
EDUCATION FOR SELF-RELIANCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS: EXPLORING THE DIFFERENT SHADES OF SKILL ACQUISITION PROGRAMMES IN UNIVERSITIES IN LAGOS STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of the different shades of skill acquisition programs, which include, SIWES, Internship, Online learning and entrepreneurship Education on the development of entrepreneurship skills. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised of 92,042 undergraduate students from universities in Lagos State. The sample Size for the study was 398, ascertained using Yamane formula. In order to have a balanced analysis for both institutions, the researcher used equal number of 225 participants from both institutions. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 450 students who have undergone SIWES. Data was collected using a questionnaire tagged “Enhancing Entrepreneurship Skills through the Different Shades of Skill Acquisition Programme Questionnaire” (EESDSSAPQ). The reliability of the questionnaire was established using test re-test method that yielded an index of .75. Mean and Standard deviation statistics were used to answer research questions. Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The study found out that SIWES programme, entrepreneurship education, online learning and internship programme significantly influenced the development of entrepreneurship skills. The study recommended that students should take advantage of the digital era to develop in demand entrepreneurial skills; Centre of entrepreneurship studies should take a cue from the SIWES programme, hereby, create avenue for students to go on practical entrepreneurship training, in addition, schools should collaborate with the critical community players to enrich the delivery of entrepreneurship education.

Keywords: Skill Acquisition, Entrepreneurship Skills, Internship Programme, Online Learning, Education for Self-reliance

Introduction

Considering the external inefficiency of the formal system of education in Nigeria, in that some University graduates are unemployable, there is a need to re-strategize and re-design the curriculum structure to reflect the needs of society. Such that education is tailored in such a way that skills, knowledge and attitudes relevant to the community at large are enshrined in the policy objective and curriculum. In light of this, Okon, et al., (2010) defined education for self-reliance as the “Learning directed towards developing in young people those skills, competencies, and attributes which equip them to be innovative and successfully manage personal and community work and business opportunities”. Such education programmes and curriculum structure are tailored in such a way that the skills, potentials and abilities of citizens are built and developed in order to become self-reliant in the political, social, economic and cultural contexts.

Education has a very important role in shaping young people into competitive and innovative individuals, especially in the context of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing global economy (Ahmad, et al., 2023). In practical terms, the tertiary institution plays crucial role in turning this into a reality. The role of tertiary education in equipping individuals with skills for self-reliance and entrepreneurship has been widely acknowledged. Education systems globally have been shifting from traditional learning models to frameworks that integrate practical skill acquisition, with universities playing a pivotal role in fostering innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship (Azuakor, 2023; Ojule, & Oliobi, 2024).

The current state of Nigeria economy is devastating, and individuals can no longer rely solely on the degrees earned in higher institutions to secure stable sources of income (Ofor-Douglas, 2022) thus, there is a need for skill acquisition for individual and national growth. According to

Ojule and Oliobi (2023), the goals of tertiary education institutions in any country are directed towards scientific, technological, and socio-economic development, among others. Empowering learners through effective and efficient entrepreneurship education can boost self-employment and drive sustainable growth and development. Skill acquisition refers to the process of gaining practical abilities and expertise in a particular trade or profession. It is foundational for promoting self-reliance and reducing dependency on formal employment. Universities have incorporated various skill acquisition programs into their curricula, ranging from vocational training to technological skills workshops, as a means to bridge the gap between education and employability (Salau, et al., 2024; Onyema, et al., 2024, Mohammed, & Yusuf, 2023). Skill acquisition is a dynamic process encompassing the development of competencies such as creativity, critical thinking, adaptability, and effective decision-making (Salau, et al., 2024). These initiatives are vital in creating a workforce capable of adapting to dynamic labor market demands.

