SELINUS UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

Skill-Based Entrepreneurship Education: How Partnerships between Industry, Academia and Government Can Foster Entrepreneurial Talent in Nigeria

By Angela Ajala

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of
Entrepreneurship & Innovation
program at Selinus University

Faculty of Business & Media
in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Entrepreneurship & Innovation

2025

ABSTRACT

This study examines the potential of skill-based entrepreneurship education to encourage entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria through effective partnership between academia, industry and the government. Amid rising youth unemployment and the growing need for job creators or entrepreneurs rather than job seekers, entrepreneurship education has become an important part of national development strategies. However, existing entrepreneurial programs fall short due to outdated curricula, limited practical opportunities and poor collaboration between industries. This study used a mixed-methods approach, combining 200 students' survey responses across 5 Nigerian Universities with qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews from 15 stakeholders, including lecturers, government officials and business leaders. The research aimed to identify the challenges preventing the effective implementation of skill-based entrepreneurship education, examine partnership opportunities as well as highlight the roles of stakeholders and strategies for their effective collaboration. This study found that some of major barriers to entrepreneurship education include lack of opportunities for practical training, outdated curricula, inadequate mentorship and insufficient funding. Due to these concerns, stakeholders emphasised the need for better partnership between academia, industry and the government. This study contributes to existing literature by emphasizing the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships in addressing Nigeria's skill gap. This study recommends a curriculum reform, increased funding, structured mentorship programs and more effective policy formulation to encourage entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to my supervisor for his guidance and time during this journey. His insights and support were highly helpful in writing this thesis. I would also like to thank all the students who filled the survey as well as all the stakeholders who participated in the interviews. Their willingness to contribute their time and knowledge helped in better understanding the challenges and scope of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Context of the Research

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a critical driver of economic growth and development. According to Ojeifo (2012), entrepreneurship involves the process of creating and developing a business venture with the aim of generating profit or creating value. This process is not only about launching a new business but also about fostering innovation, creating jobs, and contributing to societal well-being. According to Tripathi et al. (2022), entrepreneurship also involves taking risks and harnessing opportunities to create value. For Magul and Pasqualetto (2023), entrepreneurship involves generating new ideas in order to transform scarce resources into results.

Globally, entrepreneurship has been linked to significant economic growth, job creation and positive societal impact (Ezekiel, 2016). According to Van Praag and Versloot (2007), entrepreneurship causes significant growth through the development of new markets, thereby increasing productivity and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Data from Rizvi (2024) show that Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) which constitute a majority of entrepreneurial businesses contribute up to 60% of several countries' GDP. Not only that these SMEs are also responsible for a large share of job creation. Decker et al. (2014) found that by fostering a competitive environment, entrepreneurship contributes about 20% of gross job creation to the US economy. According to Ranjan (2019), entrepreneurship also increases per-capita income and contributes to the growth of infrastructural facilities across countries.

Faloye and Olatunji (2018) further emphasize that entrepreneurship helps alleviate poverty for individuals by generating income, creating wealth and providing access to essential goods and services thereby improving standard of living. According to Si et al. (2019) and Bruton et al. (2013), entrepreneurship also helps reduce poverty across the world by providing financial security through jobs and opportunities. In agreement, Morris et al. (2020) and Zhang et al. (2022) found that entrepreneurship can be a source of empowerment for the less privileged with the potential of reducing poverty in developed and developing economies. This in turn has a resultant effect on the economy. When people are employed, they have more money to spend on goods and services, thereby supporting other businesses and increasing economic growth.

Entrepreneurship education plays a vital role in this context. It empowers individuals, particularly the youth, by equipping them with the necessary skills, mindset, and knowledge to start and manage businesses, thus, encouraging self-employment and self-reliance (Abanobi, 2017). The role of entrepreneurship education extends beyond individual empowerment; it is a strategic tool for economic development. By creating an entrepreneurial mindset, education systems can produce individuals who are capable of identifying and seizing opportunities, managing risks and driving innovation (Carpenter & Wilson 2021). According to Nabi et al. (2017), entrepreneurship education encompasses a wide range of activities aimed at developing the entrepreneurial skills of students. These activities include business planning, financial literacy, risk management and vocational training (Ezekiel, 2016). It is usually offered at various educational levels, from primary and secondary schools to higher education institutions, and aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the entrepreneurial process (Enu, 2012).

Entrepreneurship education also emphasizes practical experiences. According to Nwosu (2018), practical experiences such as internships, real-world projects, and networking opportunities are

crucial in preparing students for the challenges of starting and managing their businesses. These practical components of entrepreneurship education help students apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, fostering a hands-on understanding of business operations (Mbiewa, 2011). In addition to practical skills, entrepreneurship education cultivates essential traits such as creativity, resilience, and risk-taking (Ojo et al., 2014). Magaji and Nanle (2014) found that these traits are critical for entrepreneurial success, as they enable individuals to navigate the uncertainties and challenges inherent in entrepreneurial ventures. By fostering these qualities, entrepreneurship education contributes to the development of a dynamic and innovative entrepreneurial workforce.

The importance of entrepreneurship education has been recognized globally. Many countries have integrated entrepreneurship into their educational curricula to enhance economic growth and address unemployment issues (Mikić et al., 2019). According to the Erasmus Factsheet, it can be integrated into the educational system via cross-curricular methods, as a separate subject or as an optional subject within existing subjects. The European Commission in particular, has emphasized the inclusion of entrepreneurship education in school curricula across all levels to increase innovation and employment (Remeikiene et al., 2013). In the United States, for example, over 5,000 schools and colleges offer specialized programs in entrepreneurship (Rahimi, 2021). These entrepreneurship programs are integrated into business and economics programs and have scholarships or grant to support innovative ideas. Similar to the United States, Australia also offers specialized entrepreneurship programs focused on practical training and industry networking in undergraduate and graduate levels (Rahimi, 2021). Other European countries have also launched initiatives to incorporate entrepreneurial training in their education systems, highlighting the global recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship education

(Erasmus Factsheet, n.d.). For example, in the Philippines, the government has implemented initiatives to promote small businesses and entrepreneurship education focusing on practical skills and creation of small business in various universities (Rahimi, 2021).

Unlike European countries, a significant number of African countries do not have entrepreneurship education integrated into the education system. In the few countries that entrepreneurship education is offered, it is usually based on traditional approaches such as lecturing as opposed to practical, hands-on approaches (Mbeteh & Pellegrini, 2018). For example, in countries like Kenya and Mali, youths lack the entrepreneurial mindset and skills despite having degrees and diplomas (Pompa, 2015). According to DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014), structural and cultural factors in Africa usually hinder the practical application of entrepreneurship education commonly used in European countries. Thus, making entrepreneurship education largely ineffective in addressing unemployment (Ubogu, 2020).

In Nigeria, the relevance of entrepreneurship education is particularly significant due to the country's socio-economic challenges (Olorundare & Kayode, 2014). With one of the largest economies in Africa, Nigeria faces high unemployment rates, with over 90 million Nigerian youths reported to be unemployed (News Digest, 2022). Limited access to quality education and insufficient infrastructural development further exacerbate these challenges. Ezekiel (2016) argues that entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a vital means of addressing these socio-economic issues. By promoting entrepreneurship education, Nigeria can equip its youth with the skills and knowledge necessary to create jobs and drive economic growth (Esia, 2012).

The roots of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria can be traced back to traditional practices during the pre-independence era (Ubogu, 2023). Communities engaged in various forms of trade,

agriculture and craftsmanship such as woodcarving, cloth-making, blacksmithing and pottery (Oni, 2012). In addition, trading was a vital part of Nigerian culture, with people engaging in the exchange of goods like textiles, spices, and agricultural products (Abanobi, 2017). These entrepreneurial skills were typically passed down through generations via apprenticeship systems, where young individuals learned trades by working alongside experienced family members or community elders (Okey et al., 2012). This system ensured that practical skills, business acumen, and local market knowledge were effectively transferred and preserved (Faloye & Olatunji, 2018).

The introduction of western education in the 18th century however, impacted the educational system in Nigeria (Oladunjoye, 2018). The focus was shifted from entrepreneurship skills and critical thinking to academic subjects, religion and rote learning (Ubogu, 2023). This shift in focus had long-term implications for Nigeria's entrepreneurial culture. As formal education became more widespread, the traditional apprenticeship model began to decline, and the emphasis on academic qualifications overshadowed the importance of practical skills and entrepreneurship (Umar et al., 2022). This change contributed to a workforce that was less equipped with the hands-on skills necessary for creating and managing businesses, thereby impacting the entrepreneurial mindset and capabilities of future generations (Enu, 2012). In addition, the discovery of oil and the subsequent boom also shifted the country’s economic focus from agriculture and technical skills (Edokpolor & Oduma, 2018).

In the 1980s however, the economic downturn and structural adjustment programs highlighted the need for economic diversification and job creation (Oladunjoye, 2018). In addition, the lack of emphasis practical skills and entrepreneurship training during that era contributed significantly to the high rate of employment among graduates (NBS, 2011). Following these

challenges, the Nigerian government began to realize the potential of entrepreneurship as a tool for economic development. This period saw the introduction of various policies and programs aimed at promoting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurship (Edokpolor & Oduma, 2018). Key among these was the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in 1986, which aimed to combat unemployment through training programs and support for small businesses (Abada & Okorie, 2016). It focused on various schemes, including vocational skills development, entrepreneurship training, and small-scale enterprise support services (Umar et al., 2022). The establishment of the NDE marked a significant shift to the government approach to entrepreneurship education. The main focus of the NDE was to provide trainings and opportunities for students to gain practical skills in business, thereby generating employment and fostering economic growth (Abada & Okorie, 2016).

The formal integration of entrepreneurship education into Nigeria's educational curriculum began in earnest in the 1990s (Oni, 2012). The National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced guidelines that encouraged higher education institutions to incorporate entrepreneurship courses into their programs (Ajose, 2021). The objective was to produce graduates who were not only academically proficient but also equipped with the skills to create and manage businesses (Esia, 2012). During this period, several universities and polytechnics began offering courses in entrepreneurship. Institutions like the University of Lagos, Obafemi Awolowo University, and Yaba College of Technology pioneered these efforts, setting up entrepreneurship centers and offering specialized programs (Oni, 2012). These initiatives aimed to provide students with practical business skills, knowledge of the business environment, and the ability to innovate and take risks.

