Narratives of Edupreneurs About their Successes and Trials

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Abstract:

This qualitative phenomenological study focused on gathering and analyzing the narratives of Edupreneurs based in Karachi. Its aim was to uncover their success stories, identify the significant challenges they encountered, and explore the opportunities available to them. The research involved a sample of ten Educational Entrepreneurs with 2 to 5 years of experience, selected through criterion sampling. The findings reveal a vibrant variety of experiences in educational entrepreneurship in Karachi. Themes include the growth and resilience of ventures, success stories highlighting education's transformative power, diverse strategies for success, varied metrics for accomplishment, resilience in overcoming challenges, and a proactive approach in identifying opportunities for growth and innovation. Together, these themes underscore the dynamic and multifaceted nature of success in the educational landscape of Karachi. This research suggested to establish a mentorship program and knowledge-sharing platform to empower edupreneurs through collaborative learning, enabling them to navigate challenges and replicate successful strategies in the dynamic landscape of educational entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Edupreneurs, narratives, opportunities, education

Introduction

Education is crucial for a nation's development. However, Pakistan faces significant educational challenges, including low literacy rates, poor instructional quality, and issues with access (Ahmad et al., 2014). According to Mundra (2023), the term "Edupreneur" combines "education" and "entrepreneur." Consequently, an entrepreneur who innovates in the field of learning, employing unconventional approaches to address educational issues, is referred to as an "Edupreneur," and their approach is termed "Edupreneurship."

According to a 2017 study conducted by Haris and Rahman, entrepreneurship nurtures students' critical thinking abilities, leading to enhanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the classroom. As a result, they become more imaginative and ingenious, which enables them to identify opportunities around them (Ali et al., 2021). Entrepreneurs play a pivotal role in improving a nation's economy. They foster economic growth by serving as creative and successful leaders, resulting in financial gains, the creation of job opportunities, and positive impacts on various economic sectors. According to Harbison, entrepreneurs are catalysts for innovation and growth, making entrepreneurship a potent and influential force. The simplified chart below illustrates the significance and responsibilities of an entrepreneur:
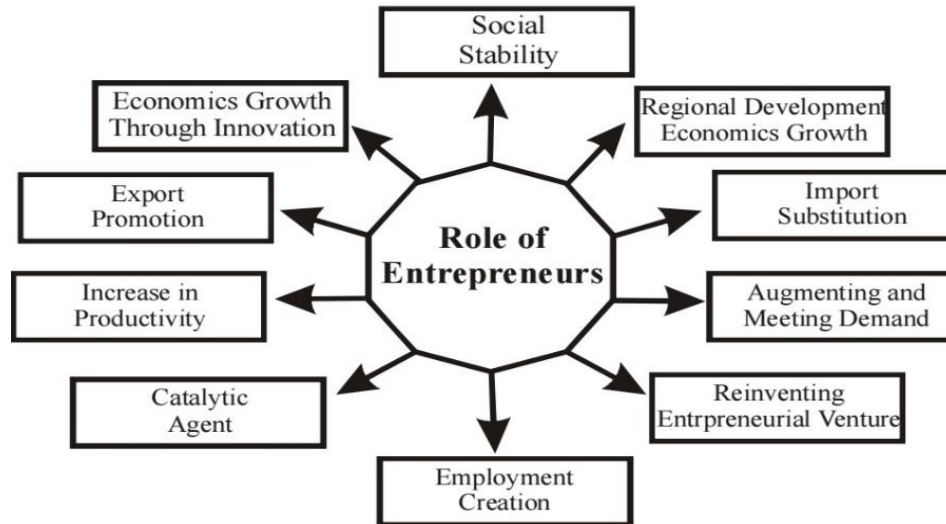
Figure: 1

Resource:

https://sites.google.com/somaiya.edu/entrepreneurshipdevelopment/entrepreneur/role-significance?pli=1

Entrepreneurs are instrumental in enhancing the value of entrepreneurship, which is indeed a valuable resource for a nation. Entrepreneurship is a dynamic strategy that elevates living standards, generates wealth, and adds value. Its significance lies in several aspects, including its ability to advance society and generate novel ideas. Therefore, it is imperative to never underestimate the importance of entrepreneurship, as it is fundamental to the development of an innovative and prosperous society.

