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Abstract

The Sessional Paper No. 4 of 2012 on Reforming Education and Training in Kenya, underlined the need for a significant overhaul of the TVET training framework, to foster quality education. This required a paradigm shift to Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) to overcome the gap between skills obtained via training and industry needs, thereby boosting the global competitiveness of the Kenyan graduates. This study aimed at investigating the delivery methods that can foster entrepreneurial competencies (EC) among students in Technical and Vocational Colleges (TVCs) in Kenya. The study conducted interviews with curriculum specialists from the Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (CDACC) and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), as well as trainers of entrepreneurship education (EE) from selected TVCs located in the Nairobi Metropolitan Region. Content analysis method was used to analyse the findings. The results revealed that traditional passive delivery methods, including lectures, business plans, assignments, group projects, and case studies, are the most popular methods used to teach EE to students in TVCs. These methods are mostly theoretical and result in the acquisition of basic EC. This study recommends that EE should be delivered using practical-operational methods to foster proficient EC. Resources are imperative in the discourse of EE. Therefore, adequate learning resources should be provided to sustain practical implementation of EE.

Keywords: Delivery Methods, Entrepreneurship Education, Hospitality Students

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Introduction

The tourism industry accounts for 10% of global GDP (Galarza et al., 2023). According to the Kenya Tourism Sector Overview report of 2022, (Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife & Heritage, 2022) the industry contributes to 10.4% GDP and directly employs 5.5% of the total workforce. Despite its significant contribution, the industry is susceptible to internal and external shocks such as intense rivalry, changing customer demands, technology advancements, and government regulations.

Survival in such an environment requires a workforce that has an entrepreneurial mindset and skills, to adjust to the ever-increasing competition and changing customer needs. The success of the hospitality sector and consequently economic growth and development, hinges on the existence of competitive hospitality enterprises. Being a labor-intensive sector, the hospitality industry demands a workforce that is well-trained and equipped with the right competencies to deliver high-quality and productive services. However, this is a great challenge as the rapidly changing business environment, driven by significant advancements in technology and major sociocultural shifts, necessitates the acquisition of new skills and competencies. These key competencies must be continuously re-evaluated to align with the current and future demands of the industry (Papageorgiou, 2024).

Entrepreneurial competencies (EC) can be developed through entrepreneurship education (EE) by offering both technical and interpersonal skills to hospitality graduates, to enable them to respond favorably to the dynamic needs of the industry (Sahtoni *et al.,* 2023; Agustian *et al.,* 2023). Research has revealed that EE imparts learners with an entrepreneurial skill set and mentality (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019).

However, in many situations, research has associated EE with learning outcomes related to entrepreneurial and business activities. This dimension is narrow, limiting learners' options (Miço & Jonida, 2023). EE can be viewed in a broader sense as a lifetime competency that aims to develop more independent, proactive, democratic, pluralistic, critical, and creative citizens who will support the sustainability of the global community. TVCs can be crucial in fostering EC, during a time when students are deeply exploring their personal, social, political, and professional selves and will be able to apply these values and abilities in their future adult life (Rodrigues, 2023).

This study presents a broader viewpoint of EE that takes the dimensions of social, psychological, and pedagogical factors, by viewing it as a process through which learners develop a wide set of abilities (European Commission, 2011; Miço & Jonida, 2023). Literature highlights three main delivery methods, based on the learning outcomes of the EE program. They include *education about* domain, *education in/through* domain, and *education for* domain (Klapper & Farber, 2016; Miço & Jonida, 2023).

The *about* domain of EE is also referred to as direct delivery domain (Esmi *et al.,* 2015). It primarily aims at raising awareness about what entrepreneurship is, the context for its implementation, and the significance that entrepreneurship plays in the advancement of economies and societies (Klapper & Farber, 2016; Ripoll'es & Blesa, 2024). This dimension follows a traditional teaching style (Colombelli et al., 2022) and posits that students learn predominantly through the passive transmission of knowledge from instructors to the learners (Miço & Jonida, 2023).