The 2000s marked a significant expansion of entrepreneurship education across Nigeria. The federal government, recognizing the importance of entrepreneurship in driving economic growth, launched several initiatives to support and expand entrepreneurship education. One notable initiative was the introduction of the Entrepreneurship Development Centres (EDCs) by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in collaboration with the NUC (NUC, n.d.). These centers were established in various universities to provide students with practical training, mentorship, and resources to start their businesses (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2013). The EDCs aimed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that graduates were better prepared to enter the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Additionally, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) introduced the Skills Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) program in 2012 (Umar et al., 2022). This program aimed to equip corps members with entrepreneurial skills during their mandatory one-year service, thereby encouraging them to pursue self-employment opportunities after their service year (Adedapr & Nzei, 2021). The SAED program offered training in various skills such as fashion design, agriculture, and ICT, coupled with business management and financial literacy education (Ibrahim, 2021). These recent initiatives reflect a more strategic approach to embedding entrepreneurship education within the national curriculum and supporting young Nigerians in developing the skills needed to thrive in an entrepreneurial environment (Odigbo, 2023).

In recent years, there has been a continued emphasis on entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, driven by both government policies and private sector initiatives (Ajose, 2021). The Nigerian entrepreneurial ecosystem has seen significant growth, with a 35% increase in entrepreneurial activities over the last two years (Anyanwu et al., 2022). This growth is supported by the

existence of incubators, accelerators, angel investors, and venture capital firms that provide start-ups with infrastructure, mentorship, and funding (Afolabi et al., 2017). Technological advancements have also played a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Online learning platforms and digital resources have made entrepreneurship education more accessible to a wider audience (Rahimi, 2021). Programs such as the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme and the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) have also provided funding, training, and mentorship to thousands of young entrepreneurs across the country. However, for this ecosystem to thrive, there is a need for robust entrepreneurship education programs that can nurture an entrepreneurial mindset from a young age.

Despite the progress, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria faces several challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to funding, and a mismatch between educational curricula and the realities of the business environment (Enu, 2012). There is a need for greater collaboration between academia, industry, and government to ensure that entrepreneurship education programs are relevant and effective (Zhang et al., 2022). However, the opportunities are vast. With a youthful population and growing recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship, Nigeria is well-positioned to create a new generation of entrepreneurs (Ajose, 2021). By addressing existing challenges and leveraging technological advancements, the country can further enhance its entrepreneurship education landscape.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Ezekiel (2016), entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has been recognized as an important factor in increasing economic growth and addressing the country's socio-economic

challenges. Historically, the Nigerian educational system emphasized traditional academic subjects and theoretical knowledge, often neglecting the practical skills and innovative thinking necessary for entrepreneurial success (Oladunjoye, 2018). This gap has become more evident in recent years, as the country faces severe economic challenges, including youth unemployment rates, limited job opportunities, inflation, and a heavy reliance on the oil sector (Edokpolor & Oduma, 2018).

The integration of entrepreneurship education within Nigerian schools' curriculum aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills and innovative mindset required to identify and exploit business opportunities (Abanobi, 2017). This in turn will encourage self-employment and reduce dependency on traditional employment sectors and white collar jobs (Enu, 2012). In addition, Magaji and Nanle (2014) found that the integration of entrepreneurship education into school curriculums will stimulate the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This is important in driving economic diversification and resilience because entrepreneurship education plays an important role in promoting sustainable economic development (Nwosu, 2018). It empowers individuals, particularly the youth, to become job creators rather than job seekers, thus addressing the critical issue of unemployment (Ojo et al., 2014). By nurturing entrepreneurial talent, Nigeria can build a robust and dynamic workforce capable of driving economic transformation. The benefits extend beyond individual success, contributing to overall societal well-being by generating wealth, reducing poverty, and improving living standards (Enu, 2012).

Recognizing the benefits of entrepreneurship education across countries, there has been numerous efforts by scholars such as Ejioju and Nwajiuba (2015) and Anyebe (2017) to examine the impact of entrepreneurship education on individuals and on Nigeria's economic development. In addition, Mbiewa (2011) found that there have been initiatives from both the government and

private sector to promote and enhance entrepreneurship education across various educational levels in Nigeria. However despite these efforts, significant challenges remain in fully realizing the potential of entrepreneurship education, thus necessitating the need for an in-depth examination into the challenges and strategic initiatives to improve entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Ojo et al., 2014).

One of the significant challenges is the lack of practical skills and experience-based learning opportunities within school curricula (Nwekeaku, 2013). According to Nwabufo and Mamman (2015), experience-based learning opportunities such as internships, role-play, real world projects and simulations are important for developing the competencies required for entrepreneurship. These opportunities allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, providing skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and risk management (Ejioju & Nwajiuba, 2015). Unfortunately, such opportunities are limited in many Nigerian educational institutions (Agbonlahor, 2016). Many schools continue to rely on traditional and theoretical teaching methods, which fail to provide students with hands-on experience needed for entrepreneurial success (Nwekeaku, 2013). This focus on the theoretical approach means that students often graduate without the practical knowledge needed to start and manage their own businesses, thereby leaving open a gap in their readiness to enter the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Ezeani, 2018).

Additionally, there is insufficient integration of entrepreneurship education across various educational levels in Nigeria. While some higher education institutions have begun to incorporate entrepreneurship courses into their programs, these efforts are often inconsistent and lack a standardized approach (Nwosu, 2018). Primary and secondary schools, which play a crucial role in shaping early mindsets and attitudes towards entrepreneurship, frequently

overlook the importance of introducing entrepreneurial concepts at a young age (Nwabufo & Mamman, 2015). This fragmented approach means that students are not consistently exposed to entrepreneurship education throughout their academic journey, resulting in missed opportunities to build a strong foundation for entrepreneurial thinking and skills (Agbonlahor, 2016).

According to Unachukwu (2010), the implementation of effective entrepreneurship education in Nigeria also faces numerous challenges. One of such issues is limited infrastructure and educational resources necessary to support comprehensive entrepreneurship training (Nwosu, 2018). Many schools in Nigeria lack the essential facilities, such as well-equipped laboratories, incubators, and innovation hubs which are crucial for encouraging practical entrepreneurial skills (Nwekeaku, 2013). Without access to these resources, students miss out on critical hands-on experiences that are necessary for understanding and navigating the complexities of real-world business environments (Ofili, 2014). Furthermore, there is a significant shortage of qualified teachers who possess both the academic knowledge and practical experience in entrepreneurship (Unachukwu, 2010). This problem results in a curriculum that is often outdated and disconnected from the current needs of the entrepreneurial ecosystem (Ofili, 2014). As a result, students are not adequately prepared to meet the challenges of starting and sustaining their own businesses (Ogunmola & Olayemi, 2020).

Another major obstacle is inadequate funding and financial support for both educational institutions and students (Nwosu, 2018). Many schools and universities struggle with limited budgets that limit their ability to develop and sustain entrepreneurship programs (Unachukwu, 2010). This financial strain often leads to a reliance on theoretical instruction at the expense of practical, hands-on learning opportunities (Ofili, 2014). Additionally, students frequently face financial barriers that prevent them from participating in entrepreneurship programs or starting

their own ventures (Ogunmola & Olayemi, 2020). Without sufficient funding, aspiring entrepreneurs cannot access the necessary resources, mentorship, or start-up capital required to transform their business ideas into reality (Nwosu, 2018).

According to Undiyaundeye and Otu (2015), addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort and partnership from the government, private sector, and educational institutions. All these stakeholders need to come together to invest in the necessary infrastructure, provide adequate training for educators, and ensure that both schools and students have access to sufficient financial resources (Ofili, 2014). This multifaceted approach is essential to creating a supportive environment where entrepreneurship education can thrive and effectively contribute to economic development (Agbonlahor, 2016). However, in Nigeria, such approach face significant barriers. One major issue is the lack of effective partnerships between these key stakeholders. Educational institutions often operate in isolation, without substantial input or support from industry and government entities (Anyebe, 2017). This disconnect leads to curricula that are not aligned with the practical needs and evolving trends of the entrepreneurial landscape.

The absence of these partnerships also results in a misalignment of goals and priorities among academia, industry, and government. Academic institutions typically focus on theoretical knowledge and academic achievements, while industries prioritize practical skills and market-ready graduates (Anyebe, 2017). Governments, on the other hand, may emphasize policy frameworks, regulatory environments and initiatives that may not effectively integrate with academic programs (Ezeani, 2018). This difference in focus creates a gap where the educational content does not fully prepare students for the demands of the entrepreneurial world, and industry expectations are not met by the output of the education system (Nwabufo & Mamman, 2015). These differences are further worsened by bureaucratic hurdles and differing agendas

(Agbonlahor, 2016). Industries may find it challenging to engage with academic institutions due to rigid administrative processes, while governments may struggle to implement policies that effectively bridge the gap between education and practical application (Ofili, 2014).

According to scholars like Ubogu (2020) and Ogunmola and Olayemi (2020), the current gaps in the Nigerian entrepreneurship landscape and lack of partnership among relevant stakeholders have a significant impact on entrepreneurial talent development, contributing to high rates of unemployment and underemployment among the youth. Despite possessing academic qualifications, many graduate lack the practical skills and innovative mind set to start and sustain businesses (Ezeani, 2018). This inadequacy leaves a significant portion of the youth unable to use their education to create self-employment opportunities (Nwabufo & Mamman, 2015). According to Ubogu (2020), this results in a continuous cycle of joblessness and underutilization of potential. Many young Nigerians, after completing their education, find themselves inadequately prepared to face the realities of the real world (Unachukwu, 2010). This not only reduces individual career prospects but also limits the broader economic development in the country. For Nwabufo and Mamman (2015), the socio-economic consequences of ineffective entrepreneurship education are far-reaching. Unemployment and underemployment contribute to increased poverty levels, social unrest, and economic instability (Ubogu, 2020). The Nigerian economy, heavily reliant on oil, misses out on the diversification benefits that a vibrant SME sector could provide (Ogunmola & Olayemi, 2020). Moreover, the failure to harness the entrepreneurial potential of the youth results in lost opportunities for innovation, which is critical for addressing pressing societal challenges and driving sustainable growth.

