Developing Digital Learning Operating Framework for Entrepreneurship Training in Nigerian Universities: a Blended Learning Approach

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Abstract

The growing interest in Blended Learning Framework *(BLF)* as emerging empirical area of study in entrepreneurial research is its concept that supports integration of different learning techniques driven by technology. There is a paucity of research in the literature to suggest the review of BLF and entrepreneurship training in most developing nations around the world. This article is aimed at exploring the potentials of BLF and traditional operating learning mix in the development of entrepreneurship teaching and learning in three selected universities in the southwest, Nigeria. Adopting a mixed method approach, seven hundred and one (701) quantitative data were collected through self-administered questionnaire from the undergraduate, postgraduate students and lecturers, while qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interview with nine (09) senior academic and curriculum development professionals from the selected universities. The data analysis results obtained using advanced Statistical Package for Social Sciences (*SPSS version 23)*, Total Content Analysis (*TCA)* and Critical Discourse Analysis *(CDA)* techniques revealed that entrepreneurship required adaptive learning methods driven by technology. Findings highlighted learning that occurs through multimedia, web-based, visual display and simulations could positively influence individual desirability for entrepreneurship. Hence, it was concluded that complementing traditional learning method with BLF could engage entrepreneurial learners more with real practices. Recommendations include the facilitation of curriculum transformation in a technology-supported learning environment for sustainable entrepreneurial leadership development in higher education institutions. This is in tandem with the assertion that embedding entrepreneurship and innovation, cross-disciplinary approach and interactive methods of teaching, all require new framework and paradigms.

Keywords: Orientation **.** Pedagogy **.** Strategy **.** Teaching approach **.** Technology**.**

Introduction

The exposure of youths to entrepreneurial training from higher education institutions is conceptualised as an alternative way of imparting employment initiatives on graduates before passing out of schools. Scholars attest to entrepreneurship as a factor influencing leadership development, youth empowerment and economic growth of many developed nations around the world (Musa and Adewale 2015; Zhou and Xu 2012). Entrepreneurship activities have multiplier effects, which include the springing up of small and medium scales enterprises. Such effects also include the creation of jobs and wealth for the nation as well as the eradication of poverty. The propensity to act in an entrepreneurial manner is not limited to certain individuals (Ali and Muhammad 2012, p.22). Different individuals will demonstrate a combination of abilities, skills and attributes. According to the aforementioned research scholars, such qualities can be learned, practiced and developed through flexible training methods.

This article is informed by the realisation of the fact that learning entrepreneurship requires different approaches because entrepreneurial students learn differently and they have different learning moments (Fredrick 2007; Mkala and Wanjau, 2013). It is also established that entrepreneurial learners would exhibit preference for experiential learning through active, practical, concrete, visual and reflective learning strategies. Isaacs, Visser, Friedrich and Brijlal (2007, p.619) also admits that hands-on activities within academic curriculum have the potential influence on individual variations and learning outcomes. The essence is to match instructions with learner's peculiarities. This is justified by the submission that the teaching and learning methods that are inspirational, flexible and adaptive to future needs could be the guidelines required for effective entrepreneurship training (Ali and Muhammad 2012).

Research scholars also established the fact that a modern entrepreneurship-directed training programme is designed around experiential learning, whereby new activities and thinking are produced through reflection (Maritz, Brown and Chich 2010). Such a training programme is designed around Blended Learning Framework (Frederick 2007, Maritz et al. 2010). Blended learning framework (BLF) involves integrating arrays of methods, reinforced by technology to conduct learning activities. Recent knowledge in entrepreneurial research about BLF effects in relations to entrepreneurship education and training motivates the research in Nigeria. Additionally, similar research relating to the review of BLF and digital learning supports is rare in the context of university-level entrepreneurship training in Nigerian.

Development of digital learning supports

Research shows that the development of digital operating system has influenced how youths play, learn and communicate (Accenture 2014). In a study conducted by Kaiser Family Foundation, it was revealed that young people in the America between the ages of 8 and 18 spent an average of 90 minutes/per day on text messaging, 82 minutes/day on voice communication, music and downloading (Lai, Khaddage, and Knezek 2013, p.415). These time estimates exclude approximately 90 minutes/day spent on the computer, social networks, and watching video streaming. In all, average young people have proved to actively be in use of digital and technological devices for learning. The learning model facilitated by technology is identified in the literature as beneficial in areas such as networking, collaborating and sharing of knowledge for educational

purposes (Ractham, Kaewkitipong and Firpo 2012). Similarly, continuous development of information and communication technology is noted to have transformed the way of living, working and learning (Voogt, Estrad, Dede and Mishra 2013, p.403). The implication is that the roles of technology in the new knowledge economy have led to reduced demand for normal routine production of workers while the demand for service and knowledge workers are on the increase in the world over. This is considerably relevant now when the production of creative and innovative workers at higher education institutions (HEIs) remains a gap in most developing countries like Nigerian (Aondoaseer 2013, p.87).

Investigations in this article reveal that through modern digital operating systems, the potential entrepreneurial leaders do not need to physically visit other locations to acquire skills. The idea is to bring filed activities to the classroom and classroom to the fields. Learning generated through digital support systems is observed to have the potential for discovery learning across different boundaries and cultures (Ferry and Kydd 2012). These include such approaches facilitated through technology-supported learning systems such as visual supports, internet search, telemedia, printmedia, simulation and business games. Similarly, other technology learning supports such as blogging, tweeting, virtual communication, the use of Facebook, Youtube, Edmodo, animations and simulations, are observed as significant in motivating entrepreneurship teaching and learning. This article is aimed at determining the influence of digital system and traditional face-to-face learning operated in a blended learning environment in the context of entrepreneurship education in tertiary level of education. It is on this note the article determines the potentials of digital system and traditional learning blend as a framework for university-level entrepreneurship training in Nigerian.

