

ALIGNMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION WITHIN THE KENYAN COMPETENCY BASED CURRICULUM: REVIEW OF THE BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT: *Education plays a critical role in determining the level of entrepreneurial activities within an economy. Despite entrepreneurial education being offered at the tertiary level in many Kenyan universities, it does not result in the inculcation of an entrepreneurial culture among the young people as it is not taught at the primary and secondary levels of education. The Kenyan ministry of education is in the process of rolling out the competency based curriculum that focuses on key competencies. The study aimed to establish the extent to which entrepreneurial competencies are incorporated in the basic education curriculum framework. The study established that the curriculum incorporates the teaching of entrepreneurial competencies to learners; however, the instruction of entrepreneurial skills is subtle as it does not include the teaching of entrepreneurship as a subject area. This study recommends the explicit teaching of entrepreneurial education in the formative years of education.*

KEY WORDS: entrepreneurial education, competency based curriculum, formative years

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial thinking is one of the most important skills that learners need to thrive in the 21st century. The 21st century skills are divided into three main categories: Learning skills, literacy skills, and life skills. Learning skills include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication; the literacy skills include information, media, and technology; whereas the life skills include flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills (Stauffer, 2020; Fadel, 2008). As noted by (Fadel, 2008) entrepreneurial literacy in addition to financial, economic, and business literacy is considered one of the 21st century themes that will determine the nature of work in this century. The nature of work and employment has been changing the world over in the last four decades and is likely to continue changing as we move further into the 21st century (Barley, Bechky, & Miliken, 2017).

As noted by Barley, Bechky, & Miliken, (2017) most of the well-paying middle class jobs that are associated with bureaucratic employment contract are on decline, more people are engaging in contingent work that include self-employed independent contractors and the free-lance work that is currently referred to as the “gig-economy” According to the world development report (2019) as cited in (Choi, Dutz, & Usman, 2020) the changing nature of work globally will be determined largely by automation in which most jobs in manufacturing industry will be automated resulting to job losses whereas other jobs will be created through product innovations. However, for most of the African Countries, automation may not displace most workers as the continent still has lower levels of technology adoption. Nevertheless, African economies and nations have a chance to forge a different path from the rest of the world by focusing on entrepreneurial education that will enable the workers to spot opportunities in the local and digital economies.

With the changes that are happening globally, there is need to ensure that entrepreneurial education is taught to learners so that they are more acquainted with the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. As noted by Njambi (2016) the increased need for entrepreneurs who are skilled in technology and business can only be achieved through incorporating entrepreneurial education in the curriculum. However, questions abound as regards to when entrepreneurial skills should be taught to learners and how it should be taught to learners.

According to Ven Der Kuip & Verheul, 2003 & Otuya, Kibas, & Otuya (2013) education plays a role in determining the level of entrepreneurial activities within an economy. Many policy makers and scholars recognize the need for incorporating entrepreneurial education within an education system, as it creates the awareness of alternative career options and broadens the learners viewpoints and opportunities. The education and training program of entrepreneurial education in Kenya is mostly offered at the tertiary level with the intent to develop positive attitudes among students toward self-employment and to alleviate the problem of unemployment and be a means of poverty reduction. However, as stated by Kimencu, et al (2019) the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education is dependent on the delivery of the curriculum content. This is further asserted by (Gichana, 2015) who did a study on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programs in Kenya and revealed that despite the training of entrepreneurship education programs, the delivery of the course was primarily through traditional approaches of teaching that emphasize on mastery of course content rather than the experiential learning that is necessary to acquire entrepreneurial skills and competencies.

The traditional education system of rote learning, reproducing facts taught in class, the expectations that learners ought to obey and adhere to rigid rules set in a school system, and engage in wage or formal employment after school all hinder the growth of the entrepreneurial mindset. In contrast to the traditional education, entrepreneurial education requires one to rely on own judgment, learn through the process of trial and error, and create his/her own job environment. Entrepreneurial education focuses on creative thinking and learning rather than the analytical and rote learning (Ven Der Kuip & Verheul, 2003)

