Volume : 2 | Issue : 5 | Received-01-09-2026 | Accepted-05-09-2026 | Published-06-09-2026

UAI JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY & CULTURAL STUDIES (UAIJMCS)

Abbreviated Key Title: UAI J Mult Cul Stu.

ISSN: 3049-2351 (Online)

Journal Homepage: https://uaipublisher.com/uaijmcs-2/

Volume- 2 Issue- 5 (September-October) 2026

Frequency: Bimonthly

Experiential Approach Utilization and Implementation of State-of-the-art Business and Entrepreneurship Education for Skills Development among Graduating Students in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between experiential approach utilization and implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for skills development among graduating students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Correlation research design using quantitative approach was adopted for this study. The population of the study was made up of 484 Business Education final year students during the 2024/2025 academic session in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate Business Education programme in Rivers State. The sample size for this study was made up of the entire population of 484 because it was a manageable size. A structured questionnaire with two parts was designed by the researcher for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts, two from Business Education department, and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State. Cronbach Alpha reliability was computed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0 to obtain reliability index of 0.74 and 0.76 for the two parts of the instrument respectively. Out of the 484 copies of instrument administered, only 402 was properly filled and returned. This constitutes approximately 83% of the entire copies administered. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed very strong positive and significant relationship between experiential approach utilization and implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for problem-solving skills, innovative skills and critical thinking skills development. Based on the findings of this study and conclusions drawn, it was recommended among others that Business education lecturers should continue to adopt and design more effective experiential learning activities capable of providing their students with opportunities to work on enhancing existing products or businesses in order to rebrand them and provide innovative solutions to meet current market needs.

KEY WORDS: innovative approach, experiential learning activities, business and skill development

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22486439

Introduction

Implementing state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education is a necessity in today's Nigeria given the fast rate at which business and entrepreneurship landscape are changing in response to economic realities and technology evolvement. Consequently, paradigm shift to more innovative approaches to curriculum content implementation has now become basic perquisite for state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education. Innovative approaches to curriculum implementation centre on using approaches that immersestudents inreal life learning activitiescapable of making them take ownership and become co-creators of required knowledge and competences. Thus, students are given learning opportunities to gain experiences and collaborativetechniques for business and entrepreneurship success within real life context.

Many advocates of innovative approaches guaranteeing students immersion in real life business and entrepreneurship learning activities (Abdulkarim, 2019; Amesi, 2022; Gengi, 2024; Azeez & Ajayi, 2025), have suggested the use of experiential approach. Experiential approach stands out among other approaches because it does not only ensure learning through engagement with real life tasks but also allows forreflection on experiences gained to create new solutions to challengesencountered (Abdulkarim, 2019). Thus, well designed experiential business and entrepreneurship learning activities should foster knowledge acquisition and creation as well as skills development in areas desirable for success in present business world.

Skill development in business and entrepreneurial areas desirable for success relate to learning to be innovative, financial literate, problem-solver, collaborator, digital citizen and information optimizer. Skill development in these areas wasenshrined in the new Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for business education (National University Commission, NUC, 2023)at the undergraduate level. Thus, any approach or pedagogical practices capable of facilitatingundergraduate students development of innovative, financial literacy, problem-solving, collaborative, digitalization, critical thinking and information optimizing skills becomesdesirable for state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education. This stems from the fact that skill development which focuses on the processes of learning to possess the competences for performing tasks in a given occupation (Omidiji&Ogwu, 2020), can only be guaranteedusing the appropriate learning approachleading to desirable outcomes of the programme. Consequently, within the context of this study, there is expectation that whereexperiential approach is utilized in the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education, it shouldfacilitate the development of innovative skills, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking skills.

The affirmation of experiential approach as indispensable tools for state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education programme was borne from the Cambridge Dictionary (2025) definition of state-of-the-art education as one which uses the modern acceptable teaching and learning practices to drivedesired competences development. Similarly, according to Writing Explained blog (2025), state-of-the-art educational programme connotes educating people using modern or new approaches other than traditional ones to get optimum results efficiently and timely.To drive state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education, the researchers believed that experiential approach can be used to facilitate knowledge and skills development. The belief of the researchers is supported by the position held by Gangi (2020) who noted that state-of-the-art entrepreneurship education is ensured through multidisciplinary field encompassing experiential learning, global collaboration and social impact. Consequently, immersing students in business and entrepreneurship learning activities using experiential learning philosophy should foster skills development and meet the current graduating students' empowerment demand of the Nigerian societies.