The *education in/through* domain of EE strives to empower students to become creative in their firms or places of employment. This domain is also called the interactive delivery domain (Esmi *et al.,* 2015). The interactive delivery domain emphasizes learning-by-doing through classroom experiences, using teaching approaches that are often secondary information-driven and teacher-focused (Hagg & Kurczewska, 2019; Ripoll'es & Blesa, 2024).

The final domain - *education for*, aims to expose students tcritical skills and abilities through participation in activities and projects. This paradigm incorporates numerous methodologies, including the experiential approach, which is a typical *"for"* strategy, with the goal of preparing people for future career experiences through practice (Colombelli et al., 2022). Ripoll´es and Blesa, (2024) assert that this model is competency based, related to higher-order learning, since it involves real-life problem-solving. The concept has recently been called venture creation programmes (Alsos et al., 2023; Ripoll'es & Blesa, 2024), in which students learn primarily through their own experiences and reflective comprehension of those experiences (Hagg, 2021; Ratten & Usmanij, 2021).

This study was premised on the idea that effective EE is based on appropriate delivery methods. However, aacademic institutions in developing countries such as Kenya, seem to continue facing challenges in delivering effective EE, including identifying practical approaches, pedagogical strategies, expected outcomes, and appropriate content. According to Adebakin (2024), among the challenges are the lack of lecturer/instructor capacity, inadequate government funding, the lack of infrastructure, and an overemphasis on theory delivery. Africa is not the only continent that faces these difficulties. In Europe, educational institutions are yet to successfully integrate EE into the curricula or real-world setting (Rodrigues, 2023).

This study evaluated the different delivery methods through which EE is taught and examined their effectiveness. The study was guided by the following research objective:

To investigate EE delivery methods on the acquisition of EC among hospitality students in TVCs in the Nairobi metropolitan Region, Kenya

Literature Review

All over the world, EE has gradually gained popularity and is now considered a crucial driver of economic development. Learning institutions, lawmakers, and academicians are paying attention to the design of specific programs to raise awareness, develop entrepreneurial tendencies and mindsets among students, and aid in the creation of new enterprises. This has resulted in the proliferation of several entrepreneurship programs in learning institutions worldwide (Ramos, Antonio, José, and José 2019; Colombelli, Andrea & Francesco, 2022). Furthermore, today's global economy has become more project-based, making it more probable that graduates will need to work multiple jobs after graduation (Ausat, 2022). This means that students need to learn new skills, with the changing labour market environment (Agustian et al., 2023; Alibasic et al., 2022).

Ideally, it is expected that EE will expose students to EC capable of facilitating start-ups, new technologies and innovations, job creations and other valuable contributions to society. In hospitality, the ultimate goal

of EE should be to develop graduates with EC, that can maximize customer satisfaction and deliver the best possible customer experience (Papageorgiou, 2024).

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), (2020) report delineates skills required in the hospitality labor market, categorizing them into five distinct areas: (i) leadership and management skills fostering operational and management capabilities; (ii) communication and foreign language skills to improve cultural knowledge and interaction with tourists; (iii) social skills crucial for service excellence; (iv) information communication and technology (ICT) skills for integrating new technologies into daily operations; and (v) financial management skills for effective handling of financial transactions.

Research has shown that Search Engine Optimization and digital marketing skills is crucial ICT skills for the hospitality and tourism industry (Papageorgiou & Marneros, 2023; European Commission, 2019). However, with the emerging technological developments such as big data, cloud computing, the Internet of Things, machine learning, and augmented/virtual reality are expected to have a significant impact on the skills needed by tourism workers. Another key entrepreneurial competency for hospitality graduates is social skills, which are key in ensuring high-quality customer interactions.

