

A Sustainable Education System and the development of Entrepreneurial Skills among students in Zimbabwe

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Abstract: The purpose of the review was to establish the relationship between entrepreneurship skills development and a sustainable education system. The introduction of entrepreneurship skills development into the education system in Zimbabwe was meant to equip students with life skills. Currently, the education system focuses mainly on theoretical components, a thing that has caused high unemployment among school leavers. The study noted that the continued production of job-seekers instead of job-creators by schools, colleges and universities in Zimbabwe has affected the sustainability of the education system. This review established that entrepreneurship skills development and a sustainable education system are closely linked. The review noted that to government and parents, the purpose of sending children to school at high costs is to prepare them for life and if after education, school-leavers cannot be absorbed in the job market, it is a waste of time and resources. It was also a finding of this review that entrepreneurship training in schools, colleges and universities significantly lowers unemployment since it equips students with innovative skills to generate income by producing goods and services. To develop entrepreneurial skills among students, the review recommended that authorities should review the curriculum in schools, colleges and universities to make entrepreneurial training mandatory. Students as early as primary school should know that to eke a living, one must grab opportunities, utilise resources, through production of goods and services, penetrate the market, make money and that it is with such money that a person can meet the other basic needs.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, skills development, sustainable education system.

1. Introduction

Zimbabwe has the world's highest unemployment rate according to ILO (2012). The root causes of this are many but scholars among them Bhebhe, Bhebhe and Bhebhe (2016), Bhebhe, Nair & Sikwila (2015) have pointed at the education system which they view as not fit for purpose. The education system in Zimbabwe has been condemned for producing job-seekers instead of job creators. According to Bhebhe et al (2016), Zimbabwe's curriculum is too bookish and neither relates to real life nor the needs of industry. In attempting to address this problem, numerous interventions were proposed by Government, one of which is the introduction of entrepreneurship skills development in the education curriculum. This review sought to get deeper and review literature to see what role entrepreneurial training can play in solving the problem of achieving a sustainable education system by analysing the relationship between entrepreneurship skills development and a sustainable education system.

Entrepreneurship skills development is a strategy for addressing sustainability issues of education and training (Hermann & Bossle, 2020). Entrepreneurship skills development is considered as a weapon to address unemployment and a ladder to achieve the dreams of every single society to be financially independent, building individual prosperity, as well as improving society's welfare needs (Syam et al., 2018). Ekpe et al. (2015) found out that secondary school graduates fail to get employment because of low skills and low self-confidence which are required by industry since school-leavers have no industrial exposure. However, studies conducted by the Times

Commission (2022); Kunicina et al. (2019) and Lipinge et al. (2022) established that entrepreneurship skills development can lead to self-employment. A high school graduate's knowledge of academic subjects is insufficient in the current economic climate, and students are increasingly expected to possess talent and qualities that will help them find self-employment after graduation (Abu et al., 2022).

The goal of entrepreneurship skills development in students is to assist them in becoming self-sufficient so that when they graduate from high school, they can channel their creativity into creating something of their own in a of competition where unemployment has become the enemy number one (Joseph et al. 2020). However, despite entrepreneurship skills development being effective in other contexts, the effects of entrepreneurship skills development on the sustainability of the education system in Zimbabwe was yet to be established and this is the gap which this review sought to fill.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the review was to establish the relationship between entrepreneurship skills development and a sustainable education system in Zimbabwe. The review also sought to recommend a model for entrepreneurship skills development for a sustainable education system.

3. Materials and Methods

This was a review study and data was collected from secondary sources including articles, conference presentations, books, newspapers, theses, journals and other documents available in libraries and on the internet.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Entrepreneurship skills development

Reviewed literature revealed that entrepreneurship skills development in students is the training of learners so that when they graduate, they become job creators rather than job seekers (Hasan et al., 2017). A study by Ataman et al. (2018) and Lawal et al. (2018) noted that entrepreneurship skills development is a process that enhances knowledge and skills through structured training and institution building programmes whose aim is to increase the entrepreneurial base in order to speed up the pace at which new ventures are created which in turn creates employment and development of the economy. Entrepreneurship skills development focuses is on shared problems that occur in the community and in the education system. By focusing on shared problems, students are encouraged to explore creative solutions (Kirkley, 2017).

Entrepreneurship skills development should target developing entrepreneurial skills, technical skills and managerial skills (Kusmintarti et al., 2018). Figure 1 illustrates the point.