In the 21st Century knowledge economy, it appears that the purpose of teaching is to bring about desirable change in the lives of the learners. A study by Adunola (2011) supported the view that students' poor academic performances are strongly related to the application of teaching methods that are ineffective to the objectives of learning. As a result, the schools must be conversant with diverse training strategies and the desired learning objectives. By implication, the new knowledge economy demands the institutional framework that spells out the linkages between the adopted teaching methods, learning objective and the desire for entrepreneurship. A study earlier conducted by Peschl (2007, p.137) discovered that the more the focus on knowledge creation and development, the more demanding becomes the individual and institutional roles. By implication, a change in the development of a knowledge society is likely to be accompanied by its implications and challenges.

Statement of the problem

The responsibility for building skills in the learners is a complex task full of several challenges (Neck and Greene 2011, p.55). Entrepreneurship is more about creating new opportunities in an uncertain environment. An institutional template for conducting entrepreneurship studies according to Jackson (2015, p.10) remains a gap in most educational institutions. These understandings as formed in the literature informed the basis of gaps identified in this article. Firstly, there are diverse studies on entrepreneurship in Nigeria: (Aja-Okorie and Adali 2013; Alabi, Alanana and Bahal 2014; Ali and Muhammad 2012; Arogundade 2011; Uduak and Aniefiok 2011) among several others. While findings of these researchers are valid largely, there has been no known study, which investigates a framework for teaching and learning (T&L) entrepreneurship in the university in Nigeria. In essence, studies that focus on sub-field areas of the T&L framework in HEIs, especially

in South-West Nigeria, are scanty. This submission agrees with a study in Iran by Arasti, Flavarjani and Imanipour (2012; p.6-7), which also established limited studies in the sub-area of teaching and learning entrepreneurship research. Arasti et al. (2012) had earlier maintained that an integrated framework for T&L sub-field area of entrepreneurship requires further study.

Secondly, a number of existing studies in the literature found a positive impact of education and training framework on entrepreneurial learning outcomes (Bechard and Gregoire 2005; Dickson, Solomon, and Weaver 2008; Fayolle and Linan 2014; Martin and Lucu 2014; Maritz et al. 2010; Nabi and Linan 2011; Welsh, Tullar and Nematic 2016). With reference to Dickson et al. (2008), a positive correlation is reported between teaching entrepreneurship and the desire to participate in entrepreneurial activities. Welsh et al. (2016, p.127) recently found a marked relationship between entrepreneurial training and the chances of becoming practicing entrepreneurs. While these studies established a relationship between entrepreneurship education and perceived entrepreneurial behaviour of individuals, it is noteworthy that most of these studies are conducted in developed countries. No known study investigates the implication of a blended learning model in entrepreneurial research in a Nigerian university.

Research objectives

With specific reference to the higher education system in Nigeria, Akhuemonkhan, Raimi and Sofoluwe (2013; p.60) identify the problem of a mismatch between the operational curriculum, delivery approach, and learning outcomes. For instance, some studies (Musa and Adewale 2015, p.25; Olorundare and Kayode 2014, p.156) establish that university graduates lack basic entrepreneurial skills, exposures and supports for business start-up after graduation. The investigations conducted by (Akuegu and Nwi-ue 2016, p.322) further confirm that the framework for entrepreneurship training substantially remains academic. The orientation achievable through strict adherent to such formal or academic training practice tends to prepare students mindsets mainly for organisational employment. It is on these bases that two key research objectives are specifically determined in this article as follows:

- To determine the influence of methods of teaching and learning on individual entrepreneurial intentions in the university-level entrepreneurship training.
- To determine the relative weight of blended learning and traditional learning methods based on entrepreneurial learning outcome.

Literature review

The need for a new paradigm in the education system is attributed to digital evolution which has changed the way people learn, thereby creating a gap between how they are taught and what they need to learn to satisfy what the knowledge society requires (Lai, et al. 2013, p.416; Voogt, et al. 2013, p.403). This point of view, according to the study conducted by Mutemeri and Chetty (2013, p.72), explains the fact that inquiry-oriented learning culture has replaced the rigid culture of teaching, learning and assessment research. It is noted in this article, that it seems unlikely that learning framework is now in the era of overwhelming change between what is to know and how to know. The implication according to the literature is that the fissure between *what* to know and *how*

to know, revolves round the overall education curriculum design, programme formulation and implementation strategies (Anene and Imam 2011). The learners enhance their competencies through deep learning of the theory, process and practice of entrepreneurial activities. The blended school of thought believes that learners want less theory and prefer more experience (Maritz et al. 2010). They prefer evaluation by judgment through direct feedback. Corbett (2005, p.489) summarised the literature on how entrepreneurs learn and how their different modes of learning influence opportunity recognition and exploitation.