Addressing the challenges in Nigeria's entrepreneurship education requires the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies. According to Anyebe (2017), these strategies must

go beyond changes in the curriculum and require an approach that combines practical skills, experience-based learning and industry relevance into educational programs (Moses et al., 2017). By adopting a multifaceted strategy, educational institutions can better equip students with the tools needed to succeed in entrepreneurial endeavors, thus creating a better entrepreneurial ecosystem (Agbonlahor, 2016). An important element of these comprehensive strategies is the need for active collaboration and partnership among academia, industry, and government (Nwabufo & Mamman, 2015). Effective entrepreneurship education cannot be achieved in isolation; it requires the concerted efforts of all stakeholders to ensure that educational programs are aligned with real-world needs (Moses et al., 2017).

According to Anyebe (2017), academia provides the foundational knowledge and theoretical frameworks, industry offers practical insights and experience-based learning opportunities, and government creates enabling policies and provides necessary resources. Such collaborations can lead to the establishment of incubators and innovation hubs within educational institutions, where students can work on real-life projects under the mentorship of industry professionals (Nwabufo & Mamman, 2015). Additionally, joint initiatives like internship programs, business plan competitions, and startup grants can provide students with hands-on experience and financial support (Maifata & Mohammed, 2016). For instance, integrating industry experts into the teaching process can ensure that curricula remain relevant and up-to-date with current market trends and technological advancements (Moses et al., 2017). Moreover, government involvement is crucial in creating policies that encourage entrepreneurship and support educational institutions in implementing these comprehensive strategies (Ubogu, 2020). By creating an environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurial activities, the government can help bridge the gap between education and industry (Maifata & Mohammed, 2016).

However, the persistent gaps and implementation challenges in skill-based entrepreneurship in Nigeria necessitate the need for urgent research into the problem. According to Agbonlahor (2016), research into the current state of entrepreneurship education is important to identify specific weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. This is because addressing these issues is important for unlocking the full potential of the nation's entrepreneurial talent. This study therefore aims to identify and analyze the key challenges preventing the effective implementation of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and understand how these challenges impact the development of entrepreneurial talent. Furthermore, exploring opportunities for enhancing partnerships and collaborations between industry, academia, and government is crucial because effective entrepreneurship education requires the joint efforts of all stakeholders. This study therefore seeks to explore how these partnerships can be used to address gaps in the current Nigerian entrepreneurial ecosystem, fostering an environment where entrepreneurial talent can thrive.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study includes:

1. To identify and analyze the key challenges preventing the effective implementation of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and understand how these challenges impact the development of entrepreneurship talent.
2. To explore opportunities for enhancing partnerships and collaborations between industry, academia, and the government in promoting skill-based entrepreneurship education, and determine how these opportunities can be leveraged to address gaps in the current Nigerian entrepreneurial ecosystem.

3. To determine the most effective strategies and best practices for developing sustainable partnerships between key stakeholders in Nigeria to promote skill-based entrepreneurship education.
4. To clarify the key roles, responsibilities, and contributions of industry, academia, and government in promoting entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

This study will address the following research questions:

1. What are the key challenges preventing the effective implementation of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, and how do these challenges impact entrepreneurial talent development?
2. What opportunities exist for enhancing partnerships and collaborations between industry, academia and the government in promoting skill-based entrepreneurship education, and how can these opportunities be leveraged to address the gaps in the current Nigerian entrepreneurial ecosystem?
3. What are the most effective strategies and best practices for developing sustainable partnerships between key stakeholders in Nigeria to promote skill-based entrepreneurship education?
4. What are the key roles, responsibilities and contributions of industry, academia and government in promoting entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria?

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, its implantation and the potential for effective partnerships between industry, academia and the government. This study examines the components of skill-based entrepreneurship education, identifying how practical skills and knowledge are imparted across different educational levels i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. It will also focus on the roles and interactions of key stakeholders as well identifying areas where their partnership can improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nigeria. This research encompasses both historical and recent trends in Nigerian entrepreneurship education, thus providing examining how past and recent policies have shaped the educational landscape.

The findings of this study is however limited due to its reliance on qualitative data collection methods such as interviews and focus groups. This is because this research method may introduce bias related to participant selection and response accuracy. The generalizability of the findings is also limited due to sample size as it may not fully represent the vast educational and entrepreneurial landscape across Nigeria. The unique socio-economic and cultural factors present in Nigeria may also limit the applicability of this study's findings to other countries. In addition, the rapidly changing economic environment and educational policies can also impact the relevance and timeliness of this study's findings.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study on skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria lies in its potential to contribute to academic research, policy formulation, and practical applications in the entrepreneurial and educational sectors.

Firstly, this study addresses a critical gap in existing literature by providing an in-depth analysis of the challenges and opportunities within the Nigerian context. While much has been written about entrepreneurship education globally, there is limited research that focuses specifically on the unique socio-economic and cultural landscape of Nigeria. This study's findings can serve as a valuable resource for scholars and researchers interested in understanding the complexities of implementing entrepreneurship education in developing economies, particularly within Africa.

From a policy perspective, the study's findings on the barriers and facilitators of effective entrepreneurship education can inform government agencies and policymakers in crafting more targeted and effective educational policies. By highlighting the importance of practical skills and experiential learning, the study emphasizes the need for curriculum reforms that include hands-on training and real-world applications. Policymakers can use these recommendations to design programs that not only impart theoretical knowledge but also equip students with the skills necessary to thrive in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The study also examines the critical role of collaboration between academia, industry, and government in fostering entrepreneurial talent. This partnership among stakeholders is essential for creating a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem. By demonstrating the benefits and best practices of such collaborations, the study can encourage educational institutions to forge stronger ties with industry partners and government bodies. This could lead to the development of more

comprehensive and cohesive entrepreneurship programs that are better aligned with market needs and technological advancements.

For educational institutions, the study provides actionable insights into how they can enhance their entrepreneurship curricula. The emphasis on practical skills, internships, and real-world projects offers a roadmap for institutions to redesign their programs to be more relevant and impactful. Educators and administrators can draw on the study's findings to develop innovative teaching methods and partnerships that enrich students' learning experiences and better prepare them for the challenges of starting and managing their own ventures.

The findings of this study will provide industry stakeholders with a more in-depth understanding the educational landscape and the potential for collaboration, thus, businesses can play a more active role in shaping the future workforce. Partnerships with educational institutions can provide companies with a direct pipeline of skilled and entrepreneurial talent, while also contributing to the broader goal of economic development. Moreover, industry involvement in entrepreneurship education can foster a culture of innovation and continuous learning within companies, which is crucial for maintaining competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market.

For students and aspiring entrepreneurs, the study explains the importance of acquiring both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. By advocating for a more integrated approach to entrepreneurship education, the study aims to create an environment where students can gain valuable hands-on experience, access mentorship opportunities, and receive the support they need to launch successful ventures. This, in turn, can lead to increased self-employment, job creation, and economic self-reliance among the youth, addressing the high unemployment rates and economic challenges facing Nigeria.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of existing literature on skill-based entrepreneurship education, focusing on the crucial roles of industry, academia and government partnerships in encouraging entrepreneurial talent. The literature review will explore global perspectives, the contributions of each sector in entrepreneurship education, the challenges and opportunities within the Nigerian context, and the application of the human capital theory in entrepreneurship education.

This chapter establishes a theoretical and empirical foundation for understanding how collaboration among these three sectors (industry, academia and government) can drive entrepreneurial success in Nigeria. By examining studies focused on both the global and Nigerian context, this study aims to highlight best practices, identify gaps in current literature and provide a foundation for the analysis of how these partnerships can be effectively used to enhance entrepreneurial skills and outcomes in Nigeria.

2.2. Global Perspectives on Skill-Based Entrepreneurship Education

Over the past two decades, entrepreneurship education programs (EEP) have seen a significant rise globally, specifically with the aim of equipping individuals with the skills necessary for entrepreneurial success (Kathayat, 2022). A systematic review by Jardim et al. (2021) synthesized the characteristics and effectiveness of EEPs across Europe, Asia, and America, revealing that these programs primarily target students in higher education institutions. However,

their findings also pointed to a growing trend of integrating entrepreneurial skills development into basic and secondary education. This reflects a shift in educational priorities toward cultivating entrepreneurial mind-sets at earlier stages of learning (Higgins et al., 2013).While many of these programs have successfully promoted the development of entrepreneurial skills, Litzky et al. (2020) found that they often fall short of directly influencing the intention to start a business. According to Asimakopoulos et al. (2019), socio-cultural and familial factors continue to play a dominant role in shaping entrepreneurial intentions, suggesting that formal education alone may not be sufficient to inspire the entrepreneurial drive.

Several studies, such as the one conducted by Montes et al. (2023) in Latin America, have sought to clarify the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intention. Their research, which involved more than 1,200 students from universities in Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru, revealed no statistically significant correlation between the two. The findings supported the null hypothesis that entrepreneurship education is independent of entrepreneurial intention, highlighting the complexity of encouraging entrepreneurial ambition. While education can provide students with foundational skills, Asimakopoulos et al. (2019) highlighted the need for supplementary mechanisms such as cultural or social interventions that could bridge the gap between knowledge acquisition and actual entrepreneurial activity. According to Maghfiorh et al. (2023), the idea that entrepreneurial intent is not solely driven by education, but rather by a combination of factors including family background, societal influences, and personal aspirations, raises critical questions about the role of formal educational systems in shaping future entrepreneurs.

On the other hand, a study by Sousa et al. (2023) focused on the perceptions of students and professionals in Europe concerning entrepreneurial skills and their development. The study

found that while established entrepreneurs had already acquired most of the competencies necessary for success, except for access to finance, students lagged significantly in areas such as financial literacy, business planning, and digital marketing. According to Morris et al. (2013), such disparity suggests that entrepreneurship education programs must be tailored to meet the distinct needs of different audiences. For students, broader programs focusing on a wide range of skills may be required, whereas for practitioners, more specific training that addresses particular challenges, such as financing and scaling, would be more beneficial. As argued by Papageorgiou et al. (2021), there is a growing need to continuously update entrepreneurship curricula to reflect the evolving landscape of entrepreneurship, especially with the increasing importance of digital skills in a rapidly globalizing economy. According to Sousa et al. (2023), this highlights the importance of constant innovation in pedagogical approaches due to the dynamic nature of entrepreneurial education.

