

Seeding an Entrepreneurial Mindset: Integrating Business Fundamentals into Namibia's School Curriculum

Linekela Iyaloo Hasholo^{1*}, Christian Nghiyoonanye Haikali²

¹Office of the Prime Minister, Republic of Namibia;

²School of International Development and Cooperation, University of International Business and Economics, Beijing 100029, People's Republic of China.

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the lack of Entrepreneurship Education (EE) in Namibia's basic education and seeks to encourage the introduction of EE across the entire basic education system as a compulsory, stand-alone subject. This will help address existing EE gaps and the high levels of unemployment among the youth in Namibia. The study evaluated the state of EE in Namibia and recommended feasible EE integration strategies into Namibia's school curriculum. Particular objectives include assessing the benefits and challenges of curriculum reform and proposing a holistic implementation model aided by home-grown and universal best practices.

Using a qualitative research methodology, and a desk research method of data collection, the study sourced secondary data from related literature, and institutional reports. The analysis mainly focused on a multidimensional conceptual model, highlighting a vigorous curriculum, skilled educators, hands-on platforms, as well as compassionate institutional mechanisms.

The findings revealed a substantial lack of practical EE at primary and secondary school levels, combined with systemic hiccups like academic curriculum design, inadequate teacher expertise, resource constraints, and sociocultural barriers. The researchers reached a conclusion that early, practical EE yields invaluable skills like problem-solving, financial literacy, and resilience, which are vital for youth transition from employment seekers to job creators.

The study therefore recommends that EE be made a compulsory subject, across the entire basic education system and encourages a student-centred educational reform, aided by four pillars, namely: universities, teachers, enterprises, and the society. Key suggested strategies in addressing existing disparities include a participatory curriculum growth, increased and sustained investment in teacher training, public-private partnerships, educational policy alignment with national developmental plans, and experimental programs led by collective leadership values. Ultimately, the integration of business fundamentals in Namibia's basic education is presented in this study as a strategic imperative, crucial for driving self-reliance, business innovations, and sustainable economic growth.

Keywords: Youth Unemployment, Curriculum Reform, Entrepreneurship Education, Business Fundamentals, Namibia.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Namibia, like many other developing nations, faces a daunting challenge of high levels of youth unemployment amidst significant public and private investment in the country's education sector. The existing educational structure, which is a product of the pre- and post-independence era, is mainly crafted to produce and prepare a

skilled work force for formal employment as Ibidun (2025) posits. The fundamental issue stems from the existing model which is increasingly becoming incompatible with contemporary socio-economic realities. This is particularly so because the formal sector can no longer take up the ever-growing number of graduates (Ibidun, 2025).

This matter is prevalent across Africa, spreading through many African nations where schools develop more, yet still miss the mark on meaningful learning, with evidence pointing to long-standing gaps (Shibuya, 2019; Fredriksen, 2023). According to Fredriksen (2023), the goal of universal primary schooling remains impractical across large parts of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), because core problems continue to linger as funding falls short, leadership lacks strength, and as what is taught rarely matches real-life demands.

The result of this undesirable phenomenon is continuously raising a number of unemployed youth who, in spite of their academic qualifications, visibly lack the skills on how to create their own employment opportunities. This, in Namibia, is plainly illustrated by the presence of a recently recorded presence of youth unemployment rate of 46.1%, which represents a value nearly three times the global average, according to Amadhila (2024) and Keulder (2021). The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that many start-up business entities and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), which are crucial for job creation, struggle to access funding due to issues such as a lack of collateral, improper or absent business plans, as well as a lack of financial statements (Thomas, 2022). As proven in the conflict-affected regions of Nigeria, a lack of economic opportunities renders youth vulnerable and this could lead to social instability. Effective Entrepreneurship Education (EE) can therefore serve as a critical intervention for human capital development and peace-building (Anosike et al., 2017).

Currently, Namibia's developmental plans, like Vision 2030 and the National Development Plan 6 (NDP6) place robust emphasis on growing the economy, and building industry while providing young individuals with supplementary opportunities. At the heart of this sits SMEs as key players. These firms constitute approximately 12 percent of the nation's total economic output, and a fifth of the workers finds jobs through them (April, 2015; Ibidun, 2025; Iiping & Shimpana, 2021; Thomas, 2022).

However, if Namibia does not actively weave financial know-how and enterprise skills into its core schooling system, attaining these ambitious goals might remain a mirage. Research from the People's Republic of China (PRC) demonstrates that effective training for business creators relies on more than just lessons. It needs trained educators, hands-on opportunities, strong course frameworks, along with backing systems working together (Liu et al., 2021). Missing these components in early education suppresses the young people's natural creativity and the drive to explore new horizons, effectively relegating them to primarily focusing on finding jobs rather than building their own paths (Mlambo et al., 2024).

