

Analysis of Entrepreneurship Pedagogy and Students' Mindset towards Self Employment in Nigeria

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Abstract

The support from higher institutions to facilitate entrepreneurship development courses is at an alarming rate at all levels. Despite this support, the rate of unemployment among university graduates continues to increase daily. The study examined how entrepreneurial curricula in selected universities in Kwara State influence students' mindset on entrepreneurship. The study adopted a thematic analysis based on data collected from the in-depth interviews obtained from nine students across the selected universities in Kwara State. They concluded that students were engaged in industrial attachments, vocational skills, workshops, and group projects that greatly influenced students' mindsets toward entrepreneurial behaviours through skills acquisition and team building. The findings also revealed that the study has implications on strategy development for entrepreneurship development curricula of universities in Kwara State and students' goals. Therefore, it is recommended that the students' entrepreneurial mindset should be enhanced through career team building; the schools should encourage undergraduates to attend workshops, acquire vocational skills and also encourage the students on holiday jobs.

Keywords:

Entrepreneurship curriculum, Mindsets, Universities, Vocational skills

Introduction

It has become increasingly apparent that entrepreneurship plays a significant role in the socio-economic development of a society. Economically, entrepreneurship stimulates markets and promotes job creation through the formation of new businesses. History has shown that economic progress is advanced by practical entrepreneurial, and innovative people who can exploit opportunities and be willing to take risks. Today, Nigeria is inundated with challenges that can only be met if it is creative, well-educated, and has entrepreneurial citizens who, whatever their paces of life, have the mindset and inquisitiveness to think in novel ways. It is observed that so many qualified graduates are roaming around the country searching for jobs. Because the university educational system produces graduates without considering the economy, the needs of the people and the society or the curriculum content do not contain much entrepreneurial education, which entails self-reliance and self-employment.

Entrepreneurship development course is learning and training; it is an instrument for change and development. Education is the facilitator of every nation's socio-economic growth and development (Iyortsuun, Goyit, and Dakung (2020). The inability of graduates to contribute meaningfully to the nation's economic development by being self-employed informs entrepreneurship education in schools. The introduction of entrepreneurship education in higher institutions indicates its importance in economic empowerment and job creation in particular (Ediagbonya, 2013). Entrepreneurship development has been seen to stimulate job creation and growth, which results in more significant employment. Entrepreneurship development courses are necessary to encourage self-employment, job creation and new venture start-ups in the country.

The rate of graduate unemployment in Nigeria has persistently been increasing despite the vast endowment of the country with human and natural resources. However, graduate unemployment is not peculiar to Nigeria or developing nations; it is indeed a long-standing global phenomenon; hence, it has been common in many countries to find universities unable to secure jobs several years after graduation (Twumasi, 2013). The significant increase in the unemployment rate, particularly among young graduates and youths in Nigeria, constitutes one of the most critical problems. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2021), in the last quarter of 2020, Nigeria records 33.3%, 22.8%, and 42.5% for unemployment, underemployment, and youth unemployment/underemployment. This sees Nigeria unemployment surged to the second-highest on a global list of countries.

Consequently, unemployment is regarded as one of the major social and global economic problems which require immediate attention. Entrepreneurship is one way of reducing the level of unemployment. However, the level of entrepreneurship education is deficient in Nigerian universities. As a result, there is a need for entrepreneurship education programmes that are perceived as a veritable tool for human development and survival. Unemployment can cause social and economic crises in the country (Bige & Nihan 2011). Entrepreneurship education is essential among youth and university undergraduate in the university to alleviate the social and economic problems. According to Afolabi, Yusuf and Idowu (2014), of all the issues facing Nigeria in recent time, none is as virulent, persistent and agonising as the problems of high unemployment among Nigerian graduates.

