



Systems Approach to Entrepreneurial Education: A Panacea to Business Skills in Nigeria Tertiary Institution

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Abstract

The study adopted the systematic approach to examine the operational impact between the variables entrepreneurship education and acquisition of business skills in Nigeria tertiary institution. The study was empirical. A total of 236 participants from four (4) tertiary institutions in Rivers State formed the population of the study, from which a sample size of 169 was derived using Taro Yamane technique. An exploratory survey design was adopted. Data was generated through the structured questionnaire administered and retrieved by the researcher. Three null hypotheses were tested using the chi-square statistical tool. The results revealed clearly that there is a significant impact between entrepreneurship education and business skills measured. The study concluded that entrepreneurship education improves students' business planning skill in tertiary institution because it exposes students to a lot of business ideas which can be used to plan their dream business. It also recommended that entrepreneurship education should be more of practical than theoretical because students tend to remember and retain more of what they practice than what they read.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education, Business Skills, Systematic Approach.

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INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship Education is being emphasized today at all levels of education owing to the fact that the program is seen as a panacea to the problem of unemployment the world over. Nigeria, like other African countries is faced with the challenges of unemployment and its attendant social problems. The entrepreneurship spirit is a precondition in the creation of an entrepreneurial society and culture. Of which the spirit is required for the total economic growth of any country especially developing ones like Nigeria. This is in line with the view of Ojeifo, (2013) that entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual, firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity to produce goods and services for public consumption. According to the Finland Ministry of Education (2009), the Commission of the European Communities states that entrepreneurial attitude is considered by initiative, proactive, individuality and innovation with particular reference to individual and social life, in as much as it works. It also included the motivation and the determination to meet objectives, whether personal goals or aims are held in common with others, and/or at work. Entrepreneurship Education looks to provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to inspire entrepreneurial achievement in a number of ways and settings. Thus, Aruwa (2004) pointed out that Entrepreneurship Education is a form of educational program designed to help students acquire the spirit of entrepreneurship and all business skills needed for becoming an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial attitude and competences are commitment to duty and willingness to accept positive as well as negative results of business ventures (Akudolu, 2010). Entrepreneurship Education helps students to develop the capacity to identify investment opportunities, establish and to run an enterprise successfully. What distinguishes entrepreneurship education from other forms of education is that it emphasis on the importance and the realization of opportunities.

These opportunities are said to be realized by starting up a business and introducing new products or ideas or by doing things differently from how others do them aimed at achieving goals. It is in this regard that the European Commission (2007) presents entrepreneurship as “an individual’s ability to turn ideas into action” Ocho (2005) asserts that entrepreneurship skill training programmes carried out in schools, helps students to gain insight to business planning. This is as (Nwagwu, 2007) and Solomon (2007) opined that incorporating skill acquisition programme into entrepreneurship education programme in tertiary institution has gone a long way in building students’ business planning skill. It is much easier to develop a good business plan if enthusiasm is matched with logical business thinking. Nevertheless, in the view of Akpomi (2009), the establishment of entrepreneurship skill centres in schools and exposing students to various skill sets has not yielded any positive result in terms of business planning skill. For her, theoretical knowledge of entrepreneurship and business practices is what develops students’ business planning skills. It is possible that a participant acquires the basic vocational skill but he or she is unable to prepare a workable business plan.