Similarly, EC required across various management functions and levels include leadership, interpersonal, technical, and creative skills. However, in hospitality, customer orientation skill is recognized as key. For front office employees, language abilities, professional demeanor, and composure are identified as essential social skills (Papageorgiou, 2024). Marneros and Gibbs (2015) underscore that hospitality education programs should be able to cover both professionally oriented courses. Room pricing, cost control, bookkeeping, and scheduling are examples of soft skills required for professional behavior and interactions. The development of soft skills, including critical thinking, adaptability, effective communication, and creativity, is seen as essential for success in the 21st century and is a core component of hospitality management education (Marneros et al., 2020).

According to Johnson et al. (2015), the greatest strategy to build EC is to expose learners to practical contexts where learners apply what they have learned in class. The scholars contend that since entrepreneurship is project-oriented, traditional techniques of teaching specialized skills should be abandoned and replaced with task training. This method enables students to adopt a culture of tolerance and innovation. Syed (2015) calls for the development of entrepreneurial abilities through seminars, digital start-up competitions, simulations, competitions for business plan design, development of products, apprenticeships, experiential learning, and information exchange exchanges, among other techniques.

Arasti et al. (2012) found that field trips, discussions, case studies, projects, simulations, interviews, project support, and formal speeches are among the most effective techniques of teaching ECs. Esmi et al. (2015) categorized EE teaching strategies into three distinct domains: direct, interactive, and practical-operational. However, the success of project-based methods is determined by availability of teaching and learning resources. Resource deficit not only impedes the practical application of EE activities thus limiting the students' engagement (Cheruiyot, 2024).

Direct domain approaches include guest entrepreneurs, coaching, entrepreneurial tutoring, extracurricular activities, startup mentorship, and the use of specific lessons. Assignments, group discussions, case studies,

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and visits to businesses are all examples of interactive delivery methods. Finally, the practical-operational domain encompasses tactics such as visits to sites, research projects and internships, workshops, business planning, hands-on experience, investment projects, role-playing, studying nature, and launching businesses.

Theoretical framework

The process of acquiring EC can be described using DeKeyser's (1998) skill acquisition theory. According to DeKeyser (2007), one of the fundamental concepts of learning diverse skills is a shift in behavior from early impressions of knowledge to spontaneous, virtually effortless, fluent, and highly proficient conduct.

DeKeyser (1998) postulated three phases of skill development as declarative, procedural and automatic. The declarative phase relates to static knowledge of facts stored in memory. Declarative knowledge, in the context of EC, relates primarily to an understanding of entrepreneurship facts and concepts such as the historical evolution of entrepreneurship, the importance of entrepreneurship, the entrepreneurship process, and so on. This knowledge is mainly delivered using the education about model that aims to increase awareness about entrepreneurship.

The procedural phase of skill acquisition is gradually gained from declarative phase through practice. This phase entails learners carrying out specific tasks, through stimulus-response connection practice, influenced by instructional settings. The instructional methods such as learning-by-doing through experiences can play a major role in honing EE learners' ability to develop innovative ideas and prospects, as well as mobilize the resources required to convert them into profit.

The last phase, often referred to as the automated phase, involves performance that is not under conscious control. Performance is largely independent and procedural. Automaticity is achieved after *proceduralization* when the error rate, reaction time, and interference with/from other operations are reduced. Attaining this greatest level of ability requires ongoing participation in entrepreneurial activities and projects through education for delivery strategies such as research projects, internships, company planning, practical experience, role-playing, and firm formation.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Nairobi Metropolitan Region (NMR), and it included public TVCs in the counties of Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Machakos, and Murang'a. The population included EE trainers from all five TVCs as well as hospitality curriculum specialists from the Curriculum Development, Assessment, and Certification Council (CDACC) and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), TVET Division.