The support from higher institutions to facilitate entrepreneurship development courses is at an alarming rate at all levels. Despite this support, the rate of unemployment among university graduate continues to increase daily. Inculcating entrepreneurship education in the university curriculum is perceived to be one of the strategies for improving graduates' entrepreneurial mindsets and skills (Iyortsuun, Goyit & Dakung, 2020). This effort is futile as most graduates still demand government and private jobs. Upon this premise, the federal government introduced entrepreneurship education through the National University Commission (NUC) in 2006 to be taught as a compulsory course in the university curriculum across the tiers of tertiary institutions in the country. This programme was perceived as a sure way of reducing the current unemployment challenge due to the government inability to absorb all the graduates from the nation's tertiary institutions (Ediagbonya, 2013). After ten years of implementation, this laudable educational policy, youth unemployment and other harmful vices are yet to abate (Iyortsuun *et al.*, 2020). Graduates from the universities are said to be unemployable, and where they are employed, the employers need to train and retrain them again before they are fully engaged in jobs.

On the other hand, where these graduates are employed without training, they appear unproductive (Gedeon & Valliere, 2018). These have been attributed to insufficient funding, space, equipment, tools, human resources and most importantly, irrelevant curricula and poor practical work experience. However, the study intends to determine the effect of the university curriculum on students' entrepreneurial mindset in tertiary institutions.

Literature Review

The term entrepreneurship can be defined as the process through which an entrepreneur takes risks to gather resources required to establish an enterprise through a product or a service available to meet the needs and wants of the society or an organisation. The term entrepreneurship is usually used in the business context. Adegboyega (2012) defines entrepreneurship as the willingness and ability of an individual or group to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and to be able to establish and run as an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities. There are various forms of entrepreneurship, and the most apparent form of it is starting new businesses, popularly referred to as a start-up company with numerous advantages. Entrepreneurship is all about changes which Salihu (2016) categorised into five fundamental types usually initiated by the entrepreneurs. They include; Initial expansion, subsequent expansion, factor innovations, production innovations and market innovations. According to Okpara (2007), entrepreneurship provides young people in universities with valuable life skills and tools to empower them to build sustainable and prosperous futures for themselves and their communities at large. Entrepreneurship is a means of bridging the gap between science or innovation and the marketplace through creating new enterprises and bringing new products and services to the market, thereby increasing national income.

Entrepreneurship Development Curriculum

According to Haase and Lautenschlager (2011), the entrepreneurship development curriculum is essential in developing individuals' entrepreneurial motivation, knowledge, and skills. According to Brown (2000), entrepreneurship education is designed to communicate and inculcate competencies, skills and values needed to recognise a business opportunity, organise and start a new business venture. Entrepreneurial education is focused on developing youth with passion and considerable talents. It aims to reduce the risk associated with entrepreneurship and guide the enterprise successfully through its initial stage to the maturity stage (Brown, 2000).

Torre (2015) also opined that entrepreneurship is the ability of individuals to undertake risk along with production factors to create goods and services. Kurya (2006), cited in Mohammed and Dandago (2014), has defined entrepreneurship education in narrower and broader terms. Entrepreneurship development curriculum refers to all activities aimed at fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, skills and attitudes, and covering a range of aspects, including creativity, start-up, growth, and innovation. Akudolu (2010) sees entrepreneurship development curriculum as acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitude to enable learners to apprehend life challenges in whatever form and take decisive steps to realise new business opportunities. Oduwaiye (2009), supported by Ooi, Selvarajah and Meyer (2011), described entrepreneurship development curriculum as the scope of lectures, curricula and programmes that attempt to provide students with the necessary entrepreneurial competencies, knowledge and skills, geared towards the pursuit of a career in entrepreneurship. UNESCO (2008) stated that entrepreneurship education is all kinds of experiences that give students the ability and vision of accessing and converting different types of opportunities. It goes beyond establishment. According to Mauchi et al. (2011), entrepreneurship education is defined as the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognise commercial opportunities and the knowledge, skills and attitude to act on them. Adebayo and Kolawole (2013) described entrepreneurship education as specialised training to the students or trainees to acquire skills, ideas, managerial abilities and capabilities for self-employment than employed for wage pay.

