Assessment Strategies in the Entrepreneurship Discipline: A Critical Review

Eyitayo Francis Adanlawo[1]; Makhosazana Vezi-Magigaba[2]

[1] North-West University, South Africa

[2] University of Zululand, South Africa

E-mail: francislawo4u@yahoo.com

Abstract

Entrepreneurship is essential for any nation hoping to compete in the knowledge-based global market, as it is often seen as a strategy for fostering economic growth, creativity, and invention. Because of this perspective, there is increasing interest in creating educational initiatives that support and foster entrepreneurship. In this article, the contemporary literature on assessment in the context of entrepreneurship education, aiming to analyse the alignment of assessment strategies with theoretical frameworks and the specific content and context of the entrepreneurship discipline was critically engaged. In collecting data for this study, a variety of sources were explored using a method called snowballing. The findings indicate that assessment is crucial in the educational process for entrepreneurship students. The standards that will be utilised for assessment must first be determined in order for an assessment process to be effective. Students of entrepreneurship should be assessed based on self-assessment and peer-assessment. Assessment in the context of social-cultural theory provide and encourage knowledge-based entrepreneurship while preparing students for careers as entrepreneurs after their studies. With behaviourist approach, students are to be rewarded for excellent performance. This study concludes that entrepreneurship will grow more if proper assessment for learning is adopted.

Keywords: *Assessment Strategies; Entrepreneurship; Education, Behaviourist Theory; Constructivist Theory; Socio-Cultural Theory*

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is essential for any nation hoping to compete in the knowledge-based global market, as it is often seen as a strategy for fostering economic growth, creativity, and invention. Because of this perspective, there is increasing interest in creating educational initiatives that support and foster entrepreneurship (Boldureaas et al., 2020). According to Adanlawo and Nkomo (2023), entrepreneurship has become a critical discipline in today's dynamic corporate environment, enabling people to innovate,

generate value, and stimulate economic growth. The necessity of entrepreneurial education in higher education stems from its significance to society as a whole. The method used to assess students' competencies and preparedness to start their own businesses is a vital part of entrepreneurship education.

According to Fatokun, Salman, and Adanlawo (2022) and Sailin and Mahmor (2018), assessment is the process of probing further into what students already know and how they can apply it. It is based on a process that starts with identifying the learning goals for each student, plans how to assess prior learning, gathers data from multiple sources, analyses and ponders the data, and then looks at methods to enhance learning in the future. The process of assessment is typically broken down into four steps. The creation of learning objectives or outcomes occurs first. Second, mechanisms for assessment are developed to gauge the student's level of learning. The third step is the actual teaching and learning process, both of which can be followed by the use of assessment instruments. The fourth stage involves gathering information from the evaluation tools, analysing the information, and using the findings to enhance future teaching and learning. This indicates that decisions regarding how to enhance learning in the future are made using assessment data.

In this article, we critically engage with contemporary literature on assessment in the context of entrepreneurship education, aiming to analyse the alignment of assessment strategies with theoretical frameworks and the specific content and context of the entrepreneurship discipline. The literature review focuses on the importance of assessment, types of assessments, assessment theories in education, and how they align with entrepreneurship. Furthermore, we also discussed the assessment methods used in the entrepreneurship module. Finally, the strengths and limitations of the assessment methods used in entrepreneurship module were discussed.

2. Methodology

In collecting data for this study, a variety of sources were explored: Ebsco, Wiley Online Google Scholar, Elsevier, and Springer. Entrepreneurship, entrepreneur, assessment or evaluation, assessment tools, and entrepreneurship skills were the search terms used to identify the research articles and books. There was no year range that restricted the search. Using a method called snowballing, the list of references from the papers that were found was used to locate more papers (Adanlawo, Nkomo, and Vezi-Magigaba, 2023). More than 140 papers were found by this search, including studies in secondary and higher education. Research on assessment in secondary education entrepreneurship, however, is scarce; the majority of studies on this topic have been carried out for entrepreneurship courses in higher education. To be presented in this review, a total of 37 papers on the assessment of entrepreneurship courses were chosen. Only recent studies were included in the assessment of entrepreneurship. This is due to the fact that the tools used in these studies have features that are necessary for effectively evaluating students' activities but are missing from older tools. Four recurring themes emerged from the examination of these papers: 1. assessment techniques; 2. educational assessment theories; 3. types of assessment; and 4. assessment significance.