Entrepreneurship skills involve the knowledge, attitudes, and abilities necessary to identify opportunities, organize resources, and start a business. These skills extend beyond business ventures to include innovation, critical thinking, and risk management (Somwethee, et al., 2023). Developing entrepreneurship skills at the university level is essential in preparing students for economic independence and fostering a culture of innovation (Oyinlola, 2024). According to Evans-Obinna (2016), Quality entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in fostering job creation, which, in turn, helps reduce unemployment, poverty, and social vices in Nigeria. It also contributes to improving living standards, thereby driving socio-economic and political development. Maina (2014) argued that for individuals receiving entrepreneurship education to become job creators rather than job

seekers, they must acquire fundamental skills and attitudes that equip them to succeed as entrepreneurs. In this regard, entrepreneurship education promotes self-reliance, enhances quality of life, and raises the general standard of living for the population. This is evident in various economic indicators, such as increased profits for employers, more job opportunities, greater productivity, the advancement of innovative technologies, and a rise in local sourcing of raw materials (Awan & Yaqoob, 2023). Consequently, for a nation aiming to achieve a self-reliant economy, its educational system should prioritize a comprehensive and robust entrepreneurial curriculum.

Entrepreneurship education aims to instill an entrepreneurial mindset in students through formal and informal learning experiences. By teaching students how to identify market needs, create innovative solutions, and sustain businesses, entrepreneurship education acts as a catalyst for economic development. Successful programs often incorporate case studies, business simulations, and community-based projects to ensure practical learning outcomes. As Ojule and Oliobi (2023) emphasized, effective entrepreneurship education not only boosts employability but also fosters innovation and adaptability in a competitive world.

Internship programs provide students with real-world experience in professional environments, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. According to Adeniji et al., (2022), Internships represent an interdisciplinary learning experience that is deeply integrated into the community and serve as a unique form of learner-centered education. The purpose of an internship is to translate theoretical learning into practical, applied experiences in which students actively participate. An internship is a cooperative industrial training program that involves students from institutions of higher learning (Sumal & Sopotan, 2018). Through internships, students gain professional knowledge

and skills, providing them an opportunity to acquire industrial experience while still studying. The challenge arises when university graduates enter the labor market with little or no entrepreneurial mindset, which negatively affects the development of nations globally. This issue can be addressed by instilling entrepreneurial virtues in undergraduates. One key factor to fostering the transition of economies is ensuring that university graduates are well-equipped with entrepreneurial knowledge gained through their university training (Okolie e. al., 2020). These programs are integral to building industry-specific skills, improving employability, and fostering networking opportunities.

The Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is a Nigerian initiative designed to expose students to industrial work environments during their university education. SIWES is planned supervised occupational experienced program involving practical activities conducted outside the regular classroom and in a real industrial set-up (Madu, et al., 2023). It is a skill development program designed to expose and prepare students for real work in which they are likely to meet in their selected courses after graduation from school. SIWES was Introduced by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in 1973, SIWES aims to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application in engineering and technology in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It has since become an integral part of the academic curriculum in universities, as it is required for various degree programs. SIWES provides a structured opportunity for students in disciplines such as engineering, technology, science, agriculture, medical fields, management, and other professional areas to gain hands-on experience. This industrial exposure equips students with the practical knowledge they need to integrate more effectively into the workforce after completing their academic studies. The scheme encourages collaboration between schools and industries, helping students gain practical

skills in addition to theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom. It also exposes students to work environments where they can become familiar with tools, machinery, and equipment that may not be available at educational institutions. SIWES plays a pivotal role in helping students gain hands-on experience in their chosen fields, thereby increasing their practical competencies and readiness for the workforce (Adeosun, et al., 2022)

Online learning has emerged as a transformative approach to education, offering flexibility and accessibility for skill acquisition. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated its adoption in universities, with students leveraging digital platforms for courses in programming, entrepreneurship, and other in-demand skills (Dhawan, 2020). However, challenges such as digital divide and inadequate internet infrastructure remain barriers to effective implementation in Nigeria. Lack of access to ICT makes it difficult for people to access information. The benefits of having access to ICT are numerous. ICT has the potential to promote other sectors of the economy such as agriculture, education, health, bank, defence, among others. In times of emergency, ICT becomes an indispensable tool for overcoming the barriers of time and distance (Okoye, et al., 2023; Umeifekwem, & Eme, 2023). This study aims to explore the different shades of skill acquisition programs implemented in universities across Lagos State, investigating their influence on the development of entrepreneurship skills among students.