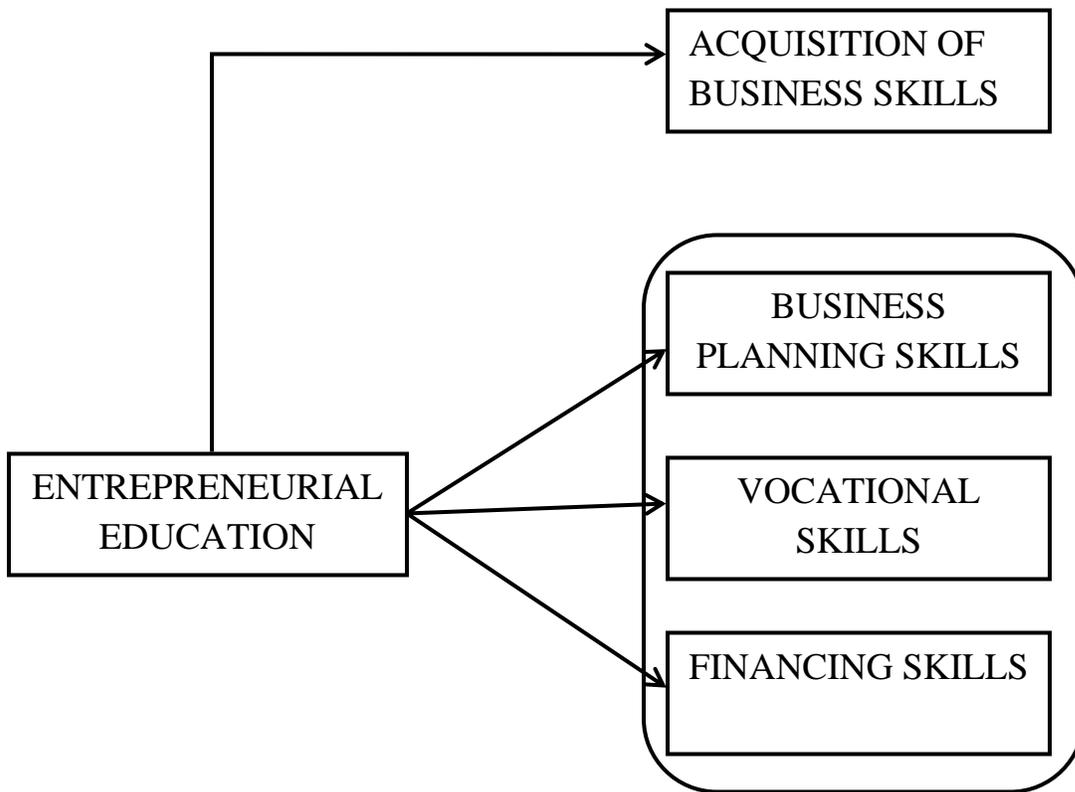
Amongst the studies which have assessed the relative association between entrepreneurship education and business skills, there exists congruence in findings which support significant impact between entrepreneurial education and business skills. Thus there exists knowledge gap made evident by the paucity of research literature on studies which have empirically examined the relative impact of entrepreneurship education on business skills within the geographical confines of a developing Nationality such as Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of graduate unemployment has remained unabated and many of the students who have passed through the scheme have not shown any sign of having acquired relevant vocational and business skills necessary for establishing an innovative business venture to overcome the inertia of unemployment. The level of entrepreneurial intention and understanding of entrepreneurship is quite low among undergraduate students in most of the Tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Until recently, Entrepreneurship Education has been treated as a mere theoretical course which students just need to read and pass examinations with good grades without necessarily acquiring business skill. Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition programs are on low key, which makes the students lack basic vocational and business skills that will build their entrepreneurship capacity.

Thus, this study attempts a unique investigation, based on contextual scope, of the impact of entrepreneurship education on business skills in Nigeria tertiary institutions. It will also contribute to the earlier identified knowledge gap through its application of empirical analysis in the investigation of the predictor variable (entrepreneurship education) and measures of business skills (business planning skill, vocational skill and financial skill).

OPERATIONAL FRAME WORK OF THE STUDY



Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, 2017

Purpose of the Study

In line with the conceptual framework, the purpose of this study was to achieve the following:

- To determine the impact of entrepreneurial education and business planning skill.
- To determine the impact of entrepreneurial education and financing skills.
- To determine the impact of entrepreneurial education and vocation skills.

Research Questions

The following research questions for this study provide a basis for the assessment of the variables of interest:

- What is the impact between entrepreneurial education and business planning skills?
- What is the impact between entrepreneurial education and financial skills?
- What is the impact between entrepreneurial education and vocational skills?

Hypotheses

- **HO₁:** There is no significant impact between entrepreneurial education and business planning skills.
- **HO₂:** There is no significant impact between entrepreneurial education and financial skills.
- **HO₃:** There is no significant impact between entrepreneurial education and vocational skills.