Scholars in the field of entrepreneurship seem to agree with that fact that students need exposure to practice, strong practical orientation, with focus on real-life problems, that integrates theory (Penaluna, Coates, and Penaluna 2010). For instance, in an article published in The Economist cited in Kleeman (2007) based on research by Deslauriers at the University of British Columbia, a positive significant relationship was found to exist between innovative teaching practices and students' learning outcomes. In an experiment conducted on 850 engineering students of the University of British Columbia, the students were divided into two groups. The two groups participated in a traditional-led class for eleven weeks. At the end of week twelve, the group was divided into two with one group continuing with the traditional class while the second group shifted to practical-based classes. The two groups were thereafter subjected to voluntary examining. The results displayed an average of 42% in favour of the traditional-led class group as against 74% average in the action-based class. From the results of the result of the experiment, students who learned through practical training performed better than theoretical class.

Blending formal and informal learning experiences in entrepreneurship education

Recent knowledge provides that practice or activity learning pedagogy have the potential to enhance intentionality. For instance, Maritz et al. (2010) explain that there are certain psychological traits that are learnable through non-traditional ways including, creativity, initiative, tolerance, passion and risk tolerance. This is what the author described as teaching psychological trait through emerging technologically driven learning model' to achieve desired entrepreneurial learning outcome. In Honig (2004), hands-on activities are relevant as experimental pedagogical methods in learning entrepreneurship for sustainable development. This, Colin and Jack (2004, p.420) support that the combination of innovative teaching approaches with the long-established traditional model of training would provide students with stronger competence and experience. The more elastic the classroom instruction methodology in accommodating all interactions and collaborations among stakeholders, the healthier the quality of the entrepreneurship studies.

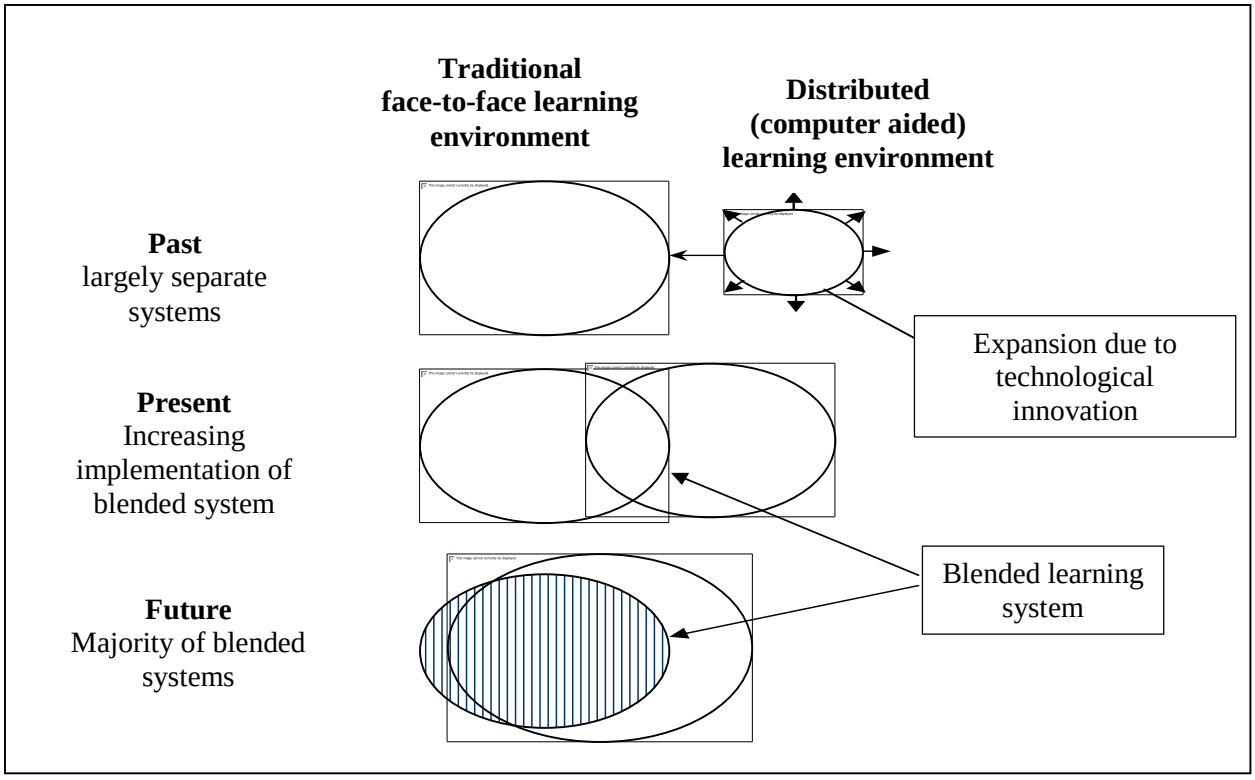

Fig. 1 Convergence of traditional learning and digital learning environment

Source: Graham (2006)

Fig. 1 depicts the level of growth achievable through the convergence of traditional face-to-face learning approach and digital technologies to provide blended learning. According to Graham (2006, p.6), the intersection of the two archetypes (traditional learning environment and distributed computer-mediated environment), provide growth in a distributive learning environment where blended learning system emerges. The integration of digital technology and traditional learning method (TLM) mix is assumed could increase the encroachment into another institutional territory, which could have been denied if the system is only one-way. The implication, therefore, is that the rapid development of digital technologies has brought innovation into how learning occurs in a distributive learning environment in the 21st Century (Lai et al. 2013, p.416; Voogt et al. 2013, p.403; Wahid, Ibrahim and Hashim 2016, p.85). This is also justified by Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which provided different learning approaches for the optimum development of the students' entrepreneurial skills achievable through a combination of knowing and doing learning techniques. Esmi, Marzoughi, and Torkzadeh (2015) also supported that both teachers and learners strongly favour experiential teaching methods relevantly applicable to entrepreneurship studies. Such model is further explained as BLF in the context of university-level entrepreneurship training.