In a similar vein, Ekankumo and Kemebaradikumo (2011) stress that entrepreneurship development curriculum seeks to provide students (especially those in tertiary institutions) with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial studies in a variety of setting. This assertion shows that well-

implemented entrepreneurship education will climax in economic empowerment and development. Entrepreneurship development curriculum is an educational schema that provides students in higher institutions with knowledge, skills, and motivation to start-up small and medium scale businesses. In other words, it promotes innovation, introduces new products or services and market strategies that help the student become outstanding entrepreneurs. Kenton and Envin (2010) define entrepreneurship development curriculum as an educational discipline that helps prepare people, especially youths, to be responsible, creative, and innovative, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs who contribute to their communities' economic development and sustainability.

In other words, an entrepreneurship development curriculum is a learning programme that provides the discipline to an individual to assume responsibility and risk for a business operation to make a profit. Entrepreneurship education is defined as the process of using private initiative to convert a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing experience or enterprise with high potential (Gibson, 2001). Nwosu and Ohia (2009) perceived entrepreneurship development curriculum as the aspect of education which equips an individual and creates the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying knowledge and entrepreneurial skill acquired in school.

University Curriculum

A good curriculum is a foundation for any developmental projects in the educational system as it determines what should be learnt in addressing the aspiration of the learners and the need of society. In Encarta (2018), the university curriculum is the syllabus, subjects or courses taught at higher educational institutions of learning which offer approach beyond the higher school level. Curriculum content refers to what is taught in school; the subject matter consists of facts, concepts, ideas, knowledge within a particular subject. However, Dodesu and Bandulescu (2010) have also viewed university curriculum differently from Encarta (2018). The contents of any university curriculum should stimulate critical thinking in students and motivate the generation of feasible and viable business ideas. Colleges and universities provide necessary training and build entrepreneurial mindset on individuals wishing to enter the professional career and acquire knowledge to become self-reliant. The primary purpose of any university curriculum is to equip students with skills that would make them able to create wealth in the era of mass unemployment. Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) view that the success of a new curriculum depends mainly on how well those who have planned its development and implementation have perceived the needs of students. The study is being carried out to allow the students to select the most acceptable curriculum contents for entrepreneurship education from some curriculum contents.

Entrepreneurial Mindset

Entrepreneurial mindset refers to a specific state of mind which orientates human conduct towards entrepreneurial activities and outcomes. As much as an entrepreneurial mindset is essential for business success, it is also vital to understand the current level in each entrepreneurial community by identifying which factors are lacking that need to be improved to foster the success of entrepreneurs (Zaidatol & Keetanjaly, 2016). The above statement relates to the fact that business success in the new economy is merely not a function of relevant skills but requires people with entrepreneurial mindsets. Individuals with entrepreneurial mindsets are often drawn to opportunities, innovation and new value creation (Dweck, 2006). Entrepreneurship Education mindset is a learning process of developing learners' skills and mindset, which creates a pathway to transform creative ideas into entrepreneurial action.

Theoretical Review

Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour (TPB) was first postulated by Ajzen (1988). The approach emphasises that intention is determined by attitude towards behaviour, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. The theory of planned behaviour was derived from reasoned action (TRA) postulated by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980). Perceived behavioural control was employed to predict human behaviours that are not entirely under voluntary control. TRA was able to predict behaviour based on intentions

assuming that all behaviours are voluntary and under control. However, not all intentions translate into actual conduct, which informed the premise for the introduction of perceived behavioural control. (Ajzen, 2002). Perceived behavioural control asserts that control beliefs give rise to either perceived ease or difficulty in behaviour performance. This implies that intention is a direct determinant or antecedent of behaviour performance while perceived behavioural control, attitude and subjective norm are regarded as the antecedents of intention (Ajzen, 1991).

The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1988, 1991, 2002) has developed a standout amongst the most predominant and well known conceptual frameworks for the investigation of human activity and, specifically, the individual's intention to participate in different activities. TPB has a prominent place with intention models and has been consistently connected to the field of entrepreneurship, given validated research outcomes (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000). The focal point of the TPB is the individual's intention to carry out a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In essence, the purpose is best anticipated by attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control; hence, with regards to entrepreneurship education, it then suggests that participation in a programme can influence an individual's attitude, perceived behavioural control and subjective norm in the development of students' intention to create new businesses (Fayolle & Gailly, 2004). There has been no shortage of criticism towards the Theory of Planned Behavior.