Interviews were used for data collection. Gillham, (2000) underscores that interviews enable the researcher to gain a more abstract understanding of the data, unlike those directly derived from the statistical summaries. During interview sessions, probes were employed in various instances to explore meanings, responses and themes and increase validity of the data (Saunders et al., 2012). Content analysis was used to analyze the data in themes to facilitate interpretation (Bengtsson, 2016).

According to Blumberg et al. (2008), content analysis allows the researcher to acquire the general idea of the text and build some set subject groups by carefully classifying the number of occasions when linked topics are discussed inside a specific exam. One advantage that content analysis provides is convenience; by simplifying and reducing enormous volumes of data into ordered parts. The interviews were further divided into smaller meaning units, which consisted of phrases or paragraphs that incorporated linked characteristics and answered questions about the study's purpose (Graneheim & Lundman 2004).

Results

Three themes about the delivery methods emerged from the data. Practical-based, interactive and traditional methods were the themes yielded. The respondents concurred that entrepreneurship delivery techniques necessitate a variety of real-world activities, such as business planning trade exhibitions. One interviewee recommended allowing students to organize their own events in instead of attending trade exhibits, as this would allow them to gain more from the experience.

One of the participants elaborated that:

"A variety of hands-on approaches are needed to teach entrepreneurship. For example, students can learn entrepreneurship by starting and running a restaurant. Alternatively, they can organize exhibitions and events, like cake fairs and sporting events, to promote and sell their products" (Expert$_1$, 2019).

"in as much as it is a combination of many methods, but the most important ones would be those that give the students the opportunity to practice" (Trainer$_3$, 2019).

Additionally, it was found that the majority of respondents are in favour of using interactive and practically based learning methods such industry visits, guest lecturers, and trade show visits. Nevertheless, it was discovered that certain TVCs relied too much on the lecture method. As one respondent noted,

"Entrepreneurship is taught here in the same way that it is taught at most colleges, just like any other subject...... " (Trainer$_3$, 2019).

Another trainer pointed out that the time for teaching EE is a limiting factor. This situation forces them to use methods such as group discussions and assignments inorder to cover the syllabus quickly. The trainer claimed that;

"..... we just have two terms to teach EE....in the second term, learners are supposed to produce a business plan..... we teach the introduction part, then cover the business plan. So that when learners break for holiday, they have ample time to work on their business plan, because immediately they open in the second week, they are required to submit the assignment" (Trainer$_1$, 2019).

According to the respondent, the situation is far worse. The respondent observed:

"...they are given instructions rather than being taught." Some tutors exclusively send notes over email...."(Trainer$_5$, 2019).

Financial constraints appeared to be another significant barrier to EE interactive and practical delivery approaches. The respondents observed that.

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"...... is not viable to teach entrepreneurship practically due to our budgetary constraints...." (Trainer$_4$, 2019).

Table 1 provides a summary of the findings.

Table 1: Findings

Case	Meaning Unit	Theme
Expert$_1$	A variety of hands-on approaches are needed to teach entrepreneurship...	Practical-based
Expert$_2$	Students can learn best through hands-on experiences, such as opening and managing a restaurant. They may be preparing exhibitions and events like cake fairs and sporting events to market and sell their items. Hospitality students should be the ones running the TVET's restaurant lab as a business venture, at the same time, with the objective of learning EE	
Trainer$_6$	Students should be able to carry out a business activity in order to utilize a business opportunity	
Trainer$_3$	...in as much as it is a combination of many methods, but the most important ones would be those that give the students the opportunity to practice.	
Trainer$_4$	… is not viable to teach entrepreneurship practically due to our budgetary constraints...	
Trainer$_2$	We attend trade fairs and exhibitions and welcome guest speakers from the sector, including past students who have achieved in business.	Interactive methods
Trainer$_1$	"….. we just have two terms to teach EE….in the second term, learners are supposed to produce a business plan…. we teach the introduction part, then cover the business plan. So that when learners break for holiday, they have ample time to work on their business plan, because immediately they open in the second week, they are required to submit the assignment"	
Trainer$_1$	Rather than inviting guest speakers, we prioritize industrial visits for our students.	Traditional methods
Trainer$_3$	Entrepreneurship is taught here in the same way that it is taught at most colleges, just like any other subject.... because we anticipate students sitting an examination	
Trainer$_5$	…they are given instructions rather than being taught. Some tutors exclusively send notes over email.	