3. Literature Review

Recent literature emphasises the need to adapt assessment strategies to the evolving entrepreneurial landscape. A study by Chapelle, Kremmel, and Brindley (2019) highlights the increasing importance of assessing students' ability to adapt to uncertainty and pivot their business ideas, given the rapid changes in markets and technologies. This suggests that traditional assessments like business plans may need to be supplemented with dynamic elements. Additionally, a survey conducted by Adanlawo and Chaka (2023) attest that students in entrepreneurship programmes increasingly value formative feedback

to enhance their skills throughout the learning process. This finding indicates a need for entrepreneurship educators to incorporate more formative assessment practices into their strategies.

Assessment is a process for gathering data for decisions about students, programs, curricula, schools, and educational policy, according to Brookhart and Nitko (2019). In order to make educated decisions about a student's progress, Mohan (2023) defines assessment in education as the process of gathering and analysing data regarding a student's performance, knowledge, skills, and abilities to support educational decision-making. According to Chapelle, Kremmel, and Brindley (2019), one of the most important aspects of the educational process is assessment; it not only focuses on determining how many of the predetermined educational aims and goals have been attained, but also serves as a tool for feedback that teachers may utilise to improve their methods of instruction. Brookhart and Nitko (2019) aver that one of the key components of a high-quality teaching and learning environment is assessment. The connections that assessment makes with other educational processes demonstrate its value. As a result, assessment is an important procedure that gives information about the success of teaching and student development and also clarifies what teachers anticipate from students (Andersson and Palm, 2017).

3.1 The importance of Assessments

Assessments are crucial because they let teachers gauge how much their students have learned and how well they have met the standards or planned learning objectives (Pollock and Tolone, 2020). It offers quantitative information that can be utilized to evaluate the calibre of instruction and curriculum. Assessments give teachers and students quick and continuous feedback (Adanlawo and Chaka, 2023). This is to say that teachers can modify their teaching strategies to meet the unique requirements of their students, this approach will give the students opportunity to recognise their areas of strength and growth. Additionally, assessment is necessary to ensure that teachers, students, and educational institutions are held responsible for their work (Torrance, 2017). It enables external stakeholders, such as the Department of Higher Education, governments, parents, Council of Higher Education, and professional bodies, to evaluate the quality of education and ensure that standards are met. More so, effective assessment informs the design and modification of curricula (Adanlawo and Chaka, 2023). It helps educators identify areas where the assessment may need adjustments and align learning objectives with desired outcomes. According to Wilson (2008), assessments could be structured as follows:

a. Motivation and Engagement: Well-structured assessments can motivate students by giving them a sense of accomplishment and allowing them to see their progress. They can also increase engagement by making learning goals clear.
b. Differentiation: Assessment helps educators identify individual strengths and weaknesses among students. This information is crucial for implementing differentiated instruction, tailoring teaching methods to meet the unique needs of each learner.
c. Summative Evaluation: Summative assessments, such as final exams or standardized tests, are used to evaluate overall achievement and determine whether students have met the required standards for promotion, graduation, or certification.
d. Decision-Making: Assessment results inform educational decisions at various levels. Educators use assessment data to make decisions about instructional strategies, and administrators use it for resource allocation and policy development.
e. Research and Evaluation: Assessment data provide valuable insights for educational research and evaluation. Researchers can use assessment results to study trends and effectiveness in education, contributing to the improvement of educational practices.
f. Transparency: Assessment ensures transparency in the educational process by making learning objectives and expectations explicit. This transparency benefits both educators and learners by reducing ambiguity and enhancing clarity.

In summary, assessment is a fundamental aspect of education that plays a multifaceted role in improving learning outcomes, enhancing teaching practices, ensuring accountability, and supporting educational decision-making at various levels. It serves as a bridge between the goals of education and the actual achievements of learners, contributing to the continuous improvement of the educational system. It is worth knowing that to achieve the goals of education and the actual achievements, assessment types should be carefully chosen.

3.2 Types of Assessments

Different assessment strategies can be used to evaluate the students' outcomes in the entrepreneurship module. Mogboh and Okoye (2019) categorise assessment strategies into summative and formative assessment. According to Mogboh and Okoye, summative and formative assessments are two different things. Summative assessment is thorough, whereas formative assessment is incremental (Johansson et al., 2022). Formative assessment is exemplified by a brief, non-graded test given at the end of a presentation to determine how well students understood the material that was just covered. Formative assessment provides rapid feedback to the student and teacher, allowing adjustments to be made if necessary. Asamoah et al. (2010) describe formative assessment as activities undertaken by educators and by their students in assessing themselves that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities. The definition indicates that formative assessment encompasses a broad range of tools that provide instructors and students with feedback to enhance learning. In addition to providing teachers with a constant source of information about what students currently understand, formative assessments are used to develop interventions to improve student learning in order to alter instruction to enhance student learning. Boldureanu et al. (2020) add that formative assessments are also used to develop interventions to improve student learning.