Statement of the Problem

Despite entrepreneurial education being offered at the tertiary level in many Kenyan universities, it does not result in the inculcation of an entrepreneurial culture among the young people. Many of the Kenyan graduates, even the graduates of Msc and Phd in entrepreneurship seek to become job seekers rather than job creators (Bwisa, 2010). This is further supported by (Mwaura, Hiuhu, Ng'ang'a, & Gatheya, 2015) who noted that very few students who receive entrepreneurial education in Kenya, Botswana, and Uganda begin their own businesses in the first two years of college as the education system does not support self-efficacy and intention to become entrepreneurs. This is contrary to countries like the United States, where graduates from the colleges and universities that offer entrepreneurship are three times more likely to be involved in venture creation than graduates who have not been taught entrepreneurship courses (Lee, Chang, & Lim, 2005). Some of the reasons for this discrepancy could be the level in which entrepreneurial knowledge and skills are introduced to learners and the pedagogical style in which entrepreneurial content is delivered. For instance, in the United States, entrepreneurial education through the venture creations programs is encouraged to all individuals regardless of their age or educational level (Lee, Chang, & Lim, 2005), This is contrary to the Kenyan 8-4-4 Education system in which the study of entrepreneurship is done at the university and tertiary levels. In high school, entrepreneurship is taught as a chapter within the subject of business studies which is not sufficient to inculcate the entrepreneurial culture among young learners (Otuya, Kibas, & Otuya, 2013).

In 2019, the Kenyan ministry of education rolled out the competency based curriculum that focuses on competencies rather than just content. Entrepreneurial education has been argued to complement aspects of the competency based curriculum as it emphasizes on imagination, creativity, and risk taking attitudes (Morris, Webb, & Sigal, 2013). This study therefore aims to establish the extent to which the competency based curriculum incorporates entrepreneurial competencies as illustrated in the basic education framework.

Entrepreneurial education in the Competency Based Frameworks

Entrepreneurial educators have been criticized of teaching what has always been considered as innate, hence un-teachable, however, various researchers have shown that entrepreneurial skills can be developed (Morris, Webb, & Sigal, 2013). According to Gibb (1998) as cited in (Ven Der Kuip & Verheul, 2003), the following entrepreneurial skills can be taught: Intuitive decision making, creative problem solving, managing interdependence through collaborative projects, ability to negotiate and conclude on deals, ability to do strategic thinking, managing projects and time, ability to persuade, negotiate, and sell; and the ability to inspire confidence through providing leadership. For learners to develop these important skills there is need to have the requisite qualities of self-confidence, self-awareness, self-efficacy, autonomy and independence, internal locus of control, high levels of empathy, be predisposed to hard work, flexibility, have high achievement orientation and have the appetite to take and manage moderate risks. Hence, entrepreneurial education can be taught from primary and secondary levels of education through inculcating those personal skills for it to have impact. According to Ven Der Kuip & Verheul, (2003) there are three levels of teaching entrepreneurship: Awareness, establishment of opportunities, and actualization through the creation of a venture. As advocated by Jean Piaget the proponent of the theory of cognitive development, intelligence grows and develops through different stages of developmental growth and as such content instruction provided to the learners should be consistent with their developmental stages (Lefa, 2014).

Kenyan Competency Based Curriculum

In order to conform to the changes within the environment, education institutions have shifted from content based education outcomes to competency based education outcomes. The competency based education is also referred to as outcome based education or capability or capacity oriented education. It is an education system that focuses on the skills that learners gain through an education system rather than the content that they know from the system. It is considered a modern education science that requires some extent of social expertise, skills mastery, and gaining of some specific competencies (Mulder, Eppink, & Akkermans, 2011).

The Kenyan education system is undergoing radical changes as the nation seeks to replace the 34 year old 8-4-4 system that began in 1985 with a competency based curriculum that was rolled out in 2019 that focuses more on what you can do, rather than what you know. The 8-4-4 system which has had various reforms over the years has been criticized for being too content oriented, focusing more on the acquisition rather than the application of knowledge. It has been orchestrated as a curriculum that is overly academic and examination oriented and one that offers very rigid education pathways for learners. In its place, various stakeholders, such as government officials,

employers and parents have appraised the new competency based curriculum at it focuses more on gaining competencies rather than the abstract acquisition of knowledge. It is anchored on the role of education being more on “what a learner can do” rather than “what a learner knows”. The new competency based curriculum therefore seeks to ensure that learners are competent in seven key areas: Communication and collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy, learning to learn and self-efficacy (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017).