The trend world over suggests increasing focus on facilitating learning through technology-supported collaboration and interactions (Mutemeri and Chetty 2013, p.72; Tsordia and Papadimituion 2015, p.24). This includes visual communities, instant messaging and blogging (Graham 2006). Distributive learning environment increases when digital technology and face-to-

face learning model are simultaneously created through the components of the blended learning system.

Fig 1 the components of BLF: face-to-face learning in a computer-based learning environment, producing online learning mix internet-based and web-based supported learning

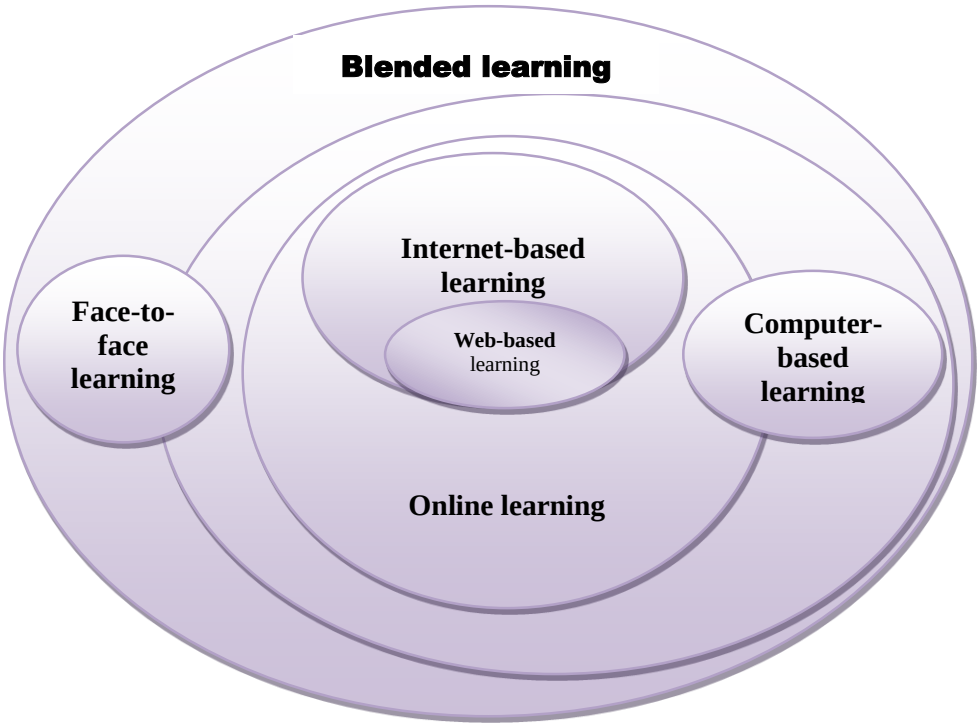

Fig. 2 The components blended learning framework

Source: Hadjerrouit (2008)

The pedagogy in Fig. 2 describes the components of blended learning in a learning cycle. Blended learning combines the use of technology and face-to-face in a network-based setting (Frederick 2007). This composition is in conformity with Hadjerrouit ('s 2008, p.181) study which opines that technology-supported pedagogy by learning theory, has received more attention in the literature as an antidote to addressing learning problem. BLF is further explained in learning theories from cognitivist, constructivist and socially situated learning theory perspectives. BTF, therefore, engages effective attainment of learning objectives through a combination of right learning technologies, to match the right personal learning style, to transfer right skills, to the right person and at the right time (Ginns and Ellis 2007, p.55-56)**.** The blended learning approach involves the combination of educational interactions and interventions. Embedded in this concept fundamental principles which include: adapting action-oriented methods of delivery to the teaching and learning objectives; accepting that not only are there many different styles of learning but that entrepreneurship learners, in particular, prefer active, concrete and experiential teaching modalities.

Research methods

Most studies in entrepreneurship education and training research adopt the use of either quantitative or qualitative research approach (Pihie and Bagheri 2014; Esmi et al. 2015; Kuttim, Kallaste, Venesaar and Kiis 2014; Khuong and An 2016). Similarly, many of these studies engage the captive population of either students or lecturers as study samples (Kuhiim et al. 2014; Pihie and Bagheri 2014).This article adopted mixed method strategies to seek to understand to an array of learning strategies and the preference as a conceptual framework. Creswell (2014, p.217) describes mixed-method as a collection of quantitative and qualitative data, as relevant in social and behavioural research with greater significance in elements of educational policy which allows data triangulation. Data triangulation is the combinations of multiple methods in the study of similar phenomenon, to address identified research problems (Hussein 2009, p.3). Recent knowledge among which is Adunuola (2011, p.7) identifies both the lecturers and students' insights as significant in determining acceptable learning framework. The implication is that the teaching and learning methods must be suitable not only for the students but also to the lecturers. The implication according to Ganyanpful (2013, p.33) is that "the bias involving the lecturers selecting the methods in which they possess monopoly knowledge should be avoided".