Statement of the Problem

Namibia's formal education has long been visibly, mainly geared towards the cultivation of job seekers instead of job creators. Looking at today's classrooms, basic money management or real world enterprise training rarely shows up in most public elementary and high schools. Because of that, students often exit without solid budgeting knowledge, any practice creating a business outline, or strong thinking strategies useful for business innovation. Missing these early building blocks makes it harder later on when launching a company, especially when banks ask for clear financial records or realistic project forecasts (Thomas, 2022).

As Magaisa et al. (2018) stated, this often present the country with a situation whereby graduates can neither find employment, nor can they start up their own businesses and provide employment to others. This is a problem which, in addition to contributing to high unemployment rates, represents a significant loss in possible economic value as well as potential innovation that could be attained via a Namibian youth-led, dynamic enterprise ecosystem. Amadhila (2024) posits, that in a study carried out in the country, unemployed graduates themselves have painted a grim picture of skills mismatch and a lack of entrepreneurship as part of main reasons for the difficulties they face, with further claims that there are more people graduating in the country with fewer jobs available, and no significant number of such graduates is going to entrepreneurship. This issue reflects a long observed broader African challenge where education systems have strong focus on expanded access to schooling

but often at the cost of quality and the relevance of education to societies' economic needs (Shibuya, 2019; Fredriksen, 2023).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to critically examine the state of EE in Namibia's basic education and to recommend a viable pathway for integration. To break this down, the specific objectives are to: a) Evaluate the potential benefits and challenges of integrating entrepreneurial fundamentals into the school curriculum; and b) Recommend a holistic model for implementing and fostering EE within Namibia's basic education framework, well informed by local research and best practices in the international community, including lessons learned from educational development projects and or policies in other SSA countries and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Research Gap

A critical gap has been identified in Namibia's basic education system, which is that of entrepreneurship and business fundamentals being either non-existent or poorly integrated into the primary and secondary school curriculum, with the tertiary educational institutions in the country offering entrepreneurship education to only a limited fraction of the youth. This leaves a vacuum in compulsory, practical, and well-structured EE at the foundational, basic educational levels. Additionally, there are also limited studies on holistic, multi-stakeholder models tailored to the Namibian socio- economic and cultural context with a focus on curriculum reform, practical platforms, teacher training, and institutional support for foundational education in the context of EE.

Contribution of the Study

This research contributes, originally, to scholarship on EE in the basic education contexts not only in Namibia but also within SSA, particularly by proposing a holistic, context-sensitive implementation model that draws inspirations from international best practices and turn them into a coherent educational model well-tailored to the socio-economic and educational landscape of Namibia. While past studies usually focused on curriculum gaps and or pedagogical strategies as separate entities, this study advances the field via the integration of the four interdependent pillars, namely: universities, teachers, enterprises, and society, into a single, unified, Learner-Centred Approach (LCA) rooted in the 1+4 Integration Circle Model and the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT).

Additionally, the study also bridges a critical research gap by providing an actionable, multi-stakeholder framework that could help address not only curriculum design but also other vital aspects such as teacher training, practical platforms, institutional support, as well as cultural adaptation, thereby providing a blueprint for systemic transformation. By connecting the Namibian national development goals to evidence-based strategies drawn from the African context and beyond, the research went beyond a mere problem identification and delivered a structured, implementable strategy for cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset from primary education onwards, thereby effectively and positively contributing to the regional discourse on sustainable educational transformation and the economic empowerment of the youth.

Significance of the Study

This research is highly significant because of the pressing national development challenges it aims to address, namely: the high youth unemployment, as well as the lack of entrepreneurial capacity among Namibian school leavers. By suggesting a framework for integrating entrepreneurial education into basic education, the study: a) Contributes significantly to policy development by offering evidence-based recommendations for a curriculum reform aligned with national goals such as Vision 2030 and the National Development Plans; b) Promotes economic resilience by encouraging a cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age, thereby potentially reducing dependency on formal employment and fostering job creation via investment in SMEs development; c) Bridges theory and practice by drawing on international best practices while adapting them to

Namibia's unique educational and cultural landscape; and c) Supports sustainable development by encouraging alignments with broader African and global agendas for vital areas such as youth empowerment, inclusive economic growth through education, as well poverty reduction.