Here are some key concepts in entrepreneurship: Making money by satisfying customer demand (Smith, 1776). Founding new businesses (Gartner, 1[i]988). Innovation and change through "creative destruction" (Schumpeter, 1934). Starting private businesses (Mill, 1848). Taking advantage of opportunities and achieving balance (Kirzner, 1973). Dealing with uncertainty (Knight, 1921).

Combining resources for profit (Cantillon, 1755). Bringing together production elements (Say, 1803). Proprietorship (Fredrick Hawley, 1892). Making ethical decisions (Frank Knight, 1921). The overarching theme derived from all these definitions is that entrepreneurship involves "innovation for profit." Therefore, indeed, entrepreneurship is a pursuit worth considering.

Additionally, the study explores the differences among educational entrepreneurs in Pakistan's academic environment. In contrast to traditional teaching methods, the research findings suggest that entrepreneurship curriculum should embrace a more sophisticated and research-oriented approach to teaching business concepts (Tanveer et al., 2021). This study sheds light on the untapped potential of educational entrepreneurship and serves as a source of inspiration for policymakers in the Philippines. Policymakers can enhance educational policies and practices by recognizing and harnessing this potential. The study also encourages Edupreneurs to strike a healthy balance between their roles within and outside the educational system, serving as a call to action for them. According to the study, Edupreneurs possess five key traits: they are hands-on and diligent, dedicated to forging meaningful connections, unwaveringly committed to lifelong learning and personal growth, adept at generating original solutions to problems, and remarkably optimistic and visionary, with a solid understanding of their own capabilities. These characteristics, as emphasized in the study, are crucial for success in the challenging field of edupreneurship (Silin, 2022).

Social entrepreneurship aims to address issues that traditional businesses have been unable to tackle (Volkmann et al., 2009; Kuratko, 2005; Seelos and Mair, 2005; Austin et al., 2006; Rae, 2010). Individuals experience joy and pride when they create and express creativity. Employee happiness and creativity are critical for the success of businesses, and there is a correlation between economic

prosperity and happiness (Amabile and Khaire, 2008; Amabile and Kramer, 2011; Goss, 2005; Diener and Suh, 2003). The educational sector plays a crucial role in transmitting entrepreneurship skills, knowledge innovation, and fostering community experimentation within society (Audretsch et al., 2014; Breznitz & Feldman, 2012; Link & Welsh, 2013; Carree et al., 2014). The positive aspects of Edupreneurs' experiences in Karachi, such as their successes and potential, are less widely known. This investigation aims to explore the achievements, obstacles, and future prospects of Edupreneurs in Karachi. It seeks to identify the factors contributing to the success of Edupreneurs, as well as the challenges they encounter and the opportunities within the educational industry. The findings from this study will enhance our understanding of educational entrepreneurship in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi, and provide valuable insights into the experiences of these educational entrepreneurs.

The researcher's primary focus is on "Narratives of Edupreneurs regarding their successes and challenges." The aim is to explore the narratives of Edupreneurs concerning the key elements of their success, the challenges they face, and the opportunities within Pakistan's education sector. The goal is to gather insights that can lead to suggested improvements in these entrepreneurial endeavors. This research aims to examine the successes of Edupreneurs to identify effective strategies and approaches that can be scaled and replicated within educational contexts. At the same time, it also seeks to gain insights from the challenges encountered by Edupreneurs, as these challenges provide valuable information about the barriers that need to be overcome to bring about meaningful change in education. To turn students' entrepreneurial ideas into reality, a technique known as edupreneurship utilizes learning scenarios (Suhendro, 2022). This study delves into the experiences, inspirations, and challenges faced by

specific edupreneurs on a personal level. The research aims to uncover the motivations driving individuals to blend their academic expertise with entrepreneurial pursuits by examining their personal backgrounds.

The primary objective of edupreneurship is to empower individuals to realize their full potential by engaging in a learning process that fosters independence, creativity, and innovation (Sánchez, 2013; Fernandez, Montes-Merino, Rodríguez-Ariza, Galicia, 2017; Saimima, Komariah, Rahmawati, 2022). This study broadens its focus to include a comprehensive examination of edupreneurs, exploring significant trends, practices, and patterns within the Edupreneur community. An educator with an entrepreneurial mindset can: 1) Recognize Educational Needs: Identify deficiencies in education and propose solutions. 2) Translate Ideas into Action: Transform these concepts into tangible initiatives, products, or businesses. 3) Promote Initiatives: Introduce and advocate for these educational projects. 4) Manage Risks: Identify and address potential risks and unforeseen challenges, enabling them to outperform future competitors and continue working on their plans (Sunday & Perumal, 2021).

