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## **Sustaining E-learning Resources for Entrepreneurial Skills Development: A Counselling Approach**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper discusses how to sustain e-learning resources for entrepreneurial skills development using counselling approach. To further drive this stance, the paper looked at the meaning of e-learning resources, entrepreneurship education and made a nexus for better output of the two concepts. The paper also examined the concept of counselling and the benefits that abound in applying counselling techniques in the teaching of entrepreneurship education using the e-learning resources. The recommendation, among others, is that all teachers involved in the use of e-learning resources in the teaching of entrepreneurship courses must be re-trained in order to acquire basic counselling techniques.*

**Keywords:** E-learning Resources, Entrepreneurship, Counselling Approach

### **Introduction**

One of the major quandaries facing Nigeria is the inability of successive governments to take clear decisions in every difficult situation that has befallen us. It could also be further argued that even when lofty decisions are finally arrived at, it is suicidal to attempt the full implementation of such decisions. From the pre-colonial era to the post-independence, the military to the civilian rule, it is business as usual when it comes to the judicious execution of programmes and policies.

The education sector is the worst hit. This is evident in the fact that the educational system of the Nigerian society has often been ridiculed by programmes and policies that never stand the test of time, irrelevant to the needs of the Nigerian child and inadaptable to the fast changing global trends. However, it is with all fairness that the present researchers observe that one of the few valuable and meaningful programmes introduced to Nigeria's educational curriculum in recent times is the entrepreneurial or entrepreneurship education.

To this end, Suleiman (2006) sees entrepreneurship education as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and run an enterprise successfully. Gibson (2011), in agreement with Suleiman (2006), remarks that it is a process of using private initiatives to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture and enterprise with high potential. It is based on this philosophy that in 2006, the Federal Government of Nigeria under the leadership of the then president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, directed all Nigerian higher education institutions to include Entrepreneurship Education (EED) as a compulsory course for all students with effect from the 2007/2008 academic session, with the main goals to:

- Identify and solve problems using critical and creative thinking;
- Work effectively with others as a proactive team member and cultivate the ability to resolve conflict;
- Organize and manage one's self and one's activities;
- Collect, analyse, organize and critically evaluate information (to make decisions that must be thorough);
- Communicate and negotiate effectively;
- Reflect on experience and explore various strategies for effective learning... learning to learn at all times;
- Become curious leading to readiness to experiment and innovate (being never satisfied with the status quo);
- Consider self-employment as a viable option upon graduation from their institution.

In another development, Odjegba (2005) observes that entrepreneurship is built on vision; focus and determination. It is built on standards management, practices, enabling environment, access to funds, among other things. Odjegba also posits that the challenges of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria which hinders its development include the following:

- Finance;
- Inadequate equipment and technology;
- Economic pressure from parents;
- Entrepreneurship education demands a talented workforce;

- Entrepreneurial attitude;
- Data;
- Research and linkages; and
- Inadequate infrastructural facilities due to inadequacy of facilities,

From the aforementioned, the researchers consider the issue of inadequate infrastructural facilities as very high integral aspect in the proper implementation of the entrepreneurship education process in our educational system.

## **Infrastructural Facilities and Entrepreneurship Education**

Infrastructural facilities are those physical and non-physical materials and human resources employed in the teaching and learning environments. Olutola (1998) averred that these facilities are the physical resource inputs that make the implementation of school curriculum easy or simple. In fact, these facilities have been found to enhance the achievement of school goals in the long run. Olutola further stated that these facilities could be consumable or non-consumable, while Adeboyeje (1999) grouped them to include:

- the school site
- classrooms
- libraries
- toilets
- cafeteria
- stores
- gardens
- sport fields
- tools
- instructional facilities
- staff and pupils furniture
- teachers and pupils textbooks
- utilities, among others.

It is regrettable though, to observe that little or no proper attention is given to the e-learning resources/materials. Literature upon literature show the negligence of the use of e-learning resource materials in the teaching and learning process in most public schools in Nigeria especially as it relates to entrepreneurship education. It is more alarming in the tertiary institutions, in that, observations also reveal that factors such as lack of constant power supply, over population in students' enrollment, skilled manpower and maintenance culture, among others, militate against the use of e-learning resources.

Scholars such as Akpa (2007), Suleiman (2006) and Ocho (2005) posit that as a way forward towards the realization of full-blown entrepreneurship education and effective practice of entrepreneurship by youth in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the youths should be exposed to training in technology (especially new discoveries) from time to time. This would keep them in tune with the trends of the technological world and thus avoid drudgery in their endeavours. They also argue that entrepreneurial teachings have to go beyond the traditional teachings in the classroom. This implies therefore that there should be the usage and more availability of e-learning resources in our institutions of higher learning for the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education.

## **E-learning Resources and Entrepreneurship Education**

E-learning denotes the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by both teachers and students. Fry (2000) and Wild, Griggs and Downing (2002), describe e-learning as the delivery of training and education via networked interactivity and distribution technologies. Khan (2005) points out that e-learning has been described in various ways as learning using a number of different technologies and methods for delivery, such as Computer-Based Training (CBT), Internet-Based Training (IBT), Web-Based Instruction (WBI), Advanced Distribution Learning (ADL), Distribution Learning (DL), mobile learning (or m-learning) or remote learning and Learning Management System (LMS). All these are considered as e-learning resources.