Limitations of the Study

This study acknowledges the limitations associated with the use of secondary data collected via the use of the desk research method in this research. Due to these limitations, the study's findings should be treated as indicative rather than definitive. This study thus, equally importantly, serves as a wake-up call for future researcher with interest in this topic to further conduct studies on the topic, employing primary data collection methods such as stakeholder interviews, questionnaires, and case studies in order to obtain first-hand data, from Namibia's basic educational institution, for their future analyses.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

EE is globally revered as an important catalyst for economic development and individual empowerment. A study by Laydes et al. (2024) reveals that EE helps boost student creativity skills, and helps with the building of confidence in them to act on new ideas. Mlambo et al. (2024) also echoed this importance by noting that such education is vital in schools as it helps foster creativity, problem-solving skills, as well as a proactive student mindset.

EE is also credited for its ability to equip learners with real-world skills such as critical thinking, financial literacy, as well as resilience, thereby preparing them for future career paths in the business world, and contributing to economic growth (Mlambo et al., 2024). All these are a huge underscore on the high potential which EE possesses in enhancing self-confidence in these learners, thereby creating a more vibrant and adaptable workforce for a society such as that of Namibia. To put this in the Namibian context, the literature review is hinged on three pivotal questions, namely: a) What is the current entrepreneurial landscape in Namibia's education? b) What impedes entrepreneurial skills development in learners? And c) How could entrepreneurial skills development in learners be improved? These three questions are addressed below.

What is the Current Entrepreneurial Landscape in Namibia's Education?

At tertiary level, Namibia is moving forward in clear ways. The Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), for instance, run classes on starting businesses. Inside NUST, a hub known as the Centre of Entrepreneurial Development (CED) helps guide new business ideas into real projects (April, 2015; Ipinge & Shimpanda, 2021; Magaisa et al., 2018). Moreover, models for entrepreneurial education in higher education have been researched on, and the studies suggested integrated approaches that combine the aspects of motivation, entrepreneurial skills, and business knowledge, (Ras & Pretorius, 2007).

However, these interventions are often reactive, usually only accommodating a tiny fraction of the youth, and often only targeting the students long after their entrepreneurial mindset has been largely formed. At Namibia's secondary school level, entrepreneurship is taught as a stand-alone subject from grades 8 to 12, but it is not a compulsory, practical-focused subject, with tiny fractions of its contents only existing in other subjects as part of the cross-curricular issues (April, 2015; Ibidun, 2025). For the primary school level, the situation is even more problematic since the subject remains virtually non-existent. At this level, it only features as a cross-curricular issue, integrated in other subjects, effectively creating a worrisome vacuum in EE in the country's basic education.

Consequently, students often enter tertiary institutions or start working knowing almost nothing about starting or running businesses. Because of this gap, higher education ends up doing the heavy lifting, building basic attitudes and abilities out of nothing. This is a huge contrast to comprehensive models which have been identified in other countries, whereby high-performing entrepreneurial education is urged on by a combination of factors such as curriculum credit ratio, EE practical platforms, as well as teaching quality (Liu et al., 2021).

This issue is also prevalent in other African countries, such as South Africa, where EE is also yet to be fully consolidated in the basic education system (Mlambo et al., 2024). This stands in stark contrast to successful interventions, such as those observed in Nigeria, whereby targeted EE service provision in higher education

demonstrated notable positive outcomes in entrepreneurship skills acquisition, knowledge, as well as poverty alleviation (Anosike et al., 2017).

What Impedes Entrepreneurial Skills Development in Learners?

Several interconnected hindrances form a formidable barrier to the development of entrepreneurial skills in learners in the Namibian schools. These stumbling blocks include:

Curriculum Design and Teacher Capacity

The existing curriculum, where entrepreneurship is present, is often theoretical and lacks the practical dimension of the learning- by - doing component, as Ipinge and Shimpanda (2021) revealed. A lack of skilled teachers further compounds this problem. Straight out of tertiary institutions, many teachers join schools lacking real-world experience themselves. As a result, their teaching often leans more on theory than hands-on practice (Ibidun, 2025; Ipinge & Shimpanda, 2021). This paints a grim picture for the Namibian education system because a teaching team's composition in this regard is a critical factor, and having a lack of diverse teaching teams in terms of possessing real-world experience often leads to weakened educational outcomes, as stated by Liu et al. (2021).

Besides, other challenges in curriculum implementation, such as a lack of instructional resources, limited funding, as well as inadequacy in teacher training on new curricula contents, significantly impedes the effective delivery of any school subject, and entrepreneurship is no exception to this (Katshuna & Shikalepo, 2023). To further muddy the waters, only few schools in developing countries like Namibia integrate Information Communication Technology (ICT) into classroom lessons, making teaching and learning difficult. That gap grows because digital tools barely reach the educational institutions in these countries, if at all (Obidile & Onyeagba, 2019).