The theory has been criticised for its exclusive focus on rational reasoning, excluding unconscious influences on behaviour (Sheeran, Gollwitzer & Bargh, 2013). They also suggest that individuals are most likely to engage in behaviours that they enjoy less, feel incapable of doing or do not intend to do seem implausible, and cast doubt on the data more than on the underlying theory. The theory assumes that a person has acquired the opportunities and resources to perform the desired behaviour, regardless of the intention. While it does consider normative influences, it still does not consider environmental or economic factors that may influence a person's choice to perform a behaviour (Sheeran, Gollwitzer & Bargh, 2013). The theory does not account for other variables that factor into behavioural intention and motivation, such as fear, threat, mood, or experience. The approach also assumes that behaviour results from a linear decision-making process and does not consider changing over time. Critics have argued that these models would benefit from a more transparent and explicit definition of behaviour control. It was suggested that adding the role of beliefs and moral and religious norms would help improve the predictive ability of the models.

In respects to the research work, the model shows that students entrepreneurial intentions are determined by the attitude of students towards an entrepreneurial career, their perception of the challenges associated with an entrepreneurial career (perceived behavioural control), and what individuals vital to them think about how successful they will be in pursuing an entrepreneurial career (subjective norm). Consequently, the development of entrepreneurial intentions translates into an expression of entrepreneurial behaviour or activities.

Empirical Review

Many authors have conducted a similar study on Entrepreneurship Education from all over the globe. However, this study brings some empirical studies. Richmell, Acheampong and Owusu (2018) explore the factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions among students in Ghana. The research was carried out by a survey method. The questionnaire was used to collect data from 731 undergraduate students pursuing the regular and part-time programme in a Ghanaian public university. Data were analysed using correlation and multiple regression analysis through SPSS. The study showed that six out of the 23 factors explored in the study significantly influenced student entrepreneurial intention. Students' exposure to other entrepreneurs and professional network is the most significant predictor of student entrepreneurial intentions, followed by dissatisfaction with previous job utilisation of better opportunity in the market predicted students entrepreneurial intention.

Faloye and Olatunji (2018) researched entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions among fresh graduates. The study's primary objective is to examine the critical determinants of entrepreneurship intentions and the link between entrepreneurship attitude orientations and business

ownership intentions among Nigeria's fresh graduates. This study utilised a survey research design. Data used for this study were collected using a questionnaire from 230 randomly selected National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members serving in Ondo State. Appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to analyse the data collected. This study showed that entrepreneurship education, ability to take the risk and the influence of family, friends and mentor were the significant determinants of entrepreneurial intentions. The study revealed that entrepreneurship education positively and significantly influences fresh graduates' business start-up intention. It was concluded that the establishment of more skills acquisition and innovation centres across Nigeria to equip the young graduates with the skills, knowledge and attitudes required to be self-reliant would assist in making them job creators rather than job seekers, and in the long term effect, graduates unemployment and criminal activities among Nigerian youths will be reduced.

Ebewo and Rugimbana (2017) researched effects of entrepreneurship education on students' entrepreneurial intentions: A case of Botswana. The research aimed to assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on university students' preferences towards entrepreneurship. A conceptual model supported by the theory of planned behaviour was adopted. Data were gathered from 343 final year students at the University of Botswana using a validated Entrepreneurship Intention Questionnaire. The results provide evidence that all three immediate antecedents of entrepreneurial intention, attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control (perceived entrepreneurial abilities) directly influence entrepreneurial choice. The implication is that the University Curriculum should be redesigned to stimulate an environment conducive to developing positive entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. Based on the above, it was recommended that entrepreneurship education subjects be offered as core subjects in the first and final years at the University of Botswana, and students' assessments should incorporate linking projects with small firms. The promotion of entrepreneurship policy in Botswana should increase the number of individuals considering business start-ups through more determined entrepreneurship education initiatives.