Consequently, a self-administered questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents composed of *312* full-time undergraduate students, *131* postgraduate students and *222* lecturers of three selected universities in South-West, Nigeria. Similarly, an in-depth interview was also conducted with *09* members of the academic planning and curriculum professionals selected randomly from the captive population of *36* members in the universities. Gill and Johnson (2010, p.127) admit that random sampling is a probability in nature, which ensures even representation of the study population. The quantitative data was analysed using the software Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The SPSS was adopted because it is comprehensive statistical software that is appropriate for analysing survey data in social sciences, market, health and educational research (Muijs 2012, p.78). The qualitative data in this article is coded and analysed using thematic content analysis (TCA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) techniques. Boyatzis (1998) explains the use of TCA as encoding the interview responses into relevant themes and merge the information that is relevant to each theme. This technique examines words or phrases in the data collected for a study. Shaw and Bailey (2009, p.143) narrate the understanding of CDA to include " a critical perspective geared towards examining the subtle ways of which unequal power relations are maintained and reproduced through the use of language".

Presentation and discussion of findings

The results of the analyses (quantitative and qualitative) data are discussed under two broad research questions intended to address the research objectives considered in this article. The questions and data analysis are discussed as follows:

- To what extent do methods of teaching and learning influence individual intentions for entrepreneurship in the university-level entrepreneurship training?
- What learning outcomes are associated with the blended learning model compare to the traditional learning method in the university-level entrepreneurship training?

Determining the extent teaching and learning methods influence entrepreneurial intentions

Parts of the findings demonstrated the influence of teaching and learning approaches on perceived desirability for entrepreneurship. The presentations under this sub-heading analyse the first objective intended to determine teaching methods (cognitive and non-cognitive) as well as methods of assessment under the university-level training in entrepreneurship. The presentations in table 2 contain the participants' opinions regarding (formal and informal) model of learning including the significance on the individual intention for entrepreneurship as follows:

Table 2: Methods used for teaching and learning entrepreneurship

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Total	Mean	SD
	(1) n (%)	(2) n(%)	(3) n(%)	(4) n(%)	(5) n(%)	(6) n(%)			
Face-to-face teaching used	41 (6.2)	28 (4.2)	22 (3.3)	68 (10.3)	299 (45.3)	202 (30.7)	660	4.76	1.37
Conducted through theoretical classes	37 (5.7)	69 (10.6)	36 (5.5)	116 (17.7)	273 (41.7)	123 (18.8)	654	4.36	1.43
Involves practical classes	43 (6.6)	70 (10.7)	34 (5.2)	136 (20.7)	214 (32.6)	159 (24.2)	656	4.35	1.50
Involves more theory than practical work	41 (6.3)	71 (10.8)	70 (10.7)	115 (17.5)	217 (33.1)	142 (21.6)	656	4.25	1.50
Includes learning from experienced entrepreneurs and other stakeholders	39 (5.9)	60 (9.1)	58 (8.8)	144 (21.9)	241 (36.6)	116 (17.6)	658	4.27	1.41
Assessment area includes self-practice, regulation & efficacy	35 (5.3)	64 (9.7)	49 (7.4)	140 (21.1)	249 (37.7)	123 (18.6)	660	4.32	1.40

The results in table 2 reveal that 30.7% of the participants strongly agreed, 45.3% agreed and 10.3% slightly agreed that face-to-face methods were used for teaching entrepreneurship. The result indicated that about 86% of the participants opined that face-to-face method of teaching was used in the universities. About 18.8% strongly agreed, 41.7% agreed while 17.7% slightly agreed

that entrepreneurship was taught through the conduct of theoretical classes. As a result, about 78.2% agreed that entrepreneurship was taught through theoretical classes with an average rating of 4.36 (SD=1.43). About 78% of the respondents agreed that teaching of entrepreneurship involved practical classes (mean=4.35, SD=1.50), 72.2% agreed that it involved more theory than practical work (mean=4.25, SD=1.50). Similarly, 76.1% agreed that it included learning from experienced entrepreneurs and other stakeholders (mean=4.27, SD=1.41) while about 76.4% agreed that assessment area included self-practice, self-regulation and efficacy with a mean and standard deviation of 4.32 and 1.40 respectively.

The findings established the statistical relationship between teaching, learning and assessment methods. Further investigations revealed that the adopted learning approaches influence attitude, knowledge and skills. The implication is that intention to engage in entrepreneurship activities is positively related to the level of orientation available through the framework for learning. Similarly, the results obtained from qualitative data also established that entrepreneurship offers capacity training towards influencing human capital development. The results of an in-depth interview on whether or not methods used to teach and learn entrepreneurship can influence the level of knowledge and skills students could acquire revealed unanimous opinions that the methods adopted for conducting teaching in entrepreneurship could determine the extent of learning. For instance, some of the respondents who participated in the results of the in-depth interview affirmed thus:

> *"The kind of method used to conduct entrepreneurship classes can influence the motive of students' entrepreneurial activities. The university tries to include lectures and practical exposure of students to various vocations like shoemaking, catering services, tailoring, etc. The theoretical classes give information related to the skills and how to write effective business plans."*
>
> *(Male, Professor, Director of Entrepreneurship Development Centre)*
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> .
>
> *"Theory must be supplemented with practice. You must acquire skills through theory and practice. We believe once you are provided with these tools you can now create employment for yourself and others. The methods can influence what the students learn and to become practicing entrepreneurs after graduation", (Male, Associate Professor, Entrepreneurship and Management Technology Department).*

The academic professionals also explained that the universities are making efforts at exposing students to both learning the theories and other practical work-related activities. The results of qualitative data analysis provided sufficient ground that affirmed entrepreneurial learners' preference for concrete, practical, visual and reflective learning methods. They are tides to experientialism needed for skills acquisition for comparative analysis. The academic planning professionals also opined that using techniques adaptable to the immediate environment and inclusive of practitioners are the ideal framework university-level entrepreneurship training.