Other studies echoed similar issues by revealing that issues such as power cuts, too few to non-existing computers, expensive programs and poor internet connectivity, across large areas of SSA countries such as Namibia, hold back modern teaching in business schools, as noted by Obidile and Onyeagba (2019). This problem is also highlighted by Fredriksen (2023) who stated that shaky funding and thin support systems for EE across SSA deprive classrooms and students in particular, of opportunities to performing well.

Socio-Cultural Factors

The presence of deep-rooted cultural norms in a society can be a significant hurdle. As indicated by April (2015) and Ibidun (2025), traditional gender roles in nations like that of Namibia, where young women are often seen as primarily suitable for housekeeper jobs, and the aspect of prioritising extended family values at the expense of business principles can be a huge discouragement to the entrepreneurial pursuits in female learners. This can usually lead to business failure as family needs often replace well-rounded business practice. Additionally, the effectiveness of EE is also heavily influenced by the local socio-cultural landscape as well as by the local residents' capacity for skills and knowledge acquisition, which is one of the crucial factor highlighted in the studies conducted on educational policy impact (Xin et al., 2025).

Insufficient Supporting Mechanisms

There is a lack of robust ecosystems found in leading entrepreneurial nations. Research shows that practical platforms, such as incubation centres and entrepreneurial training bases, are crucial for providing practical experience and improving entrepreneurial skills (Liu et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2021). For Namibia's context, a significant lack of such concrete support systems for the youth, such as business incubators, start-up funds, and strong university-industry partnerships, makes things difficult for young people to have a smooth transition of their ideas to enterprise, often leaving aspiring young entrepreneurs overwhelmed (Ibidun, 2025). For the country of Nigeria, for example, a success of the Centre for African Entrepreneurship and Leadership (CAEL) projects is a huge underscore on the crucial role played by partnerships, practical incubation units for effective EE, as well as capacity building (Anosike et al., 2017).

As indicted by April (2015), one other great challenge in this regard is that of changing one's mindset from having skills to becoming a competent entrepreneur, a significant undertaking which requires input from all socio-economic development stakeholders in a society. This is further compounded by the fact that financial institutions often drag their feet in hesitation to funding business start-ups due to the presence of perceived high risks as well as due to a lack of collateral or a business success track record (Thomas, 2022).

How Could Entrepreneurial Skills Development in Learners be Improved?

According to Iiping & Shimpanda (2021), improvement in this regard requires a fundamental shift from teaching about entrepreneurship to teaching for and through it. This involves the following aspect:

Early and Integrated Intervention

The practice of seeding an entrepreneurial mindset must commence early. Starting young makes a big difference when it comes to cultivating an entrepreneurial mindset. Business basics, taught at a young age can be easily grasped, thereby laying a much needed foundation in business knowledge and skills from elementary school level even if careers may feel far off at this stage. According to April (2015), meeting business ideas early this way helps children form useful habits of mind. This early intervention strategy is also championed by Thomas (2022), who indicated that being ready earlier means fewer hurdles later, especially when seeking funds for new business ventures.

This strategy aligns with the Learning for All agenda, which emphasises quality learning and skills development from early childhood, as stated by Shibuya (2019), and the call for the integration of EE at all educational levels as a pathway to attaining socio-economic development (Anosike et al., 2017). Furthermore, studies conducted in the PRC reveal that progressive educational policies, such as extending free compulsory education, can boost local business creation over time, underscoring how timely and early interventions help influence business outcomes years later (Xin et al., 2025).

Experiential Pedagogy and Practical Platforms

Moving beyond lectures and theory to incorporate business simulations, case studies, guest speakers from the business industry, as well as real-life student projects can be a great way of making learning engaging and relevant in EE (Iiping & Shimpanda, 2021). Because of this, educational institutions at all levels should create different business incubations projects where students can try out starting businesses, along with areas that help these projects grow. This plays an instrumental role in helping learners develop real skills and broader abilities for launching new business ideas (Liu et al., 2021; Ye et al., 2021). In Nigeria, examples demonstrated how open workshops, building business strategies, and support hubs can turn learning into actual working enterprises (Anosike et al., 2017). According to Ibidun (2025), the PRC's model, with its emphasis on business plan competitions and University Pioneer Parks (UPPs), provides a compelling illustration of this approach. Under this PRC model, government-aided business incubators, help integrate specialised business education with hands-on entrepreneurial training to help encourage student start-ups, thereby effectively bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Moreover, community-based initiatives in Namibia, for example the Havana Entrepreneur project, which employed a strategy of challenge-based learning in informal settlements, have also demonstrated a good promise in boosting practical business skills and entrepreneurial confidence (Winschiers-Theophilus et al., 2017). The effective use of ICT in education and in advancing projects such as these can further enhance this experiential learning, thereby fostering global communication and the much needed technological literacy at a time during which digital economy has taken global centre stage (Obidile & Onyeagba, 2019).

