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EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT: A TOOL FOR ENHANCING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

In societies grappling with unemployment and economic uncertainty like Nigeria, nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets among students is essential for empowering them to identify opportunities, create value, and contribute meaningfully to personal and national development. At the secondary school level, entrepreneurial education not only prepares students for diverse career pathways but also fosters resilience, adaptability, and critical thinking—skills vital for success in the 21st century. Effective educational management ensures proper resource allocation, improved infrastructure, financial support, and a supportive learning environment. This approach plays a pivotal role in equipping students with the competencies needed for employability and national development. This study therefore, examines educational management as tools for enhancing entrepreneurial skills in secondary schools in Nigeria. While entrepreneurial education offers a pathway for reducing unemployment, fostering innovation, and preparing students for sustainable futures, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor facilities, lack of trained personnel, and weak industry collaborations persist. The study highlights that strategic curriculum planning, resource mobilization, stakeholder partnerships, policy advocacy, and student-led initiatives are critical in overcoming these barriers. It concludes that through effective management practices, schools can become

incubators of innovation, producing graduates who are academically grounded, self-reliant, and capable of driving socio-economic development. The study recommends that school administrators prioritize continuous capacity building for teachers through regular training, workshops, and exchange initiatives with industries and higher institutions to enhance their delivery of practical, innovation-driven entrepreneurship education.

Keywords: Educational Management, Career Counselling, Entrepreneurial Skills, Secondary Education, Nigeria

Introduction

Globally, education remains a tool for all-round economic development and human transformation. It is education that develop the learners cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities thus helping them to thrive and contribute positively to their families, communities and nation at large. Education is perceived as the greatest weapon against poverty, disease and ignorance, a critical tool for achieving sustainable development (Ogonor (2019; Nwokonko et al. in Ezeh et al., 2025). It prepares students for the world of work and the building of human capital for capacity development (Obona et al. as cited in Iyiegbuniwe et al., 2025). Given its relevance, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) grouped education into: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education respectively.

In societies where unemployment and economic uncertainty are prevalent, nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets among students empowers them to identify opportunities, create value, and contribute meaningfully to personal and national development. The students are vital to the school system and the economy because they represent the future workforce, innovators, and entrepreneurs whose skills, knowledge, and creativity drive national development and economic growth. Therefore, the secondary school system which serves as a bridge that connect primary and tertiary education is expected to among other things provide quality learning opportunities, instill moral values, and equip students with knowledge and practical skills needed for personal growth, responsible citizenship, and national development (Obona et al., 2024; Difoni et al., 2024; Ikwen et al., 2025; Uzu et al., 2025). Entrepreneurial education is taught at the different levels of education and is meant to equipe the students with essential skills to thrive in today's rapidly changing world. Beyond preparing learners for academic progression, introducing entrepreneurial skills at the secondary level not only prepares students for diverse career paths but also instills resilience, adaptability, and critical thinking, which are vital for success in the 21st century.

Secondary school students in Nigeria face a range of challenges such as inadequate access to learning resources, poor infrastructure, limited career guidance, socio-emotional concerns, and exposure to negative social influences. Others are

material, human and financial resources constraints, resistance to change (Obona et al., 2024; Bush, 2006; Sánchez et al., 2023; Obona et al., 2025). Osuji et al. (2023) emphasize that providing quality education is a fundamental priority for every nation and a key national educational objective. However, these barriers often weaken their academic performance, personal growth, and long-term career prospects. Prior to graduation, such challenges can diminish students' motivation, critical thinking, and acquisition of relevant skills, while after graduation, they frequently lead to unemployment, underemployment, and limited entrepreneurial capacity.

Effective educational management ensures proper resource allocation, improved infrastructure, financial support, and a supportive learning environment. It plays a critical role in equipping secondary school students with entrepreneurial skills that prepare them for higher education, the workforce, and national development. This study therefore examines educational management as tools for enhancing entrepreneurial skills in secondary schools in Nigeria, with particular focus on curriculum planning, resource allocation, provision of facilities, monitoring and evaluation. It also explores the challenges to developing entrepreneurial competencies, identifies effective strategies for improvement, and offers practical recommendations for policymakers, and school administrators.

