



## CURRICULUM CONTENT RELEVANCE AS A PREDICTOR OF ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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### Abstract

*This study examined the predictive relationship between curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset development among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The research addressed the critical gap between Nigeria's entrepreneurship education policy objectives and the measurable dispositional outcomes among secondary school learners. A correlational research design was adopted, with a sample of 384 SS2 students drawn from 20 public secondary schools across three senatorial districts in Osun State using multistage sampling. Data were collected using two adapted and validated instruments: the Curriculum Content Relevance Scale (CCRS;  $\alpha = 0.87$ ) and the Entrepreneurial Mindset Inventory (EMI;  $\alpha = 0.91$ ). Three research questions were answered, and one hypothesis was tested at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and simple linear regression. The results revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset ( $r = 0.682$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Curriculum content relevance accounted for 46.5% ( $R^2 = 0.465$ ) of the variance in students' entrepreneurial mindset. Students demonstrated moderate levels of entrepreneurial mindset, with opportunity recognition ( $M = 3.42$ ) and risk-taking propensity ( $M = 2.98$ ). The findings underscore the necessity for curriculum reform that embeds entrepreneurial competencies across all subjects.*

**Keywords:** Curriculum content relevance, entrepreneurial mindset, senior secondary education, entrepreneurship education, predictor variables

### Introduction

The persistent challenge of youth unemployment in Nigeria has reached critical proportions, with recent statistics indicating that over 40% of Nigerian youth remain unemployed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). This structural deficiency in the labour market has intensified calls for educational reform that prioritizes entrepreneurial competency development alongside traditional academic achievement. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) has responded by deliberately embedding entrepreneurship content into the revised Basic and Senior Secondary Education Curricula, signaling a policy shift from certificate-driven education to one that nurtures creativity, productivity, and problem-solving.

Entrepreneurial mindset is defined as the cognitive and affective orientation that enables individuals to identify opportunities, manage risk, and persist through setbacks has emerged as a crucial outcome of contemporary secondary education (Alao, Njoku, Hamzat & Omopariola, 2024). Research has demonstrated that entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian adolescents is significantly influenced by contextual factors including family environment, self-efficacy, and proactive personality and relies on activity-based learning, mentorship, and exposure to real-life experiences (Ereh, Ini, & Ikpo, 2019). However, the specific role of curriculum content relevance in shaping this mindset remains inadequately explored, particularly at the senior secondary school level. This is cultivated through

entrepreneurship and business education programs embedded within the secondary school curriculum, as guided by the *National Policy on Education, (FRN, 2025)*.

Osun State, located in Southwestern Nigeria, presents a unique context for this investigation. The state has implemented various educational reform initiatives, yet youth unemployment remains a pressing concern. Understanding how curriculum content relevance predicts entrepreneurial mindset among Osun State students could inform targeted interventions and policy decisions.

### Statement of the Problem

Despite Nigeria's national policy directives emphasizing entrepreneurship education, evidence suggests that the intended outcomes are not being fully realized. Graduates of secondary schools continue to demonstrate job-seeking orientations rather than opportunity-recognition competencies. The gap between curriculum intentions and learner outcomes has been attributed to implementation challenges, including inadequate teacher preparation, resource constraints, and by critical consideration, the perceived irrelevance of curriculum content to students' lived realities and future aspirations. The problem this study addresses is the lack of empirical evidence establishing the relationship between how students perceive the relevance of their curriculum content and their development of entrepreneurial mindset attributes. Without such evidence, curriculum developers and educators lack direction for meaningful reform and transformation.

### Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What is the level of curriculum content relevance as perceived by senior secondary school students in Osun State?
- (2) What is the level of entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State?
- (3) To what extent does curriculum content relevance predict entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State?