Further analysis of the quantitative data explained the relationship between entrepreneurial training and individual intention. Pearson's correlation coefficients were used at the bivariate level

to determine the relationship that exists between each of the methods and each entrepreneurial intention (preference for employment with government or private company rather than entrepreneurship; preference for a government or private job first before moving into entrepreneurship; and preferring to combine government or private job with entrepreneurship) which were the dependent variables. Parts of analysis of the findings of this article also established a significant positive correlation between the use more of formal or TLM and the intention to seek employment with Government or firms rather than setting up of one's own business ($r = 0.151$, $p<.0005$). The results revealed an agreement between the lecturers and the students that the traditional teaching approach is used to conduct entrepreneurship classes and that such practice is closely associated with an agreement that graduates would rather seek employment with government or private firms as against willingness for entrepreneurial action. The results of the multivariate analysis further showed the influence of delivery methods and perceived entrepreneurial desirability/intention (choice of employment) presented in table 3 as follows:

Table 3: Correlation between teaching methods and entrepreneurial intentions

SN		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Prefer government/private job to entrepreneurship								
2	Prefer government /private job before moving into entrepreneurship	.382**							
3	Prefer combining government/private job with entrepreneurship	.136**	.360**						
4	Face-to-face teaching	.142**	.176**	.100**					
5	Theoretical classes	.115**	.177**	.164**	.422**				
6	Practical classes	0.048	.178**	.196**	.186**	0.064			
7	More theory than practical work	.189**	.166**	.124**	.231**	.382**	-.119**		
8	Learning from experienced entrepreneurs and other stakeholders	0.046	.137**	.147**	.161**	0.044	.515**	-0.066	
9	Assessment of student self-practice, regulation & efficacy, etc.	0.004	.117**	.170**	0.069	0.009	.552**	-0.031	.587**

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

The results of the bivariate analysis in table 3 show that graduates' preference for employment with the government or private company to entrepreneurship is significantly related to use of face-to-face teaching ($r=0.142$, $p<0.01$), theoretical classes ($r=0.115$, $p<0.01$) and more theory than practical work ($r=0.189$, $p<0.01$). This implies that using the face-to-face method, theoretical classes and more theory than practical work in teaching entrepreneurship tends to tie graduates' entrepreneurial intentions towards seeking government or private jobs rather than embarking on their own business venture. On the other hand, graduates' preference for employment with the government or private company before moving into entrepreneurship was significantly and positively associated with face-to-face teaching ($r=0.176$, $p<0.01$), theoretical classes ($r=0.177$,

p<0.01), practical classes (r=0.178, p<0.01). The use of more theory than practical work (r=0.166, p<0.01), learning from experienced entrepreneurs and other stakeholders (r=0.137, p<0.01) and assessment of student self-practice, regulation and efficacy (r=0.117, p<0.01) influenced individual intention for entrepreneurship.

Relying mostly on traditional lecturing methods (TLM) for entrepreneurship training and development would only result in knowledge of theories because the methods lack the basic initiative for the application (Smith and Paton 2011). The results of this finding established that level of skills achievable would be marginal, when the model of learning substantially remains formal or TLM. Such findings as obtained in this article aligns with similar research conducted under the European university enterprise by Gibeus et al. (2006) cited in Jackson (2015, p.4). Gibeus et al.'s study compared the performances of the three approaches adopted for entrepreneurship training programmes between formal teaching programme, informal or active enterprise training activities and the control group, who neither had the former or the latter exposure. The result of the investigation showed the higher positive impact on the entrepreneurial intention of the students who learned through the active or non-formal model (seminars, simulation, group project) over the formal or traditional model (lectures and case studies) as well as the other group who were not exposed. Gibeus et al. concluded that conducting entrepreneurship training through formal or TLM did not necessarily lead to the formation of business enterprises. The methods can influence what the students learn to become practicing entrepreneurs after graduation.

From the theoretical perspectives, the summation of the findings (quantitative and qualitative) suggested that a complementary linkage between learning through cognitive and non-cognitive activities could ignite intention for entrepreneurship. The results are in agreement with the earlier studies that what students are taught and how they are taught have a significant influence on what they learn in entrepreneurship (Esmi et al. 2015). Similar findings are in agreement with other studies (Pihie and Bagheri 2011), which concluded that post-study participation in entrepreneurial activities and ability to practice, are largely influenced by training and assessment methods. As a result, part of the findings in this article was that both formal and informal methods of teaching have significant influence at various stages of learning. The implication is that learning that occurs through learning the theories and practical activities have a substantial influence on the learning outcomes. For example, the issue of visual technique adaptable to our environment from where the university operates is deemed significant in an entrepreneurship education and training concept. Training methods that take the form of practical, visual, reflective and concrete activities could influence entrepreneurial desirability in the context of university-level training in entrepreneurship. These understandings align with a compendium presented by Gibbs, Hannon, Price and Robertson (2013, p.24) of forty-four (44) motivational strategies to entrepreneurial intentions.

Determining blended learning framework compare to the traditional learning method influence.

