

IMPLEMENTATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP CURRICULUM FOR PROMOTING SELF-RELIANCE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

The study examined the implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum for promoting self-reliance in community development initiatives in Enugu State. The study was carried out in Enugu State. Three research questions guided the study. The population of the study was 900 adult learners and facilitators. No sampling was used as the population was manageable. The instrument for data collection was self-structured questionnaire developed by the researchers, titled: Entrepreneurship Curriculum Implementation and Self-Reliance Questionnaire (ECISQ). The instrument was face-validated by three experts in the Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Reliability was established using the Cronbach Alpha method, yielding a coefficient of 0.85. Data were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed that effective implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum promotes self-reliance among community members by equipping learners with practical skills in small-scale business development, vocational competencies, and income-generating activities. It was also found that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation enhances community development initiatives through active participation of learners in cooperative enterprises, skill acquisition programmes, and local economic projects that improve livelihoods. The findings further showed that adequate instructional delivery, practical training, and community-based learning approaches support learners in applying entrepreneurial skills to real-life situations, thereby improving economic independence and reducing unemployment within communities. The study contributed to knowledge by demonstrating that effective entrepreneurship curriculum implementation is a key strategy for promoting self-reliance and strengthening community development initiatives in Enugu State. It was recommended that education stakeholders and curriculum planners should strengthen practical entrepreneurship training, improve instructional delivery methods, and enhance community involvement in entrepreneurship education to promote self-reliance and sustainable development outcomes.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship curriculum, self-reliance, curriculum implementation, community development initiatives

Introduction

The persistent rise in unemployment, poverty, and low economic productivity among community members in Enugu State has continued to generate serious concern among educators, policymakers, and development practitioners, especially in relation to the effectiveness of educational programmes in promoting self-reliance. Despite the introduction of entrepreneurship education in various levels of the education system and community-based learning initiatives, many learners still graduate without adequate practical skills to create employment or establish sustainable businesses. This situation raises a critical concern about the extent to which entrepreneurship curriculum is effectively implemented to achieve its intended purpose of promoting self-reliance and strengthening community development initiatives in Enugu State. The inability of many

learners to translate acquired knowledge into productive ventures suggests possible gaps in curriculum delivery, inadequate practical exposure, and weak linkage between classroom instruction and real-life entrepreneurial practice.

Entrepreneurship education has been widely acknowledged as a strategic educational innovation designed to equip learners with creative, innovative, and problem-solving skills necessary for economic independence. It focuses on preparing individuals to identify opportunities, take risks, and establish income-generating ventures that contribute to both personal and community development. According to Akinwale and Oladipo (2022), entrepreneurship education is a structured learning experience that equips individuals with business competencies required for self-employment and economic sustainability. Similarly, Nwokolo and Ezeani (2023) explained that entrepreneurship education involves the development of creative and innovative skills that enable learners to transform ideas into viable economic enterprises. In the view of Ojo and Balogun (2021), entrepreneurship education is a practical-oriented form of learning that enhances learners' ability to generate income through productive engagement in business activities. In this study, entrepreneurship curriculum refers to the organized instructional content, learning experiences, and training activities designed to equip learners with entrepreneurial competencies for self-reliance and community development initiatives.

Curriculum implementation represents a crucial stage in the educational process because it determines the extent to which educational objectives are translated into practical learning outcomes. It involves the actual delivery of planned instructional content by teachers, facilitators, and other stakeholders in order to achieve desired educational goals. According to Ugwu and Nnadi (2022), curriculum implementation is the process of translating educational plans into practical teaching and learning activities within real educational settings. In a similar view, Okafor and Anozie (2021) described curriculum implementation as the systematic application of instructional strategies, materials, and methods to achieve predetermined educational objectives. Furthermore, Ibrahim and Musa (2023) emphasized that effective curriculum implementation requires adequate instructional resources, skilled facilitators, and active learner participation to ensure meaningful learning outcomes. Within the context of this study, entrepreneurship curriculum implementation refers to the practical delivery of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and competencies to learners through structured instructional processes aimed at promoting self-reliance in community development initiatives.

Self-reliance is a central objective of entrepreneurship education because it enables individuals to depend on their own abilities, creativity, and skills for survival and economic advancement. It reflects the capacity of individuals to create employment opportunities rather than depend solely on government or external assistance. According to Eze and Uche (2023), self-reliance is the ability of individuals to utilize acquired skills and knowledge to generate income and sustain their livelihoods independently. In another perspective, Chukwuemeka and Nwafor (2021) defined self-reliance as the capability of individuals to engage in productive ventures that ensure economic independence and reduce unemployment. Similarly, Nnaji and Obasi (2022) stated that self-reliance involves the development of entrepreneurial competencies that enable individuals to contribute meaningfully to economic growth. In the context of this study, self-reliance refers to the ability of community members to apply entrepreneurial skills acquired through curriculum implementation to achieve economic independence and reduce dependency on external support systems.