Moreover, evidence from a pilot study conducted by Boldureanu et al. (2020) in a European business creation course illustrated the extensive impact that exposure to successful entrepreneurial role models can have on students' attitudes and intentions toward entrepreneurship. The study showed that students who had the opportunity to engage with these role models during their educational programs exhibited greater confidence in their ability to start a business. This suggests that role models play an important role in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations by providing tangible examples of success that students can emulate (Dohse & Walter, 2012). However, Boldureanu et al. (2020) found that this effect varies significantly between business and non-business students, demonstrating the need for differentiated program designs that cater to the unique needs of each group. For business students, interaction with

successful entrepreneurs may reinforce their existing ambitions, while for non-business students, these interactions might spark new interest in entrepreneurial endeavors (Dohse & Walter, 2012).

Another perspective, offered by a study on Swedish universities by Rasmussen and Sørheim (2006), advocated for a shift towards action-oriented learning in entrepreneurship education. This approach emphasizes learning by doing, group collaboration, and network-based activities, which stands in contrast to traditional classroom-based models that are more focused on theoretical instruction. According to Hahn et al. (2019), this hands-on approach not only educates future entrepreneurs but also facilitates the commercialization of university research and the establishment of new ventures. By immersing students in real-world challenges and giving them the tools to collaborate and create, this method of experiential learning appears to improve entrepreneurial competencies far more effectively than passive learning methods (Morris et al., 2013). According to Nabi et al. (2017) and Tan and Ng (2006), this trend toward experiential and problem-based learning is reflective of a broader global shift in education, where the focus is increasingly placed on developing practical skills that can be directly applied to entrepreneurial pursuits.

In contrast, a case study of business schools in European Union member states conducted by Qian (2017) found that while these institutions have been successful in developing essential entrepreneurial skills such as problem-solving, risk-taking, and teamwork, cultural factors significantly influence the specific skills that are emphasized in different regions. In support, Maghfiorh et al. (2023) emphasized that regional variations in cultural norms and societal expectations shape both the skills that are prioritized and the overall effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in encouraging entrepreneurial behaviour. For instance, in some regions, risk-taking may be highly valued, whereas in others, teamwork and collective effort are

seen as more important (Pazos et al., 2022). This highlights the importance of contextualizing entrepreneurship education within local cultural frameworks, as what works in one region may not necessarily be effective in another (Leon, 2018). Accordingly, the design of entrepreneurship education programs must take into account these cultural differences to ensure that they are relevant and impactful in diverse settings.

Hermann and Bossle (2020) argued for the need to integrate entrepreneurial education with broader societal and economic goals, such as sustainability and social responsibility. As entrepreneurship increasingly intersects with global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and technological disruption, educational programs must evolve to address these issues and prepare students to become entrepreneurs who are not only economically successful but also socially responsible (Sanchez-Hernandez & Maldonado-Briegas, 2019). According to Higgins et al. (2013), this requires a shift in focus from merely teaching students how to start businesses to equipping them with the skills and mindsets needed to address complex global challenges through entrepreneurship. Recent research, including studies by Almahry et al. (2018), have also stressed the importance of teaching entrepreneurship with a strong emphasis on ethics and sustainability, encouraging students to create businesses that contribute positively to society while also achieving financial success.

According to Leon (2018), the global rise of entrepreneurship education reflects a growing recognition of its potential to drive economic growth, innovation, and social progress. However, the effectiveness of these programs in encouraging genuine entrepreneurial intent remains a topic of debate, as socio-cultural factors, educational approaches, and individual motivations all play critical roles in shaping entrepreneurial outcomes (Asimakopoulos et al., 2019). While education can provide the necessary skills and knowledge, Boldureanu et al. (2020) emphasizes that

inspiring entrepreneurial ambition requires a more holistic approach that includes exposure to role models, experiential learning opportunities, and a deeper understanding of the cultural and societal context in which entrepreneurship occurs. As the landscape of entrepreneurship continues to evolve, the methods and content of entrepreneurship education must also adapt (Nabi et al., 2017). This ensures that future entrepreneurs are equipped not only with the technical skills needed to succeed but also with the broader competencies required to navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world (Kathayat, 2022).

Despite the increasing global emphasis on entrepreneurship education, studies such as Litzky et al. (2020) reveal that the relationship between education, skills development, and entrepreneurial intention is complex and often context-dependent. While entrepreneurship programs are widely acknowledged for their role in equipping individuals with technical and managerial skills, Rasmussen and Sørheim (2006) found that the broader challenge remains in translating these skills into entrepreneurial action. For instance, several studies, including Kathayat (2022) and Campos (2023) that explored conceptual and technical skills in Nepal, have affirmed the positive impact of these skills on entrepreneurial development. However, they also point to the limitations of human skills in driving entrepreneurship, suggesting that the focus of education should be on more tangible skills that directly enhance business operations (Campos, 2023).

These findings highlight the need for entrepreneurship education programs to be flexible and responsive to both the changing nature of entrepreneurship and the different needs of their participants. As demonstrated by the various studies such as Bi and Collins (2021), entrepreneurship education is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, it requires careful consideration of local cultures, the backgrounds of participants, and the specific skills necessary for success in the global entrepreneurial landscape (Tok & d'Alessandro, 2019). By addressing

these factors, educational institutions can better prepare students and professionals alike to thrive in entrepreneurial endeavors (Carriker, 2021).

Entrepreneurship education has become a central focus of policy initiatives worldwide, with the objective of creating economic growth, reducing unemployment, and generating social capital. According to Bi and Collins (2021), this is based on the belief that entrepreneurial skills and mindsets can be taught, and that these skills can drive students towards establishing startups and innovative business ventures. For Carriker (2021), one of the key aspects of effective entrepreneurship education is the need for efficient, well-designed frameworks that provide both theoretical knowledge and practical, hands-on experiences. According to Grivokostopoulou, et al. (2019), the growing emphasis on technology in education has also led to the exploration of innovative methods, such as the use of 3D virtual worlds to enhance entrepreneurship training. The application of gamification principles, according to Li et al. (2023), offers an immersive learning experience, where students engage in game-based activities that simulate real-world business challenges. These methods have been shown to not only boost students' motivation but also develop critical entrepreneurial skills necessary for overcoming daily obstacles in their entrepreneurial journeys (Liu, 2023).

While traditional methods of education emphasize cognitive and technical knowledge, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of skills-based human capital in encouraging entrepreneurship, especially in high-technology sectors (Kathayat, 2022). Research from Campos (2023) highlights the role of various labor market skills, including cognitive, technical, problem-solving, social, and managerial skills, in promoting entrepreneurial activity. These skills not only contribute to startup activity but also play a significant role in translating university research into entrepreneurial ventures, especially within knowledge-based regional economies

(Hahn et al., 2019). This finding challenges the traditional focus on education-based human capital, suggesting that a more nuanced, skills-based approach may be essential for encouraging entrepreneurship in specific sectors.

Additionally, the professional identity of entrepreneurs is increasingly being recognized as an important element of entrepreneurship education. As global business environments evolve, entrepreneurs must cultivate identities that are adaptable, broad-minded, and capable of navigating complex, trust-based business networks. This requires a new set of skills, such as social competence, ethical understanding, and the ability to sustain networks across diverse cultural contexts (Morris et al., 2013). Entrepreneurs must also develop ethical frameworks as part of their professional identity, with education playing a crucial role in promoting values and ethical codes necessary for responsible business leadership (Lina et al., 2019). Researchers like Kathayat (2022) and Aaltio and Wang (2015) also emphasize the need for entrepreneurship education to focus not only on technical and business skills but also on instilling a strong sense of responsibility and sustainability.

In the context of preparing students for global entrepreneurial roles, the integration of essential skills into the curriculum becomes critical. As highlighted by Okoro (2021), students and graduates of tertiary institutions require practical entrepreneurship skills, such as business planning and execution, as well as financial management skills related to inventories and profit calculations. Moreover, in an increasingly digital world, ICT skills are indispensable for aspiring entrepreneurs. The ability to access software, manage digital communications, and perform basic technical tasks is no longer optional but a core requirement for entrepreneurial success (Papageorgiou et al., 2021, Mwangi, 2011). The study conducted in Delta State by Okoro (2021) emphasizes the importance of incorporating these practical skills into the educational curriculum

to ensure that students are well-equipped to navigate the entrepreneurial landscape upon graduation.

An additional layer to entrepreneurship education is the development of 21st-century skills. These skills go beyond basic business acumen and include critical competencies like creativity, leadership, social relationships, and critical thinking (Seoke et al., 2023). According to Ghafar (2020), entrepreneurship education should focus on nurturing these skills to create graduates who are not only driven to start their own ventures but also capable of making a significant entrepreneurial impact within organizations. While detailed industry knowledge may be beyond the immediate scope of entrepreneurship education, exposure to real-world industry contexts through experiential learning is important (Pazos et al., 2022). Such experiences provide students with the necessary insights into how industries operate, while simultaneously teaching the soft skills needed for entrepreneurial success (Carriker, 2021). The incorporation of these skills into entrepreneurship curricula is a gap that needs to be addressed.

The significance of creating a multicultural entrepreneurial perspective is also increasingly evident in today's globalized economy. As demonstrated by Velinov et al. (2020)'s research focused on MBA students engaging in transnational entrepreneurship, the borders for professional careers are widening, and students must develop intercultural communication skills to thrive in this environment. Programs that emphasize international cooperation, whether through exchange programs, summer schools, or partnerships with multinational companies, provide students with the opportunity to hone their abilities to navigate global business networks (Almahry et al., 2018). Furthermore, the use of online technologies and blended learning methods has emerged as a key tool in this effort. According to Pantelli et al. (2019), students who engage in online project teams gain valuable experience in coordinating activities with

distant team members, developing a flexible approach to online networking procedures that can be critical in today's interconnected business world.

These studies suggest that entrepreneurship education is evolving in tandem with the changing global economic landscape. While traditional business education remains relevant, there is a growing emphasis on a broader set of skills that encompass not only technical and cognitive abilities but also social, ethical, and intercultural competencies (Aaltio & Wang, 2015). The integration of these elements into entrepreneurship education programs can help to ensure that students are not only equipped to launch successful startups but are also prepared to navigate the complexities of global business environments.