Empowered Educators and School Leadership

Investing in teacher training is of paramount importance. Educators need professional development in experiential pedagogies and, ideally, some form of industry exposure in order to effectively guide and inspire future entrepreneurs. This needs to be part of a broader solution to curriculum implementation challenges, which includes the involvement of teachers in the curriculum development process itself, a practice that is highly

instrumental in fostering understanding as well as creating a sense of ownership among educators (Katshuna & Shikalepo, 2023; Iipinga & Shimpanda, 2021).

Successful models such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) Strengthening of Mathematics and Science Education (SMASE) project which has been implemented in African countries demonstrate how effective the cascading, in-service teacher training can be, which mainly focuses on learner-centred and activity-based learning (Shibuya, 2019). Additionally, encouraging Ubuntu school leadership, a philosophy that emphasises community, collective responsibility, and inclusivity, can also help create massive support for school environments whereby business initiatives and innovative ideas are encouraged and sustained (Lopez et al., 2024). In order for such, transformative education to take place, schools need to have leaders who seek solutions within their communities, and empower both teachers and learners (Lopez et al., 2024).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research has its roots in the Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), a concept invented by Kolb (1984). According to Kolb (1984), learning is usually most effective when it involves the aspect of a cyclical process of real-life experience, abstract conceptualisation, reflective observation, as well as active experimentation. In the context of teaching entrepreneurship, learning by doing matters more than just the theoretical aspect. Instead of only explaining ideas, students need to be tested through real-life tasks. This strategy helps students see what works and what does not, and this triggers them to think about results, and then adjust accordingly (Liu et al., 2021). This ELT aligns well with the call for pedagogy that teaches for and through entrepreneurship, rather than one that merely teaches about it (Iipinga & Shimpanda, 2021).

Additionally, the study is also grounded in the Human Capital Theory which was invented by Becker (1964). This theory views education and training as investments that play a crucial role in enhancing an individual's skills and productivity, subsequently leading to greater economic output. In the context of this study, integrating business fundamentals into basic education is framed as a strategic investment in Namibia's human capital, which is aimed at developing competencies such as business innovation, financial literacy, as well as risk management, which are vital essentials for entrepreneurial success and economic development in the Namibian Society (Laydes et al., 2024; Mlambo et al., 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction to Research Framework

In order to gain deeper insights into the vital aspects of this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted for this study. The qualitative research approach is a form of social science study that focuses on the collection and analysis of non-numerical data to derive meaningful interpretations, thereby helping us to understand the involved social dynamics when studying specific individuals or particular communities (Nghaamua, 2022). As stated in Quest (2014) and Creswell et al. (2018), the qualitative methodology provides a perspective that enables researchers to gather rich, descriptive data, which is highly essential for thorough analysis in a study. This study's descriptive nature, in particular, makes this research approach the most suitable one for addressing the study's objectives.

Secondary data

For this study, data was gathered through an extensive document analysis of secondary sources, which include online publications, Institutional reports, and peer-reviewed journal articles. This desk research method gave room for a comprehensive synthesis of the existing knowledge on EE in Namibia, and enabled the researchers to draw from the critical analysis of other authors. The desk research method was particularly employed due its obvious benefits, such as it being a cost-effective method; allowing a speedy collection data; and providing a broad overview of topics.

Through the analysis of existing data, researchers gained valuable insights on the topic without having to incur high costs and or investing more time in the study, which would have been the case had they embarked on

collecting primary data. However, the study recognises the limitations of the desk research method and urges future studies on this topic to be based on primary data, to help validate these findings via stakeholder interviews, surveys, and case studies in the Namibian schools.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is adapted from the multi-dimensional model for effective EE proposed by Liu et al. (2021), which posits that successful business outcomes tend to work better when four linked parts are in place, namely: a well-crafted curriculum; skilled educators; real-world learning spaces; as well as the school systems that back them up. This study applies this framework to analyse the weak spots in Namibia's foundational schooling and to structure its recommendations, with great emphasis on the need for all four components. These components need to be addressed in such a way that they eventually work interactively to produce a greater combined effect. This is further supported by Ye et al.'s (2021) 1+4 integration circle model, which positions learners in the centre, surrounded by educators, businesses, higher institutions, and the rest of the society.