Community development initiatives refer to organized collective efforts by individuals, groups, and institutions within a community aimed at improving social, economic, and infrastructural conditions. These initiatives are often driven by cooperative actions, skill acquisition programmes, and local development projects that enhance community well-being. According to Edeh and Nnaji (2022), community development initiatives are participatory processes through which community members work together to improve their living conditions and economic status. Similarly, Obi and Uzochukwu (2023) described community development initiatives as structured activities that promote collective responsibility and sustainable development within communities. In the view of Nwafor and Ugwuanyi (2021), community development initiatives involve collaborative actions that empower individuals to contribute to economic growth and social transformation. In this study, community development initiatives refer to entrepreneurial and cooperative activities through which learners apply acquired entrepreneurial skills to improve economic conditions and promote sustainable development in Enugu State.

The relationship between entrepreneurship curriculum implementation, self-reliance, and community development initiatives is significant because effective curriculum delivery serves as a bridge between education and economic empowerment. When entrepreneurship education is properly implemented, learners are expected to acquire practical skills such as business management, financial literacy, vocational skills, and innovative thinking that enable them to establish and sustain businesses. However, observations in many communities in Enugu State suggest that despite the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in curricula, many learners still lack adequate practical exposure, resulting in limited entrepreneurial engagement and continued unemployment. This situation indicates possible deficiencies in instructional delivery methods, inadequate practical training, and insufficient integration of community-based learning approaches.

Empirical studies have shown that entrepreneurship education contributes to skill acquisition and self-employment when effectively implemented. For instance, Nnamdi and Okeke (2022) found that practical entrepreneurship training significantly improves self-employment opportunities among learners in South-East Nigeria. Similarly, Ibrahim and Musa (2023) reported that effective curriculum implementation enhances learners' ability to engage in income-generating activities in community-based education programmes. In another study, Ojo and Balogun (2021) observed that entrepreneurship training improves learners' creativity and business development skills when practical methods are adopted. Despite these contributions, most existing studies have focused separately on entrepreneurship education, curriculum implementation, or self-reliance without adequately examining how entrepreneurship curriculum implementation promotes self-reliance within community development initiatives in Enugu State. From the researcher's personal observation and available empirical literature, there appears to be limited comprehensive study that integrates entrepreneurship curriculum implementation, self-reliance, and community development initiatives within a unified framework in Enugu State. Existing studies have not sufficiently addressed how the practical implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum translates into real economic empowerment and sustainable community development outcomes. This identified gap therefore necessitated the present study, which seeks to examine the implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum for promoting self-reliance in community development initiatives in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship curriculum implementation has become a central strategy in contemporary education systems aimed at promoting self-reliance and strengthening community development initiatives, especially in developing societies such as Enugu State. Ideally, entrepreneurship education is expected to equip learners with practical skills, innovative thinking, and business competencies that enable them to create employment opportunities, become economically independent, and contribute meaningfully to community development. In a well-functioning system, effective curriculum implementation should translate entrepreneurship education into practical outcomes such as small-scale business creation, vocational engagement, and sustainable income generation among community members. However, the situation in many communities in Enugu State appears to be different from this expectation. Despite the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in educational programmes and community-based training initiatives, many learners still lack adequate practical exposure and entrepreneurial competence required for self-reliance. Observations indicate that curriculum implementation is often characterized by theoretical instruction with limited hands-on training, inadequate instructional resources, and insufficient linkage between learning content and real community economic activities. As a result, many graduates of entrepreneurship programmes remain unemployed or underemployed, thereby increasing dependence on limited job opportunities and external support systems.