At the same time, challenges remain in terms of effectively implementing these educational frameworks. As noted by Pazos et al. (2022), there are often significant gaps between the skills that are deemed necessary for entrepreneurship and the actual content of entrepreneurship education programs. This is particularly true in emerging economies, where educational infrastructure may not be fully equipped to provide the kind of immersive, experiential learning that is becoming increasingly common in more developed regions (Carriker, 2021). Furthermore, the shift towards online and blended learning models, while beneficial in many ways, also presents challenges in terms of ensuring the quality and consistency of educational delivery (Pantelli et al., 2019). Ensuring that students are able to engage meaningfully with these platforms, and that they are provided with adequate support, is important for the success of these programs.

In conclusion, entrepreneurship education is a critical driver of economic growth and social development. However, to be truly effective, it must evolve to meet the changing needs of the

global economy (Hermann & Bossle, 2020). This includes not only providing students with technical and cognitive skills but also encouraging soft skills, ethical understanding, and intercultural competencies that are essential for success in today's interconnected world (Aaltio & Wang, 2015). By integrating these elements into educational frameworks, policymakers and educators can help to ensure that the next generation of entrepreneurs is well-equipped to tackle the challenges of the future. The use of innovative teaching methods, such as virtual reality and gamification, holds great promise for enhancing the learning experience and motivating students to engage deeply with the material (Grivokostopoulou et al., 2019). Nevertheless, continued research and development are needed to refine these approaches and ensure their widespread applicability across different educational contexts.

2.3. Role of Industry in Entrepreneurship Education

According to Palanikumar et al. (2019), industry plays an important role in shaping entrepreneurship education by offering an interface between academic learning and real-world business demands. By actively participating in the educational process, industries ensure that training programs remain relevant and up-to-date with the latest market trends and technological advancements (Blankesteijn et al., 2021). This collaboration results in curricula that are not only theoretically sound but also practically applicable, providing students with the skills and knowledge they need to excel in today's competitive workforce (Oyinlola et al., 2024). To give credence to scholars like Blankesteijn et al. (2021), Boudreaux (2020) and Mwangi (2011) suggests that industries or the business sector bridges the gap between classroom learning and

the actual demands of the workplace, ensuring that students are equipped to navigate the complexities of modern business environments effectively.

Omoniyi et al. (2022) found that one of the key contributions of industry involvement is the enhancement of skill development. According to them, industries provide hands-on training opportunities that are critical for students to understand the different aspects of starting and running a business. This is particularly important in developing economies, where entrepreneurship serves as a crucial driver for industrial growth and employment generation (Maina, 2014). Findings from James et al. (2018) suggests that industries help create an entrepreneurial mindset or intention in students when they are exposed to real-world challenges. According to them, this encourages innovation, creativity, and a problem-solving approach. Graduates, therefore, emerge not just as potential employees but as innovators and entrepreneurs who can contribute to economic development by creating jobs and promoting industrial growth (Oyinlola et al., 2024).

Research by Boudreaux (2020) and Richardson and Hynes (2008) further emphasizes the significant influence of industries on positive entrepreneurial outcomes. For instance, entrepreneurs in service-oriented sectors have been found to exhibit higher profitability and survival rates compared to manufacturing and retail (Boudreaux, 2020). This highlights the importance of industry-specific knowledge and strategic insights, which can be incorporated into entrepreneurship education to better prepare students for the challenges ahead (Belitski & Heron, 2017). According to Maina (2014), understanding the dynamics of different industries enable aspiring entrepreneurs to make informed decisions about their ventures, selecting sectors with higher growth potential and profitability. This insight is also valuable for policymakers, who can design targeted initiatives that support entrepreneurship education tailored to the needs of

specific industries, thereby enhancing the impact of such programs on economic growth (Omoniyi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, studies like Omoniyi et al. (2022) and Mwangi (2011) found that industry involvement offers several benefits to entrepreneurship education beyond curriculum development. Richardson and Hynes (2008) found that industry partners, by actively engaging in academic programs, can offer mentorship, internships, and project-based learning opportunities that provide students with valuable exposure to the practical aspects of entrepreneurship. According to Oyinlola et al. (2024), Maina (2014) and James et al. (2018), this real-world experience is important for developing an entrepreneurial mindset or intention, enhancing employability, and bridging the gap between academic knowledge and business practice. Mentorship from industry professionals, in particular, offers students insights into the complexities of running a business, from managing finances and operations to navigating market competition and regulatory environments (Mwangi, 2011). In support, Nate et al. (2022) emphasizes that such mentorship helps create a mindset that is resilient, adaptive, and innovation-ordemia collaborations facilitate the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge, which is essential for encouraging innovation and accelerating the commercialization of research (Blankesteijn et al., 2021). Through joint research initiatives, universities and industries can co-develop innovative solutions that address pressing societal and market needs (Belitski & Heron, 2017). Richardson and Hynes (2008) found that this collaboration not only enhances the research capabilities of academic institutions but also provides industries with access to cutting-edge knowledge and technologies. According to Blankesteijn et al. (2021), the establishment of Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) further supports this process by facilitating the commercialization of academic research, promoting

entrepreneurship, and promoting the development of new products and services that can drive economic growth.

Different models of industry-academia partnerships exist globally, each enhancing skill development and ensuring that educational programs align with labor market needs (Omoniyi et al., 2022). According to Bhattarai (n.d.), the Dual Education System in Germany is a prime example, integrating theoretical education with practical training. This system allows students to divide their time between classroom learning and gaining hands-on experience in companies, ensuring they are job-ready upon graduation. Degree Apprenticeship (2022) found that Cooperative Education Programs also blend academic studies with professional work experience, enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. Studies such as Mbah et al. (2018) and Nate et al. (2022) also highlight internships and apprenticeships as examples of industry-academia partnerships. According to Mbah et al. (2018), internships and apprenticeships offer structured training and mentorship, which are particularly valuable in vocational and technical education. For Cheon (2014), joint research initiatives between universities and industries also result in innovative solutions such as curriculum co-development which ensures that academic programs stay attuned to evolving market needs.

According to Oyinlola et al. (2024), successful industry-driven entrepreneurship programs around the world have demonstrated the significant impact of these partnerships. For example, the Swiss Entrepreneurship Program (Swiss EP) focuses on building startup ecosystems and emphasizes collaboration between startups and established companies. This approach not only accelerates the growth of new ventures but also promotes a culture of innovation and knowledge sharing within the business community (Swiss EP, 2024). Similarly, the Science-Based Entrepreneurship Education (SBEE) program at VU University Amsterdam integrates science

and technology with entrepreneurship, facilitating technology transfer and creating an entrepreneurial mindset among students (Blankesteijn et al., 2021). In the UK, universities have implemented Entrepreneurship Education Programs (EEPs) that focus on enhancing student employability and entrepreneurial skills (Rogers-Draycott et al., 2024). While these programs have been successful, Massis et al. (2018) suggests that there is still potential for greater alignment with industry requirements to maximize their impact.

In Nigeria, university-industry partnerships have been instrumental in providing students with practical experience, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in the job market and contributing to economic development (Oyinlola et al., 2024). These partnerships have facilitated the development of entrepreneurship education programs that are closely aligned with the needs of the local economy, addressing skill gaps and promoting innovation (Mbah et al., 2018). In Brazil, universities focus on social innovation and entrepreneurship, aligning educational initiatives with community needs (Oyinlola, 2024). According to Omoniyi et al. (2022), the existence of entrepreneurship programs in different countries around the world reflects a growing trend of addressing social challenges while promoting entrepreneurial skills, thus, demonstrating the potential of entrepreneurship education to drive positive societal change alongside economic growth.

Studies such as James et al. (2018) and Massis et al. (2018) found that industry participation is not just beneficial but important for the success and effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programs. By aligning curricula with industry needs, providing real-world experiences, and facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technology, industries play a significant role in shaping the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators (Palanikumar at al., 2019). This collaboration enhances the quality of educational programs, ensures that students are equipped

with the skills required by the job market, and creates an entrepreneurial ecosystem that can drive economic growth and innovation (Omoniyi et al., 2022, Rogers-Draycott et al., 2024). Through strong university-industry partnerships, educational institutions can contribute significantly to the development of a skilled, entrepreneurial workforce that is capable of addressing the challenges and opportunities of the modern business landscape (Maina, 2014).

2.4. Role of Academia in Entrepreneurship Education

According to Davey et al. (2016), the role of academia in entrepreneurship education has evolved significantly over the decades, reflecting broader changes in economic needs, pedagogical approaches, and societal attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Initially, entrepreneurship education in academic institutions was relatively limited and often focused on traditional business management practices (Solomon, 2008). This early form of education, which emerged prominently in the 1950s, utilized the "Case method" of teaching. This method was designed to prepare students for management roles within established companies rather than equipping them to start and grow new ventures (Harfst, 2010). It emphasized the analysis of business cases from existing companies, aiming to develop managerial skills in the context of established business practices (Damnjanovic et al., 2017). Puri (2020) however, found that this approach often overlooked the unique challenges faced by startups and new business ventures, focusing instead on the operational aspects of existing firms.

As the global economic landscape shifted, particularly with the rise of entrepreneurial hubs like Silicon Valley, there was a notable transformation in how entrepreneurship education was approached (Harfst, 2010). This shift marked a move towards more experiential and practical

learning methods (Bell & Bell, 2020). Findings from Foss et al. (2013) suggest that modern entrepreneurship education now emphasizes real-world applications and interactive learning experiences. For example, contemporary programs incorporate customer development processes and lean startup methodologies (Einav & Blekher, 2022). These methods encourage students to engage directly with potential customers, test their business hypotheses in the market, and iterate their ideas based on real feedback (Shepherd & Gruber, 2020). Findings from Foss et al. (2013) suggests that this practical approach helps students gain firsthand experience in navigating the challenges of starting and growing a business, rather than solely relying on theoretical knowledge.

According to Penialber and Samson (2024), the integration of skill-based training into academic curricula has become a critical component of modern entrepreneurship education. Unlike traditional knowledge-based learning, which focuses on theoretical understanding, skill-based training equips students with specific competencies that can be directly applied in the workplace (Glassman et al., 2003). This approach is driven by the increasing demand for job-ready graduates who possess practical skills relevant to their chosen careers (Davey et al., 2016). Skill-based training not only prepares students for immediate employment but also creates a mindset of continuous improvement and adaptability, which is important in today's rapidly changing job market (Kusio & Fiore, 2020).