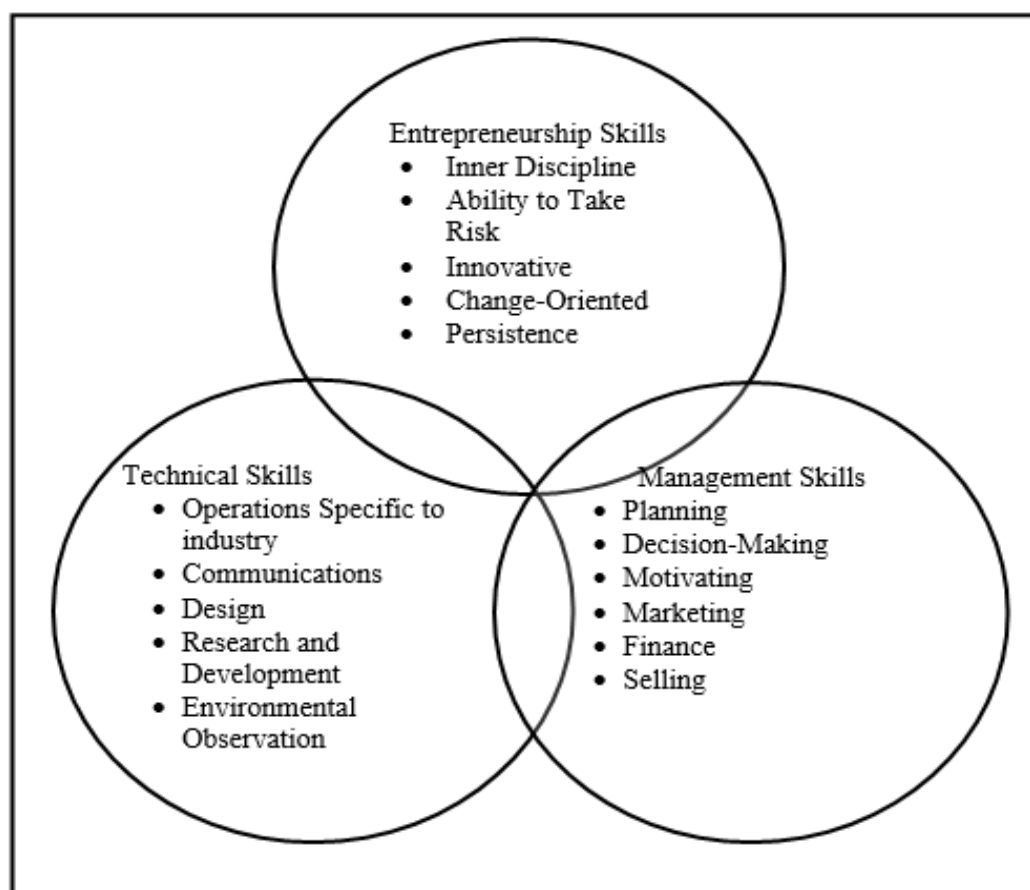


Figure 1: Set of entrepreneurial skills

Source: (Kusmintarti et al, 2018)

Tubey et al. (2018) concur with Kirkley (2017) that entrepreneurship skills development is meant to improve the quality of human lives by improving living standards and creating conducive environments for the growth of individuals' self-esteem, increasing people's independence to choose and by enlarging choice ranges. From the above definitions, entrepreneurship skills development is viewed as the enhancement of skills and knowledge of learners who want to be job creators while focusing on shared problems in the education system and the society to improve the quality of human lives and development of the economy through creativity and innovation.

While Ekpe et al. (2015) assert that the role of entrepreneurship skills development is to attend to the nation's overall productivity through developing wealth, reducing unemployment, fostering creativity and innovation. Entrepreneurial skills development leads to development of sustainable products and services and implementation of new projects that stand as solutions to environmental and social concerns. Strachan (2018) posits that it is crucial in preparing the youth for a world in which everything including employment patterns and practices will have changed. Andelic et al. (2017) also found out that entrepreneurship skills development has many benefits, including leading to the creation of jobs through the launch of new businesses or the growth of existing ones, as well as the increase of social wealth through the creation of new markets, new technologies, new industries, new institutions, new jobs and this leads to net increases in real productivity, increase in income and achievement of higher standards of living for the general public. Zhang (2020) posits that entrepreneurship skills development creates value through identification of opportunities and ideas and transforming them into financial, cultural and social value for others. Thus, in the process of creating value, learners are equipped with entrepreneurial mindsets so that they are able to cope with risks and uncertainties. However, entrepreneurship skills development and other efforts to improve entrepreneurial attitudes, intentions and actions among learners are hampered by lack of common understanding of educational objectives, methodology, resources and content to develop entrepreneurs (Strachan, 2018).