Statement of the Problem

Unemployability, which depicts the inability of a person who has earned a degree to secure a job because of lack of required job specific skills needed to fit the world of work, is a phenomenon that have contributed to the increasing unemployment rate in Nigeria. Extensively, this dimension to youth unemployment is a fruit of

external inefficiency of tertiary education. This borders on the incongruity between the curriculum programme structure and the skill and knowledge demands of the labour market, which results into graduates deficiency of in demand job ready skill, thus, they become liabilities to themselves and to the society at large thereby, plunging them into poverty. Consequently, they can contribute neither to the economic growth of the nation nor to themselves. Thus, they become patronage of social vices amounting to educational wastage. There appears to be a gulf in the disequilibrium when placed side-by-side with the sustainable development goals. Consequent upon this, the study sought to explore the different shades of skill acquisition programmes as essential instruments toward enhancing the development of entrepreneurship skills for self-reliance among university students.

Methodology

A correlational research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of 92,042 undergraduate students from the University of Lagos (48, 680) and Lagos State University (43,362). The sample Size for the study was 398, ascertained using Yamane formula. In order to have a balanced analysis for both institutions, the researchers used equal number of 225 participants from both institutions. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 450 who have undergone the SIWES programme.

A self-designed Questionnaire tagged “Enhancing Entrepreneurship Skills through the Different Shades of Skill Acquisition Programme Questionnaire” (EESDSSAPQ) was used to collect data. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A sought information on the impact of Impact of Student Industrial Work Experience scheme (SIWES), entrepreneurship education, online learning, and internship programme on the development of entrepreneurship skills. Section B sought information on the entrepreneurship skills

students have acquired as a function of the different shades of Skill Acquisition programmes. It was structured after the four-point scale of Strongly Agree = 4 Agree = 3, Disagree = 2 and Strongly Disagree = 1 respectively.

The instrument was duly validated by three experts in Test and Measurement. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using test re-test method, which was calculated with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and it yielded an index of .75.

Table 1: Influence of SIWES Programme on the Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

SN	Items	Mean	S.D	Decision
1.	SIWES experience engender the development of positive work ethics.	3.89	.31	Agreed
2.	I have developed self-awareness and empathetic skills that engender positive social networking.	3.22	.63	Agreed
3.	I have become more emotionally intelligent	3.56	.50	Agreed
4.	SIWES is instrumental for eliciting better understanding about the urgency for goal attainment	3.56	.50	Agreed
5.	SIWES has helped students to be more accountable, thus, carefully managing my business	3.67	.47	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.58	.35	Agreed

As indicted in the Table 1, the general opinion of the respondents represented by the grand mean of 3.58 is greater than the scale mean of 2.50; this implies that student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) influences the

Table 2: Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on the Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

SN	Items	Mean	S.D.	Decision
6.	I have high propensity to start a business	3.56	.69	Agreed
7.	I favour development of business firm more than searching for white collar jobs	3.44	.69	Agreed
8.	I am enlightened as to the direction of the viable business to venture into	3.22	.63	Agreed

Mean and Standard deviation statistics were used to answer research questions, decisions were made along the criterion mean of 2.50, therefore, any mean value ≥ 2.50 is accepted while any value < 2.50 is rejected. Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. **Results**

Research Question 1: Does Student Industrial Work Experience scheme (SIWES) influence development of entrepreneurship skills?

development of entrepreneurship skills.

Research Question 2: Does entrepreneurship education influence the development of entrepreneurship skills?

9.	I am motivated to be financially independent and self-employed	3.56	.69	Agreed
10.	My perception about taking risk is positive, hence, I see it as an unavoidable phenomenon that facilitate success	3.67	.47	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.49	.59	Agreed

As indicted in Table 2, the general opinion of the respondents represented by the grand mean of 3.49 is greater than the scale mean of 2.50; this implies that entrepreneurship education influences the development of entrepreneurship

skills.

Research Question 3: Does online learning influence the development of entrepreneurship skills?

Table 3: Influence of Online learning on the Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

SN		Mean	S.D.	Decision
11.	I have developed networking skills that aides expansion of my business partnership	3.33	.67	Agreed
12.	I have access to DIY videos that foster learning entrepreneurial skills	3.00	1.06	Agreed
13.	Knowledge and skills from online learning has helped in searching for new trends in the parlance of business enterprise	3.56	.50	Agreed
14.	Online learning helps me to update my knowledge of 21st century driven new business strategies	3.44	.69	Agreed
15.	It offers plethora of courses that fosters leadership capacity	3.33	.67	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.33	.61	Agreed

As indicted in the Table 3, the participants agreed on all the items with their mean ratings all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Similarly, the table showed that the general opinion of the respondents represented by the grand mean of 3.33 is greater than the scale mean of 2.50; this

implies that online learning influences the development of entrepreneurship skills.