### Research Hypothesis

One research hypothesis was formulated at tested at 0.05 level of significance:

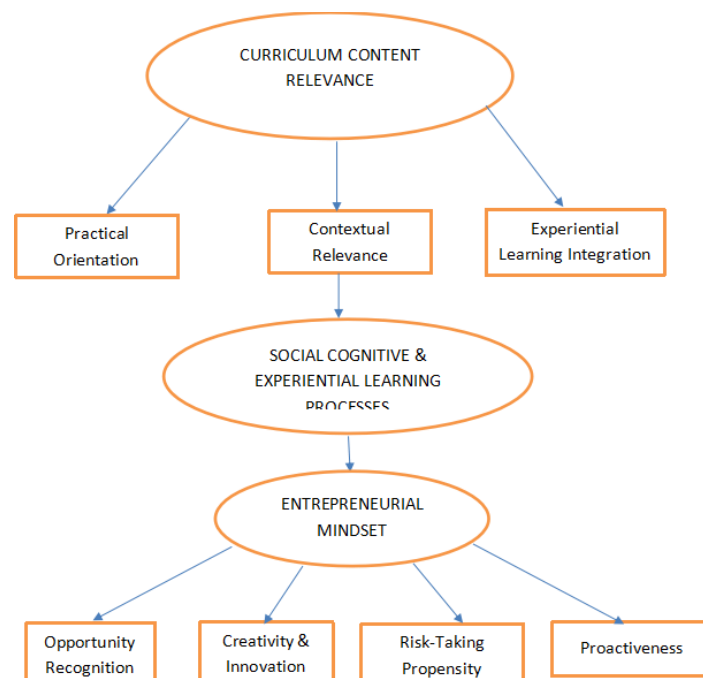
H<sub>0</sub> 1: There is no significant relationship between curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State.

### Conceptual Framework

Curriculum Content Relevance refers to the degree to which students perceive their academic content as meaningful, applicable to real-life situations, and connected to their future career aspirations. In the context of entrepreneurship education, relevant content is characterized by practical orientation, contextualisation to local economic realities, and integration of experiential learning opportunities. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) has emphasized that curriculum must equip young people with "the knowledge, skills, and values needed to create solutions, generate wealth, and build a better society" (NERDC, 2025).

**Entrepreneurial Mindset** encompasses the cognitive and affective dispositions that predispose individuals toward entrepreneurial action. Drawing

**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between Curriculum Content Relevance and Entrepreneurial Mindset



from the experiential learning framework, Suyaman et al. (2026), conceptualise entrepreneurial mindset as comprising opportunity recognition, creativity and innovation, risk-taking propensity, proactiveness, and self-efficacy. These dimensions are not innate but can be cultivated through structured educational experiences. In Nigeria, this mindset is developed through entrepreneurship and business education programs embedded within the secondary school curriculum, as proposed by the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2025).

### Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in two complementary theories which are:

*Social Cognitive Theory:* This theory posits that learning occurs through the interaction of personal, behavioural, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986). Curriculum content serves as an environmental stimulus that interacts with students' cognitive processes to shape entrepreneurial self-efficacy and outcome expectations. Bandura's (1986) *social cognitive theory* provides a foundation for understanding how students cultivate entrepreneurship behaviour through observation, practice, and reinforcement in educational environments.

*Experiential Learning Theory:* Kolb's four-stage cycle posits concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation which provide a pedagogical foundation for entrepreneurship education. Research has revealed that experiential learning models significantly enhance both entrepreneurial mindset and character among secondary school students (Kolb, 1984). According to Alao et al. (2024), the entrepreneurial mindset is cultivated via experiential learning methods like projects, simulations, and hands-on activities which transcend rote instruction.

### Empirical Review

Research on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian secondary schools has gained momentum in recent years. Ohadiugha (2023), examined curriculum development impact on entrepreneurship skills among Nigerian university students, finding significant differences in entrepreneurial mindset between public and private institutions, and recommending collaborative curriculum development involving stakeholders.

At the secondary level, Saibu et al. (2024), investigated students' perceptions of Entrepreneurial-Motivated Approach (EMA) in chemistry teaching in Lagos State. Their findings revealed that EMA enhanced both conceptual understanding and entrepreneurial self-reliance skills compared to traditional lecture methods. This study recommended subject-based entrepreneurship integration across all secondary subjects. The implementation of entrepreneurial studies curricula at the senior secondary level has been explored by Ursula (2025), who looked into the role of NERDC's 34 trade/entrepreneurial curricula in promoting human and economic development aligned with Sustainable Development Goals. The research pointed out that effective implementation is central to achieving youth empowerment and sustainable peace.