4.2 Sustainable Education system

Sustainability of an education system is ensuring that the education system meets the needs of the current students without compromising the needs of future generations. Therefore, a sustainable education system is useful today and in the future. It enables students who pass through the school curriculum to be able to use the skills obtained from it today and in the future. It is the cultivation of an entrepreneurial and innovative spirit among students and staff through institutional ethos and a fit-for-purpose curriculum where standard teaching and learning permits the use of skills, knowledge and competencies in eking a livelihood in order to survive in an upper middle-income economy as envisioned by Zimbabwe's Vision 2030. A sustainable education ensures that human, infrastructural and financial resources are gainfully utilised and renewed (Barnard et al., 2016). Sustainable education is also defined as an education system that offers long-lasting solutions to social, environmental, and economic problems and encourages students to learn how to improve their personal lives, in their schools, in their communities and on a global scale in order to instil survival skills (Ahamer, 2016). Den (2015) defines a sustainable education system as a system in which students' natural energy for learning is renewed.

In a context specific to Africa, Olutuase et al. (2020) proposed a model for stimulating entrepreneurship skills through entrepreneurship training. Figure 2 illustrates the model.

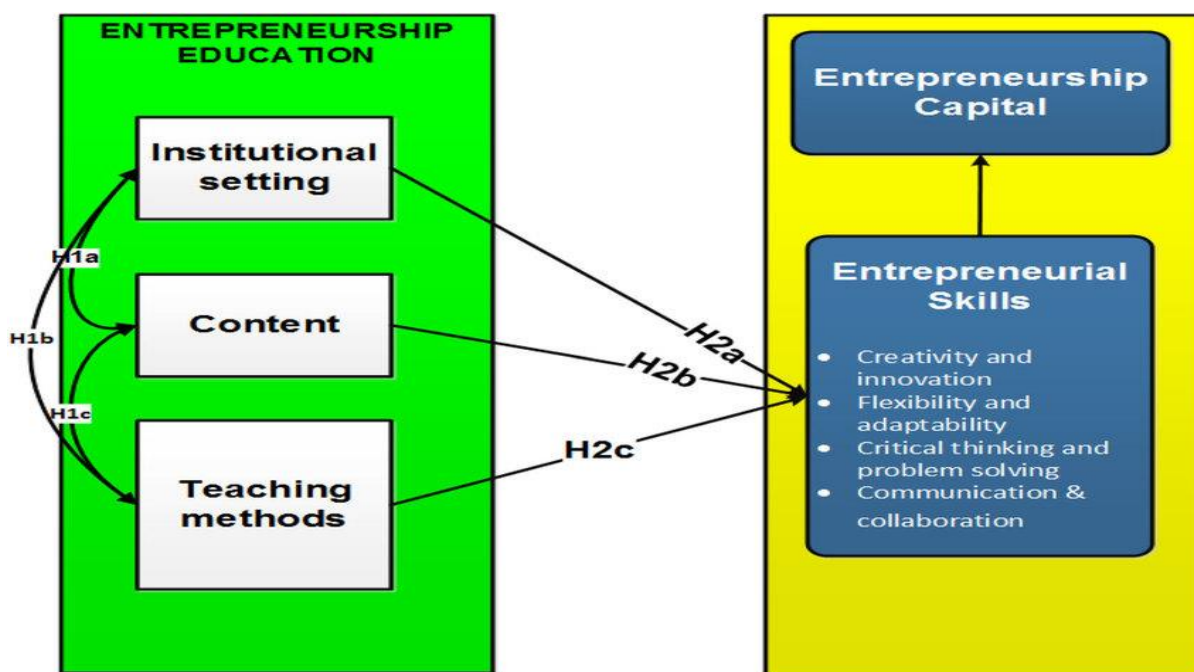


Figure 2: Model for stimulating entrepreneurial skills

Source: Olutuase, Brijlal & Yan (2020)

This study recommends the adoption of Olutuase et al. (2020)'s model of entrepreneurship education as illustrated above. Through training, education, and encouragement of innovation, one can cultivate entrepreneurial attributes in young people, such as entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and attitudes as cited by (Lv et al., 2021). Students are provided with foundational knowledge and are encouraged to think entrepreneurially through entrepreneurship training and education.