Summative assessment is demonstrated by a thorough final test (Houstin and Thompson, 2017; Torrance, 2017). This indicates that feedback is primarily meant for the teacher to assess the student's level of familiarity with the subject matter. Houstin and Thompson (2017) argue that summative assessments are mostly used to decide on grades or assess readiness for advancement. Summative evaluation, which usually takes place at the conclusion of a learning session, aims to evaluate the learner's overall effectiveness (Wiliam, 2014). According to Darling-Hammond (2006), summative assessments are used to convey students' competencies to external stakeholders, such as administrators and employers, in addition to serving as the foundation for grade assignments. Kulasegaram and Rangachari (2018) and Dolin et al. (2018) describe summative assessments as "cumulative assessments" that intend to capture what a student has learned, or the quality of the learning, and judge performance against some standards. In the discipline of entrepreneurship, summative exams are typically high-stakes tests meant to determine a student's final level of knowledge, or how much learning has occurred. Gardner (2010) refers to final exams as a type of summative assessment.

Several studies agree that the use of summative and formative assessments aids in the achievement of course objectives through instructional approaches. (Koka, Brēmane, and Koķe, 2021; Mogboh and Okoye, 2019; Torrance, 2017). Adanlawo and Nkomo (2023) suggested employing formative assessment to evaluate students in complicated domains. By providing students with feedback that they can use to identify their strengths and weaknesses and improve their performance going forward, formative assessment aims to facilitate learning. According to Koka, Brđmane, and Koġe (2021), the ideal circumstances for formative assessment are those in which the parties involved in the learning process (students, teachers, and curriculum developers) will utilise the results internally.

3.3 Assessment Methods in Entrepreneurship

Various assessment methods are used to evaluate the entrepreneurship module: an oral presentation, a business plan which is a group projects, case study, and a written examination. These

assessments align with the learning outcomes and goals of entrepreneurship education. According to Martin (2015), business plans and Pitch presentations are common assessment tools in entrepreneurship education. The authors argue that they align with the practical nature of entrepreneurship, as students are required to develop, present, and defend their business ideas, mirroring real-world entrepreneurial challenges. To assess entrepreneurship students, project learning was one of the numerous methods of assessment that were frequently employed by teachers and was seen as a pertinent way to evaluate students' general abilities and attitudes. Even though students put in a significant amount of time on their projects, their performances were frequently not accurately reflected in their assessment profiles.

Direct vs. indirect measures make up a second assessment category (Druica et al., 2020). Indirect evaluation is frequently used in entrepreneurship modules to hold internal and external groups accountable. This type of assessment investigates learning evidence outside of student output. Druica et al. (2020) describe it as the "reported perception of student mastery of learning outcomes". In order to enhance students' learning, they should be made aware of the variations in the assessment methods that will be employed at the start of the course, the feedback mechanisms that will be employed, and the resources that are accessible to them beyond the classroom. Their learning and course grade can both be enhanced by the resources. This creates a supportive environment for students in the classroom.

The notion of direct assessment does not outline who must score the work, the scoring methodology, or the nature of the assignment. A learner's task performance that is thought to be dependent on completing a learning objective is scored through direct assessment. Direct assessment does not entail assigning grades to tasks; a poll of students' assessments of their own learning would not be a direct measure. However, given the validity concerns discussed above, this may be deemed a direct measure if students evaluate each other's oral presentations. According to Chaka and Adanlawo (2022), using a direct evaluation method that necessitates the identification of a desired objective would result in the most effective learning. In contrast, indirect assessment procedures are evaluations of learning that do not specify a specific learning outcome yet are frequently taken to be assessments of learning. One should not jump to the conclusion that an assessment is indirect because a measure is not direct in nature. The measure must be thought to be connected to learning in order to be considered an indirect assessment method; otherwise, it is neither direct nor indirect in nature.

3.3.1 Self-assessment

Self-assessment is one of the best ways to spark students' interest in learning, according to Andersson and Palm (2017). Assessment was significantly impacted by the change from a teacher-centered model to a learning environment where students actively participate and are encouraged to take ownership of their knowledge and abilities. Johanson et al. (2022) argue that engaging students in their own or others' assessments involves them in the learning and evaluation process and has numerous advantages. In order to assess entrepreneurship students' performance and learning activities, the students take ownership of their education and engage in reflective practices. Self-assessment is crucial in the assessment process for entrepreneurship students since they need to be in charge of their education. Andersson and Palm (2017) attest that self-assessment is a crucial component of entrepreneurial courses and a helpful tool for monitoring student progress.

