

## **Lifelong Learning in Entrepreneurship Education: A Paradigm for Sustainable Development**

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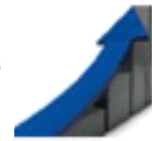
### **Abstract**

*The study was carried out to investigate lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education as a paradigm for sustainable development. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study comprised undergraduate students of selected higher institutions of learning in Akwa Ibom State with a population size of one thousand, six hundred (1600) students. Ten percent of the population (160) was selected using a simple random sampling technique and open ballot system was adopted to ensure that students stand equal chance of being selected. Structured questionnaire; Lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education questionnaire (LLEEQ) was used for data collection. Three lecturers from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Akwa Ibom State College of Education, validated the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha and reliability index of 0.86 was obtained. The research questions were answered using mean while the hypotheses were tested using t-test statistics. The result showed that lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education equips undergraduates with skills to be self-reliant, thereby contributing to sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, Entrepreneurship education, Sustainability, Lifelong learning, Self-reliance.

### **Introduction**

One of the major characteristics of a developing economy is the inability to provide for the basic needs of the population (Inegbenebor & Igbinomwanhia, 2010). In Nigeria, these problems appear to be getting worse by the day as thousands of graduates are churned out annually from the various Nigerian institutions of higher learning. Hence, poverty eradication and employment generation have been top priorities of both federal and state governments as well as other NGOs. This is propagated mainly through entrepreneurship education and skills acquisition. Entrepreneurship education as educational training helps individuals to understand and develop key entrepreneurial attributes, and skills such as creativity, innovativeness, quick decision-making and risk-taking skills. These skills are not only relevant to those interested in starting and growing

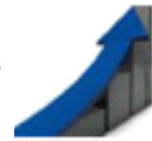


businesses but to all as these skills are necessary in the workplace, in daily life activities, as well as in managing the home and to the society at large.

It can be said therefore that entrepreneurship education generates programs that help in immersing students in the fundamental entrepreneurial mindset that will help them to develop critical thinking skills which enables them to identify and evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities; manage risks and learn from the results; understand the process that enables entrepreneurs with limited resources to transform a simple idea into a sustainable success; understand and apply fundamental aspects of entrepreneurial thinking across disciplines and as a means of personal empowerment; establish goals, identify resources and determine the steps required to accomplish goals, as well as identify and interact with local entrepreneurs and business owners within their own communities. All of these are geared towards attaining sustainable development. Sustainability in this context refers to intergenerational equity, just and peaceful societies, social tolerance, environmental preservation and restoration, poverty alleviation and natural resource conservation. Similarly, the concept of sustainable development requires the pursuit of an improved standard of living and self-reliance (Lindner, 2018).

As such, lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education is critical for developing entrepreneurial skills, attitudes and behaviours that are the basis for self-reliance. To this end, adequate access and exposure to entrepreneurship within educational systems at all levels becomes important as they are the outreach to target audiences outside of traditional educational systems. The need for lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education for sustainable development led to the integration of entrepreneurship education into the university education curriculum in Nigeria. This was to equip undergraduates with skills to function well and contribute to society upon graduation (Davwet et al., 2019). This goal is reflected in the Nigerian universities' strategic plans to provide the chance for undergraduates to become entrepreneurs and lifetime learners. Hence, entrepreneurship education was introduced to equip undergraduates from various disciplines with entrepreneurial skills needed to possess life-sustaining essentials, be a person, and be free from social servant hood (Edokpolor, 2020).

The ability of undergraduates to possess life-sustaining essentials, be a person, and gain freedom are described in economic development literature as core values of sustainable development (Mensah, 2019). To further achieve this ultimate goal of entrepreneurship education, a Centre for Entrepreneurship Development was established in most Nigerian Universities, which implies that entrepreneurship education occupies a strategic position in most Nigerian universities. It is on this premise that the Federal Government of Nigeria through the National Universities Commission (NUC) mandated Nigerian universities to integrate entrepreneurship education into the curriculum to curb the increasing rates of social problems in the country (Edokpolor, 2020).



Notably, the social problems that have engulfed most university graduates' in Nigeria are unemployment and poverty. Therefore, the recent high rates of unemployment and poverty suggested that graduates from numerous universities in the country possessed a low-level of entrepreneurial skills, which appear to hinder their opportunity to become self-reliant. It therefore implies that the goal of entrepreneurship education in promoting sustainable development in Nigeria has not been fully achieved. To foster the actualization of this goal, entrepreneurship education which is essential for developing the human capital necessary for the society of the future should be a lifelong process. It is not enough to add entrepreneurship education into the university curriculum alone. It should be incorporated into the curriculum of educational institutions at all levels (primary, secondary and higher education). In support of this, Ogundele & Egunjimi (2017) opined that entrepreneurship education should never end; as successful entrepreneurs continue throughout the lifetime of their business/ investments. Hence, there is need for lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education as this will promote sustainability and self-reliance.