To effectively integrate skill-based training into curricula, Tudor (2017) found that educational institutions must adopt several key strategies such as curriculum design. According to them, institutions should develop programs that prioritize skill acquisition alongside traditional academic content. This involves identifying the key competencies required in various fields and embedding them throughout the educational experience. In addition, Bell and Bell (2020) opines

that experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, simulations, and project-based assignments, allow students to practice and refine their skills in real-world contexts. Warhuus et al. (2018) also found that regular assessments and feedback mechanisms help track students' progress and ensure that they meet the desired competencies. For Penialber and Samson (2024), collaborations with industry leaders provide valuable insights into the skills that are in demand, helping to align curricula with current industry needs. Additionally, Tudor (2016) suggests that leveraging technology through learning management systems and online platforms can facilitate personalized learning experiences and provide access to resources that enhance skill development.

According to Glassman (2003), several academic institutions worldwide have distinguished themselves through innovative approaches to entrepreneurship education. For instance, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is renowned for its NUS Overseas Colleges program, which allows students to work in startups across various international locations, including Silicon Valley, Shanghai, and Stockholm (Bozward, 2024). This program provides students with hands-on experience in diverse business environments, enabling them to apply their entrepreneurial knowledge in different cultural and regulatory contexts. Similarly, Spain's IE Business School emphasizes creativity, design thinking, and innovative problem-solving in its entrepreneurial courses (Bozward, 2024). This focus nurtures an environment where unconventional ideas are encouraged, and students are trained to develop unique solutions to modern challenges (Martz et al., 2017).

In Africa, the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business adopts a pragmatic approach by incorporating case studies and simulations where students confront and learn from failure (April & April, 2007). This approach prepares students for the realities of the

entrepreneurial journey, helping them understand that setbacks are a natural part of the process and valuable learning opportunities. In Australia, the University of Melbourne's Wade Institute of Entrepreneurship stands out for its robust mentorship program, which connects students with experienced entrepreneurs and industry experts (Wade Institute, 2024). This mentorship offers students firsthand insights into the entrepreneurial landscape and valuable networking opportunities that can significantly enhance their ventures.

In Russia, research by Zotov et al. (2021) involving fifth-year economics students at various Moscow universities has shown that the use of case studies in entrepreneurship education significantly increases the demand for graduates in the labor market. The findings indicate a strong correlation between the case study methodology and entrepreneurial success, as measured by the propensity to start one’s own business. These examples illustrate the diverse and innovative approaches adopted by universities globally to promte entrepreneurship education. From hands-on international experiences to creativity-focused curricula and robust mentorship networks, these institutions are preparing students to face the challenges and seize the opportunities in the entrepreneurial world (Foss et al., 2013).

Miller et al. (2018), however, found that the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education relies heavily on the role of faculty, pedagogy, and institutional support. According to Rossano-Rivero and Wakkee (2019), faculty members who teach entrepreneurship should possess a combination of academic qualifications and practical experience in the field. Hiring professors with real-world entrepreneurial experience and providing them with ongoing training in modern pedagogical methods are crucial steps in enhancing the quality of entrepreneurship education Chaker & Jarraya, 2021). In addition, Bell and Bell (2020) emphasizes that engaging

entrepreneurs and local businesses in the educational process further enriches the learning experience by bringing practical insights and real-world perspectives into the classroom.

Pedagogically, interactive teaching methods such as project-based learning, internships, consulting projects, and case studies are essential for promoting "learning by doing" (Fiet, 2001). These methods bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, allowing students to experience the entrepreneurial process firsthand (Harfst, 2010). According to Josué, et al. (2023), incorporating technology into the learning environment, such as through online platforms and digital tools, can further enhance the learning experience by providing personalized and interactive educational resources. In addition, Penialber and Samson (2024) found that contextualizing learning materials to address local needs and collaborating with industry stakeholders also contribute to making entrepreneurship education more relevant and impactful.

According to Saeed et al. (2015), institutional support is another critical component of effective entrepreneurship education. For them, providing adequate and consistent funding for entrepreneurship programs enables institutions to establish well-equipped centers, innovation hubs, and support services. For Kusio and Fiore (2020), however, facilitating cross-border faculty collaborations and international mobility allows institutions to share best practices and enhance their educational offerings. In addition, Amini (2019) suggests that encouraging the development of entrepreneurship doctoral programs advances research and teaching in the field, while integrating entrepreneurship education across various disciplines promotes a campus-wide entrepreneurial mindset.

Despite the advancements in entrepreneurship education, academic institutions, particularly in regions such as Nigeria, face several challenges in promoting entrepreneurial talent (Aladejebi & Amao-Taiwo, 2023). According to Agbonlahor (2016), inadequate funding often limits the ability to establish well-equipped entrepreneurship centers and provide necessary resources for student startups. Findings from Maifata and Mohammed (2016) also suggest that the shortage of qualified faculty members with practical entrepreneurial experience and the presence of outdated curricula that emphasize theoretical knowledge over practical application further impede the development of effective entrepreneurship programs. Additionally, Aladejebi and Amao-Taiwo (2023) found that inadequate infrastructure, including unreliable power supply and limited access to high-speed internet, poses significant barriers to students' ability to develop and test their business ideas.

Apart from limited access to funding, findings from Solomon (2008) suggest that limited industry collaboration also restricts opportunities for students to gain real-world experience through internships, mentorship programs, and access to potential investors. According to Aldejebi and Amao-Taiwo (2023), socio-cultural barriers, such as societal pressure to pursue traditional career paths rather than entrepreneurship, further complicate efforts to promote entrepreneurial mindsets among students. Addressing these challenges therefore requires a concerted effort to prioritize entrepreneurship education, secure adequate funding, invest in faculty development, update curricula, improve infrastructure, and strengthen industry partnerships (Rossano-Rivero & Wakkee, 2019). By tackling these issues, academic institutions can play an important role in nurturing successful entrepreneurs and driving economic growth through innovation and the cultivation of entrepreneurial talent (Miller et al. 2018).

2.5. Role of Government in Supporting Entrepreneurship Education

According to O'Connor (2013), entrepreneurship education has gained significant attention from governments worldwide as a tool for stimulating economic activity and promoting innovation. Governments promote entrepreneurship education to drive economic growth, job creation, and the diversification of their economies (Yuntao, 2018). However, Raposo and Paço (2011) found that substantiating its economic benefits can be challenging due to differing perspectives on what constitutes successful entrepreneurial outcomes. Despite this complexity, the government's role in facilitating and nurturing entrepreneurship, particularly through education and financial support, remains crucial (Praag & Versloot, 2007).

According to Skica et al. (2014), governments play a major role in integrating innovation and entrepreneurship into higher education, guiding students and creating an environment that encourages entrepreneurial endeavors. By offering support through grants, subsidies, incubators, and financial assistance programs, governments can help startups overcome financial barriers, enabling them to pursue innovative ideas that drive economic growth and job creation (Wasnik & Jain, 2023). In countries like Korea, for instance, government support has been shown to positively influence the entrepreneurial behavior of international students, highlighting the significance of a supportive policy environment in shaping entrepreneurial activities (Zhang et al., 2022).

Findings from Skica et al. (2014) suggests that the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth is complex and often influenced by various external factors. A study by Saberi and Hamdan (2019) focusing on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—explored this relationship,

particularly examining the moderating role of government support. The findings indicated that government support significantly moderates the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth in these countries. Key indicators such as risk capital and high growth were found to be strong predictors of entrepreneurial investments in the region, suggesting a rapid expansion of entrepreneurial activities. However, areas like technology absorption and process innovation scored lower, indicating room for improvement in leveraging technological advancements.

In support, another study by Kiradoo (2020) highlights the essential role of governments in facilitating entrepreneurship through regulatory quality, risk capital availability, and creating an environment conducive to innovation. According to Praag and Versloot (2007), the impact of government intervention in entrepreneurship is not immediate and often requires long-term strategies and commitment. As such, conducting longitudinal studies is necessary to fully understand the extent and nature of these impacts, especially considering factors like the international financial crisis that may affect entrepreneurial ecosystems (Frimanslund et al., 2022). This is because entrepreneurship education plays an important role in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape and driving economic development. Its impact extends beyond immediate business creation to promoting a culture of innovation, risk-taking, and problem-solving (Raposo & Paço, 2011). While there is a consensus on the positive correlation between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial activity, Zhang et al. (2022) found that the true measure of its success often lies in the rate of new business creation and the long-term sustainability of these ventures. Governments, therefore, face the dual challenge of funding these educational programs and ensuring that they are effectively integrated into the broader economic development strategy (O'Connor, 2013).

According to Yuntao (2018), government policies and initiatives are necessary in shaping the environment for entrepreneurship education. By integrating entrepreneurship into school curricula, providing financial support, training educators, encouraging partnerships, and creating incubation centers, governments can create a supportive ecosystem for budding entrepreneurs (Praag & Versloot, 2007). For instance, Palmér and Johansson (2018) found that integrating entrepreneurship concepts into subjects like mathematics and social studies at various educational levels ensures that students are exposed to entrepreneurial thinking from an early age. Beugré (2017) also found that providing financial assistance in the form of grants, loans, and tax incentives to educational institutions and aspiring entrepreneurs further supports the development of entrepreneurial skills and ventures.