Furthermore, community development initiatives that should benefit from entrepreneurship education appear to be weak or unsustainable due to low levels of active participation and limited application of acquired entrepreneurial skills. This gap between policy intention and actual implementation suggests that entrepreneurship curriculum may not be effectively delivered in a manner that promotes self-reliance and community development outcomes. The persistence of unemployment, poverty, and low entrepreneurial engagement among community members therefore raises concern about the effectiveness of entrepreneurship curriculum implementation in Enugu State. The problem of this study is that despite the introduction of entrepreneurship curriculum in educational and community development programmes in Enugu State, many learners still lack the practical entrepreneurial skills required for self-reliance, resulting in low participation in productive ventures and weak community development outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum for promoting self-reliance in community development initiatives in Enugu State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. determine how entrepreneurship curriculum implementation promotes self-reliance among community members in Enugu State.
2. examine how entrepreneurship curriculum implementation enhances skill acquisition for community development initiatives in Enugu State.
3. assess how entrepreneurship curriculum implementation supports participation in community development initiatives in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does entrepreneurship curriculum implementation promote self-reliance among community members in Enugu State?

2. How does entrepreneurship curriculum implementation enhance skill acquisition for community development initiatives in Enugu State?
3. How does entrepreneurship curriculum implementation support participation in community development initiatives in Enugu State?

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum for promoting self-reliance in community development initiatives in Enugu State. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect and analyze data from respondents without manipulating variables. The study was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. Enugu State was selected because of the presence of community-based adult education programmes and entrepreneurship training centres where issues relating to curriculum implementation and skill acquisition are actively observed. The population of the study consisted of 900 respondents made up of adult learners, facilitators, and community development stakeholders involved in entrepreneurship-related programmes in Enugu State. Since the population was manageable, the entire population was used without sampling. The instrument used for data collection was the Entrepreneurship Curriculum Implementation and Self-Reliance Questionnaire (ECISRQ), developed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study. The instrument was structured on a four-point rating scale.

The instrument was validated by three experts from the Department of Continuing Education and Development Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts reviewed the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives, and necessary corrections were made before final administration. The reliability of the instrument was established using the Cronbach Alpha method after a trial testing. A reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was reliable for data collection. Data for the study were collected through direct administration of the questionnaire with the help of trained research assistants. Copies of the questionnaire were retrieved after completion to ensure a high response rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The decision rule was based on a criterion mean of 2.50 on a four-point rating scale. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered agreed, while any item below 2.50 was regarded as disagreed.

Results

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on How Entrepreneurship Curriculum Implementation Promotes Self-Reliance among Community Members in Enugu State

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
1	Entrepreneurship curriculum develops business creation skills	3.68	0.51	A
2	It enhances income-generating abilities among learners	3.41	0.67	A
3	It reduces dependence on salaried employment	3.55	0.59	A
4	It improves financial literacy for self-reliance	3.47	0.62	A
5	It promotes small-scale business development	3.74	0.44	A
6	It encourages innovation and creativity	3.52	0.60	A
Aggregate Score		3.56	0.57	A

Data in Table 1 shows that item means range from 3.41 to 3.74, with SD between 0.44 and 0.67. The aggregate mean of ($\bar{X} = 3.56$, $SD = 0.57$) indicates agreement that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation promotes self-reliance. This implies that learners acquire business creation, financial literacy, and innovation skills that support self-employment and reduce dependence on salaried jobs. The close SD values show consistency in respondents' views.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on How Entrepreneurship Curriculum Implementation Enhances Skill Acquisition for Community Development Initiatives in Enugu State

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
1	Provides vocational skills for community development	3.49	0.64	A
2	Improves cooperative enterprise skills	3.66	0.53	A
3	Develops problem-solving skills	3.58	0.57	A
4	Enhances technical entrepreneurial skills	3.43	0.66	A
5	Supports local economic participation	3.71	0.45	A
6	Improves business management ability	3.60	0.52	A
Aggregate Score		3.58	0.56	A

Data in Table 2 shows item means ranging from 3.43 to 3.71, with SD between 0.45 and 0.66. The aggregate mean of ($\bar{X}=3.58$, $SD=0.56$) indicates agreement that entrepreneurship curriculum enhances skill acquisition for community development initiatives. This suggests that learners develop vocational, cooperative, and managerial skills that are useful for community development projects. It also shows that entrepreneurship education supports practical skill development needed for local economic activities.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Entrepreneurship Curriculum Implementation Supports Participation in Community Development Initiatives in Enugu State

S/N	Item Statement	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	SD	Decision
1	Encourages participation in cooperative societies	3.52	0.60	A
2	Promotes involvement in community development projects	3.67	0.50	A
3	Increases engagement in local economic activities	3.44	0.65	A
4	Promotes teamwork in business activities	3.75	0.42	A
5	Motivates participation in skill-based projects	3.58	0.56	A
6	Strengthens self-help initiatives	3.61	0.54	A
7	Encourages participation in cooperative farming and trading	3.48	0.63	A
8	Enhances involvement in community-based entrepreneurship programmes	3.69	0.49	A
Aggregate Score		3.59	0.55	A

Data shows mean values from 3.44–3.75 and SD between 0.42–0.65. The aggregate mean of ($\bar{X} = 3.59$, $SD = 0.55$) indicates agreement that entrepreneurship curriculum supports participation in community development initiatives through cooperative activities and entrepreneurship engagement. This implies that learners become more involved in cooperative activities, teamwork, and community-based economic programmes after exposure to entrepreneurship education. The low SD shows agreement among respondents.