Temple (2000) conducted a study on the impact of education on economic growth and found that education can enhance productivity, leading to positive effects on economic growth. He also emphasized the crucial role of education in the development of various sectors of the economy. In his paper, Kerr (2001) discussed how education contributes to economic growth. The primary objective of this conference is to gather diverse perspectives on the formulation of education policies. When crafting these policies, the focus should not solely be on their implementation but rather on how they can best support the country's economic and social objectives.

Nambisan in 2017, research has shown that women exhibit entrepreneurial traits such as passion, vision, creativity, energy, commitment, and strong listening and communication skills. This suggests that entrepreneurship is not limited to a specific gender and encompasses a range of personality traits and qualities that contribute to success in this field. Porter (1994) emphasized that entrepreneurship education often emphasizes quantitative approaches at the expense of fostering creative thinking. It places a greater focus on nurturing imagination, originality, and the ability to take risks.

Roach (1999) outlined several key objectives for entrepreneurial education, which include: 1. Equipping individuals with essential entrepreneurship skills. 2. Enhancing the capacity to identify viable business opportunities. 3. Augmenting knowledge and skills to develop flexible strategies for risk management. 4. Acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills for initiating and promoting new businesses. Furthermore, entrepreneurship education contributes to the development of communication, problem-solving, teamwork, self-management, and planning abilities.

Research Objectives

1. To gather the success stories of Edupreneurs based in Karachi.
2. To identify the challenges faced by Edupreneurs.
3. To find the opportunities available for Edupreneurs.

Research Questions

1. What are the success stories of Edupreneurs based in Karachi?
2. What are the major challenges faced by Edupreneurs?
3. What opportunities are available to Edupreneurs?

Edupreneurs play a crucial role in overcoming global educational challenges by innovatively addressing issues like regulatory complexities and

financial constraints, exemplified by initiatives such as TeachersPayTeachers, showcasing the transformative power of grassroots efforts in education.

Their localized adaptations in regions like Pakistan underscore the adaptability of Edupreneurs, who navigate specific challenges, ensuring culturally aligned and contextually relevant solutions that contribute to bridging educational gaps and fostering inclusive learning environments.

Challenges Face by Educational Entrepreneurship

The objective of educational entrepreneurship, a potent force in the field of education, is to enhance and revolutionize learning systems globally.

Ineffectiveness:

The low effectiveness and efficiency of entrepreneurship education have been attributed to several issues and constraints uncovered in prior research. These problems include:

- Insufficient skills among teachers responsible for promoting, instructing, and implementing entrepreneurship programs in universities (Karimi et al., 2010; Olorundare & Kayode, 2014; Welsh & Drăguşin, 2011; Yusoff et al., 2014).

- A lack of commitment from faculty and management to the government's entrepreneurship agenda (Rahim et al., 2015).

- The failure of entrepreneurship education to adequately prepare and motivate students for success upon graduation (Chiekezie et al., 2016).

- Instructors' limited knowledge of entrepreneurship (Othman et al., 2012).

- Challenges in designing effective learning experiences within the program's constrained timeframe (McGuigan, 2016).

- Insufficient integration of entrepreneurial education across different university degrees, often failing to align with real-world circumstances (Karimi et al., 2010; Welsh & Drăguşin, 2011).

- The prevalence of traditional teaching and learning methods, hindering the effective promotion of entrepreneurship (Sanchez et al., 2017).
- Limited opportunities for instructors to receive comprehensive training (Ozdemir, 2018; Wang, 2013).

Enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of entrepreneurship education is crucial to ensuring that it equips students with the knowledge and attitudes necessary for entrepreneurial success.

Obstacles:

The difficulties and obstacles to effective entrepreneurship education also encompass:

- Ineffectiveness of universities in promoting an entrepreneurial culture, often due to stringent institutional regulations and unfavorable attitudes from administrators toward entrepreneurship programs, making it challenging for these programs to be effectively implemented (Othman et al., 2012).
- The impact of students' family responsibilities on their intentions to start their own businesses. Parental attitudes toward entrepreneurial programs can influence the motivation and interest of their children in participating in such programs (Rengiah & Sentosa, 2016).
- The influence of society on how individuals perceive entrepreneurship programs. Supportive communities can inspire students to embrace entrepreneurship and acquire essential skills, while a lack of positive social perceptions can hinder the development of entrepreneurial activities (Ferreira et al., 2016).
- The challenge of educating a diverse group of students with varying learning paces, motivations, backgrounds, and talents (Vanevenhoven, 2013).