According to Deveci and Seikkula-Leino (2018), teacher training plays an important role in the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. Research by Hardie et al. (2022) indicates that governments are increasingly investing in professional development programs to ensure that educators are well-equipped with the necessary skills and resources to teach entrepreneurship effectively. Furthermore, governments are encouraging collaborations between educational institutions, businesses, and industry stakeholders to enhance the learning experience for students (Zhang et al., 2022). These partnerships offer mentorship, internships, and practical exposure to the entrepreneurial ecosystem, bridging the gap between theory and practice (Deveci & Seikkula-Leino, 2018). Additionally, Wasnik and Jain (2023) found that governments fund the establishment of incubation centers and innovation hubs within educational settings to provide students with the resources and environment needed to develop and test their entrepreneurial ideas. Bozhikin et al. (2019) also found that governments are developing policies and running awareness campaigns to change societal attitudes towards entrepreneurship, emphasizing the

economic and social benefits of starting and running businesses. This approach encourages a cultural shift, where entrepreneurship is viewed not merely as a fallback option but as a viable and respectable career path (Raposo & Paço, 2011). According to Skica et al. (2014), monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programs ensure that government policies remain relevant and can be adapted to meet the evolving needs of the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Several countries have implemented specific initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and support education in this field. For example, India's "Startup India" initiative offers tax benefits, easier compliance, and access to resources for entrepreneurs, creating an environment conducive to innovation and startup growth (Chahal & Chahal, 2023). Another inintiative is the Atal Innovation Mission in India. This aims to establish a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship through the creation of Atal Tinkering Labs in schools and incubation centers for startups (Mishra & Gupta, 2023). In Nigeria, the N-Power Program provides skills training and entrepreneurship education to empower young individuals and stimulate economic growth (Nnaeto & Nwambuko, 2023). These initiatives highlight the different approaches that governments can take to support entrepreneurship education and create a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Wasnik and Jain (2023) found that governments are also providing grants, funding, and tax incentives to support entrepreneurship education and encourage investment in this area. Programs like the U.S. Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) allocate over $1.3 billion annually to support small business research and development, illustrating the scale of government investment in promoting entrepreneurial activities (Link & Scott, 2010). In Nigeria, initiatives like the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Program provide seed capital, business

training, and mentorship to young entrepreneurs, offering them the resources needed to start and grow their businesses (AWP Network, 2024). Similarly, the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund offers low-interest loans to small and medium enterprises, providing financial support that is crucial for business development and sustainability.

Tax incentives also play a significant role in encouraging investment in entrepreneurship education (Denes et al., 2019). According to Abdul (2018), governments offer tax credits for companies that support entrepreneurship programs, reduced taxes for startups in their early years, and tax deductions for individuals investing in entrepreneurial ventures. These financial incentives lower the barriers to entry for new businesses and encourage private sector involvement in supporting entrepreneurship education (Kiradoo, 2020).

Governments also play an important role in enhancing entrepreneurship education by promoting partnerships and collaboration between educational institutions, businesses, and other stakeholders (Hardie et al., 2022). This support often includes funding university-industry collaborations on entrepreneurial research projects, which serve as a bridge between academic knowledge and real-world business practices. Additionally, governments facilitate mentorship programs that connect students with experienced entrepreneurs, providing invaluable guidance and practical insights (St-Jean et al., 2017). By allocating resources to incubators and accelerators, governments further strengthen the ecosystem, offering budding entrepreneurs the support and tools needed to innovate and grow their businesses (Zhang et al., 2022).

Another crucial aspect of creating a conducive environment for entrepreneurship is regulatory reform (Beugré, 2017). Governments work to simplify regulations, reduce bureaucratic obstacles, and streamline processes for business registration, licensing, and compliance

(Bhinekawati, 2016). These reforms are essential in lowering the barriers to entry for new businesses, making it easier for individuals to start and manage their ventures (Kiradoo, 2020). By making the regulatory landscape more navigable, governments contribute to the development of a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that encourages innovation and economic growth. Alongside regulatory frameworks, Ven (1993) found that infrastructure investment is also crucial in supporting entrepreneurial activities. By investing in essential infrastructure such as broadband connectivity, transportation, and specialized facilities like business incubators and science parks, governments provide the physical and technological resources necessary for startups to operate efficiently and scale their operations (Asaul et al., 2020). In countries like Nigeria, government-led initiatives have been instrumental in promoting entrepreneurship by providing the necessary infrastructure and support systems for business development.

Government-led initiatives in Nigeria highlight the significant impact such programs can have on promoting entrepreneurship. One notable example is the YouWin! (Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria) program, which offers funding, mentorship, and training to young entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas (MSME Africa, 2024). By providing these resources, YouWin! helps young business owners grow and sustain their ventures, contributing to the overall economic development of the country. Another impactful initiative is the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Program, a prominent project of the Tony Elumelu Foundation. This program offers seed capital, business training, and mentorship to young entrepreneurs across Africa, extending its influence beyond Nigeria to promote entrepreneurship development throughout the continent (AWP Network, 2024). Through its comprehensive support, the program empowers emerging entrepreneurs to overcome common challenges and achieve success in their respective industries. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency

of Nigeria (SMEDAN) also plays a vital role in strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nigeria. SMEDAN focuses on promoting the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by providing training, access to finance, and business advisory services (MSME Africa, 2024). By targeting SMEs, which are often the backbone of a developing economy, SMEDAN contributes to economic diversification and the creation of sustainable employment opportunities.

Research by O'Connor (2013), Beugré (2017) and Palmér and Johansson (2018) has shown that government involvement in entrepreneurship education is multifaceted and extends across various aspects, including creating a conducive regulatory environment, providing financial support, investing in education, encouraging innovation, developing infrastructure, promoting international trade, supporting sustainable practices, and offering crisis management. These efforts collectively contribute to a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem that drives economic growth and job creation. Therefore, governments must continue to play a key role in creating a business environment that promotes entrepreneurship, guiding entrepreneurial practice, and providing business services to support entrepreneurial endeavors (Yuntao, 2018). By recognizing and harnessing the significant role they play in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape, governments can support new and existing entrepreneurs, particularly through regulatory quality, risk capital, technology absorption, and process innovation (Saberi et al., 2019). This, in turn, enhances economic growth and contributes to the diversification of economies, moving from traditional industries to more diversified and sustainable economic models.

Entrepreneurship education, with the support of government policies and initiatives, is important in encouraging innovation, job creation, and economic growth (Palmér & Johansson, 2018). According to Saberi et al. (2019), the integration of entrepreneurship into education systems,

coupled with financial support and a conducive regulatory environment, creates a solid foundation for entrepreneurial activities to flourish. As countries continue to invest in and develop their entrepreneurial ecosystems, the role of government remains central in ensuring that these efforts translate into tangible economic benefits and the sustainable development of society (Beugré, 2017).

2.6. The Triangular Partnership Model: Industry, Academia, and Government Collaboration

The Triangular Partnership Model is a framework that emphasizes collaboration among three key stakeholders or entities to achieve a common goal (Chakrabarty & Prabhu, 2022). According to Alonso and Santander (2021), this model is built on the idea that combining the strengths and resources of three distinct partners can create more comprehensive and effective solutions than if each entity were to work independently. It leverages the unique capabilities and perspectives of each partner to address complex challenges, foster innovation, and drive sustainable development (Prantz & Zhang, 2021). By encouraging communication, cooperation, and shared responsibility, Piefer-Söyler and Aigües (2020) highlight that the Triangular Partnership Model aims to create a dynamic and balanced relationship where each participant contributes to and benefits from the partnership in a meaningful way.

According to Prantz and Zhang (2021), the Triangular Partnership Model has evolved in response to changing global dynamics in international cooperation. Early models of development assistance were characterized by a North-South approach, where developed nations provided aid to developing countries (Piefer-Söyler & Aigües, 2020). However, as emerging economies

gained prominence, this donor-recipient model became less effective (Mehari et al., 2013). The late 20th and early 21st centuries saw the rise of South-South cooperation, with developing countries collaborating to share knowledge and resources (Zegers et al., 2022). In this context, triangular cooperation emerged as a strategy to combine the strengths of both North-South and South-South partnerships. According to the United Nations (2019), this new model was formally recognized by international organizations, including the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which identified it as a key modality for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The model has continued to evolve, expanding to include a wider range of stakeholders beyond government entities, such as international organizations, civil society, the private sector, and academic institutions (Alonso & Santander, 2021). Recent initiatives like the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Cooperation have been instrumental in promoting best practices and promoting inclusive partnerships (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2024). This model's adaptability allows it to be tailored to meet the specific needs of the partners involved, encouraging innovative solutions that are relevant to local circumstances and promoting sustainable development outcomes (Chakrabarty & Prabhu, 2022).

When applied to entrepreneurship, the Triangular Partnership Model has the potential to bridge gaps between academia, industry, and government. This model is designed to encourage innovation, drive economic growth, and address complex societal challenges by leveraging the unique strengths and resources of each sector (Mehari et al., 2013). According to Alonso and Santander (2021), each stakeholder has a role to play in the trio-partnership. Academia contributes through research and the development of knowledge, producing a skilled workforce and generating new ideas. Industry brings practical expertise, funding, and a focus on

commercialization, helping to turn academic research into viable products and services (Burbridge & Morrison, 2021). According to Saberi and Hamdan (2019), the government plays an important role by creating supportive policies, providing funding and infrastructure, and facilitating an environment that encourages collaboration and entrepreneurship. By working together, these three sectors create a synergy that can lead to technological advancements, economic development, and improved quality of life (Chakrabarty & Prabhu, 2022). According to Mehari et al. (2013), the model's success is based on the ability of these partners to align their objectives, share knowledge, and work towards common goals.

Successful partnerships under this model can be seen globally. In Silicon Valley, a prime example of this collaboration is evident in the partnership between Stanford University, technology companies, and government agencies (Burbridge & Morrison, 2021). This ecosystem has supported countless startups and technological advancements, creating a hub of innovation. Similarly, Singapore's Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) illustrates the successful integration of government, academia, and industry in focusing on research and development across fields like biomedical sciences and information and communication technologies (Eisenhaber et al., 2022). Israel's innovation ecosystem also stands out, with strong support for startups and entrepreneurs through government funding, academic expertise, and private sector involvement, making the country a global leader in technology and innovation (Weinberg, 2019).

In Nigeria, the impact of the Triangular Partnership Model is increasingly evident. Programs such as the Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) initiative, a collaboration between the Nigerian government, UNDP, and private sector partners, have significantly contributed to skill development among young entrepreneurs (BOI, 2024). By providing training, mentorship, and

funding, this initiative has empowered thousands of youths to start their businesses, driving job creation and economic growth. Another notable example is the Tony Elumelu Foundation's collaboration with local universities and the Nigerian government to empower African entrepreneurs through training and funding (AWP Network, 2024). This triangular partnership has provided seed capital and mentorship to numerous startups, enhancing their capacity to innovate and compete in the market. Additionally, initiatives like MTN Nigeria's Digital Skills Initiative, in partnership with the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and local tech hubs, aim to enhance digital skills among young entrepreneurs (Odia & Odia, 2013). By providing training programs that equip participants with the necessary technical skills to thrive in the digital economy, this partnership has resulted in a more skilled workforce capable of driving innovation within Nigeria's burgeoning tech sector.