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has developed the basic education framework that serves as the blue print of how the competency based curriculum is to be implemented (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017). The basic education framework highlights the pillars, values, core competencies for basic education, and the organization of basic education from early year’s education, middle school education, lower secondary education, senior secondary education, and their respective assessment processes. It also addresses education for learners with special educational needs and the pertinent and contemporary issues in the environment that are aligned to the subject matter.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a qualitative research design with a focus on document analysis of the main document used in the implementation of the competency-based curriculum: Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF). The document was used with the permission from Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development and the ethical review board of Kenyatta University. A research permit to conduct the study was also provided by National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI).

The analyses were done using the framework analysis, a qualitative data analysis technique that presents content analysis in a matrix format. The framework analysis is the most appropriate qualitative analysis technique that is best suited for applied policy research; it involves the review of documents such as policy and procedure documents through five steps: Familiarization, categorizing the themes, indexing, charting, mapping, and interpretation (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). The framework analysis was developed by Jane Ritchie and Liz Spencer on NatCen, an applied research agency in UK in the early 1990’s. The analysis, provides clear steps or techniques of conducting qualitative analysis, involves a case and theme based approach using a matrix, the themes used are presented in a hierarchy that includes the sub themes, it involves summarization and synthesis of the data. Finally it retains the links to the data and uses the summary to link to the original data (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). The framework analysis is a form of content analysis

tool that is used to present qualitative data in a matrix format. Content analysis, involves the process of establishing the presence of words in a collection of documents in order to break down the textual content into manageable categories so as to establish the themes that could support the interpretation of qualitative data.

The current study aimed to establish the extent to which entrepreneurial skills and competencies are incorporated within the basic education curriculum framework document.

Document analyzed

Year published; Publisher	Purpose of the Publication	Assertions of the Document
Basic Education Curriculum Framework Year: 2017; Author: KICD (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Design)	Developed to actualize the curriculum reforms from the input of stakeholder engagements, national needs assessment study, deliberations from national curriculum reforms conference and benchmarking studies	a. Curriculum reforms b. Curriculum goals of education in line with vision 2030 c. Basic education Curriculum pillars d. Curriculum guiding principles e. Core competencies for basic education

Table 1: Document Analyzed

Results and Findings

The research findings were presented in a matrix form using the framework analysis. The study found that the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) had several entrepreneurial themes that include: Communication, identification of opportunities, collaboration, empathy, and venture creation.

Entrepreneurial Themes	Rate	Evidence from BECF	Interpretation
Communication	92	Among the seven competencies, communication and collaboration is the first core competence of the new curriculum Communication as a personal value (pg. 14; 21, 79) “ Communication as an interpersonal skill (pg. 22, pg.23)	According to (Velasco, 2013) the ability to communicate, persuade and discuss with various stakeholders is considered a critical entrepreneurial competency by the consortium for Entrepreneurship Education.

		<p>As a digital literacy skill (pg. 25)</p> <p>As a process of delivering value (Pg, 97)</p> <p>As a business skill (pg. 59)</p>	<p>Communication is illustrated in the basic education curriculum framework as a personal value, interpersonal skill, a digital literacy skill, a process of delivering value and as a basic skill.</p>
Identification of Opportunities	38	<p>The concept of opportunity is viewed from varied perspectives in BECF:</p> <p>Hair Dressing and Beauty Therapy: Students will also have the opportunity to attend trips to industry exhibitions and enter competitions to develop their creativity. Pg. 93</p> <p>They will not only be practicing their skills on models, they will have the opportunity to refine their techniques on actual paying customers, thereby building their confidence and gaining experience in a commercial environment. Pg. 93</p> <p>Tourism and Travel: Learners in the tourism and travel will prepare for an exciting career that provides an opportunity for employment within various sectors of the tourism industry. Pg. 95</p> <p>Project Methods of Assessment: The project will give an opportunity to learners to apply their acquired knowledge and transferable skills to a real life situation. Pg. 120</p>	<p>Oyson (2016) Opportunities are central to entrepreneurship. The concept of entrepreneurship cannot exist without opportunity.</p> <p>The BECF provides learners in senior secondary schools the opportunity to apply their knowledge.</p> <p>Through the visits to the various sites, learners can begin identifying entrepreneurial opportunities and gaps that they can fill in the market place.</p>
Collaboration	26	<p>Definition of collaboration (pg. 22)</p> <p>Collaborations as a partnership (Pg. 93; 84,)</p> <p>“Schools offering culinary, home management, agricultural technologies will</p>	<p>According to Velasco (2013) ability to collaborate effectively is an entrepreneurial competency that allows learners as entrepreneurs to collaborate mutually and effectively with other business people to</p>