RELATED READINGS

Concept of Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship Education provides the platform for injecting business consciousness and business skills. Aruwa (2004) pointed out that Entrepreneurship Education is a form of educational program designed to help students acquire the spirit of entrepreneurship and all business skills needed for becoming an entrepreneur. The most popular aspect of Entrepreneurship Education is entrepreneurship Awareness Education. Entrepreneurship Awareness Education is typical of the theory based entrepreneurship education taught in schools without practical vocational skills. Entrepreneurship Awareness Education refers to entrepreneurship education program that are just designed to help students gain knowledge of entrepreneurship, business opportunities and spur them towards business venture. The regular teaching of Entrepreneurship Education as a course in the classroom or lecture rooms is a typical example of Entrepreneurship Awareness Education.

Entrepreneurship Education is not just about acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge. If an entrepreneurship course or program must serve the original purpose (which is to combat unemployment), it must help students to develop vocational skills. Vocational skills oriented entrepreneurship education promises to help students not only gain entrepreneurship awareness but to equip them with practical skills and help them establish business venture.

The rate of unemployment in Nigeria is disturbing. In 1992, the World Bank put the Nigerian unemployment rate at 28%. In April 2009, the discussion by panel of experts during a youth and employment session in Washington DC, the Director of the Nigerian National Planning Commission, Mr. Omotoso put the rate of youth unemployment at between 60-70% (The World Bank, 2009). Omotoso (2009) grieved the situation by adding that only 10% of the Nigerian graduates can be engaged in the Labour Market. The high rate of unemployment must have contributed to a large extent to the high rate of crime which has graduated in this country from social disturbances and armed robbery attacks, to kidnapping. It appears that these unemployed youths are taking it back on a society that has failed to give them a proper sense of direction through sound education. Aladekomo (2009) is of the view that comprehensive education equips students to challenge the status quo by proffering better alternatives in line with the present economic predicament. Omotoso (2009) reported that of all the strategies being adopted by Nigeria to redress this ugly circumstance was the reformation of the education sector. However, mere reformation of the education sector cannot result in job creation (The World Bank, 2009).

Ohanva (2009) opined that the solution is not increased vocalization of education, as is wrongly being canvassed, but a return to the basics". That is to say returning to basis of education, this means the cultivation of human aptitude, capacity, creative and imaginative potentials through comprehensive development of the individuals. He further noted that for Nigeria to respond to the demands changing needs of the world, not necessarily direct paid labour, Nigeria's formal and non-formal education sector should as a matter of urgency look towards teaching and training learners in the basic talents of knowledge acquisition, communication skills, flexibility, creativity, team spirit, literacy, and ICT fluency and lifelong learning. These generic skills are necessary for effective life in the present ICT - dominated world. They are not job specific. Their acquisition calls for the type of general education found in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship education equips the learner with the required knowledge and skills a learner desires, seeks, recognizes and utilizes to make him or her have opportunity to do things in new ways, and to be able to create wealth for sustainable development and for others. It consequently contributes effectively to the society in the era of global economic crisis. The systems approach as Mkpia (1988) saliently puts it focuses on "a systematic, sequential, integrated and goal-oriented procedure, design or approach to an undertaking". Its application in the context of this paper is a departure from an unplanned, unsystematic and unrealistic method of instructional delivery to learner. On the strength of this, Gagne (1979) opines that the planning of instruction must be consistent and impartible with the technical knowledge at each point of division. To this end, Akanbi (1998) asserts that the application of systems approach to any situation assumes the existence of problem.

Entrepreneurship Education Curriculum (EEC)

Curriculum is concerned with the why, what and how of instruction. In other words, it is concerned with the aims, goals and objectives of instruction, the content, organization and evaluation. These curriculum elements form the beacon for the development and implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum. This should constitute a core for every learner at all levels of education in Nigeria. This is in line with the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2004) which maintained that it is a lifelong learning process starting from elementary level to other levels of education and spanning to adult education. Brown (2000) is of the view that the

principle of entrepreneurship is considered valuable for students at all levels. In this regard, all students at all levels of education in member States of the European Union such as United Kingdom, Cyprus, Ireland, Slovenia etc. are exposed to entrepreneurial education (European Commission, 2007).