- The presence of a weak entrepreneurial culture in the broader community may impede effective entrepreneurship education (Karimi et al., 2010; Olorundare & Kayode, 2014; Welsh & Drăguşin, 2011).

Overcoming these obstacles to foster entrepreneurial education requires making changes not only within educational institutions but also in societal attitudes and support systems.

Psychological Issues:

Educational Obstacles to Entrepreneurship:

- Inadequate preparation for entrepreneurial training (Othman et al., 2012).
- Lack of the skills required for entrepreneurial programs (Ustyuzhina et al., 2019; Yusoff et al., 2014).[iiiii]
- Lack of appropriate support for government entrepreneurial programs (Yusoff et al., 2014).
- Difficulty overcoming psychological and self-imposed obstacles (Sandhu et al., 2011).
- Ineffective stress management techniques leading to risk aversion (Sandhu et al., 2011).
- Limited financial literacy and awareness (Bagheri & Pihie, 2012).
- Negative outlook and lack of commitment to entrepreneurship initiatives (Rengiah & Sentosa, 2016).
- Lack of enthusiasm for entrepreneurial endeavors (Bagheri et al., 2013).
- Insufficient knowledge and expertise related to entrepreneurship (Bagheri et al., 2013).
- Lack of motivation to learn entrepreneurial skills (Chiekezie et al., 2016).

Opportunities for Educational Entrepreneurship

As the educational sector undergoes rapid and unprecedented changes, educational entrepreneurship has the potential to thrive and bring about revolutionary change in this evolving environment. Globally, there is a growing demand for creative solutions to address new challenges in teaching, learning, and skill development.

Market Dynamics:

When viewed through a lens of discovery, the market is shown to be in a constant state of evolution, continually generating fresh insights. This ongoing change offers individuals the chance to continually acquire new knowledge, aiding them in identifying business prospects (Venkataraman et al., 2010). Entrepreneurs in the educational sector can leverage these shifting market dynamics to innovate and respond to the changing demands of students and educational institutions.

Information as a Key Factor:

Understanding why some individuals can identify opportunities that others might overlook hinges on the importance of information. It is widely acknowledged that information is not distributed evenly among people (Costanzo et al., 2010). Some individuals possess access to unique or specialized knowledge that can give them a competitive advantage in recognizing and seizing opportunities.

Access to Relevant Information:

Identifying entrepreneurial opportunities necessitates access to pertinent information, which is a fundamental prerequisite. Individuals need the tools to gather data that is relevant to the environment in which they aim to create or provide value. This access to information encompasses market trends, consumer demands, and cutting-edge technologies, all of which can assist them in their entrepreneurial ventures.

Prior Knowledge Matters:

The process of identifying opportunities is significantly influenced by prior knowledge. People are better equipped to interpret new information when they possess prior knowledge in a particular field. For example, an engineer with a thorough understanding of conventional light bulb dimming can readily connect new information with her existing domain knowledge, resulting in a more profound and insightful grasp of potential prospects (Grégoire et al., 2012). This existing knowledge serves as a valuable foundation upon which fresh entrepreneurial ideas can be developed.

Information Valuation:

Prior knowledge and experiences influence how individuals assess information and events. When evaluating new information, individuals draw upon their prior knowledge and experiences, which in turn affects their ability to identify opportunities and results in variations in perceived value (Shane, 2000). Essentially, people's previous learning shapes the perspective through which they interpret information, significantly impacting their ability to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities.

Significance of Uncertainty:

According to Venkataraman et al. (2010), uncertainty is a critical element of Opportunity Identification (OI). Individuals searching for opportunities must gather information from various stakeholders, each of whom may provide information of varying value, selectively exchange information with specific parties, or even furnish misleading information. Navigating this ambiguity is a vital aspect of OI for entrepreneurs because they must make decisions despite having incomplete or conflicting information in order to successfully identify potential opportunities.