Internationally, Suyaman et al. (2026), developed and validated an experiential learning-based entrepreneurship model (PEIR which connotes Prepare, Experience, Internalize, Reflect) for senior secondary school students. Their research demonstrated moderate improvements in entrepreneurial mindset through structured experiential learning cycles within institutional frameworks. Despite these contributions, no study has specifically examined curriculum content relevance as a predictor of entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State, justifying the present investigation.

### Methodology

This study adopted a correlational research design. This design was suitable for examining the relationship between two variables (curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset) and determining the predictive power of the independent variable (curriculum content relevance) on the dependent variable (entrepreneurial mindset). The target population comprised all 48,672 Senior Secondary School Two (SSS2) students in public secondary schools in Osun State (Source: Osun State Ministry of Education, 2025). SSS2 students were selected because they have

completed at least one year of the senior secondary curriculum and can provide informed responses regarding curriculum content relevance. Using Yamane's formula, a sample size of 384 students was determined. Multistage random sampling technique was used. Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected from each senatorial district. This gave a total of nine LGAs. Two secondary schools were then randomly selected from each LGA making a total of 18 schools. From each selected school, 22 SSS2 students were selected using simple random sampling technique. Two instruments were developed for data collection. They are: Curriculum Content Relevance Scale (CCRS) and Entrepreneurial Mindset Inventory (EMI).

The CCRS measured students' perceptions of their curriculum content relevance across three domains: practical orientation (8 items), contextual relevance (7 items), and experiential learning integration (5 items). Items were structured on a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1).

The EMI measured entrepreneurial mindset across five dimensions: opportunity recognition (6 items), creativity and innovation (6 items), risk-taking propensity (5 items), proactiveness (5 items), and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (6 items). The same 4-point Likert scale was used.

Both instruments were subjected to face and content validation by three experts in educational psychology and measurement. Reliability was established through a pilot test involving 50 SSS2 students from a school not included in the main study (from neighboring Oyo State). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.87 for CCRS and 0.91 for EMI, indicating high internal consistency.

Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and simple linear regression at 0.05 significance level. For mean scores, a benchmark of 2.50 was adopted as the criterion for agreement (scores  $\geq$  2.50 indicate positive perception/agreement; scores  $<$  2.50 indicate negative perception/disagreement).

### Results

#### Research Question 1: Level of Curriculum Content Relevance

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Curriculum Content Relevance Perceptions

Domain Remark	N	Mean	SD
Practical Orientation	384	2.86	0.74
Contextual Relevance	384	2.73	0.81
Experiential Learning Integration	384	2.51	0.79
Overall CCRS	384	2.70	0.65

\*Note: Benchmark mean = 2.50

The results from sample distribution across senatorial districts indicate that students perceive

curriculum content as moderately relevant (overall mean = 2.70). Practical orientation had the

highest mean (2.86), while experiential learning integration had the lowest (2.51), suggesting that while students see practical value in their subjects, opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning are limited.

**Research Question 2: Level of Entrepreneurial Mindset**

**Table 2:** Mean and Standard Deviation of Entrepreneurial Mindset Dimensions

Dimension Remark	N	Mean	SD
Opportunity Recognition	384	3.42	0.58
Creativity and Innovation	384	3.18	0.62
Proactiveness	384	3.05	0.71
High Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy	384	3.01	0.68
High Risk-Taking Propensity	384	2.98	0.76
Overall EMI	384	3.13	0.59
High			

Table 2 reveals that students demonstrate a high overall entrepreneurial mindset (mean = 3.13). Opportunity recognition scored highest (3.42), reflecting students' ability to identify business opportunities in their environment. Risk-taking

propensity scored lowest (2.98), suggesting that Nigerian secondary students remain relatively risk-averse.