The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (CEE-2004) further categorized the learning content of entrepreneurial education into Entrepreneurial skills and Ready skills. The entrepreneurial skills comprise the themes of entrepreneurial processes and entrepreneurial traits/behaviors. The ready skills comprise the themes of business foundations, communications and interpersonal skills, digital skills, economics, financial literacy, professional development, financial management, information management, marketing management, operations management, risk management, and strategic management. In fact, the skill is concerned with specialized ability in every way of human endeavour. Anyakoha (1997) categorized entrepreneurial skills into personality skills and management related skills. Entrepreneurship education should be able to equip learners with skills not only for understanding their capabilities but also for coping with different situations in life.

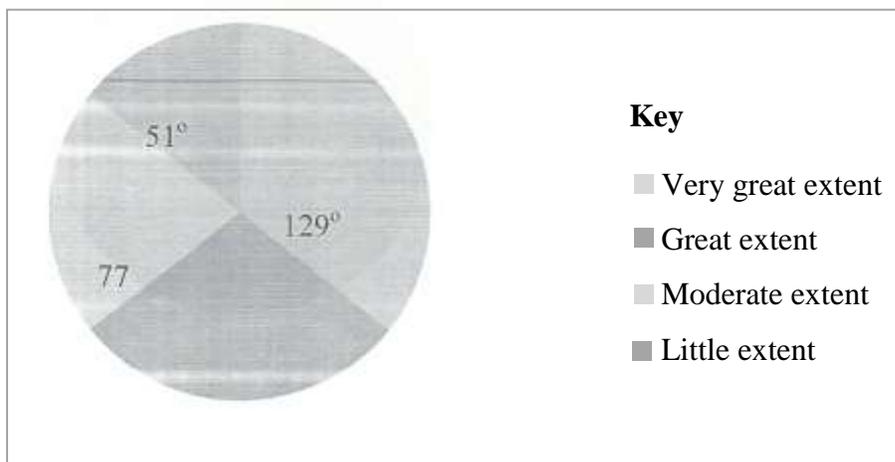
The effective implementation of entrepreneurship education (Ololube, Uriah & Dudafa, 2014) in our curriculum will no doubt help learners in Nigeria to develop entrepreneurial skill, knowledge, capacities (Abeh, 2017) and the ability to be self-reliant and self-employed (Ololube & Uzorka, 2008).

METHODOLOGY

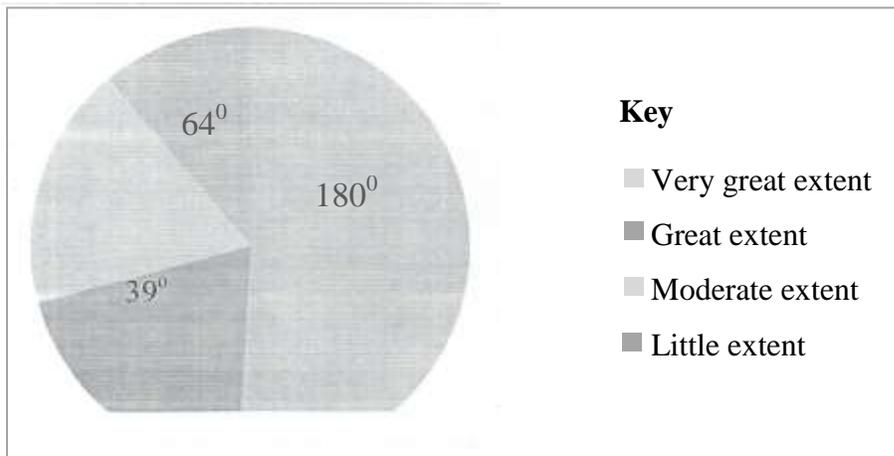
The study adapted the exploratory research design, and the population of this study is 236 students from tertiary institution in Rivers State. The Taro Yamane formula was employed to arrive at the sample size of 168. The questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection, while the chi-square statistical tool was adopted to test the hypotheses at 0.05 levels of significant.