### **Purpose of the Study**

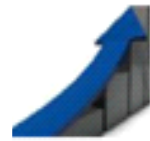
The purpose of the study focused on how students through exposure to lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education can be self-reliant and also attain sustainable development. More specifically, the study is set to:

1. determine the extent to which lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promotes student's self-reliance.
2. determine the extent to which lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promotes student's attainment of sustainable development.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study will be of benefit to students, teachers, school management, educational planners as well as the entire society.

1. It will help in immersing students in the fundamental entrepreneurial mindset that will help them to develop critical thinking skills which enables them to identify and evaluate entrepreneurial opportunities; manage risks and learn from the results; understand the process that enables entrepreneurs with limited resources to transform a simple idea into a sustainable success; understand and apply fundamental aspects of entrepreneurial thinking across disciplines and as a means of personal empowerment; establish goals, identify resources and determine the steps required to accomplish goals, as well as identify and interact with local entrepreneurs and business owners within their own communities.



2. To the teachers, it will give them an insight into what is expected of them. It will also help them to implement the curriculum and seek for further improvements on the subject through in-service training such as attending seminars and workshops, which will help in improving their method of teaching.
3. To the school management, it will guide them on what qualities and qualifications to look for in recruiting teachers/facilitators.
4. Also, to educational planners, these findings can be used to guide them on the need for qualified teachers to facilitate effective teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in schools. It will help them make some adjustments in some of the topics in the curriculum.
5. Finally, the study would be of immense benefit to the government because it will be a working document for policy formulation in relation to the training of teachers. It will contribute to the existing literature on students' performance and teachers' qualification; hence it will be important to the society at large.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were considered pertinent to the success of the study;

1. To what extent does lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promote student's self-reliance?
2. To what extent does lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promote student's attainment of sustainable development?

### **Research Hypotheses**

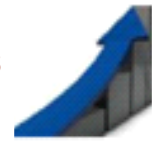
The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested.

**Null Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education on student's self-reliance.

**Null Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant influence of lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education on student's attainment of sustainable development.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised undergraduate students of selected higher institutions of learning in Akwa Ibom State with a population size of one thousand, six hundred (1600) students. Ten percent of the population (160) was selected using a simple random sampling technique and open ballot system was adopted to ensure that students stand equal chance of being selected. Structured questionnaire; Lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education questionnaire (LLEEQ)



was used for data collection. Three lecturers from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Akwa Ibom State college of Education, validated the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha and reliability index of 0.86 was obtained. The research questions were answered using mean while the hypotheses were tested using Related t-test statistics. Any response equal or above 2.5 is accepted to be significant, while any response below 2.5 is not significant and therefore rejected.

Results

The results on data analysis carried out on data for the study are presented below.

Research Question 1: To what extent does lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promotes student’s self-reliance?

Table 1: Mean score of the extent to which lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promotes student’s self-reliance

Table with 4 columns: S/N, ITEMS, X-bar, and REMARK. It lists 5 items related to entrepreneurship education with their respective mean scores and remarks (all 'AGREED').

Result in Table 1 shows that all the items have mean above the discriminating score 2.50. This shows that entrepreneurship education produces responsible, productive and self-reliant students. Also, students who acquire entrepreneurial skills have better options to become independent thereby achieving sustainable development.

Research Question 2: To what extent does lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promotes student’s attainment of sustainable development?

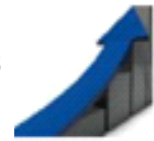


Table 2: Mean score of the extent to which lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promotes student’s attainment of sustainable development

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	Remark
6	Entrepreneurship education helps in improving the quality of basic education.	3.3	AGREED
7	Skill acquisitions through entrepreneurship education help in providing training for all sector of private and civil society.	3.2	AGREED
8	Skill acquisitions through entrepreneurship education help in developing public awareness and understanding.	3.2	AGREED
9	Skill acquisitions through entrepreneurship education help in reorienting existing education program to address sustainable development.	3.1	AGREED
10	Skill acquisitions through entrepreneurship education promote sustainable development.	3.4	AGREED
		3.0	AGREED

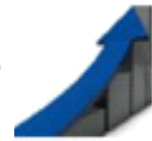
Results in Table 2, shows that all the items have mean above the discriminating score 2.50. This shows that entrepreneurship education helps in improving the quality of basic education. Also, skill acquisitions through entrepreneurship education help in reorienting existing education program to address sustainable development.