The analyses in this section address research question two of this article, which sought to assess the relative weight blended approach compared with the TLM in the context of university-level entrepreneurship training in the three randomly selected universities. The analysis in table 4 presents the weights of blended learning methods as follows:

Table 4: Traditional and blended methods mix in entrepreneurship training

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total	Mean	SD
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)			
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)			
Lectures	12 (1.8)	22 (3.3)	74 (11.2)	189 (28.5)	365 (55.2)	662	4.323	0.933
Chalk and talk	77 (11.8)	94 (14.5)	161 (24.8)	187 (28.8)	129 (19.5)	650	3.297	1.287
Field works/tours	92 (13.9)	154 (23.3)	207 (31.3)	128 (19.4)	78 (11.8)	661	2.912	1.222
Discussions	12 (1.8)	46 (7.0)	167 (25.3)	258 (39.0)	178 (26.9)	661	3.829	0.977
Role-play	72 (11.1)	157 (24.2)	206 (31.7)	149 (23.0)	62 (9.6)	649	2.945	1.160
Use of project/multimedia facilities	73 (11.1)	114 (17.3)	197 (29.9)	159 (24.2)	113 (17.2)	658	3.184	1.248
Business simulations/games	147(22.5)	214 (32.8)	169 (25.9)	86 (13.2)	36 (5.5)	652	2.463	1.139
Internship	95 (14.5)	140 (21.4)	172 (26.3)	134 (20.5)	112 (17.2)	653	3.048	1.308
Mentoring/coaching	68 (10.3)	149 (22.6)	193 (29.3)	162 (24.6)	86 (13.1)	658	3.076	1.189
Conferences and seminars	61 (9.3)	99 (15.1)	245 (37.3)	159 (24.2)	92 (14.1)	657	3.183	1.146
Self-practice/regulation	40 (6.1)	129 (19.7)	222 (33.9)	145 (22.1)	118 (18.0)	655	3.261	1.160
On-line/e-learning	108 (16.4)	134 (20.3)	184 (27.9)	152 (23.1)	81 (12.3)	659	2.950	1.266
Business Networking	119 (18.2)	188 (28.8)	192 (29.4)	106 (16.2)	47 (7.2)	653	2.649	1.166
ICT/Internet search	68 (10.3)	118 (17.9)	197 (29.9)	151 (22.9)	125 (19.0)	659	3.225	1.241
Blended learning	87 (13.3)	150 (22.9)	202 (30.8)	136 (20.8)	78 (12.0)	655	2.944	1.216

The results in table 4 depict the level of use of traditional and blended methods in the university-level entrepreneurship training in HEIs. The analyses report the finding relating to the weights of blended learning combining the regular lecturing model effects on entrepreneurial desirability and intentions of the learning group. The results of the analyses establish the significant weights indicating the effectiveness of the blended entrepreneurial orientation factors including field activities, internship, mentoring, self-practices, Networking through technology supports as complementary to lectures, case studies, discussions and literature reviews. The result reveals that 83.7% of the study participants agreed that lectures were often or always being used to teach entrepreneurship while 11.2% opined that it was seldom used. This level of use was followed by use of discussions method (69.5% and 25.3% respectively); the chalk and talk method (48.3% and 24.8% respectively), and information and communication technology (ICT) including the internet search (41.9% and 29.9% respectively). The use of projector multimedia facilities was (41.4% and 29.9% respectively) and self-practice/regulation (40.1% and 33.9% respectively). Less than 40% of the participants agreed that other methods were often or always used for teaching entrepreneurship.

For instance, 31.2% agreed that fieldwork/tours were often or always used while 31.3% opined that it was seldom used. Similarly, about 32.6% believed that role-play was often or always used while 31.7% agreed to its seldom use; 37.7% agreed that each of internship and mentoring/coaching was often or always used. Also, about 26.3% and 29.3% respectively opted for the occasional use of the methods; 38.3% of the participant was of the view that conferences and seminars were often or always used whereas 37.3% agreed to use the method seldom. Use of online/e-learning, business networking and blended learning often or always were supported by 35.4%, 23.4% and 32.8% of the participants respectively while 27.9%, 29.4% and 30.8% respectively agreed that the methods were seldom used. This result has found and reported that traditional methods were more often used for entrepreneurship training in HEIs whereas, blended methods was accorded lesser attention.

The investigation was due to the recognition of the blended learning method as an intervention in entrepreneurship education and training in the recent time. The significance of the blended learning method relates to its arrays of delivery approaches that impart skills required for entrepreneurial practices. The essence is to determine the attitudes of the respondents to use of technology and the significance in the university-level entrepreneurship training as presented in table 5 as follows:

Table 5: Use of technology facilities

	Strongly disa	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Total		
	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	n(%)	N=665	Mean	SD
I have not experienced teaching and learning with the use of computer technology at my university	299 (45.1)	156 (23.5)	56 (8.4)	53 (8.0)	62 (9.3)	37 (5.6)	663	2.297	1.583
There has been some attempt to use multimedia and ICT facilities to aid teaching and learning in my classes, but help is still required on a regular basis	67 (10.1)	123 (18.6)	40 (6.0)	133 (20.1)	214 (32.3)	86 (13.0)	663	3.848	1.592
Students are engaged in running small businesses and participating in research projects on an existing business to boost entrepreneurial awareness before graduation.	61 (9.2)	85 (12.9)	92 (13.9)	141 (21.4)	204 (30.9)	77 (11.7)	660	3.868	1.499
Digital portfolios facilities are used in the class to make teaching and learning more comfortable for students	80 (12.1)	134 (20.3)	65 (9.8)	141 (21.4)	177 (26.8)	62 (9.4)	660	3.587	1.576
The use of a wide variety of e-learning and visual display facilities forms part of teaching and learning entrepreneurship at my university	62 (9.4)	123 (18.6)	72 (10.9)	149 (22.5)	205 (30.9)	51 (7.7)	663	3.702	1.492
Using ICT methodology is/would be more suitable for teaching and learning entrepreneurship courses at my university	22 (3.3)	29 (4.4)	41 (6.2)	120 (18.1)	300 (45.3)	150 (22.7)	662	4.657	1.211
Experiential teaching and learning approaches will have a greater impact on the students' decision to become an entrepreneur than reading activities.	15 (2.3)	20 (3.0)	23 (3.5)	81 (12.2)	310 (46.8)	214 (32.3)	663	4.950	1.103
High impact activities will be positively related to the decision to become an entrepreneur.	11 (1.7)	22 (3.3)	21 (3.2)	96 (14.5)	330 (49.9)	181 (27.4)	661	4.899	1.050
Effective teaching and learning entrepreneurship could be achieved when attachment, internship and consulting assignments are included in the curriculum	12 (1.8)	18 (2.7)	18 (2.7)	54 (8.1)	266 (40.1)	295 (44.5)	663	5.155	1.071