Conclusion of Methodology

The qualitative research approach and the desk research methodology gave a strong foundation for achieving this study's objectives. Through systematic analysis of existing literature as well as institutional documents, this approach made it possible for a critical assessment of the entrepreneurial education landscape in Namibia to be done. The insights attained from this study form the basis for the proposed integrative EE framework, while simultaneously underlining the need for future studies based on primary data, to help validate these findings via the conducting of stakeholder interviews, surveys, and case studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Current Curriculum Landscape in Namibia

The findings in this study confirm that Namibia's basic education currently lack a compulsory, well-structured subject dedicated to business and entrepreneurship. Where this subject exists, it is often an optional module, with minimal practical engagement for learners, particularly at the secondary education level, while the subject is virtually non-existent at primary school level. The study also reveals that teachers in the Namibian schools are often under-equipped, and teaching materials are usually outdated or unavailable because of the presence of limited funding.

This is a cause for concern since this type of model lacks the multi-dimensional components such as a high credit ratio of practical courses proposed by Liu et al. (2021), a diverse teaching team, and adequate practice platforms, which are vital for driving high EE performance in schools. These findings stand in stark contrast to the tertiary level, where efforts are being made, albeit with their own challenges, and to helpful blueprints in countries like the PRC, which has systematically integrated EE into its education system with strong state support.

Moreover, a lack of early preparation in the subject contributes to the later difficulties Namibian business startups face, which includes issues such as a lack of awareness regarding funding requirements and an inability to produce the necessary documentation to financial institutions. This situation mirrors challenges in other African countries, where the rapid expansion of education access has not been matched with quality improvements, particularly in areas such as mathematics and science, which are foundational for entrepreneurial innovation.

The Multiplicative Benefits of Early EE

This study found that an introduction of business fundamentals early in young people yields profound benefits that extend beyond business creation. This includes the ability to equip learners with essential life skills, including: financial literacy, which is the understanding of personal finance, savings, and investment, which are critical aspects for managing a business and seeking funding; problem-solving and innovation which enhances learning to identify market opportunities and developing creative solutions, thereby enhancing the quality of business proposals and plans presented to potential financiers; resilience and leadership which is concerned with cultivating the resolve to persevere through challenges and the ability to lead and work in teams, qualities

Kuratko (2014, as cited in Magaisa et al., 2018) identifies as central to the entrepreneurial character; as well as shifting mindsets, triggering a shift from a culture of dependency to one of self-reliance and opportunity recognition, crucial for navigating Namibia's complex socio-economic environment. .

The data also revealed that the introduction of early EE in schools can lead to economic empowerment in learners, future job creation, as well as local community development. As observed in Nigeria, EE has clearly demonstrated that it can be a vital tool of transformation with a greater potential for facilitating a good transition from socio-economic marginalisation to inclusion thereby contributing to peace-building in vulnerable communities. Equally importantly, educational policies of this kind also hold a huge potential for generating positive spillovers to other regions, eventually leading to regional development outside of the immediate school environment, a view held by Xin et al. (2025).

Challenges of Integrating EE into Namibia's Basic Education

The road leading to the integration of EE into the entire basic education of Namibia is an endeavour that is riddled with massive challenges, many of which are reflected in the country's broader educational context. These challenges include:

Systemic Inertia and Implementation Flaws

Overhauling a national curriculum is a difficult undertaking for one to embark on, and new initiatives face the same implementation challenges faced by the general curriculum, for instance the shortages of instructional materials and limited teacher understanding on the subject of EE. The study found that Africa's past with the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) hints at troubles ahead, such as having growth outpacing preparation. As a result, countries such as Namibia risk seeing classrooms getting filled faster than skilled teachers. Consequently, learning will eventually face diminish as instruction weakens under pressure. For Namibia in particular, teacher readiness in this context will be needed as the education system overstretch to keep up with the demand for reforms. This underlines the need for a carefully crafted policy reset.

Faculty Development

One other challenge to EE integration in Namibia is the lack of skilled teachers available in EE. This means more investment must go toward training many educators properly. Another cause for concern is exempting teachers from designing and developing curricula. This poses a significant problem because without their input, teachers might choose to care less about how lessons delivery should take place. When educators feel disconnected, motivation often fades, even though dedication matters greatly for better teaching results. This notion is also supported by Liu et al. (2021) who stated that as realised in successful models, one of the key conditional variables for achieving high EE successes is the involvement of higher-quality, diverse teaching teams.

Resource and ICT Constraints

Schools in Namibia have been found by this study to often lack the basic educational infrastructure. These include computer labs, internet connectivity, and simulation software which are vital for integration into the practical EE. This challenge stems from limited funding which has been a recurring hindrance to effective curriculum delivery in the Namibian school. Economic barriers such as inadequate funding, expensive educational hardware and software, and high communication costs have been found to be among the standout factors that severely restrict access to ICT integration in the teaching and learning process, summing up the limited funding problem. This is a cause for concern since these ICTs an essential tool that must form an integral part of modern EE. Additionally, the lack of practical EE platforms, which are a key dimension to the delivery of effective EE, is also a major gap that exists in Namibia's current education system.