Brito et al. (2018) assert that for an organisation to be considered sustainable, it must be able to generate simultaneously social, economic and environmental development; establishing fair relationships with all stakeholders while seeking methods that promote good use of natural resources. Similarly, Birkin et al. (2009) assert that for an organisation or system, to be considered sustainable, two cases of sustainable development need to be addressed; that is the natural/ environmental case and the societal/social case. Barnard et al. (2016) argued that sustainability is not about ecology and the environment only, but it also refers to an organisation or a system's

ability to be maintained at a certain level or rate of performance that can be continued for an indefinite period. Therefore, entrepreneurship skills development is considered an instrument for sustainable future of individuals, systems and organisations.

According to Altinay & Wang (2011), the way that young people are educated from a young age has a critical influence in their development of characteristics usually associated with entrepreneurial behaviour. Ibrahim et al. (2016) posit that even if a person has entrepreneurial skills and a supportive environment, he or she is unlikely to engage in any entrepreneurial activities if they lack the essential traits of the entrepreneurial mind-set such as risk-taking, innovativeness and a proactive desire to thoroughly examine their surroundings before using their skill in a way that will lead to an entrepreneurial intention. There are very few studies according to Kurniawan et al. (2019) that have looked specifically at high school students and their entrepreneurial inclination because of the belief that high school students are still young to handle businesses in the same way as business owners or college students. Al-Mamary et al. (2022) noted that young learners ought to be provided with motivation and inspiration in order to foster creativity and facilitate the development of sufficient options for careers and came up with five characteristics that an entrepreneur must possess. According to Al-Mamary et al. (2022), risk-taking, proactiveness, creativeness, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness determine entrepreneurial behaviour and should be inculcated in all young learners as shown in Figure 3.

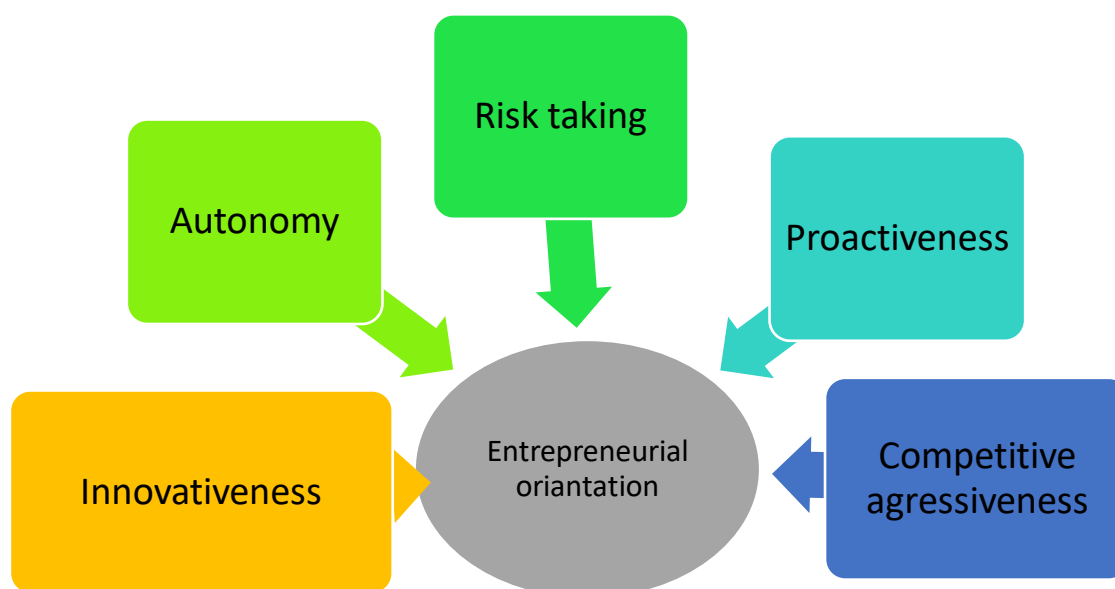


Figure 3: Entrepreneurship orientation
Source: Al-Mamary & Alshallaqi (2022).

According to Bartha et al. (2019), entrepreneurial orientation equips students with knowledge that is crucial for starting and running enterprises.

4.3 The effects of entrepreneurship skills development on education system sustainability

The analysis of literature indicates that there are vast evidence which supports that entrepreneurship skills development leads to employment through the creation of new businesses or the expansion of existing ones, which in turn creates wealth by generating new industries, new technologies, new jobs, new markets and an increase in income that results in achieving high standards of living (Diraditsile & Ntseane, 2022). Aledeiebi (2018) classified entrepreneurship skills development as the primary tool for reducing youth unemployment and generating wealth.