3.3.2 Peer assessment

Peer assessment, according to Adachi, Tai, and Dawson (2018), is the process of providing comments on the work of one's peers using success standards that the students may have already established. In this kind of assessment, students work together to design assessment criteria and evaluate one another's work, which fosters the growth of a community whose main goal is to support one another. The comments that students receive from their peers also appear to increase their incentive for improvement more than the evaluations of their teachers (Druica et al., 2020). Students that receive this

kind of assessment are better able to comprehend the goals and objectives of a course, thereby, have a greater knowledge of the standards used to assess them. According to Chaka and Adanlawo (2022), peer assessment gives students the opportunity to collaborate and support one another as they organise their learning recognise their strengths and shortcomings. They are also able to pinpoint areas that need improvement and ultimately acquire a variety of abilities.

The majority of research work on peer assessment recommends the use of an online tool. A few studies are built on a paper-based assessment system. According to Druica et al. (2017), using a web-based peer assessment maintains anonymity, which ensures that students evaluate their classmates through a web-based platform rather than in person. It also gives teachers flexibility because they can monitor students' progress at any point during the assessment process. In short, it can be said that peer assessment improves students' higher-level thinking abilities.

3.3.3 Groupwork

The value of group work as an assessment method has long been understood by educators (Khumalo and Utete, 2023). Working in groups is a productive strategy to address the rising student population in higher education, particularly in terms of cutting back on class time and assignment marking time. Additionally, it might be a strategy for managing larger classes of pupils in the same amount of instructional time. Group assessments assist students by offering a relaxed setting for the discussion and assimilation of new ideas. According to Adanlawo and Vezi-Maagigaba (2023), groupwork promotes social membership in a setting of mass education where students may feel alienated and perplexed.

3.4. Strengths and Limitations of Assessment Strategies

The different strategies of assessing entrepreneurship students have both strengths and shortcomings. Choosing the appropriate assessment strategy depends on the assessment objective. Firstly, the oral presentations give students a chance to practice public speaking and learn how to prepare materials for presentations. Their degree of confidence and communication abilities are enhanced by this assessment technique. However, this kind of assessment technique is challenging for students who do not speak English fluently, are shy, or lack confidence when giving presentations. Secondly, the group project allows entrepreneurship students to learn better by discussing and questioning each other's opinions and reasoning. This form of assessment allows students to develop different perspectives on how they can go about completing a task.

This strategy, according to Adachi, Tai, and Dawson (2018); Nkomo and Adanlawo (2023) offers students the chance to strengthen their communication abilities and increase their capacity for idea generation. However, the disadvantage of the groups project is that some students do not participate during discussions and do not come for group meetings; hence, it results in poor assessment. Finally, written examinations allow students to apply or critique the knowledge gained during the lectures. The strategy's merit is that it enables the lecturer to evaluate each student separately and spot those who need further help (Khumalo and Utete, 2023). The strategy allows the lecturer to create intervention plans to help disadvantaged students and identify the areas that need work. The disadvantage of this assessment strategy is that the grade may not always accurately reflect a student's ability.

3.5 Assessment Theories in Education

One of the fundamental aspects of educational assessment is the incorporation of assessment theories. Theories provide the foundation for designing and implementing effective assessment strategies. In the context of entrepreneurship education, we can identify several relevant theories:

3.5.1 Constructivist Theory: This theory posits that learning is an active and personal process (Clark et al., 2021). Assessment in entrepreneurship education should, therefore, focus on authentic tasks and real-world challenges, allowing students to construct their understanding of entrepreneurship through hands-on experiences (Brown, 2019). Constructivism is considered an innovative approach that influences the method of teaching (Reddy and Adanlawo, 2018). This indicates that constructivism creates strategies that enable students to gain knowledge. For students to actively gain knowledge, teachers need to create a method by which the content of the study will be thought through. This method will simply change the content of the teaching for easy understanding by the students. Li and Guo (2015) aver that, in constructivism, the teacher serves as a facilitator rather than the only resource during the teaching and learning process.

