students to do on their own or carryout the project as a group (collaboration). The projects should be the ones the students can handle financially and should be things they will face after graduation from school in order to encourage them for self-reliance.

### **Roles of the Business Education Teacher in Project Method of Teaching**

The project to be successful must be based on a definite procedure. The first and main responsibility of a teacher is to provide those situations in which they feel a spontaneous urge to solve some of their practical problems. The teacher should motivate the students in such a manner that there is whole hearted cooperation of students in the project process. Teacher helps the students in proper planning of the project and discuss with them all the pros and cons of the project they are about to embark. The teacher supplies clue and also provide information to the students about the sources of materials for the project. The relation of the teacher with his students is very closer in project method than in ordinary class teaching. The teacher acts like a friend, who works together with the students and helps them to gain rich experiences. The teacher directs the students and gives them all types of necessary directions and does not behave as an autocratic teacher. (Venesaar, 2018)

### **Essentials for a Good Project**

The following are essential for a good project as posited by Nupur (2016)

- (i) **Timely:** The project should be such as is related directly to the lesson and vocational interest. It should be in accordance with the mental and chronological age of the students. Environmental and seasonal factors must be given due consideration.
- (ii) **Usefulness:** The project selected should be useful in life. The learning experience in a project must be capable of being applied in life of students.
- (iii) **Interesting:** Projects should be interesting from students' point of view. They must make an appeal to the emotional hungers or drives of the students.
- (iv) **Challenging:** Projects given to students should neither be too simple nor too long and difficult. They should be challenging. Challenging projects would enable the students to take up projects that would be applicable in their real life after graduation.
- (v) **Economical:** The project should be economical and should not unnecessarily tax the energy and pocket of the students.
- (vi) **Rich in Experience:** The project should be able to correlate different subjects and practical activities of life. Students who have been exposed to project method of teaching



should be able to gather reasonable experience that will enable them become self-reliant after graduation.

- (vii) **Cooperativeness:** In the project there should be enough scope for individual and cooperative thinking.

### **The Teaching of Entrepreneurship Education for Self-Reliance**

Quality entrepreneurship education could enhance job creation which would subsequently reduce unemployment, poverty and social vices in Nigeria. This will also help to improve the standard of living; hence promote social economic and political development in Nigeria which is the cardinal objective of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Maina, 2014). According to him, for recipient of entrepreneurship education to be a job creator rather than job-seeker, he might acquire essential basic skills and attitudes which will be enable him to function as an entrepreneur. Thus, entrepreneurship education which lead to self-reliance improves the quality of life and the general standard of living of the masses. It reflects in the following economic indicators such as Higher Profit Employers, more employment, Higher Productivity, Promotion of Innovative Technologies, products and services and increase in local sourcing of raw materials (Okoba, 2012).

Therefore, for a country striving to attain self-reliance economy, its educational system should be designed to involve robust entrepreneurial curriculum. Entrepreneurship as a factor of production is a body that organizes human and materials resources for the production of goods and services. Entrepreneurship in its broader sense is a process of making individuals explored their potentials and initiatives or creativities for greatness, which will in turn build their self-confidence in order to become self-reliant and self-sufficient in the race of life. Entrepreneurship is a source of job creation, empowerment and economic dynamism in a rapidly globalizing world. Entrepreneurship prepares Business Education students to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic development and sustainable communities thereby become self-reliant (Jimoh, 2012). A Business Education student who is self-reliant, is one who is self-employed, because self-employment is one of the keys to working out of poverty. To move out of poverty, one need to truly want more, make the effort to gain it, seek self-employment over normal employment, gain the necessary skills to accomplish a certain task and establish personal values like organization, cleanliness, honesty among others. self-reliant is learnt through entrepreneurship, the real power to attract wealth comes from our own self-reliant through entrepreneurship, determination and will; not from any dependence on others.

### **Ways Business Education Students could Become Self-Reliant through Entrepreneurship**

The following are ways Business Education students could become self-reliant through entrepreneurship.

- i. **Develop the spirit of wealth creation and self-employment:** Wealth lies in self-employment, not on salaried jobs (Babalola, 2012). Business Education students should not develop the mindset of getting white collar job after graduation from the higher





- institution rather they should think of creating businesses that will make them self-reliant and employer of labour.
- ii. **Risk-taking:** Business is all about risk because it is rooted on profit and loss. Unemployed people clamour for jobs. They do not readily consider the alternative option and self-employment or taking risk because life itself is all about risk (Taiwo 2011). Salaried employment offers security, and unless one comes to enjoy the security of insecurity, such individual is not meant for self-employment which give rise to self-reliant through entrepreneurship and the attendant risks.
  - iii. **Translating of dream and vision into reality:** “Rich is he who has a dream, even without coins in his pocket” (Taiwo 2011) an entrepreneurial individual is a dreamer who accomplish dream through creating, organization and production of ideas as inclusive in capacities and skills which one earn for life.
  - iv. **Proper Utilization of every difficult situation:** A trial or hard circumstances around man is always a period of exploring and discovering human hiding potentials. Abraham Lincoln looses all his election from the district representatives but never gives up and was aiming higher until he finally got to the presidency and he won. Ben Carson who was libel in school as “Dummy” (Dull student), he used that opportunity to discovered the greatest in him and he became the first neurosurgeon who separated twins born attached together in their heads. Even as a student, one can come to better understanding of the current market and the challenges faced by fellow stakeholders, thereby increasing the livelihood of one success in the field (Abenet & Milkias 2017).
  - v. **Developing and Creating of School-to-work strategy:** This is a strong strategy for allowing young people and students to have practical work experience before students graduate from school. Such strategy as the establishment of school farm, shops and other vocational training or activities where students will develop practical experiences and cultivate the culture of self-reliant through job creation based on the skillful experiences acquired in those vocational activities (Taiwo 2011).

## Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education not only has a key role in development of entrepreneurial culture in the society, but also creates the necessary knowledge for starting, survival and growth of business. Like other education, teaching methods have an important role in entrepreneurship education. Effectiveness of entrepreneurship education is largely related to the teacher's skills and his (or her) knowledge of using different teaching method, specifically the methods of teaching entrepreneurship education. The students need to accustom with business problems. On the other hand, to be in a real business environment is essential for students. Then “development of a new venture creation project” could be other teaching methods of entrepreneurship program in universities. Entrepreneurship education requires project method mechanism. The project given to students will enable them to be self reliant. Most of the students find it difficult to take



up a project after graduation reasons being that they were not exposed to such projects while in school. As such, they are afraid to try new project, hence, when a teacher uses project method to teach entrepreneurship education after graduation it will not be difficult for the students to be self-reliant as they had already been exposed to such tasks which will make them not to develop phobia. Students should be given projects that they could apply in real life situation. For instance, in the case of entrepreneurship students should be given projects on how to conduct feasibility study, step by step guide on how to start small business.

### **Suggestions**

The following recommendations were drawn from the paper.

1. Lecturers should adopt the project method of teaching in entrepreneurship education.
2. Students should be given realistic projects to embark on.
3. The lecturers should ensure they monitor student's projects and award grades to them.

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