The philosophy of experiential approach centres on allowing students to learn through experiencing real life activities and reflecting on them to deepen their understanding and create new knowledge (Kolb, 1984). There is no gainsaying that experiential approach provides a promising path for implementing state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education. This is due to the fact that when business and entrepreneurship education students are given the opportunities to learn through undertaking and reflecting on real life business activities' experiences such as market opportunity identification, product development and packaging, auditing of micro and small businesses' real financial and non-financial records, reconciling small businesses' bank statements, typing and formatting students' project reports, rearranging disorganized office spaces, and so on, experiences gained through the processes are retained than when only told about the processes to these activities (Abdulkarim, 2019; Kozlinska, Rebmann, & Mets, 2020; Ferdinand, 2021). Supporting the use of experiential approach to implement state-of-the-art business education, Stuart (2022) averred that one of the best learning approaches in business programme for the creation of new knowledge through the transformation of experiences and reflections leading to the development of 21st century skills such as innovation, problem-solving, teamwork, and critical thinking skills is experiential approach.

Extant studies on the use of experiential approach in business and entrepreneurship education for skills development also abounds. Abdulkarim (2019) reported that the use of this approach in entrepreneurship for business education helped the students in the process to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, management and marketing skills of micro businesses. RameshBabu et al (2020) reported that students develop essential cognitive and product development skills when exposed to experiential learning activities. Kozlinska et al (2020) affirmed that the use of experiential approach in entrepreneurship education immensely influenced students to develop entrepreneurial skills for future endeavours. Okolocha and Bestowei (2021) reported that the use of experiential strategy in business education for exposing students to their career related learning activities led to skills development is areas of learning activities. Ferdinand (2021) also affirmed that using experiential approach for skill development ensures business students get involved with practical hands-on experience where they can develop skills capable of aiding their establishment of multiple income streams businesses after graduation. Hall (2022) also affirmed that experiential approach to business and entrepreneurship education enable students to acquire content knowledge and skills; self-esteem, and reflective ability required in translating their learning into future opportunities. Ezeabii, et al (2022) also affirmed that students exposed to content using experiential approach are expected to develop skills related to the tasks carried out as well as transferable skills in related career path.

A cursory look at the extant studies reviewed revealed that the use of experiential approach has positive link to promoting skill development in business and entrepreneurship education, hence

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22486439

guaranteeing a state-of-the-art implementation of the programme. Nevertheless, the relationship between the use of this approach and implementation of start-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for skills development among graduating students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State has not be ascertained. It was in order to ascertain this that the present study was conceived.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the link between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for skills development among graduating students in tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for problem-solving skills development.
2. the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for innovative skills development.
3. the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for critical thinking skills development.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for problem-solving skills development?
2. What is the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for innovative skills development?
3. What is the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for critical thinking skills development?

Hypotheses

The following formulated hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for problem-solving skills development.
2. There is no significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for innovative skills development.
3. There is no significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for critical thinking skills development.

Methods

Correlation research design using quantitative approach was adopted for this study. Epistemologically, the research work was based on post-positivism which centres on collecting and analyzing the views of those who are directly affected by the use of the approach in the delivery of state-of-the-art of business education for skills development (Stainton, 2022).

The population of this study comprises of 484Business Education final year undergraduate students during the 2024/2025 academic session in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate Business Education programme in Rivers State. The population was considered to be the most appropriate by the researchers because only final year undergraduate students who have studied Business and entrepreneurship education programme for more than two semesters can provide data on the use of experiential approach in implementing courses and skill development during the process. Below is the breakdown of the population.