Cultural Shift

The study revealed that fighting long standing views on business aspects, such as uprooting the practice of hiring relatives instead of skilled people, which amounts to nepotism, or encouraging a business mindset rather than just a pure focus on family roles, is one difficult undertaking to embark on. Changing these patterns takes time

and could involve consistently engaging openly within communities to help them have a changed mindset towards EE and its related aspects. Consistency and patience in doing this is vital since lasting change in this context often take time, a notion supported by Xin et al. (2025); Amadhila (2024) ; and April (2015).

Conclusion of Findings

Conclusively, the findings and subsequent discussion thereof underline the crucial alignment between Namibia's EE gaps and the theoretical frameworks in which this study is grounded. Specifically, the practical inadequacy in current EE delivery is a clear illustration of the disconnect from Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which states that for effective learning to occur, a cyclic engagement in concrete experience, reflection, conceptualisation, as well as experimentation has to take place first.

Similarly, the lack of investment in teacher capacity and practical platforms identified in this study is a clear reflection of a shortfall in seeing education through the lens of Becker's Human Capital Theory (HCT), where systematic investment in human's skills development is considered essential for enhancing individual productivity and earning potential. By clearly attaching the descriptive challenges within these two theoretical concepts, the discussion on the findings of this study both diagnoses systemic failures in Namibia's basic education system and reinforces the study's theoretical contribution to scholarship by framing curriculum reform as a crucial intervention and pathway towards the operationalisation of experiential learning and human capital principles within the country's basic education system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of this study, the study recommends the provision of EE in Namibia's entire basic education as a compulsory, stand-alone, separate subject, as this hold a better potential in fostering genuine entrepreneurial skills in learners. When it is a stand-alone subject, its potential of creating a systematic and deep knowledge will improve, allowing learners to build knowledge progressively. This could be realised if the subject is to cover the full spectrum of what it takes to start and run a business venture, from opportunity identification and legal aspects to the aspects of marketing and finance.

Additionally, having EE as a dedicated subject will also help learners develop an entrepreneurial identity that easily accepts entrepreneurial risks, resilience, and initiative. This will enable learners to view challenges as opportunities and to embrace failures as learning experiences, thereby potentially creating a deep-seated attitudinal shift which has so far clearly proven difficult to achieve when EE is just treated as a minor topic touched upon in other subjects as currently practices in Namibia's basic education.

Given this study's findings, it also became clear that in order for Namibia to successfully seed an entrepreneurial mindset, education authorities along with vital stakeholders need to adopt a multi-pronged approach. This should involve drawing lessons and expertise from Namibian's local good practices, regional and global experiences. With the 1+4 Integration Circle Model as their core influencer, proposed by Ye et al. (2021), the researchers in this study recommend a Learner-Centered Approach (LCA) supported by four main pillars, namely: teachers, enterprises, universities, and the society, which, along with other approaches, are explained below.

Phased and Participatory Curriculum Reform (The Universities Pillar)

Integrating EE as one of the vital cross-curricular themes in Namibia's primary school is a vital aspect which needs to be realised. This should continue as a compulsory, practical subject at secondary school level. To ensure success, basic education educators have to be involved in the curriculum design and development stages. This helps ensure practicality and creates a sense of ownership in teachers. For the entire process to succeed, inputs from tertiary educational institutions within the country will also be paramount. These institutions are the primary training hubs for the teachers who need to be equipped with the required skills and attitudes to deliver instructions in the basic education classrooms, hence their importance. Additionally, the tertiary institutions' contribution to the curriculum design and development will help it have strong roots in emphasising experiential learning, help strengthen the inputs regarding ICT skills integration, and preparing students for the modern business world where a digital economy has taken significant centre stage.

Investment in Teacher Training and Support (The Teachers Pillar)

Teacher training and support is another powerful pillar which cannot be ignored when addressing the gaps identified and being address by this study. Cognisant of this fact, it is therefore important that there is a development of specialised certification programs and an investment in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for educators, focusing on incorporating the important aspect of hands-on EE in order to help bridge the existing gap between the theoretical part and that of practice. This will help build a more diverse, practical, and competent team of educators.

In practice, this must include the training of educator on a particular content of the new curriculum in order to overcome the potential huddle of a limited teachers' understanding of the curriculum. Additionally, the Namibian education authorities could also adopt a cascading, in-service teacher training model, comparable to JICA's SMASE project, an African- based Japanese initiative which has so far proven largely effective in enhancing pedagogical skills across the Africa continent, a view also shared by Shibuya (2019).