**Figure 2:** Bar Chart Showing Entrepreneurial Mindset Dimension Scores



**Research Question 3: Predictive Power of Curriculum Content Relevance**

**Table 3:** Simple Linear Regression Summary on Curriculum Content Relevance

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std.	Error of Estimate
1		0.682	0.465	0.464	0.432

**Table 4:** ANOVA for Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression	60.234	1	60.234		322.456
Residual	69.366	382	0.187		
Total	129.600	383			

**Table 5:** Regression Coefficients

Variable	Beta (β)	t	p-value	B	Std. Error
Constant	11.992		< 0.001		1.487
Curriculum Content Relevance	0.608	0.034	< 0.001	0.682	17.956

The regression analysis reveals that curriculum content relevance significantly predicts entrepreneurial mindset ( $\beta = 0.682$ ,  $t = 17.956$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The  $R^2$  value of 0.465 indicates that curriculum content relevance accounts for 46.5% of the variance in entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students. The regression equation is:

$$\text{Entrepreneurial Mindset} = 1.487 + 0.608(\text{Curriculum Content Relevance})$$

This means that for every one-unit increase in curriculum content relevance perception, entrepreneurial mindset increases by 0.608 units.

**Research Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State

**Table 6:** Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r
Curriculum Content Relevance	384	2.70	0.65	0.682
Entrepreneurial Mindset	384	3.13	0.59	< 0.001

\*Correlation is significant at  $p < 0.01$  level (2-tailed)

Table 6 shows a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset ( $r = 0.682$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) which states that there is no significant relationship between curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State is accepted. This indicates that students who perceive their curriculum content as relevant tend to demonstrate higher levels of entrepreneurial mindset.

### Discussion

The finding revealed that students perceive curriculum content as moderately relevant (mean = 2.70) aligns with previous research indicating that while Nigerian educational policies emphasize relevance, implementation gaps persist. The lower score for experiential learning integration (2.51) is particularly noteworthy, as experiential learning has been identified as a critical mechanism for developing entrepreneurial competencies. This suggests that the NERDC's vision of shifting from "certificate-driven to one that nurtures creativity, productivity, and problem-solving" has not been fully realized at the classroom level in Osun State. Students demonstrated high overall entrepreneurial mindset (mean = 3.13), with opportunity recognition scoring highest (3.42). This finding is consistent with Salami (2019) research among Oyo State adolescents, which found significant entrepreneurial intention influenced by contextual factors. The relatively low risk-taking propensity score (2.98) may reflect cultural values that prioritize security and predictability, as well as the absence of structured opportunities for calculated risk-taking within the school environment. The strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.682$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between curriculum content relevance and entrepreneurial mindset provides empirical support for the theoretical framework. This finding corroborates the work of Ohadiugha, (2026) who found that curriculum development significantly

impacts entrepreneurship skills, and Saibu et al. (2024), who demonstrated that entrepreneurial-motivated approaches enhance both learning and self-reliance skills.

The 46.5% variance explained by curriculum content relevance ( $R^2 = 0.465$ ) shows that while curriculum relevance is a powerful predictor, other factors such as family environment, peer influence, self-efficacy, and proactive personality identified by Salami, (2019) also contribute to entrepreneurial mindset development.

### Conclusion

This study has established that curriculum content relevance is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial mindset among senior secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The strong positive relationship between these variables underscores the importance of curriculum design and implementation in shaping students' entrepreneurial dispositions. While students demonstrate moderate perceptions of curriculum relevance and high entrepreneurial mindset, the limited integration of experiential learning represents a missed opportunity for enhancing entrepreneurial competency development.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

The NERDC and Osun State Ministry of Education should revise the senior secondary curriculum to embed entrepreneurial competencies across all subjects, not only in stand-alone entrepreneurship courses. Subject-based entrepreneurship integration, as piloted in chemistry education, should be expanded to mathematics, sciences, arts, and vocational subjects.

Schools should be required to allocate specific time for experiential learning activities, including project-based assignments, business simulations, and community engagement projects. The PEIR (Prepare, Experience, Internalize, Reflect) model validated by Suyaman et al. (2026), provides an evidence-based framework for implementation.

Teachers must receive training on entrepreneurial pedagogy, including how to make curriculum

content relevant to students' local contexts and future aspirations. As the NERDC Executive Secretary emphasised, "the objectives of the new curriculum will not be achieved without effective teachers in the classroom".

Schools should establish partnerships with local businesses and entrepreneurs to provide mentorship opportunities, internships, and real-world problem-solving experiences for students.

Schools should create safe environments for calculated risk-taking, including business plan competitions, mini-enterprise projects, and innovation challenges that normalize failure as a learning process.

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