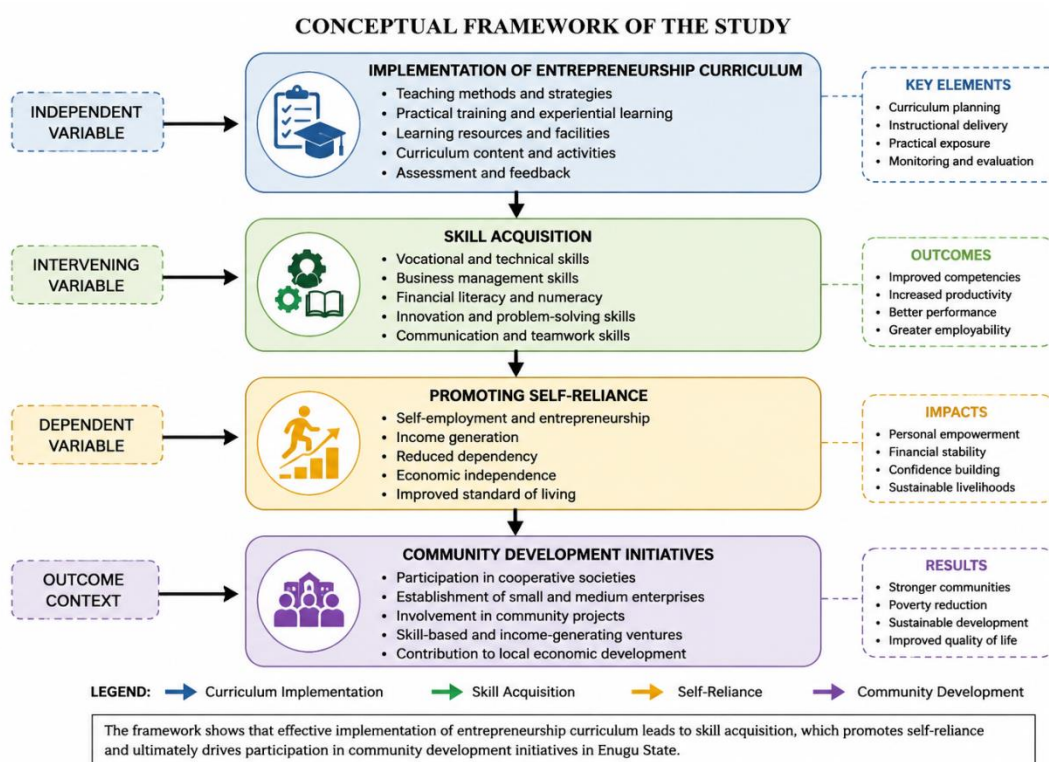


Figure 1: The above conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between entrepreneurship curriculum implementation, skill acquisition, self-reliance, and community development initiatives in Enugu State. It shows that effective implementation of entrepreneurship curriculum (through teaching methods, practical training, and instructional resources) leads to the acquisition of relevant entrepreneurial skills such as vocational competence, financial literacy, and business management abilities. These acquired skills, in turn, promote self-reliance among community members by enabling them to engage in self-employment and income-generating activities. Furthermore, the framework indicates that self-reliance ultimately translates into active participation in community development initiatives such as cooperative societies, small-scale enterprises, and community-based projects. Generally, it demonstrates a progressive relationship where curriculum implementation drives skills development, which enhances self-reliance and strengthens community development outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation promotes self-reliance among community members by equipping learners with practical business competencies, vocational abilities, and income-generating skills

that enable them to engage in self-employment activities. The findings further showed that when entrepreneurship curriculum is properly implemented through practical-oriented instruction, learners are able to develop small-scale enterprises, acquire financial literacy, and reduce dependence on external employment opportunities. The findings are in consonance with the study of Akinwale and Oladipo (2022) who posited that entrepreneurship education enhances youth empowerment by providing practical skills for self-employment and economic independence. Similarly, Nnaji and Obasi (2022) found that entrepreneurship skills acquisition significantly improves economic independence among youths by enabling them to create personal ventures. In the same direction, Ojo and Balogun (2021) reported that practical entrepreneurship training enhances learners' ability to become self-reliant through engagement in productive economic activities. Also, Eze and Uche (2023) affirmed that skill acquisition programmes play a vital role in promoting self-reliance and reducing unemployment among community members. These findings imply that effective entrepreneurship curriculum implementation is a strong determinant of self-reliance when learners are exposed to practical training, experiential learning, and business-oriented education.