DATA RESULT AND DISCURSION

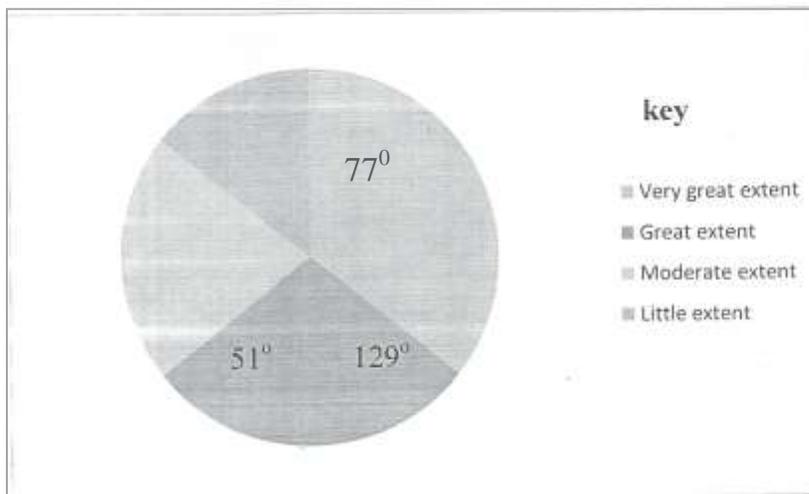
Response to Research Question 1



Response to research Question 2



Response to Research Question 3



TEST OF HYPOTHESIS 1

H₀₁: There is no significant impact between entrepreneurship education and business planning skill.

Table 1: Contingency table for H₀₁:

F _O	F _e	(F _O -F _e)	(F _O -F _e) ²	$\frac{(F_O - F_e)^2}{f_e}$
50	47.5	2.5	6.26	0.131579
55	47.5	7.5	56.25	1.184211
25	47.5	-22.5	506.25	10.65789
60	47.5	12.5	156.25	3.289474

40	40	0	0	0
45	40	5	25	0.625
35	40	-5	25	0.625
40	40	0	0	0
30	32	-2	4	0.125
25	32	-7	49	1.53125
48	32	16	256	8
25	32	-7	49	1.53125
20	20.5	-0.5	0.25	0.012195
15	20.5	-5.5	30.25	1.47561
32	20.5	11.5	132.25	6.45122
15	20.5	-5.5	30.25	1.47561
				37.11529

Cal $x^2 = 37.1$

df = 2 at 0.05 level of significance

crit $x^2 = 16.9$

Decision: Since the calculated X^2 values 37.11 is greater than the X^2 critical value 16.9, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant impact between entrepreneurship education and student's business planning skill is hereby rejected. This implies that there is a significant impact between entrepreneurship education and students business planning skill.

Test of Hypothesis 2

H_{02} : There is no significant impact between entrepreneurship education and business financing skill.

Table 2: Contingency table for H_{02}

F_o	F_e	$(F_o - F_e)$	$(F_o - F_e)^2$	$\frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{f_e}$
70	48.5	21.25	451.5625	9.262821
65	48.5	16.25	264.0625	5.41667
10	48.5	-38.75	1501.563	30.80128
50	48.5	1.25	1.5625	0.032051
30	33.75	-3.75	14.0625	0.416667
30	33.75	-3.75	14.0625	0.416667
30	33.75	-3.75	14.0625	0.416667
45	33.75	11.25	126.5625	3.75
25	28.75	16.25	264.0625	9.184783
25	28.75	-3.75	14.0625	0.48913
40	28.75	-3.75	14.0625	0.48913
25	28.75	11.25	126.5625	4.402174
15	28.75	-3.75	14.0625	0.48913
20	28.75	-13.75	189.0625	6.576087
60	28.75	-8.75	76.5625	2.663043
20	28.75	31.25	976.5625	33.96739
				108.7737

Cal $x^2 = 108.77$

df = 2 at 0.05 level of significance

crit $x^2 = 16.91$

Decision: Since the calculated x^2 value 108.7737 is greater than x^2 critical value 16.919, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant impact between entrepreneurship education and business financing skill is hereby rejected. This implies that there is a significant impact between entrepreneurship education and business financing skill.

Test of Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: There is no significant impact between entrepreneurial skill acquisition programmes and students’ vocational skill.