Concept of Educational Management

Educational management is vital for achieving institutional goals, as it provides the framework for efficient school operations, effective curriculum delivery, and quality learning outcomes. Through the strategic planning, organization, direction, and control of human, material, and financial resources, it ensures that school function productively and remain accountable. Scholars describe it as the systematic coordination of resources and activities aimed at realizing institutional objectives, with emphasis on leadership, resource utilization, and staff development (Okeke, 2023; Ndalu, 2025; Obona et al., 2025). Furthermore, Difoni et al. cited in Obona (2024) define it management as the strategies and actions adopted by educational administrators to manage staff effectively and enhance their performance. It includes tasks such as planning, organizing, leading, and supervising different functions to meet institutional objectives (Obona, 2024). In this sense, educational management serves as the backbone of school effectiveness, aligning administrative and instructional processes to foster efficiency, accountability, and the attainment of educational goals.

The effectiveness of educational institutions is closely tied to the quality of their management and leadership. According to Sergiovanni and Starratt

(2013), strong educational management fosters collaboration among staff and creates a supportive environment for teaching and learning. In the same vein, Emdin (2020) emphasizes that educational leaders must confront systemic inequalities, advance equity, and promote inclusive, culturally responsive education. Effective management can be expressed through diverse leadership styles—such as instructional, transformational, servant, ethical, distributed, and digital leadership—all of which enhance institutional effectiveness, equity, and sustainability (Xie, 2020; Ngene & Obona, 2024). Beyond advancing administration and academic performance, educational management also plays a critical role in promoting entrepreneurship by embedding skill-based training, encouraging innovation, and equipping students with the opportunities and resources necessary for self-reliance and meaningful contributions to national development.

Concept of Entrepreneurial Skills

In Nigeria, where high levels of unemployment and underemployment persist, entrepreneurial skill development has become particularly essential. Entrepreneurial skills refer to the essential competencies that enable individuals to recognize opportunities, innovate, take calculated risks, and manage resources effectively to create economic or social value. They combine creativity, problem-solving, decision-making, leadership, and resourcefulness, empowering individuals to transform ideas into viable ventures (Kuratko, 2016; Szirmai, Naudé, & Goedhuys, 2011). In Nigeria, where unemployment and poverty remain pressing issues, the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills is critical for preparing students to become job creators rather than job seekers. Educational institutions, guided by the National Policy on Education (2013), are therefore tasked with developing practical, innovative, and adaptable graduates who possess the competencies needed for employability and national development (Etor et al., 2019; Madukwe et al., 2024). Given the high rates of unemployment globally and nationally, fostering entrepreneurial mindsets among secondary school students is essential for self-reliance and job creation. Without such skills, many graduates who fail to progress into tertiary education often remain unemployed, exposed to poverty and social vices. Obona et al. (2023) emphasize that equipping students with entrepreneurial abilities such as creativity, initiative, and problem-solving is vital for addressing these challenges. Thus, effective entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level can help in reducing unemployment, enhancing economic growth, and promoting sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Essential Entrepreneurial Skills for Empowering School Students

Entrepreneurial skills help school students become creative thinkers, smart problem-solvers, and confident leaders ready for the future. Some of these important skills are:

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Students need the ability to carefully

analyze challenges, break them into manageable parts, and devise workable solutions. This skill not only supports academic learning but also equips students to tackle real-world issues with logical reasoning and innovation.

Creativity and Innovation: Creativity allows students to generate fresh ideas, while innovation helps them turn those ideas into practical solutions. In entrepreneurship, being able to think outside the box fosters the development of unique products, services, and strategies that stand out in a competitive world.

Communication Skills: Effective communication is vital for sharing ideas, pitching projects, and collaborating with others. Students must develop both verbal and written communication skills, as well as digital expression, to clearly articulate their entrepreneurial visions.

Collaboration and Teamwork: Entrepreneurship often requires working with peers, mentors, or partners to achieve goals. Teamwork teaches students the importance of respecting diverse opinions, delegating responsibilities, and achieving synergy through collective effort.

Financial Literacy: Understanding the basics of money management, such as saving, budgeting, and simple investments, is crucial for entrepreneurial success. Students who acquire financial literacy can manage resources wisely and make informed decisions about funding and expenditures.

Decision-Making: Entrepreneurship involves making choices under uncertainty. Students must learn to assess alternatives, weigh risks, and select the best course of action. Strong decision-making skills build confidence and accountability in their entrepreneurial journey.