		<p>be expected to form collaborations and partnerships within their community</p> <p>Collaboration as a form of assessment (pg. 132)</p> <p>Collaboration as a learning technique (pg. 134)</p> <p>“Use of social media in collaborative learning could be used to exchange and share information and experiences on the reformed curriculum” Pg. 134.</p>	<p>establish linkages that lead to common objectives.</p>
Empathy	4	<p>Empathy as an interpersonal skill: Pg. 14</p> <p>“The teaching and learning of values will also enable them to value diversity in all people, and to demonstrate respect, empathy and compassion for all people.” pg. 14</p> <p>Empathy as a Self-Efficacy Competence: pg. 23</p> <p>“They will demonstrate interpersonal relationship skills such as assertiveness, empathy, ..” Pg. 23</p> <p>Empathy as a learning outcome: pg. 78</p> <p>Empathy as a family value (pg. 112)</p>	<p>According to (Humphrey, 2013) high levels of emotional intelligence and empathy levels have a positive correlation to entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Entrepreneurs with high emotional and empathy levels are more attuned with the stakeholders needs hence making them more effective.</p>
Venture creation	11	<p>Community service learning (pg. 70)</p> <p>“ community service learning covers aspects of citizenship, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, life skills, communication skills, and research” pg. 70</p> <p>As a business venture pre-requisite (pg. 71)</p> <p>“Entrepreneurship will provide the learners with competencies required for developing, organizing, and managing business venture.... “ pg. 70</p> <p>As a competency in Agriculture education (pg. 84)</p>	<p>A lot of emphasis is provided explicitly in the senior secondary level on entrepreneurship. Especially since most of the subjects provided are technical and practical in Nature.</p> <p>There is need therefore to ensure that learners acquire the entrepreneurial personal qualities in their formative years to ensure that the skills acquired at senior secondary level are actualized.</p>

	<p>“The subject will focus on crop and livestock production, fisheries, value addition and entrepreneurship”</p> <p>Pre-vocational and vocational skill (pg. 108; 109) Entrepreneurship is recognized as one of the learning support areas in pre-vocational learning.</p> <p>The pre-vocational and vocational subjects or skills will be for the special needs learners who will not have their needs met in the regular curriculum</p>	<p>It is also noteworthy, that while entrepreneurship seems to cut across different disciplines, there is no explicit course or subject that provides the entrepreneurial content.</p>
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DISCUSSIONS

The study established that the competency based curriculum incorporates the teaching of entrepreneurial skills and competencies to learners as proposed in the basic education curriculum framework. From the review of the curriculum framework, entrepreneurship is recognized as one of the learning support areas in pre-vocational learning that occurs in the senior secondary school levels. At the lower primary school levels, emphasis is placed on inculcating the entrepreneurial personal skills such as communication, collaboration, and empathy that are pre-requisites to the learning of concrete entrepreneurial skills. Empathy is recognized also as an entrepreneurial attitude that enables a person to have an entrepreneurial mindset. Russell, Karl, & Qing (2018) define empathy to be a cognitive and effective process that fosters a person’s capability to understand and appreciate other peoples’ feelings, thoughts, and experiences and it is central to entrepreneurial mindset.

Paco & Palinhas, (2011) support the inculcation of personal skills such as communication, collaboration, and empathy skills at the primary school level as they contribute to the development of an enterprising culture and mindset. The business related entrepreneurial skills such as opportunity recognition and venture creation are addressed by the curriculum in the junior and senior secondary school levels. This notwithstanding, the conceptualization of opportunity by the curriculum framework is varied and might not be consistent with opportunity recognition as relates to entrepreneurship. As noted by Oyson, (2016) the concept of opportunity is elusive and crowded with controversy. The conceptualization of opportunity recognition by the basic education framework is viewed from the chances or options that the different subject areas offer to learners

in form of employment and not from the perspective of need recognition. There is need for the basic education curriculum framework to expand the perspective of opportunity recognition to encompass the entrepreneurial mindset of problem solving and identification of the needs that different skills and competencies can fulfill. That perspective will be helpful in shaping the minds of the learners from the attitude of job seeking to become job creators.