Table 3: Contingency table for H₀₃

F _o	F _e	(F _o -F _e)	(F _o -F _e) ²	$\frac{(F_o-F_e)^2}{f_e}$
75	51.5	23.5	552.25	10.7233
49	51.5	-2.5	6.25	0.121359
7	51.5	-44.5	1980.25	38.45146
75	51.5	23.5	552.25	10.7233
20	34	-14	196	5.764706
48	34	14	196	5.764706
23	34	-11	121	3.558824
45	34	11	121	3.558824
25	30.75	14.25	203.0625	6.603659
33	30.75	-5.75	33.0625	1.075203
50	30.75	2.25	5.0625	0.164634
15	30.75	19.25	370.5625	12.05081
20	23.75	-8.75	76.5625	3.223684
10	23.75	-3.75	14.0625	0.592105
60	23.75	-13.75	189.0625	7.960526
5	23.75	36.25	1314.063	55.32895
				165.666

Cal $x^2 = 165.66$

df = 2 at 0.05 level of significance

crit $x^2 = 16.919$

Decision: Since the calculated x^2 value 165.666 is greater than x^2 critical value 16.919, the null hypothesis which says that there is no significant impact between entrepreneurial skill acquisition programmes and student’s vocational skill is hereby rejected. This implies that there is a significant impact between entrepreneurial skill acquisition programmes and student’s vocational skill.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Entrepreneurship Education and Business Planning Skill

Lesko (2010) noted that the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions has helped many graduates to acquire relevant vocational skill and business planning

skill. Entrepreneurship education exposes students to a lot of business ideas such can be used by students to plan their dream business. By reading about how successful entrepreneurs started, students gain relevant knowledge that can be used for effective business planning. In the same vein, a study conducted by Obanya (2008) revealed that the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education has helped students to learn how to write good business plans for themselves. Similarly, Brown (2000) pointed out that in-depth knowledge of entrepreneurship education makes it easier for students to draft their own business plan.

However, Anyakoha (2010) argued that the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education has not really helped students to gain business skill. He pointed out that the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education is often treated as a mere academic course to the point that most of the teachers are unable to impart the business skill.

Entrepreneurship Awareness Education and Students' Vocational Skill

Entrepreneurship awareness education is an academic-based approach to entrepreneurship training (Ocho, 2005). It refers to a form of entrepreneurship educational program that is designed to expose student to theoretical knowledge and concepts about entrepreneurship. Solomon (2007) defined entrepreneurship awareness education as a theory-based approach to the teaching of entrepreneurship course which appeals to the cognitive domain rather than the psychomotor domain. However, Aruwa (2014) noted that teaching entrepreneurship education theoretically without providing practical skills makes it difficult for students to acquire vocational skills.

Entrepreneurship Education and Business Financing Skills

Akpa (2007) pointed that the teaching of entrepreneurship education as an academic course in tertiary institutions in Nigeria exposes students to ideas about how to source for fund in order to start up business ventures. Entrepreneurship education has many concepts and topics that show students how to source out capital to start up business.

However, Ojeifo (2013) noted that no matter what students have learnt in entrepreneurship education and other business-related courses, many students do not have fund sourcing skill so they are unable to materialize their entrepreneurial dreams. Also Solomon (2007) in his own view held that many students who have learnt ways of sourcing capital to start up their business are unable to apply what they have learnt.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of data and discussion of findings, the study concluded that entrepreneurship education improves student's business planning skill in tertiary institution because it exposes students to a lot of business ideas which can be used by students to plan their dream business. The study also concluded that entrepreneurship education improves student's business financing skills because it gives them ideas about how to source for fund to start their own business ventures. Furthermore, the study concluded that entrepreneurship education improves students' vocational skill by exposing them to theoretical knowledge and concepts about entrepreneurship thereby enabling them to practice what they have learnt instead of only reading about it without engaging in any form of practice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions were made:

- Entrepreneurship education should be complemented with the establishment of entrepreneurship centres to encourage skills acquisition.
- The study is also recommending that entrepreneurship education should be more of practical than theoretical because students tends to remember and retain more of what they practice than what they read.
- Lecturers that teach entrepreneurship education should regularly go for trainings to update themselves with new innovations in entrepreneurship education.
- Technical skills to be emphasized rather than theoretical skills to encourage the economic independence for young school leavers in line with the National Policy on Education.

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