Leadership Skills: Leadership enables students to inspire others, coordinate group efforts, and take responsibility for outcomes. Developing leadership early encourages initiative and prepares them to handle responsibilities in both academic and business contexts.

Time Management: Balancing school responsibilities with entrepreneurial activities requires effective time management. Students must prioritize tasks, set deadlines, and avoid procrastination to ensure productivity and success.

Digital Literacy: In today's digital economy, students must know how to use technology effectively. Digital literacy skills, such as using productivity apps, social media, and online tools, empower them to market ideas, access resources, and connect with wider audiences.

Resilience and Adaptability: Entrepreneurship involves challenges, failures, and unexpected changes. Students must cultivate resilience to overcome setbacks and adaptability to adjust strategies when circumstances shift, ensuring long-term growth and perseverance.

The Role of Educational Management in Enhancing Entrepreneurial Skills

i. Curriculum Planning: Incorporating entrepreneurship education into curriculum planning equips students with creativity, independence, and employability skills. The Nigerian National Policy on Education identifies entrepreneurship as a tool for tackling unemployment and promoting job creation (Oyinlola, 2024). Research highlights that experiential and cross-disciplinary learning—such as internships, mentorship, and product development—boosts entrepreneurial alertness, self-efficacy, and innovation among students (Ho et al., 2018; Galvão et al., 2020).

ii. Resource Allocation: Allocating financial, human, and material resources strategically is fundamental to effective entrepreneurship education. Schools that provide incubators, startup hubs, qualified teachers, and mentorship programs have been shown to enhance entrepreneurial intention, problem-solving, and risk-taking skills (Makāi & Dőry, 2023; Korejo et al., 2023). On the other hand, insufficient resources weaken entrepreneurship training. Through effective counselling, according to Ohuakanwa (2022), students are able to optimize available resources, cultivate resilience, and identify external opportunities, ultimately strengthening their entrepreneurial mindset.

iii. Provision of Facilities: Facilities such as makerspaces, incubation centers, laboratories, and market-access platforms help students transform classroom learning into practical entrepreneurial projects. These facilities foster innovation, startup creation, and employability (Wang, 2020; de Sousa et al., 2024). Well-maintained facilities also guarantee a safe and supportive environment for learning (Obona, 2024). Effective management is crucial in motivating students to make full use of these facilities, thus building entrepreneurial self-confidence.

iv. Monitoring and Evaluation Entrepreneurial Initiatives: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems are crucial for assessing the success of entrepreneurship programs by measuring outcomes such as venture sustainability, innovation, and opportunity recognition. Strong M&E frameworks have been shown to improve entrepreneurial performance and adaptability (Issifu & Agyapong, 2023; Cao et al., 2024). A balanced evaluation considers both measurable outcomes and students' attitudes and self-efficacy (Mensah-Williams & Derera, 2023). Management supports this process by guiding students to reflect on their progress, set achievable goals, and refine entrepreneurial intentions based on feedback.

The Challenges to Developing Entrepreneurial Competencies

i. Inadequate Funding: A major barrier to building entrepreneurial skills through educational management is poor funding and lack of facilities. Many schools in developing areas cannot afford incubation centers, laboratories, or makerspaces, limiting students to theory-based learning. As Oviawe and Uwameiye (2021) note, underfunding in Nigerian institutions

hinders effective entrepreneurship training, leaving students without modern equipment, workspaces, or skilled personnel. Without adequate financial investment, graduates' risk being ill-prepared for innovation, risk-taking, and venture creation.

ii. Limited Collaboration with External Stakeholders: Weak partnerships with industries and stakeholders also reduce the impact of entrepreneurship education. Collaborations with financial institutions, business mentors, and private-sector partners are critical for internships, mentorship, and real-world practice. However, many schools operate in isolation, limiting students' exposure to market realities. Okolie, Igwe, and Elom (2019) argue that weak industry linkages undermine entrepreneurship training by denying students opportunities for incubation and practice-based learning.

iii. Lack of Trained Personnel: The shortage of well-trained personnel also limits entrepreneurship education. Many teachers lack both teaching expertise and practical entrepreneurial experience, making lessons overly theoretical. Akhuemonkhan et al. (2013) highlight that the absence of skilled instructors weakens the integration of experiential learning, even when facilities exist. Without competent educators, entrepreneurship programs cannot fully nurture students' problem-solving and innovation skills.

iv. Resistance to Change: Resistance to change and limited awareness among school administrators further undermine entrepreneurship education. Traditional leaders often prioritize core academic subjects over entrepreneurship, failing to allocate resources or support innovative programs. Nwagwu (2020) observes that this resistance stems from poor awareness and weak administrative commitment. Unless attitudes shift, entrepreneurship education may remain underdeveloped despite supportive policies.