Table 1: Population Distribution

Tertiary institutions offering undergraduate Business Education	**Final Year Students**
Rivers State University, Port-Harcourt	98
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt	273
University of Port-Harcourt	31
Federal College of Education (Tech.), Omoku	82
Total	**484**

Source: Academic and Planning Unit in each of the Institutions, 2025

The sample size for this study was made up of the entire 484 final year Business Education students from all the tertiary institution offering undergraduate programme in Rivers States, Nigeria. This entire population was used because it is a manageable size for a study based sine only views of those directly affected by the variables were gathered for analyses; hence, census sampling was adopted for the study.

Two sets of structured questionnaires designed by the researchers titled “Experiential Approachin Business and Entrepreneurship Education Questionnaire (EAIBEEQ)” and “Implementation of State-of-the-art Business and Entrepreneurship Education for Skills Development among Undergraduate BusinessEducation Students Questionnaire (ISBEESDUBESQ)” were used for data collection in this study. The first instrument was meant to assess the used of experiential approach in implementing state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education with 12 items; while the second instrument was used to assess skills development among undergraduate Business Education students with 15 items, five to each of the skills assessed. The two instruments were designed to contain closed ended items with a set of response options for the students to choose from when answering the instruments. The response option pattern was designed using the four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA – 4points), Agree (A – 3points), Disagree (D -2 points), and Strongly Disagree(SD – 1point).

The two set of instruments were subjected to face and content validation by three experts, two from Business Education department who have been handling both business and entrepreneurship courses, and one in Measurement and Evaluation, all in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State. Comments and corrections made by these three experts were used to modify the final copies of the instruments before administered to the respondents.

The instruments were subjected to pilot test using 30 final year Business Educationundergraduate students in Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. Data obtained were to run CronbachAlpha reliability analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0. The computation gave reliability index

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22486439

values of 0.74 and 0.76, hence, the instruments are deemed reliable for the study.

The class representatives in each of the tertiary institutions were consulted and used to administer the instruments to their colleagues. They were briefed by the researcher on the purpose of the instruments and how to administer them. The copies properly filled and returned by the research assistants were 402 which were approximately 83% of the entire copies administered.

Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions raised and hypotheses formulated. All analyses were done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24.0. The interpretation of the Pearson r valuewas based Bryman and Bell in Ahaiauzu and Asawo (2016) as follows:

r = 00 – 0.19 'very weak positive relationship' or -00 to -0.19 'very strong negative relationship'

r = 0.20 – 0.39 'weak positive relationship', or -0.20 to -0.30 'strong negative relationship'

r = 0.40 – 0.59 'moderate positive relationship', or -0.40 to -0.50 'moderate negative relationship'

r = 0.60 – 0.69 'strong positive relationship', or -0.60 to -0.69 'weak negative relationship'

r = 0.70 – 1 'very strong positive relationship', or -0.70 to -1 'very weak negative relationship'

However, to test hypothesis, when p value obtained is equal to or less than the p-value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis upheld. The reverse is the case if otherwise, that is, p-value obtained from the computation is greater than the p-value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis be accepted.

Results Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for problem-solving skills development?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for problem-solving skills development.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship and Significant Relationship between the use of Experiential Approach and Implementation of State-of-the-art Business Education for Problem-solving skills Development.

		Use of experiential approach	State-of-the-art Business Education for Problem-solving skills Development
Use of experiential approach	Pearson Correlation	1	.917**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	402	402
State-of-the-art Business Education for Problem-solving skills Development	Pearson Correlation	.917**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	402	402
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 shows data that answers the research question 1 and test hypothesis 1. The Pearson r value of appropriately 0.92, df = 400, p < 0.05 means that there is a very strong positive relationship between the use of experiential approach and the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for problem-solving skills development. In addition, since the p value calculated 2-tailed test of 0.000 is less than the p-value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for problem-solving skills development in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate programmes in Rivers State. These results emanated from the fact that experiential approach ensures students undertake real life business and entrepreneurship tasks where they can be confronted with problems requiring workable solutions. Consequently, this sees them developproblem-solving abilities in order to succeed in the business and entrepreneurship tasks given.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for innovative skills development?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for innovative skills development.

Table 3: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship and Significant Relationship between the use of Experiential Approach and Implementation of State-of-the-art Business Education for Innovative skills Development.