The result in table 5, shows the level of use of technology facilities in teaching and learning entrepreneurship. According to the result, only 61.1% were of the opinion that use of a wide variety of e-learning and visual display facilities formed part of teaching and learning entrepreneurship in their university (mean=3.70, SD=1.49). 86.1% agreed that using ICT methodology was/would be more suitable for teaching and learning entrepreneurship courses in their university (mean=4.66, SD=1.21). About 91.3% agreed that experiential teaching and learning approaches would have a greater impact on the students' decision to become an entrepreneur than reading activities (mean=4.95, SD=1.10). Similarly, as much as 91.8% claimed that high impact activities would be positively related to the decision to become an entrepreneur (mean=4.90, SD=1.05) while 92.7% believed that effective teaching and learning entrepreneurship could be achieved when attachment, internship and consulting assignments are included in the curriculum (mean=5.16, SD=1.07).

These results indicated a consensus among the respondents that use of technology facility could motivate teaching and learning entrepreneurship and ultimately boost graduate entrepreneurial intention and self-practice. In a related development, the findings from the responses obtained through qualitative data include the fact that "the world is driven by ICT; the whole world is a village. The findings further revealed that blended learning synergy and interaction in the context of technology support understanding of entrepreneurship training. Some of the academic professionals who participate in the in-depth interview explained as follows:

Technology is key entrepreneurial education to bringing the view of other people from another part of the world to what we are doing here.

(Male, Professor, Director of Entrepreneurship Development Centre)".

Similarly, some of the respondents assert that: E-facilities blend with cultural values; the cultural base technology and interaction using technology to reach out to everybody both locally and international will be good for the system.

(Male, Professor, Director of Academic Planning).

In addition, that technology supported system would facilitate learning from another part of the world, to develop graduates' skills and venture into own business after graduation.

(Female, Director of Academic Planning).

Using technology in training could also expose the students and lecturers to practical activities.

(Male, Professor, HOD of Entrepreneurship Management Technology).

The consensus among respondents is that blended learning framework could arouse the student interests in entrepreneurship. The implication is that the technology applications such as simulation, developed software, use of internet facilities, bulletin board, multimedia option, video

and games as required for the technical progress of the learners. Blended learning framework offers action-oriented methods of delivery and diverse techniques unique to effective entrepreneurship training. The results of the findings are in agreement with the study by Ginns and Ellis (2007, p.55-56), that BLF combines with right learning technologies, to match the right learning style, to transfer right skills, to the right person and at the right time. The findings imply that the respondents formed a positive attitude toward the diffused techniques as a more effective delivery strategy in university-level entrepreneurship training. The blend of face-to-face learning (informal) and face-to-face (formal) mediated by ICT, significantly influence T&L entrepreneurship.

Managerial implications of the findings

This article has successfully been able to achieve informed understanding of the implications of chosen T&L methods in the context of university-level entrepreneurship training. The article offers an integrated framework according to the viewpoints of students, lectures and academic planning professionals. The framework describes the conceptual relationship between formal and non-formal learning activities. The framework spells out the synergy between blended learning method, the use of ICT, and traditional learning practices. The significance of these factors is used to measure the relationship between entrepreneurship education programmes and individual behavioural intentions. The findings of this article also show that imparting entrepreneurial skills requires aggregation of knowledge with other knowledge providers. This knowledge provides the university management with a framework, which attempts to strike a balance between education and training mechanisms the context of university-level training in entrepreneurship. The article also provides understanding to how the model of learning influence individual entrepreneurial intentions. The results further describe the relationship between delivery strategies, prior experience and individual behaviours for entrepreneurship. The results also provide a direction for reforms relating to policies on schools' capacity building programmes. The article further provides a leeway to a programme of action towards preparing the functional foundation for HEIs to succeed in future entrepreneurship development programmes.

Conclusion

Part of the contributions of this article is the new blended learning and technological framework effects and the significance of 21st Century entrepreneurship education. It is noted in this article with substantial evidence from the literature that the evolution of digital and technological effects has changed the way learning takes place in the knowledge economy. The implication is that the learners enhance their competencies through deep learning of the theory, process and practice of entrepreneurial activities. The blended school of thought believes that learners want less theory and prefer more experience. The contributions of this article establish the fact that modern information and communication technology interventions have the capacity to connect allied businesses and higher education sectors. The connection has the potential to stimulate bidirectional relationship benefiting to a variety of participating stakeholders, the students, lecturers, universities, other educational institutions and enterprises. The future of effective entrepreneurship education and training appears revolving around BLF. Integrating BLF is the future direction of effective entrepreneurship education in teaching and learning. The results showed a significant support for synergy and interaction when technology drives entrepreneurship development programmes.

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