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges in Promoting Entrepreneurial Skills

i. Capacity Building for School Administrators and Teachers: One of the most effective ways to overcome the challenge of untrained personnel is through deliberate capacity building for school administrators, teachers, and career counsellors. Educational management can provide continuous professional development to ensure that administrators understand how to integrate entrepreneurship into school policies and resource planning, while counsellors and teachers are trained to deliver practical, experiential learning. Management plays a key role by mentoring students, guiding them in career choices, and nurturing entrepreneurial attitudes that align with their strengths and aspirations. As Eze and Nwali (2012) highlight, retraining personnel and upgrading facilities are essential for entrepreneurship education to achieve impact in Nigeria. Through such capacity-building initiatives, schools can create a supportive culture that fosters creativity, innovation, and self-reliance.

ii. Partnerships with Stakeholders: To address limited collaboration with stakeholders, school management should actively forge partnerships with industries, NGOs, and local businesses. These collaborations provide students with hands-on experiences, including internships, mentorship, and exposure to real business environments, thereby bridging the gap between classroom theory and market realities. Educational managers can facilitate these partnerships by helping students to identify opportunities, and guiding them in professional networking. Evidence from Cyril et al. (2023) shows that when schools collaborate with industries, students' creative thinking, marketing skills, and problem-solving abilities improve significantly. By embedding such partnerships in management strategies, schools can ensure entrepreneurship education remains practical, relevant, and impactful.

iii. Government Involvement: Overcoming inadequate funding challenges also requires strong government involvement. Educational management can advocate for increased public investment in entrepreneurship education, including the provision of incubation centers, startup hubs, and learning facilities. Policy measures mandating entrepreneurship education across curricula and providing incentives for schools will ensure sustainability. Effective managenent enhances this effort by aligning government-led entrepreneurship initiatives with students' aspirations, thereby motivating them to maximize available opportunities. Robust financial backing can thus create an enabling environment where entrepreneurial skills can thrive.

iv. Encouraging Student-led Initiatives and Entrepreneurship Clubs in Schools: To inspire innovation, school management have to encourage the formation of student-led initiatives and entrepreneurship clubs. These platforms promote peer learning, leadership, and risk-taking as students manage projects, test business ideas, and engage in entrepreneurship competitions. Educational administrators can guide these initiatives by helping students reflect on their experiences, set realistic goals, and build confidence in venture creation. Pittaway et al. (2011) demonstrated that entrepreneurship clubs enhance learning through action, reflection, and social interaction, reinforcing entrepreneurial mindsets. By institutionalizing such clubs, educational management empowers students to take ownership of their entrepreneurial journey, building resilience and adaptability in the face of socio-economic challenges.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial skill development in secondary schools is a crucial pathway for addressing unemployment, fostering innovation, and preparing students for sustainable futures in Nigeria and beyond. Education remains the most powerful tool for human and economic transformation, and when effectively managed, it equips learners with the creativity, resilience, and problem-solving abilities needed to thrive

in a dynamic world. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor facilities, lack of trained personnel, and weak collaborations with industries continue to hinder entrepreneurship education. Efficient educational management offer practical solutions through curriculum planning, resource mobilization, stakeholder partnerships, policy advocacy, and student-led initiatives. By integrating these approaches, schools can transform into incubators of innovation, producing graduates who are not only academically sound but also self-reliant, adaptable, and capable of contributing meaningfully to national development.

Recommendations

i. School administrators should prioritize continuous capacity building for teachers by organizing regular training programs, workshops, and exchange initiatives with industries and higher institutions. This will enhance their ability to deliver practical, innovation-driven entrepreneurship education.
ii. Policymakers need to ensure that entrepreneurship education is strategically aligned with labor market demands and broader national economic objectives, thereby making students' entrepreneurial skills relevant and impactful.
iii. Government authorities should substantially increase budgetary allocations to entrepreneurship education, with priority given to the establishment of incubation centers, makerspaces, and well-equipped laboratories that provide students with hands-on, experiential learning opportunities.

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