Sultan (2017) conducted a study to determine the entrepreneurial intention of undergraduate Agricultural students in Ethiopia, taking Jimma University College of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine as a study area. The descriptive and inferential design was employed in the study. The stratified sampling techniques were applied to select respondents and collect data; pretest self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 212 participants. Descriptive and inferential analysis such as mean and Spearman correlation were employed. The study found out that the entrepreneurial intention of under graduating agricultural students as students had a strong desire to pursue an entrepreneurial career. The majority of the respondents were ready to assume risk while pursuing an entrepreneurial career. However, the study result showed that infrastructure, premises and utility were not satisfactorily available to be self-employed.

Oguntimehin and Olaniyan (2017) investigated the relationship between students' exposure to Entrepreneurship Education and their Career Entrepreneurial Intentions in Ogun state-owned universities. Six hypotheses were generated for the study. The population comprised all final year undergraduates, with a sample of 609 students in the university. Three research instruments were used. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product- Moment Correlation Coefficient, T-test, and ANOVA. Findings revealed that Entrepreneurship Education significantly influences students' Entrepreneurial intentions.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive study adopting the survey and case study method using the deductive approach and relying on qualitative method standard in business management research. The qualitative method helps to solicit information on the perspective and thought of the students in the area of entrepreneurship development curriculum of universities in Kwara State and Students' mindset.

The population of this study involved the students of Kwara State University Malete, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin and the University of Ilorin, all in Kwara State.

Thematic Analysis of the Interview Responses

Figure 4.1 presented the thematic analysis of the study, based on data collected from the in-depth interviews conducted with nine students across the selected universities in Kwara State. The analysis presents answers to the research questions, which were explored through in-depth discussion. The thematic analysis sought to determine and extract students' perspectives on the entrepreneurship development curriculum and state of mind at universities in Kwara State. The interview responses were analysed thematically, where each theme answered each research question, the result anchored on the entrepreneurship development curriculum of universities in Kwara State and their goals. The study identified themes and sub-themes that described how and how curriculum development could affect student goals. The emerged conceptions are grouped into themes and sub-themes. Figure 4.1 visualises all the main themes and sub-themes from the perceptions of the selected students.

Theme 1: Entrepreneurship development curriculum of universities in Kwara State and students' entrepreneurial mindset.

Entrepreneurship development curriculum is a learning programme that provides the discipline to an individual to assume the responsibility and the risk for a taking decision on the career. According to Nwosu and Ohia (2009), entrepreneurship development curriculum is the aspect of education that equips an individual and creates the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying knowledge and entrepreneurial skill acquired in school. Entrepreneurial attitudes are built through team building and skills acquired during the university programme from the students' responses. The responses further showed that team building is developed through workshops and group projects, while skills acquisition is achieved through vocational skills and industrial attachments. This is represented in figure 4.2

Team building

The university curriculum emphasised team-building capacity among the students to improve their career goals. For instance, respondent kw1 said, *"the inclusion of workshops in the university curriculum had greatly increased the students' team-building capacity which helps to sharpen the entrepreneurial mindset"*. Similarly, hui3 corroborated the above submission when *"he said the schools are expected to organise workshops and encourage group assignments to enhance students' mindsets"*.

Skills Acquisition

The university curriculum emphasised the importance of practical skills acquisition through industrial attachments and vocational skills acquisition in holiday jobs. These were introduced to enhance the entrepreneurial mindset of the students in the university. Over the years, students' industrial attachments had been institutionalised to boost entrepreneurial mindset. This was explained when the students responded to the research questions of the study. For instance, respondent coded iln3 suggests that *"though not all the departments have institutionalised industrial attachment scheme, those of my friends that were able to undergo attachment said the scheme helped them a lot. Such things make us students have a positive entrepreneurial mindset,"* although respondent hui2 disagreed with this submission when he said *"most of this skills acquisition programmes are not really achieving their aims due to poor implementation of the curriculum"*.

Meanwhile, **iln1**, in her response, said, *"the lecturers encourage students to acquire practical skill the holiday jobs and enrolment in vocational skills acquisition programmes"*.