**Null Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant influence of lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education on student’s self-reliance

Table 3: Related t-test analysis of influence of lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education on student’s self-reliance

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Entrepreneurship education	160	3.18	9.81	398	-329.5	1.97	Significant
Students’ self-reliance	336	54.78					

Table 3 above shows that t-test calculated value of -329.5 is less than the critical value of 1.97. The null hypothesis of no significant relationship between lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promotes student’s self-reliance was rejected and the alternative hypotheses accepted. This shows that there is a significant influence of entrepreneurship education on student’s self-reliance.



**Null Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant influence of lifelong learning in entrepreneurship on student’s attainment of sustainable development

**Table 4:** Related t-test analysis of influence of lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education on student’s attainment of sustainable development

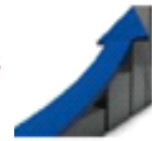
Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Entrepreneurship education	160	3.20	10.41	398	-320.8	1.97	Significant
Attainment of sustainable development	336	54.85					

Table 4 above shows that t-test calculated value of -320.8 is less than the critical value of 1.97. The null hypothesis of no significant influence of lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education and student’s attainment of sustainable development was rejected and that alternative hypotheses accepted. This therefore means that there is a significant influence of lifelong learning on entrepreneurship education and student’s attainment of sustainable development.

### **Discussion of Findings**

#### **Lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education and the promotion of student’s self-reliance**

Results from research question 1 showed that all the items had mean above 2.5 which was the decision level and therefore it was accepted. This shows that there is a positive relationship between lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education and student’s self-reliance. The implication is that lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education enhances skills acquisition which in turn promotes self-reliance. This is in line with Mkpa (2004) who asserts that an individual is said to be self-reliant when he/she can depend less on other people and his/her family in the management of his/her human and/or material resources. Okiridu, Azuma & Godpower (2017) assert that citizens will be self-reliant when they have possible cause to access and utilize the essentials of life which include food, shelter, clothing, medication, transportation, functional education, etc. Similarly, Akpotowo and Amahi (2006) confirm that the skills acquired through entrepreneurship education equip students with the requisite skills to establish as well as run small business of their own. All these promote sustainable development.



## **Lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education promotes student's attainment of sustainable development**

From the analysis in Research Question 2, all items had mean above the decision level of 2.5 and therefore accepted. This implies that lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education enhances skill acquisition which in turn promotes sustainable development. The implication is that the higher the entrepreneurial skill acquisition, the higher the attainment of sustainable development. This is in agreement with the findings of Meredith (2003) that entrepreneurs create new businesses and can also reshape jobs into positions which are more productive. Hence, the need to expand individual abilities to analyze their own generic occupational skills in order to expand the current economic base is critical for a sustainable growth. Therefore, the findings of research question two show that lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education which promotes acquisition of entrepreneurial skill acquisition is key to sustainable development. Osuafor (2008) posited that for development to be sustained there must be human development. This human development can only be achieved through continuous (lifelong) learning. According to Arogundade (2011), the major essential tool for achieving sustainable development involves improving the quality of basic education, as well as reorienting existing education programs to address sustainable development. It can be said therefore that sustainable development can only be possible through continuous learning; of which entrepreneurship education stands out.

### **Conclusion**

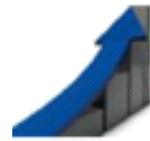
Learning never ends. As the world evolves, there is new knowledge to acquire. Hence, a continuous learning and investigation in the field of entrepreneurship will expose the students to skills that will drive them to sustainable development. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education will equip the students with different skills that can make them confident, self-reliant, or salable in the labour market. The implication of the study is that for Nigeria to attain sustainable development there is need to encourage skill acquisition through lifelong learning in entrepreneurship education.

### **Recommendations**

Following the findings of the study, the study recommends that;

1. The Federal and Akwa Ibom State Governments should give adequate attention to entrepreneurial development in the country through the provision of good economic environment to encourage individual participation in business while this is guaranteed; entrepreneurship will thrive and consequently sustain economy.
2. Federal and Akwa Ibom State Governments should promote entrepreneurship education through appropriate policy.

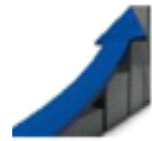




3. Entrepreneurship education should be started as early as primary school and progress through all levels of schooling to further inculcate and develop entrepreneurial skills in young people.
4. Entrepreneurship education in the universities should be adequately funded. This can be achieved through increase in budgetary allocation to the universities by the government.
5. Develop entrepreneur internship programmes matching students with locally successful entrepreneurs with clearly established education programmes.
6. Teachers should consider having a full understanding of the school curricula and imbibe the characteristics needed to influence academic performance.

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