Research Question 4: Does Internship programmes influence the development of entrepreneurship skills?

Table 4: Influence of internship Programmes on the Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

SN	Items	Mean	S.D.	Decision
16.	Internship helps students to develop self-confidence	3.67	.47	Agreed
17.	Internship programme enhances students self-efficacy	3.78	.42	Agreed
18.	It has helps students to appreciate the importance of a role model	3.56	.50	Agreed
19.	Internship programme provides student with the avenue to identify and address skill deficiencies	3.67	.47	Agreed
20.	It has given me the opportunity to be familiar with the work environment	3.67	.47	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.67	.40	Agreed

As indicted in the Table 4, the participants agreed on all the items with their mean ratings all above the criterion mean of 2.50. Similarly, the table showed that the general opinion of the respondents represented by the grand mean of 3.58 is greater than the scale mean of 2.50; this implies that internship programme influences

the development of entrepreneurship skills.

Testing of Research Hypotheses

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of Student Industrial Work Experience scheme (SIWES) on development of entrepreneurship skills

Table 5: Influence of Student Industrial Work Experience scheme (SIWES) on the Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

Regression Model	Source	Sum of Squares	ANOVA Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
R=.551	Regression	16.121	1	16.121	195.225	.000
R ² =.304	Residual	36.990	448	.083		
Adj. R ² =.302	Total	53.111	449			

a. Dependent variable: Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

b. Predictor: (constant), Student Industrial Work Experience scheme (SIWES)

Table 5 shows a co-efficient of regression (R) of .551, this indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) and development of entrepreneurship skills. The result also shows Regression square (R²) of .304, indicating that the independent variable, student

industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) is accountable for 30.4% (Regression square R² × 100) variability in the development of entrepreneurship skills. The table indicated that the analysis of variance of regression produced an F-ratio value of 195.225 with p-value (.000) at .05 level of significance. This means that student

industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) had a significant influence on the development of entrepreneurship skills (F= 195.225; df= (1;448); p-value (.000)< .05).

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of entrepreneurship education on the development of entrepreneurship skills

Table 6: Influence of Entrepreneurship Education on the Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

Regression Model	Source	Sum of Squares	ANOVA Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
R=.288	Regression	4.395	1	4.395	40.419	.000
R ² =.083	Residual	48.716	448	.109		
Adj. R ² =.081	Total	53.111	449			

a. Dependent variable: Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

b. Predictor: (constant), Entrepreneurship Education

Table 6 shows a co-efficient of regression (R) of .288, this indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurship education and development of entrepreneurship skills. The result also shows Regression square (R²) of .083, indicating that the independent variable, entrepreneurship education is accountable for 8.3% (Regression square R² × 100) variability in the development of entrepreneurship skills. The table indicated that the analysis of

variance of regression produced an F-ratio value of 40.419 with p-value (.000) at .05 level of significance. This means that entrepreneurship education had a significant influence on the development of entrepreneurship skills (F= 40.419; df= (1;448); p-value (.000)<.05).

Research Hypothesis 3: There is no significant influence of online learning on the development of entrepreneurship skills

Table 7: Influence of Online Learning on the Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

Regression Model	Source	Sum of Squares	ANOVA Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
R=.236	Regression	2.969	1	2.969	26.526	.000
R ² =.056	Residual	50.142	448	.112		
Adj. R ² =.054	Total	53.111	449			

a. Dependent variable: Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

b. Predictor: (constant), Online Learning

Table 7 shows a co-efficient of regression (R) of .236, this indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between online learning and development of entrepreneurship skills. The result also shows Regression square (R²) of .056, indicating that the independent variable, online learning is accountable for 5.6% (Regression square R² × 100) variability in the development of

entrepreneurship skills. The table indicated that the analysis of variance of regression produced an F-ratio value of 26.526 with p-value (.000) at .05 level of significance. This means that online learning had a significant influence on the development of entrepreneurship skills (F= 26.526; df= (1;448); p-value (.000)<.05)

Research Hypothesis 4: There is no significant influence of Internship programmes on the development of entrepreneurship skills

Table 8: Influence of Internship Programme on the Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