Sulistyowati (2019) states that the underlying premise of the constructivist approach is that learning involves creating knowledge rather than simply receiving it. The advantage is that students can build their own knowledge through active learning and interpret ideas in their own ways. This motive is very essential for entrepreneurship students whose' aim is to gain knowledge that will prepare them to start and successfully manage businesses. Adanlawo and Chaka (2023) avers that understanding is a main goal of constructivism. Since it allows for the incorporation of the content into the student's existing body of knowledge. For teaching and learning to be effective in developing students' entrepreneurial skills, it must continuously evaluate and adjust to unexpected changes in students' behaviour and thinking. According to the theory, teachers' duty is to structure lessons so that students can link and make sense of concepts and facts. The theory goal correlates with our aim as university lecturers, which is to develop university students' entrepreneurial skills to make meaningful contributions to the economy and society at large.

3.5.2 Behaviourist theory

According to behaviourists, a student's intentional actions are governed by their consequences and antecedents, or an incident that gave rise to the behaviour (Krause et al., 2010). The behavioural approach regularly evaluates students through close observations in which they maintain and control environmental factors (Bennett et al., 2019). It includes evaluation techniques like functional and environmental behavioural assessment. When teachers observe and analyse a student's behaviour, they are using a behaviourist assessment approach. They pay attention to the results and the reason why this behaviour occurred. A teacher of entrepreneurship should encourage business thinking and entrepreneurial culture. To equip students with the skills required, the adoption of skills-based pedagogy that requires a teaching and learning philosophy that inspires the development and practice of entrepreneurial skills should be encouraged. Entrepreneurship teachers should teach their students in preparation to be self-employed, with the aim of inspiring students to start and manage businesses of their own. In this case, students should be taught the practical skills required to start small businesses.

3.5.3 Socio-cultural theory

According to social-cultural theory, learning occurs within a social and cultural context (Al-Amrani, 2022). Sociocultural theory concedes that activities have meaning because they are a part of larger social structures rather than existing in isolation. According to the sociocultural paradigm, learning is the process of taking part in a community of practice where one develops social and cognitive expertise by using cultural tools that one learns from working with more experienced members. Al-Amrani (2022) avers that the possibilities for learning are defined by activities for assessment, classroom language, and interpersonal relationships. A teacher can view assessment methods as practices that develop participation patterns and, in turn, help students develop their identities as learners and knowers by having an understanding of the possibilities for learning (Cowie, 2005). This is a novel and thought-provoking

viewpoint on the goals of assessment that places a strong emphasis on classroom assessment. Cowie (2005) avers that assessment strategies should encourage collaboration and interaction among students, mirroring the collaborative nature of entrepreneurial endeavours.

Conclusion

Assessment is crucial in the educational process for entrepreneurship students. The standards that will be utilised for assessment must first be determined in order for an assessment process to be effective. Thereafter, selecting the assessment method that best addresses these characteristics is essential (William, 2014). Assessing students is done using a constructivist framework, which views them as active participants in the creation of meaning through real-world problem-solving. Students of entrepreneurship should be assessed based on self-assessment and peer-assessment. With behaviourist approach, if students are rewarded for doing extra work, they are more likely to repeat that behaviour. For example, awarding students for best performance. This approach encourages students to work harder in order to win the award. According to the sociocultural paradigm, assessments should focus on the social processes that learners go through as they approach learner autonomy rather than just the cognitive ones.

With a sociocultural approach, assessment is seen as an interaction between the student and the social environment, and it is seen as a component of an integrated cultural process (James, 2006). In this form of assessment, students can be assessed through presentations. Students are to do oral presentations in class, in front of the teacher and classmates. This gives an opportunity for one-on-one interaction with the teacher. In this way, students develop expertise through language and activities while participating in the social interaction of working with a more knowledgeable expert (Adanlawo and Chaka, 2023). According to recent studies, learner autonomy development is aided by social goals and the teacher-student relationship (Clark et al., 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Teachers of entrepreneurship who wish to implement strategies to foster student autonomy can find a strong theoretical framework for explanation from a sociocultural perspective on assessment.

For proper assessment of entrepreneurship students, universities should serve as a base of knowledge creation to provide training and the ability for academics to produce "knowledge innovations" that can be formally or informally passed on to students through the adoption of assessment for learning. To achieve the aim, entrepreneurial behaviour should be encouraged (behaviourist theory), from raising awareness to inspiring and implementing ideas. Assessment for learning in the context of social-cultural theory will give students the opportunity to learn. This sort of assessment will provide and encourage knowledge-based entrepreneurship while preparing students for careers as entrepreneurs after their studies. This study concludes that entrepreneurship will grow more if proper assessment for learning is adopted.

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