The evidence is mounting that at all level of entrepreneurial development curriculum of universities is geared towards educating the graduates while they are still in schools and sharpening their career goals (Olejnik & McKinney, 2013; Jiddah, 2016; Owusu-Ansah & Poku 2012). However, Patrick (2014) and Thresi and Hamadi (2013) investigated the reasons for creating new enterprises and the entrepreneurial characteristics of those responsible for the emergence of new firms. With the aid of analysis of variance, the study findings showed that three of the four perceptual components were significant: achievement needs, risk-taking, and autonomy, while self-confidence is non-significant in

determining the student's intention to start a business. Also, reviewed the work of Ijaz, Yasin and Zafar (2012), who examined cultural factors affecting entrepreneurial behaviour in Malaysia.

The study also reviewed Mkala and Wanjau (2013) work that carried out a survey of implementation of entrepreneurship education programme in technical training institutions in Kenya. The findings showed that teachers routinely use traditional teaching and assessment methods, and institution administrations do not provide sufficient training resources or support teachers to develop networks with entrepreneurship practitioners. Notably, the study reviewed Tarus, Kemboi, Okemwa and Otiso (2016) that examined the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among business undergraduate students and Nnadozie, Akanwa and Nnadozie (2013), who examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on the career aspirations of Nigerian para-professional librarians-in-training

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concluded that through skills acquisition and team building, students were engaged in industrial attachments, vocational skills, workshops, and group projects, which greatly influenced students' mindsets toward entrepreneurial behaviours. The findings also revealed that the study has implications on strategy development for entrepreneurship development curriculum of universities in Kwara State and students' goals. Because of the above results, the following recommendations are made:

- i. The students' entrepreneurial mindset should be enhanced through career team building; the schools should encourage undergraduates to attend workshops and acquire vocational skills. The schools should also encourage the students on holiday jobs and skills acquisition.
- ii. New venture creation is another important goal in the life of students. Students should be encouraged towards savings and also register their businesses.
- iii. University Curriculum should insist on Portfolio and investment analysis to enable the students' job creation skills.

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Figure

Figure 4. 1: Thematic representation of the study.
Source: Authors' Field Survey (2021)

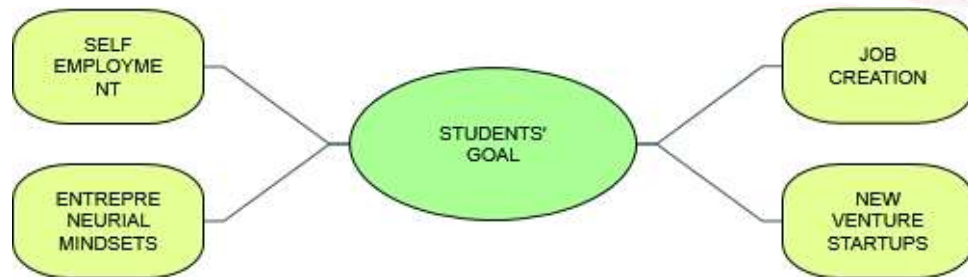


Figure 4.2: representation on theme 1: Entrepreneurial mindset.
Source Nvivo output (2021).

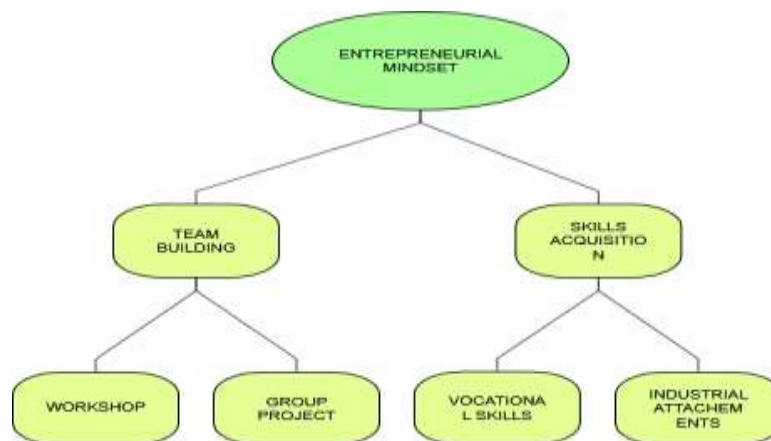


Figure 4.3: Thematic analysis of entrepreneurial mindset
Source Nvivo output (2021).