According to UK.Essays (2015), the basic e-learning resources include e-textbooks, power point presentations of lectures and electronic notice boards. Al-Ammari and Hamad (2008), lay their stance as they confirm that as students learning in the e-learning system, they interact every time from wherever with different instructional materials which include text, sound, pictures, video, among other things. In addition, the authors also add that learners can also communicate with their teachers and classmates both individually and as a group with the use of message boards, instant message exchanges and video conferencing.

On this premise, Khan (2005) considers that the e-learning system with its resources when analysed can be an inventive approach for delivering learner-centred, interactive and well facilitating learning environment to any place, anyone, anytime, by utilizing the lectures and resources of different digital technologies among other types of learning materials suited for an open, distributed and flexible learning environment. Ubah (2011) states that with the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (or e-learning resources) in tertiary entrepreneurship education, emphases are placed on practicable teaching methods that are more useful in vocational and technical training and the experiencing of realities in the course of learning. All these are directed towards

the preparation and participation in the occupation of vocational and technical values which is designed to develop understanding, comprehension, attitudes, abilities, skills and work habits, among others. Ubah then outlines the benefits of e-learning resources to entrepreneurship education to include:

- to provide tools to increase students' productivity;
- to engage learners through motivation and challenges;
- to provide opportunities to investigate and build knowledge;
- to promote and encourage active learning and authentic assessment;
- to increase learners' independence;
- to promote collaborative and cooperative learning;
- to tailor learning to the learner; and
- to provide platform to support higher level thinking.

Having all these in mind, Onu (2013) concludes that to effectively teach entrepreneurship education in educational institutions in Nigeria, teachers' competence must be carefully assessed. Teachers, as important role models, must possess requisite knowledge of entrepreneurship to be able to motivate students in developing a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, focusing on the use of the different e-learning resources (ICT). The question now arises, how can these e-learning resources be sustained in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, now and beyond and to further facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals of Nigeria from 2016?

## **Sustaining E-learning Resources for Entrepreneurship Education**

The concept of sustenance is widely viewed from different facets of human endeavours. To the educationists, sustenance or sustainability could be to simply maintain the existence of a process, idea, philosophy, concepts, programmes and policies, among other things. To this end, Bates (2001) states that the policy issue with respect to e-learning (and its resources) for all countries, rich or poor, is not one of direction but of readiness and scale, in that, e-learning is heavily dependent on appropriate technological infrastructure already being in place for commercial or government reasons. Bates also argues that there is the need for a skilled workforce to support e-learning. Even if the infrastructure is in place, there must be a capacity to supply the necessary trained people to support and sustain e-learning, as well as technically trained people who can install, manage and maintain the necessary infrastructure. Most importantly, the present researchers are of the assertion that teachers and all those who, in one way or the other, use the e-learning and its resources must have basic counselling skills and techniques to be able to utilize, manage and explore the full

potentials of e-learning resources for the proper sustenance in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in our institution of higher learning.

## **Benefits of the Counselling Approach**

Counselling is a help or assistance given by a professionally-trained personnel called the counsellor to an individual or group of people who have challenges, to help them understand themselves and their environment with a view to solving their problems, making necessary adjustments, bringing about right decisions and finally living a satisfactory and productive life now and in the future (Anyamene and Associates, 2009). The later part of this definition, "...productive life...", gives the precedence for the present researchers' call for the inclusion of counselling approach in the sustenance of e-learning resources in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Thus, the benefits of such inclusion include that:

- Counselling knowledge will equip both the teachers and students with sound management skills of which will facilitate learning of entrepreneurship education through the use of the e-learning resources.
- Counselling knowledge will enable the teachers to examine the instructional resources needs of the learners in the bid to suggesting the right choice for proper understanding of concepts during learning.
- Counselling knowledge will enable the teachers to use the e-learning resources in producing graduates with entrepreneurial skills.
- Counselling knowledge will enable the teachers to develop the spirit of supervision and follow-up on the learners, during and after learning had taken place.

## **Conclusions**

The world today is shifting from a traditional to a technologically-driven society, where every aspect of life is digitalized. Hence, it is only an economy that is based on this philosophy that would be assured of a future. Therefore, with the introduction of entrepreneurship education into the Nigerian education system, we are in the right direction. But more importantly, this programme must be sustained and this would be achieved through several ways, among which is the application of counselling approach in the usage of e-learning resources in the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship education in all our institutions of higher learning.

## Recommendations

The researchers recommend as follows:

- All teachers involved in the use of e-learning resources in the teaching of entrepreneurship courses must be constantly re-trained in order to acquire basic counselling techniques.
- Institution managements must organize refresher courses for all teachers for the proper usage and management of e-learning resources.
- Government, in its sustainable development goals from 2016, must solve the issue of provision of sufficient funds to higher institutions, for the installation of e-learning resources in academic courses.
- Parents and guidance should encourage their children and wards about the proper utilization of electronic devices in their academic pursuit instead of indulging in otherwise.

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