		Use of experiential approach	State-of-the-art Business Education for Innovative skills Development
Use of experiential approach	Pearson Correlation	1	.977**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	402	402
State-of-the-art Business Education for	Pearson Correlation	.977**	1

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22486439

Innovative skills Development	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	402	402
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Table 3 shows data that answers the research question 2 and test hypothesis 2. The Pearson r value of appropriately 0.98, df = 400, p < 0.05 means that there is a very strong positive relationship between the use of experiential approach and the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for innovative skills development. In addition, since the p value calculated 2-tailed test of 0.000 is less than the p-value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for innovative skills development in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate programmes in Rivers State. These findings emanated from the fact that the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education using experiential approach provides students with the opportunity to add value to existing business products or services, hence developing their innovative abilities.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for critical thinking skills development?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business education for critical thinking skills development.

Table 4: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship and Significant Relationship between the use of Experiential Approach and Implementation of State-of-the-art Business Education for Critical Thinking skills Development.

		Use of experiential approach	State-of-the-art Business Education for Critical Thinking skills Development
Use of experiential approach	Pearson Correlation	1	.963**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	402	402
State-of-the-art Business Education for Critical Thinking skills Development	Pearson Correlation	.963**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	402	402
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Table 4 shows data that answers the research question 2 and test hypothesis 2. The Pearson r value of appropriately 0.96, df = 400, p < 0.05 means that there is a very strong positive relationship between the use of experiential approach and the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for critical thinking skills development. In addition, since the p value calculated 2-tailed test of 0.000 is less than the p-value provided at 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for critical thinking skills development in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate programmes in Rivers State. These findings emanated from the fact that the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education using experiential approach provides students with the opportunities to reflect on their experiences and think out possible workable solutions, hence developing counterfactual abilities through critical reflection of experiences.

Discussion of Findings

The results relating to specific purpose 1 revealed that there is a very strong positive relationship between the use of experiential approach and the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for problem-solving skills development. The results also related to hypothesis 1 also revealed that there is significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for problem-solving skills development in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate programmes in Rivers State. This finding emanated from the fact that the respondents strongly agreed that using experiential approach ensures students undertake real life business and entrepreneurship tasks where they can be confronted with problems requiring workable solutions. Consequently, this sees them develop problem-solving abilities in order to succeed in the business and entrepreneurship tasks given.

The results related to specific purpose 2 revealed that there is a very strong positive relationship between the use of experiential approach and the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for innovative skills development. The results also related to hypothesis 2 revealed that there is significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for innovative skills development in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate programmes in Rivers State. This finding emanated from the fact that respondents strongly agreed that using experiential approach to the implement state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education provides students with the opportunities to add value to existing business products or services, hence developing their innovative abilities.

The results related to specific purpose 3 revealed that there is a very strong positive relationship between the use of experiential approach and the implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for critical thinking skills development. The results of test of hypothesis 3 also revealed that there is significant relationship between the use of experiential approach and implementation of state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship

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education for critical thinking skills development in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate programmes in Rivers State. This finding stemmed from the fact that the respondents strongly agreed that using experiential approach to implement state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education provides students with the opportunities to reflect on their experiences and think out possible workable solutions, hence developing counterfactual abilities through critical reflection of experiences.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that the use of experiential approach has positive link to implementing state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education for skills development in tertiary institutions offering undergraduate programme in Rivers State. It was also concluded that the use of experiential approach in implementing this programme facilitated skills development in areas such as problem-solving, innovative and critical thinking as emphasised in the CCMAS for undergraduate of this programme in Nigeria, hence making the outcome desirable for a state-of-the-art business and entrepreneurship education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were put forward implementation:

1. Business education lecturers saddled with the responsibilities of implementing business and entrepreneurship courses should endeavour to provide their students with much opportunities for solving real life business and entrepreneurship problems;
2. Business education lecturers should adopt and design more effective experiential learning activities capable of providing their students with opportunities to work on enhancing existing products or businesses in order to provide innovative solutions to current market needs;

Business education lecturers in tertiary institutions in Rivers State should continue to provide their students with opportunities to critically evaluate experiences gained through exposure to real life business and entrepreneurship tasks while using experiential approach for courses implementation.

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.22486439