Integration of Unrelated Information:

The responsibility of those tasked with identifying entrepreneurial prospects often involves the integration and synthesis of disparate and potentially unstable pieces of information. Through this process, they develop expectations for future events, including the recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities. The true value of an opportunity can only be determined ex ante, after the idea has been investigated and tested for its viability (Grégoire et al., 2012). When deciding which opportunities to pursue, entrepreneurs must rely on their judgment and insights to form expectations based on the available information.

Impact of Uncertainty:

An individual's perception of the feasibility of an opportunity is significantly influenced by the level of uncertainty involved. Some individuals may be more certain about the entrepreneurial potential of their ideas than others. These perceptions have a substantial impact on whether individuals choose to seize an opportunity (Grégoire et al., 2012). In essence, an entrepreneur's willingness to take the risk and pursue a specific opportunity may be influenced by the degree of uncertainty associated with it.

Dealing with Uncertainty:

In conclusion, individuals involved in Opportunity Identification (OI) must possess the ability to comprehend and manage the uncertainties that envelop potential opportunities. They encounter challenges in acquiring relevant information from stakeholders in situations where information may be contradictory or deficient.

Opportunity Identification and Structural Alignment:

A conceptual framework for comparing elements and drawing conclusions from these comparisons, structural alignment has been empirically utilized to elucidate OI (Costanzo et al., 2010).

Making Sense of New Information:

People employ structural alignment to make sense of new information by comparing it to their existing knowledge. Identifying parallels enables them to better comprehend and ascribe meaning to the circumstances they are facing.

Consideration of Superficial Aspects:

In OI, individuals consider alignment with both higher-order structural connections and superficial attributes. Fundamental characteristics, such as the materials used in a new technology, are referred to as superficial features.

Importance of Higher-Order Structural Interactions:

According to Costanzo et al. (2010) and Grégoire et al. (2012), higher-order structural interactions are more intricate and abstract, involving cause-and-effect relationships that help elucidate why and how consumers behave in a particular manner.

Role of Similarities:

According to a 2010 study by Costanzo et al., individuals can uncover new entrepreneurial opportunities by comparing similarities in higher-order structural linkages rather than focusing solely on superficial characteristics. These commonalities enhance their ability to identify and capitalize on innovative ideas.

In conclusion, educational entrepreneurship is poised to shape the future of how people learn and develop their skills. Given the rapidly evolving nature of the educational landscape, driven by technological advancements, evolving consumer preferences, and an emphasis on personalized and lifelong learning, educational entrepreneurs have a unique opportunity to drive positive change.

They can bridge access gaps, enhance education quality, and create inclusive learning environments by leveraging digital platforms, personalized learning methods, and innovative solutions. This intersection of education and entrepreneurship offers an effective approach to addressing educational challenges and unlocking individuals' full economic and social potential. The future of educational entrepreneurship holds the promise of significant impact on students, educators, and society as a whole.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Entrepreneurs → Edupreneurs → Questionnaire → Semi structure Interview → Feedback → Analysis
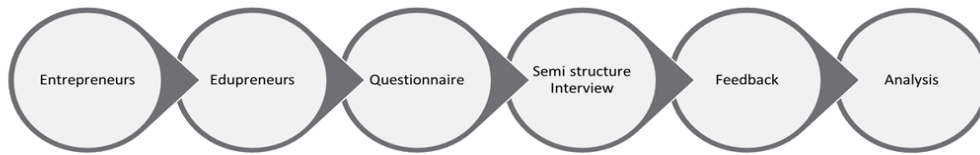
Methods:

The qualitative phenomenological research strategy employed in this study aimed to delve into the lived experiences of edupreneurs in Karachi, Pakistan, managing educational enterprises. With a focus on uncovering the essence and nature of their entrepreneurial journeys, the researcher selected ten participants using criterion sampling based on their substantial firsthand knowledge of edupreneurship spanning above 2 to 5 years experiences. This study on educational entrepreneurs in Karachi, Pakistan, employed criterion sampling, ensuring participants with firsthand knowledge were selected based on predetermined criteria, as recommended by Creswell (2013) and Patton (2001). Ethical considerations were diligently maintained, fostering a trusted environment, prioritizing confidentiality, and upholding respect for participants throughout the

research process. Semi-structured interviews provided a platform for participants to share their experiences openly, addressing successes, challenges, and opportunities. Ethical considerations were prioritized, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. The study acknowledged limitations, including a relatively small sample size, geographic specificity, subjectivity in qualitative research, potential temporal biases, and constraints in capturing systemic issues. Ethical guidelines were rigorously adhered to, emphasizing participant rights and data confidentiality. The subsequent data analysis, employing thematic analysis, aimed to systematically uncover patterns and themes within the narratives, offering a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted landscape of educational entrepreneurship in Karachi.