Literature reviewed indicates that entrepreneurship skills development plays a key role in the development of human capital. While Wardana et al. (2020) view entrepreneurship skills development as an investment in human capital to prepare students to start new businesses through experience integration, skills advancement and

knowledge creation. Jena (2020) accepts that profitability, entrepreneurial spirit, attitudes and chances of survival are all impacted by the development of entrepreneurial skills in learners.

Policy-makers realise that entrepreneurship skills development has an effect of achieving a good standard of living of society and the school graduates themselves (Diyoke, 2014). However, although entrepreneurship skills development has been recognised by policy-makers as a strategy that can enhance local, regional and national economies, it is also a vehicle for solving stubborn social problems that were yet to be addressed by the government or the private sector historically and as a workforce development strategy for expanding employment (Lyons et al., 2020).

In assessing the effects of entrepreneurship skills development, (Poi, 2022; Gwani et al., 2020; Galvao et al., 2017 & Gbadeyan et al., 2017) found out that there are factors that influence entrepreneurship skills development and the challenges that militate against the development of entrepreneurship skills in learners. Butkouskaya et al. (2020) claim that learners who have entrepreneurial intentions often give up from starting their own ventures due to some aggravating external and internal factors. The claim is supported by Maina (2013) who claims that some challenges militating against entrepreneurship skills development emanate from the government, parents or certain volatile external environmental forces. Kirkley (2017) asserts that these challenges can be overcome by strengthening ties between formal education, businesses and communities through entrepreneurship skills development. However, the question still arises as to whether entrepreneurship skills development can lead to the practice of entrepreneurial behaviours across all subject areas.

Barbosa et al. (2008) noted that for entrepreneurial skills development to be effective, it should use four key strategies which they called 'RAVE'. RAVE uses **R**esident entrepreneurs, **A**spiring entrepreneurs, **V**isiting entrepreneurial scholars and **E**ntrepreneurial advisors to develop entrepreneurial skills in students as shown in Figure 4.