Discussion

This study found that TVCs predominantly used methods interactive and direct methods to teach EE. The most common interactive methods used entail visits to trade shows and exhibitions. In some cases, guest speakers and entrepreneurs were invited to speak on topical issues in entrepreneurship. However, the most frequently used direct methods include the use of lecturers and notes. More often, learners are sent manuals through emails. Other direct methods of delivery such as talk shows, small business mentorship was rarely used.

Previous studies (Syed, 2015) concur that traditional methods of EE delivery are predominantly used, even though they are least effective (Colombelli et al., 2022). The intermediate outcomes of the traditional methods of EE delivery are exposure of learners to theoretical entrepreneurship knowledge (Klapper &

Farber, 2016; Ripoll'es & Blesa, 2024). This level of skill is basic as it requires learners to replicate entrepreneurship concepts such as business support services, ways of managing business finance, process of entrepreneurship, factors which inhibit entrepreneurial behaviour, how to identify business opportunities and the components of a business plan.

This study found that due to resource limitations, the practical methods were rarely used. Trainers indicated that in most cases, they are not able to practically teach EE due to our budgetary constraints. In some instances, certain sections of the syllabus we reported to have been hurriedly covered, with the aim of completing the syllabus within recommended period, at the expense of developing the entrepreneurial capabilities. Experts stressed the necessity of hospitality students organizing their own events, such as cake fairs, to expose them to the steps involved in planning and executing an entrepreneurial action, rather than attending exhibitions and trading elsewhere.

The findings on resource imperative in delivery of EE coincide with previous research (Decker-Lange, Lange, & Walmsley, 2024; Nafukho & Mansour, 2023) have found a strong relationship between resources and delivery of practice-oriented EE. According to Decker-Lange et al. (2024), training institutions must fund placements, and incubator space, and preserve ties with the local business community. Nafukho and Mansour, (2023) alleged that learners who can access resources tend to have more innovative entrepreneurial ideas as opposed to counter parts.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the EE offered in Kenyan TVCs is more focused on theoretical knowledge than imparting skills and entrepreneurial attitude among students. The study recommends using practical methods in the delivery of EE. However, the central role of learning resources, especially in the development of EC among hospitality graduates, is indisputable. For hospitality students to carry out business ventures and projects such as running the restaurant lab, they need funding and time.

Building on Dekeyser's theory of skill acquisition, (1988) the achievement of entrepreneurial *automaticity* can only be achieved by repeatedly applying declarative knowledge to tasks until students reach a point where facts, concepts, and ideas are no longer relevant. The *automaticity* phase of entrepreneurial is attained after a continued practice and application of facts, concepts and ideas of entrepreneurship through practical learning. This implies that the time available to learning EE should be adequate, takin into consideration that students learn at different paces.

Timely provision of funds to equip the laboratories, purchase ingredients, fund seminars and field trips is also crucial. It is critical to note that funding of hospitality training goes beyond budgetary allocations, and centers heavily on efficient procurement process. Trainers observed that in most cases, lengthy procurement procedures, that come into play, when planning for field trips and purchase of materials, eat into the set time of syllabus coverage. This challenge should be addressed by the government and TVCs to ensure timely release of the funds. Besides, regulatory bodies should continuously monitor the resource capacity of TVCs based on student populations vis a vie the capacity of training resources.

Lastly, future research should focus on the hospitality industry's dynamic needs of the labor market, in response to changes within the global business environment. Such changes may include socio-cultural

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dynamics, economic conditions, technological advancements, and reactions to recent global crises, including pandemics.

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