Discussion of Finding:

The discussion of findings reveals a rich tapestry of experiences, challenges, successes, and opportunities within the realm of educational entrepreneurship in Karachi.

The **first theme, "Educational Venture,"** underscores the remarkable growth and transformative journey of the venture, emphasizing their resilience, innovation, and commitment to providing quality education.

The **second theme, "Success Stories,"** illuminates inspiring narratives of individuals whose lives have been positively impacted by the venture, showcasing adaptability and the transformative power of education, especially during challenging times.

The **third theme, "Strategies or Approaches,"** sheds light on the multifaceted strategies employed by the venture, emphasizing the importance of passion, adaptability, and community engagement in achieving success.

The **fourth theme, "Success Accomplishment,"** explores diverse metrics used to measure success, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of accomplishments and the enduring impact on students and the community.

The **fifth theme, "Significant Challenges & Obstacles,"** delves into the hurdles faced by the venture, highlighting their resilience, adaptability, and strategic planning in overcoming adversities.

Lastly, the **sixth theme, "Available Opportunities,"** illuminates the proactive stance of edupreneurs in identifying and capitalizing on opportunities for growth, innovation, and community support.

Collectively, these findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced landscape of educational entrepreneurship in Karachi, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of success and the importance of adaptability, innovation, and community engagement in navigating challenges and seizing opportunities within the dynamic field of education.

Summary:

The narratives of Edupreneurs in Karachi unveil a tapestry of qualities defining their success. Marked by a hands-on approach, unwavering determination, and adaptability, these entrepreneurs navigate challenges with resilience, particularly evident during the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their success is rooted in an empowering leadership style, emphasizing relationship-building and effective communication, fostering both motivated teams and community support. Furthermore, their commitment to continuous learning, coupled with creative problem-solving and visionary thinking, positions them as dynamic contributors to the educational landscape. In essence, these findings encapsulate the multidimensional qualities that propel Edupreneurs in Karachi toward achievement, impacting not only their personal

growth but also leaving a lasting imprint on their educational ventures and the communities they serve.

Conclusion:

The narrative of this educational venture unfolds as a compelling story of growth, resilience, and transformation, revealing a journey marked by challenges, strategic accomplishments, and harnessed opportunities. Originating from a modest home-based tuition setup fueled by passion and belief in education, the venture faced and triumphed over obstacles, including financial crises and the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Adaptability and an unwavering commitment to quality education not only enabled survival but also spurred thriving amid adversity. Amidst challenges, the venture identified and seized opportunities for growth and innovation, leveraging online learning, addressing skill-based education demands, and fostering community support. Metrics of success extended beyond numbers, emphasizing the venture's transformative impact on students' lives. This narrative encapsulates the profound role of education as a catalyst for positive change, showcasing the venture's commitment to adaptability, innovation, and quality in overcoming challenges and fostering hope and opportunity within the community. Their journey stands as an inspiring testament to the pursuit of educational excellence and social betterment for future generations.

Recommendations:

1. Create platforms for edupreneurs to connect with experienced mentors and other professionals in the field. Sharing knowledge and experiences can lead to innovative solutions and a stronger support network.

2. Encourage edupreneurs to focus on measuring the impact of their educational initiatives. This data-driven approach can help secure funding, showcase

successes, and improve their programs for the benefit of students and communities.

3. It is suggested that international funded agencies such as USAID provide micro-funding for educational institutions.

4. Embrace technological integration for personalized learning experiences.

5. Foster a culture of adaptability and innovation to stay responsive to changing market demands.

6. Strengthen community engagement and support to secure partnerships and resources.

7. Uphold a commitment to quality education through teacher training and curriculum development

8. Balance customization of educational programs with scalability for broader reach.

9. Maintain a long-term perspective and invest in sustainable practices.

10. Develop financial resilience strategies and explore creative funding solutions.

11. Ensure inclusive access to education, addressing connectivity issues and offline resources.

12. Continue to provide skill-based education, especially in underserved communities.

13. Inspire confidence in students by recognizing success beyond academics.

14. Implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for continuous improvement.

15. Invest in teacher development with ongoing training and support.

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