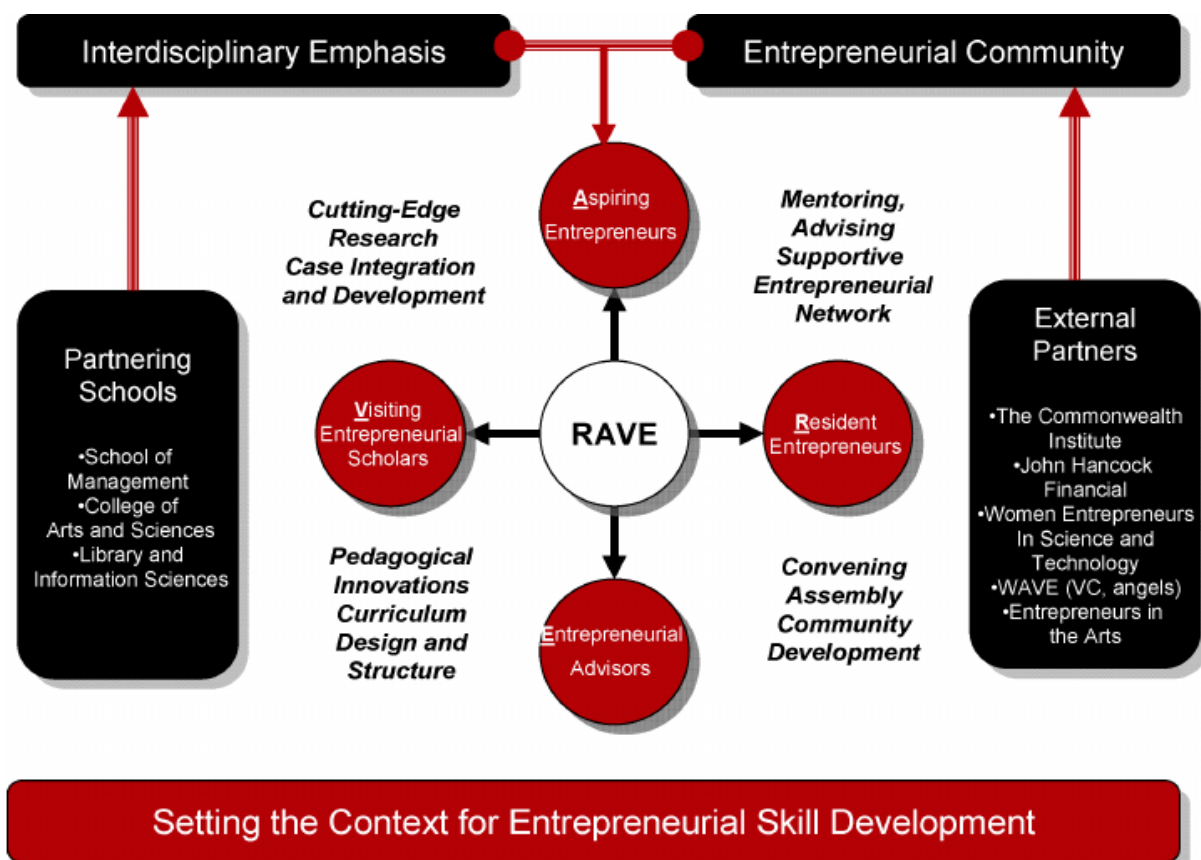


Figure 4: Entrepreneurial Skills Development
Source: Barbosa, Smith & Kickul (2008)

Mohammadali & Abdulkhaliq (2019) discovered that entrepreneurship skills development has an impact on economic development. The most significant effects identified were increased employment, increased innovation, upgraded technology, technical knowledge and it generated income at the community level, which may result in increased national wealth and economic growth. Abu & Abdulraheem (2022) also revealed that development of entrepreneurial skills is crucial for national development because it equips students with the knowledge, talents, beliefs, and behavioural patterns they need to be active entrepreneurs. Most interestingly, Anah & Asogwa (2017) investigated the effects of entrepreneurship skills development on economic development in the State of Enugu in Nigeria. The findings showed that entrepreneurship skills development creates job opportunities which in turn enhance the living standards of people. Gwani et al. (2020)'s study also indicated a significant relationship between entrepreneurship skills development and sustainable job creation.

Reviewed literature by Poi (2022) highlighted that entrepreneurial skills development can be used to enhance innovation in an organisation and can be used to translate entrepreneurial ideas into marketable business ventures. The development of entrepreneurial abilities fosters learners' creativity and improves their capacity to commercialize novel ideas, improve products and have good market opportunities. Ekpe et al. (2015) found out that entrepreneurship skills development was found to have positive effects on entrepreneurial activity and self-employment of learner graduates in Nigeria, France, Germany, Rome, Italy and Malaysia. A study conducted by Akhtar (2021) on the effects of entrepreneurial training for the human resource management of prisoners showed that entrepreneurial skills development affects self-efficacy leading to venture creation.

Literature reviewed from Edewor, Imhonopi & Amusan (2014) indicated a positive effect of entrepreneurship skills development on the civil society and a greater effect on the vulnerable sectors through job creation, product development and macroeconomic strengthening.

5. Conclusions

The major objective in this study was to establish the relationship between entrepreneurship skills development and a sustainable education system. Literature research led to the general conclusion that entrepreneurship skills development in secondary schools is a long-term strategy that ensures the long-term viability of the educational system.

It was also a finding of this review paper that entrepreneurship skills development does not happen in a vacuum. It is purposeful and it has to be caused. The review noted that entrepreneurship skills development is an investment. It requires planning, mentoring, incubation, awareness campaigns and business development workshops. Education which produces job-seekers is not sustainable in a country like Zimbabwe which has the highest unemployment rate in the world.

Literature reviewed revealed that entrepreneurship skills development can lead to the creation of wealth through generation of new ventures, creation of new markets, new technologies and new employment through generation of new businesses.

It is also effective in reducing unemployment as students leave the education system equipped with innovative skills to make money through production of goods and services. It also contributes to national development, through equipping students with the knowledge, skills and entrepreneurial behavioural which they need to be active entrepreneurs. The contribution of entrepreneurship skills development to national development, to society and to the education system shows a positive relationship. The review noted that to many parents and indeed many governments, sending children to school at high cost is to prepare them for life

Recommendations

The study recommends a new sustainable curriculum across the education system in Zimbabwe from kindergarten, primary, secondary school, colleges right up to universities which focuses on mainstreaming entrepreneurship in the curriculum to impart innovativeness, creativity and skills in the production of goods and services by students in order to create viable business ventures. The study also recommends mandatory entrepreneurial re-training and continuous staff development to teachers who were currently not equipped to

teach entrepreneurship.

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Appendices

List of Figures

Figure 1: Set of entrepreneurial skills

Figure 2: Model for stimulating entrepreneurial skills

Figure 3: Entrepreneurship orientation

Figure 4: Entrepreneurial Skills Development