Regression Model	Source	Sum of Squares	ANOVA			
			Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
R=.916	Regression	44.599	1	44.599	2347.208	.000
R ² =.840	Residual	8.512	448	.019		
Adj. R ² =.839	Total	53.111	449			

a. Dependent variable: Development of Entrepreneurship Skills

b. Predictor: (constant), Internship Programme

Table 8 shows a co-efficient of regression (R) of .916, this indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between internship programme and development of entrepreneurship skills. The result also shows Regression square (R²) of .840, indicating that the independent variable, internship programme is accountable for 84% (Regression square R² × 100) variability in the development of entrepreneurship skills. The table indicated that the analysis of variance of regression produced an F-ratio value of 2347.208 with p-value (.000) at .05 level of significance. This means that internship programme had a significant influence on the development of entrepreneurship skills (F= 2347.208; df= (1;448); p-value (.000)<.05).

Discussion of Findings

The answer to research question 1 and the corresponding test of hypothesis 1 showed that Student Industrial Work Experience scheme (SIWES) influences the development of entrepreneurship skills. Based on the results, the study found out that student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) influences the development of entrepreneurship skills. This implies that, although the SIWES might be aimed at preparing students' for future specific job roles, however, they agreed that some parts of the programme helps them to develop entrepreneurship skills such as the development

of work ethics, the urgency of goal attainment and social networking skill among others. In the same vein, in corroboration, Agada and Etori (2023) found out that this SIWES significantly influence entrepreneurship skills of Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Cross River State.

Similarly, the answer to research question 2 and the result of hypothesis 2 indicated that entrepreneurship education positively influences the development of entrepreneurship skills. This implies that, the general course titled "entrepreneurship studies" which is compulsory for students to take greatly influences the development of entrepreneurship skills of students. Although, concerns have risen over the low level of pragmatism to the teaching of the course in various universities. In the same vein, Arogundade (2011) argues that entrepreneurship education will help students to develop skills that foster self-reliance and task the government and other education stakeholders to ensure that educational programme at all levels of education are relevant to provide the youths and graduates with needed entrepreneurial skills that gives them advantage in the world of work.

In likely manner, the answer to research question 3 and the result of hypothesis 3 indicated that online learning had significant influence on the development of entrepreneurship skills.

Extensively, the study illustrated that, students are able to access course materials in both text form and videos from online learning management platforms such as coursera, Alison as well as YouTube videos on several handcrafts. One could deduce that, students are able to take leadership courses and other business management course as well as learn crafts.

The result of the study further showed that internship programme has positive significant influence on the development of entrepreneurship skills. This implies that students' agreed that they were able to develop entrepreneurial skills during the course of an internship programme they had attended, even when the internship programme was not entrepreneurship inclined. One could deduce that, the skills developed during the internship programme suffices for entrepreneurial success, such that the skills acquired during the internship programme could applied in the business world.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In recent time "skills" in its different shades have become a critical factor in the recruitment and selection parlance as well as in the competitive business world. Consequently, either in the aspect of enhancing graduate employability or attaining a successful entrepreneurial endeavor, students should be exposed to the different shades of skill acquisition programmes that includes SIWES, online learning, internship programme and entrepreneurship education which according to this study has been empirically proven to have significantly influenced the development of entrepreneurship skills. These programmes are instrumental towards developing entrepreneurship skills in students' that gives them leverage in the business world amidst economic uncertainties, as such, rather than join in line with the already long queue of unemployment they reduce the queue by creating job opportunities.

Based on the findings of this study, the following

recommendations were made:

1. Schools should collaborate with private and public institutions to facilitate the provision of internship programmes for students to enhance employability skills, since those skills are equally useful in the entrepreneurship and business parlance.
2. The centre for entrepreneurship studies should enrich the entrepreneurship courses taken by University students, such that, it is more pragmatic and activity-based than theoretical.
3. Centre for entrepreneurship studies of the universities should engage community resource persons for fostering practical demonstration and giving room for mentorship, which is crucial for engendering entrepreneurial intention among students.
4. Students should take advantage of the digital era to develop in demand entrepreneurial skills by exploring plethora of online courses made available on the several online learning platforms.
5. Centre of entrepreneurship studies should take a cue from the SIWES programme, hereby, create avenue for students' to go on practical entrepreneurship training.

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