Forging Strategic Partnerships (The Enterprises pillar)

Collaborating with the local business community, banks, and tertiary institutions to provide concrete mentorship, instructional resources for teachers, and internship opportunities for students is a crucial aspect in ensuring the success of EE and eventually the socio-economic development of the Namibian. It would therefore be crucial to engage financial institutions in school programs since this could help clarify business funding application and acquisition processes to future entrepreneurs in the Namibian schools. Equally importantly, forging Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) could also help establish ICT resource hubs and practical platforms such as school-based mini incubators or project centers, which are vital for providing learners with experiential learning.

Policy Alignment and Cohesion

Seeing to it that educational reforms are aligned with Namibia's national development goals such as Vision 2030, and the National Development Plans 6 (NDP6), and even the African Union's Agenda 2063 is crucial. This ensures that the allocation of finances for supporting crucial socio-economic transformation in the country is easily attained. This may include allocating funds for instructional materials, ICT infrastructure, teacher training, and for the development of practical platforms.

To make this yield the desired results, the Namibian government should consider providing subsidies on modern education enablers such as software licenses and make digital tools more accessible to educators and learners for educational purposes. This study found that research carried out on Universal Primary Education (UPE) underscores the importance of this intervention by demonstrating that strong government commitment to subsidizing basic education helps overcome systemic barriers to teaching and learning, thereby ensuring the sustainability of educational improvements in the society as revealed in Fredriksen (2023) and Anosike et al., (2017). It is therefore important that policy-makers are patient, mindful of the long-term nature of these interventions to avoid inconsistencies since the positive effects of these interventions may not be immediate, and could take a few years, generating broader societal benefits.

Foster Ubuntu School Leadership and Launch Pilot Programs (The Society Pillar)

The CPD aspect for school leaders in Namibia needs to incorporate the principles of Ubuntu leadership, which support community engagement, inclusive decision-making processes, as well as seeking solutions together as a community. In testing the model proposed by this study, selected flagship entrepreneurship schools could be established in every one of the Namibia's 14 regions. These pilot project schools would be crucial in serving as living laboratories to test proposed curriculum models, instructional methods, as well as support systems, thereby effectively providing valuable data and a blueprint for future nation-wide rollouts especially if these pilot projects succeed.

This would be a wise and cost-effective approach to pursue due to its ability to help mitigate the risks associated with not-before-tried, large-scale, curriculum implementations and it could also be potentially inspired by successful, local community-level pilot projects. Some of these successful community-level pilot projects which

could inspire great results for this approach are such as JICA's School for All model, which was implemented in West Africa and successfully helped improve school management and community participation therein (Shibuya, 2019), as well as the highly impactful Centre for African Entrepreneurship and Leadership (CAEL)-led case studies carried out in Nigeria, alluded to in Anosike et al. (2017).

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the integration of business fundamentals into the Namibian school curriculum is not just an educational enhancement exercise but also a strategic imperative required for national development and to solve many of Namibia's current socio-economic problems. Namibia's current education system mainly produces graduates who are skilled yet often not empowered to create their own employment opportunities. This is also reflected by the struggles of youth-led start-ups business ventures in the country in accessing funding from financial institutions, and their general approach in navigating the Namibian business landscape. As this study found, this issue is not unique to Namibia but is rather a challenge which is part a broader African struggle in this context. This underscores the need for shifting from quantitative educational expansion and transitioning to a qualitative, context-relevant learning process that prepares the African youth in general, and those of Namibia in particular, for the modern economy.

Via the practice of learning from the challenges and the successes at the tertiary level within Namibia; addressing the systemic issues of curriculum implementation; incorporating proven successful strategies from the tried and tested, effective multi-dimensional models; as well as by adopting the good practices observed from international,

regional, and local Namibian-based models, Namibia can commence with the sowing of the seeds of entrepreneurship in the early lives of its people. In order for this to translate into success, a fundamental policy reset that put foundational skills, practical competencies, and strong government support is a required and crucial step in this potentially great leap forward in EE of the country.

Namibia's cultivation of an entrepreneurial mindset from primary school level and having EE proceeding to secondary education as a compulsory, stand-alone subject, supported and driven by a well-oiled machine of well-trained and empowered educators; adequate practical EE platforms; a school leadership atmosphere inspired by the Ubuntu philosophy; and a supportive ecosystem made up of all vital education stakeholders, has a great potential of enabling the country's youth to eventually take charge of their own lives and become masters of their own destinies. Ultimately, this will help drive business innovations, help create employment opportunities, and enable the country to build a more healthy and self-sustaining economy that is a true reflection of Namibia's great aspirations of becoming a knowledge-based economy by the year 2030.

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