The study adds on to the conversations by (Otuya, Kibas, & Otuya, 2013); (Bwisa, 2010) and (Mwaura, Hiuhu, Ng'ang'a, & Gatheya, 2015) who have all argued in support of inculcating entrepreneurial education among young people in Kenya through its incorporation in the curriculum. More specifically, the study finds that the suggestions by (Otuya, Kibas, & Otuya, 2013) on a proposed approach to teaching entrepreneurship education in Kenya have been implemented to some extent. Activities that foster entrepreneurship such as involving the learners in singing simple songs that illustrate buying and selling; pretend play that involve purchasing products from a makeshift shop in class; and translating handcrafted goods made from the class projects to sales that had been suggested by Otuya et al (2013) have been incorporated within the basic education curriculum framework. However, most of the other activities that align to entrepreneurship such as playing monopoly and scrabble games to demonstrate investment and communication; engaging in business risk taking games; involving learners in actual brainstorming sessions are yet to be incorporated.

This study, therefore aims to add on to the conversation of incorporating the explicit teaching of entrepreneurship in the schools both through the formal and non-formal curriculum. Through the formal curriculum entrepreneurship should be taught as a subject area to be included in the basic education curriculum framework. Through the non-formal curriculum, entrepreneurship clubs that foster the entrepreneurial mindset should be introduced in schools. This exposure will result to the creation of the awareness of alternative career options and embrace entrepreneurship as viable career option. The exposure of entrepreneurial education from an early age will result to a mindset shift by young people from one of job-seeking to job-creation, and this will reduce on the levels of unemployment in the country. Moreover, the incorporating of entrepreneurial education in the basic education framework will align to the 21st century skills of creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication. This will result to the Kenyan Competency based curriculum achieving its vision of ensuring that all learners become engaged, empowered, and ethical citizens.

Implications to research and Practice

This study recommends the explicit teaching of entrepreneurial education in the formative years of education. Early exposure to entrepreneurial education from the formative years will result to an entrepreneurial mindset and culture that views societal problems as entrepreneurial

opportunities that can be solved through the creation of business venture. The teaching of entrepreneurship to learners from the formative years can be incorporated in the formal curriculum or it can be delivered as a non-formal curriculum within the schools through forming entrepreneurial clubs that can be used to nurture the entrepreneurial skills and talents among learners from an early age.

The implication of the study to research and policy is to build up on the conversation and the need of incorporating entrepreneurial education from the early years of learning. A policy brief that states the need to incorporate entrepreneurial education from the basic education level will be developed. This research will recommend the teaching of entrepreneurship as a vocational subject that will equip the learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that relate to occupations in various sectors and that will prepare the learners for careers in paid or self-employment.

CONCLUSIONS

The study established that the Kenyan competency based curriculum, as proposed in the basic education curriculum framework, has the potential to develop entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through formal and non-formal curriculum and also provide learners opportunities to apply those competencies in real life. An earlier and explicit exposure of entrepreneurial education to learners from an early age aligns aptly with the competencies identified in the basic education curriculum framework and should be considered to be taught as a subject area to learners in middle school education. The study concludes by making the following specific recommendations: Entrepreneurial education should be incorporated in the basic education curriculum framework and operationalized in the curriculum designs in form of either formal or non-formal curriculum such as through the formation of entrepreneurial clubs. Entrepreneurship as a subject area should be included in the middle school years of a learner's education as it provides the foundation on to which all the other technical subjects within that level of learning will be founded on. The incorporation of entrepreneurship as a subject area in the basic education curriculum framework will result to the production of textbooks and instructional materials that foster entrepreneurship resulting to the entrepreneurial discipline and culture being inculcated from an early age. Entrepreneurial education will result to learners who are engaged, empowered, and ethical as envisioned in the basic education curriculum framework and will result to the achievement of the critical skills required to thrive in the 21st century such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills.

Future research

A recommendation for future studies could be to evaluate the extent to which the text books, curriculum designs, and other learning resources used in the classroom incorporate entrepreneurial

education. This study also recommends that a longitudinal study be done to establish the effect of early exposure to entrepreneurship on the learners who are exposed to entrepreneurial education from the formative years. A comparative study is also recommended on the learners who have studied the different educational curriculums in Kenya to establish the effect of the different pedagogical styles of teaching and learning on the learners' outcome.

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