The findings of the study revealed that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation enhances skill acquisition by exposing learners to practical training in vocational skills, cooperative enterprise management, and income-generating activities that can be applied in community development initiatives. The study also showed that effective curriculum implementation helps learners acquire problem-solving skills, creativity, and innovative thinking necessary for initiating and sustaining community-based projects. The findings are in consonance with the study of Ibrahim and Musa (2023) who found that effective curriculum implementation significantly improves entrepreneurial skill development among learners in Nigeria. Similarly, Nwokolo and Ezeani (2023) reported that entrepreneurship education enhances innovation and practical skill acquisition necessary for economic development. In addition, Nnamdi and Okeke (2022) established that entrepreneurship training improves vocational competencies and employment generation among graduates. Furthermore, Okafor and Anozie (2021) noted that curriculum implementation strategies that emphasize practical learning improve learners' acquisition of job-related and entrepreneurial skills. These findings suggest that entrepreneurship curriculum, when properly implemented, serves as a platform for developing practical competencies required for meaningful participation in community development initiatives.

The findings of the study revealed that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation supports participation in community development initiatives by encouraging learners to engage in cooperative ventures, community-based enterprises, and skill acquisition programmes that contribute to local economic growth. The findings also indicated that learners who acquire entrepreneurial skills through effective curriculum implementation are more likely to participate in community development projects such as group farming, cooperative savings, and small business development. The findings are in consonance with the study of Ede and Nnaji (2022) who posited that community development initiatives depend on active participation and collaborative engagement of community members for sustainable development. Similarly, Obi and Uzochukwu (2023) found that community-based programmes enhance participatory development and economic empowerment among members. In addition, Nwafor and Ugwuanyi (2021) reported that community empowerment programmes improve participation in local development activities. Likewise, Edeh and Nnaji (2022) affirmed that participatory

approaches strengthen community involvement and sustainable development outcomes. These findings imply that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation enhances community participation by equipping learners with relevant skills and motivating them to apply such skills in community development activities.

Educational Implications of the Study

The findings imply that effective entrepreneurship curriculum implementation strengthens learners' acquisition of practical skills, enhances self-reliance, and increases participation in community development initiatives. It also implies that when curriculum delivery is practice-oriented, learners are better prepared for self-employment and community-based economic activities.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation plays a significant role in promoting self-reliance and enhancing participation in community development initiatives in Enugu State. It establishes that beyond theoretical instruction, practical curriculum delivery is essential in equipping learners with vocational, business, and problem-solving skills that translate into economic independence. The study also contributes by integrating entrepreneurship curriculum implementation with community development outcomes, showing that effective curriculum delivery strengthens both individual empowerment and community productivity. Furthermore, it expands understanding of how education can serve as a direct tool for reducing unemployment and fostering sustainable development at the community level.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation has a significant role in promoting self-reliance among community members in Enugu State. The study established that when entrepreneurship curriculum is effectively implemented, learners acquire practical skills that enable them to engage in self-employment and income-generating activities. It was also concluded that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation enhances skill acquisition necessary for participation in community development initiatives, as learners become equipped with vocational and entrepreneurial competencies. Furthermore, the study concluded that effective curriculum implementation encourages active participation of community members in development initiatives such as cooperative ventures and small-scale enterprises. Overall, the study established that entrepreneurship curriculum implementation is a key instrument for promoting self-reliance and strengthening community development outcomes in Enugu State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Entrepreneurship curriculum planners should ensure that curriculum content should be more practically oriented so that learners should acquire hands-on entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance.
2. Facilitators of entrepreneurship education should adopt experiential teaching methods such as practical demonstrations and business simulations so that learners should develop real-life entrepreneurial competencies.
3. Government and education stakeholders should provide adequate instructional resources and training materials so that effective curriculum implementation should be achieved in all learning centres.

4. Community leaders and stakeholders should actively support entrepreneurship programmes so that learners should be encouraged to participate in community development initiatives.
5. Adult education and entrepreneurship training centres should strengthen skill acquisition programmes so that learners should be better equipped for self-employment and sustainable livelihood activities.

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