According to Burbridge and Morrison (2021), these partnerships have a profound impact on skill development and entrepreneurial outcomes. They provide hands-on learning opportunities and encourage knowledge transfer, ensuring that students and budding entrepreneurs are equipped with the skills and expertise required by the industry (Mbah et al., 2018). Through this model, academic institutions remain aligned with industry needs, producing graduates who are ready to contribute effectively to the workforce (Chakrabarty & Prabhu, 2022). This synergy also accelerates the commercialization of new technologies, leading to increased competitiveness and economic growth (Burbridge & Morrison, 2021).

However, in the Nigerian context, there are barriers to effective collaboration within the Triangular Partnership Model. One of the primary challenges is the limited involvement of academia in many partnerships (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2024). Often, collaborations are skewed towards industry and government, with academic

institutions playing a lesser role (Ofili, 2014). According to them, this imbalance can limit the potential for innovation and the effective transfer of knowledge, as academia is a critical driver of research and development. Additionally, there can be a lack of alignment between the objectives of the partners, with each sector having different priorities and timelines, making it difficult to establish a common ground (Ezeani, 2018). Findings from Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2024) suggests that resource constraints also pose a significant challenge, particularly in academia, where funding for research and development can be limited. This can hinder the ability of academic institutions to engage fully in partnerships and contribute to innovation. Furthermore, there can be regulatory and policy barriers that impede collaboration, such as restrictive intellectual property laws or bureaucratic hurdles that slow down the process of bringing new technologies to market (Ezeani, 2018).

Despite these challenges, Burbridge and Morrison (2021) found that the Triangular Partnership Model holds great promise for driving innovation, research, and development in Nigeria and beyond. By encouraging greater involvement of academia and addressing regulatory and resource constraints, this model can be further optimized to realize its full potential. As nations seek to remain competitive in an increasingly globalized world, the Triangular Partnership Model offers a strategic approach to leveraging the strengths of industry, academia, and government to achieve shared goals and contribute to sustainable development (Alonso & Santander, 2021).

2.7. Challenges and Gaps in Skill-Based Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria

Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is faced with numerous challenges and gaps that significantly impede its effectiveness in preparing graduates for self-employment and job

creation (Choice & Candour, 2021). According to Coker et al. (2021), one of the foremost challenges is the issue of inadequate funding. Many institutions lack the necessary financial resources to offer practical entrepreneurship training effectively (Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2015). This lack of funding impacts the availability of essential teaching materials, equipment, and the development of business incubators that can provide hands-on experience. In addition, Choice and Candour (2021) found that the lack of sufficient funding for educational institutions prevents the development of quality entrepreneurship programs. Without adequate financial resources, universities struggle to provide practical training, necessary materials, and facilities that support effective learning (Rusu et al., 2022). This financial shortfall often leads to an over-reliance on theoretical teaching methods, which do not adequately prepare students for the practical demands of entrepreneurship (Coker et al., 2021).

According to Nwekeaku (2013), institutional barriers also impede the progress of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. One of the most pressing issues is the lack of qualified instructors with both academic knowledge and practical entrepreneurial experience (Ubogu, 2020). Many educators lack the necessary training or background in entrepreneurship, which affects the quality of education delivered (Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2015). Most educators in these institutions have not received specialized training in entrepreneurship education, which limits their ability to deliver effective teaching (Nwekeaku, 2013). This gap in instructional quality means that students often miss out on crucial practical insights that are essential for understanding the realities of starting and managing a business (Ubogu, 2020). Consequently, the education system produces graduates who are theoretically informed but lack the practical skills and mindset needed to thrive as entrepreneurs (Oyinlola et al. (2024).

Another issue, according to Okoro (2021) is the mismatch between the skills taught in entrepreneurship programs and the actual demands of the labor market. The disconnect between education and industry needs results in graduates who are ill-prepared for the challenges they will face in starting and running a business (Pazos et al., 2022). This skills gap reduces the employability of graduates and diminishes their effectiveness as entrepreneurs (Oyinlola et al. (2024). To address this issue, Eze and Obidile (2018) opines that there is a need for closer collaboration between educational institutions and industry stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum is aligned with market needs and that students acquire relevant skills.

The curriculum in many entrepreneurship programs is, however, another area of concern (Tudor, 2017). Findings from Balusji et al. (2023) and Okoro (2021) suggests that the curriculum itself is often outdated, placing an emphasis on theoretical knowledge rather than practical application, failing to equip students with the hands-on skills required for success in the business world. This focus on theory over practice creates a disconnect between what is taught in classrooms and the skills required in real-world business environments (Carland & Carland, 2010). Graduates, therefore, find themselves ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of starting and managing a business, contributing to high rates of business failure among new entrepreneurs (Pazos et al., 2022). This outdated approach to teaching entrepreneurship results in graduates who are well-versed in theory but lack the practical know-how to implement their ideas and navigate the challenges of starting a business (Nwekeaku, 2013). To address this issue, Eze and Obidile (2018) emphasizes that there is a need for a curriculum overhaul that integrates more hands-on learning experiences, such as internships, business simulations, and project-based learning.

Poor infrastructure also poses a significant barrier to effective entrepreneurship education (Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2015). Many educational institutions in Nigeria suffer from inadequate

facilities and resources necessary for teaching and learning entrepreneurship concepts effectively (Choice & Candour, 2021). This includes limited access to modern technology, learning materials, and facilities conducive to hands-on training (Nwekeaku, 2013). Without access to such resources, students are unable to gain the necessary experience and exposure to the tools and technologies that are important in today's business landscape (Undiyaundeye & Otu, 2015). This lack of adequate infrastructure ultimately impedes the development of competent and competitive entrepreneurs (Mbaeri et al., 2016). To enhance the quality of entrepreneurship education, institutions must invest in developing the infrastructure and resources required to facilitate practical learning experiences.

In addition to lack of resources, Ofili (2014) also found that societal attitudes towards entrepreneurship present another challenge. In Nigeria, there is a prevailing cultural preference for traditional employment over entrepreneurship, which diminishes the perceived value of entrepreneurial education (Nwekeaku, 2013). In many cases, families and communities encourage young people to pursue stable, salaried jobs rather than taking the risks associated with starting their own businesses (Olufemi, 2020). This mindset discourages students from engaging with entrepreneurship education, exploring entrepreneurial ventures and pursuing their own business ideas. Moreover, the public perception of entrepreneurship as a risky endeavor further discourages individuals from considering it a viable career option. Many view entrepreneurship as a last resort rather than a promising career path, impacting enrollment in entrepreneurship education programs (Ofili, 2014). According to Nwekaku (2013), changing these attitudes is important to promoting an entrepreneurial culture and encouraging more young people to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career path.

Rusu et al. (2022) found that gender disparities are another cultural barrier that affects access to entrepreneurship education. Some societal norms often associate entrepreneurship with masculinity, leading to the perception that it is more suitable for men than women (Gupta et al., 2009). In some parts of Nigeria, this stereotype often limit opportunities for women to engage in entrepreneurial training and support, leading to unequal participation in entrepreneurship programs (Nwachukwu et al., 2021). Additionally, women often bear a disproportionate share of household and caregiving responsibilities, which restricts their time and ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities and education (Singh et al., 2010). This imbalance can hinder their participation in training programs and networking opportunities, which are essential for entrepreneurship. Addressing these cultural barriers is important for creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for aspiring entrepreneurs, particularly women.

Women entrepreneurs also face institutional challenges, including limited access to financial resources, mentorship, and networks crucial for starting and sustaining a business (Coker et al., 2021). Institutional biases that favor male entrepreneurs worsen these disparities, making it more difficult for women to access the support they need. Moreover, the curriculum in many entrepreneurship programs tends to reflect male-dominated perspectives, which can alienate female students (Singh et al., 2010). According to Gupta et al. (2009), the lack of female role models and mentors in entrepreneurship education further perpetuates gender imbalances, making it challenging for women to see themselves as successful entrepreneurs. Findings from Nwachukwu et al. (2021) suggests that educational challenges also play a role in limiting the participation of women in entrepreneurship education. The existing curriculum often emphasizes traditional business models that may not resonate with women's experiences or aspirations

(Mbah et al. (2018). There is a need for curricula that incorporate diverse perspectives and address the unique challenges faced by women entrepreneurs (Okoro, 2021).

Additionally, Mbaeri et al. (2016) found that many programs focus heavily on theoretical knowledge without providing sufficient hands-on experience, which can disadvantage female students who may need more confidence-building activities. According to Mbah et al. (2018), experiential learning opportunities, such as internships and business simulations, can help women develop practical skills in a supportive environment, boosting their confidence and entrepreneurial capabilities. Underrepresentation of women in entrepreneurship programs is another issue that needs to be addressed (Nwachukwu et al., 2021). Female enrollment in these programs is often lower than that of males, leading to a lack of gender balance in classrooms (Elliot et al., 2021). This imbalance can negatively affect the learning environment and outcomes for all students, as diverse perspectives are crucial for a well-rounded education (Hägg et al., 2022). To create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women in entrepreneurship, educational institutions must actively work to increase female participation and representation in these programs (Nwachukwu et al., 2021).

According to Choice and Candour (2021), entrepreneurship education in Nigeria also faces a series of socio-economic barriers that hinder its effectiveness and accessibility. According to them, high levels of poverty and unemployment limit access to education and, by extension, entrepreneurship training programs. Many potential students cannot afford the costs associated with higher education or specialized entrepreneurial training, which restricts their ability to acquire the necessary skills (Udefuna et al., 2013). This economic barrier is a significant factor contributing to the limited pool of skilled entrepreneurs in the country.

Policy implementation issues also pose a significant barrier to effective entrepreneurship education (Omoniyi et al., 2022). While there are policies in place aimed at promoting entrepreneurship education, inconsistent implementation and lack of support from governmental bodies hinder progress (Ubogu, 2020). This lack of commitment affects the establishment and sustainability of robust entrepreneurship programs across educational institutions (Coker et al., 2021). To overcome this challenge, there needs to be a concerted effort from policymakers, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders to ensure that entrepreneurship education is given the necessary priority and resources (Eze & Obidile, 2018).

2.8. Gaps in Literature

The existing literature on entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has largely focused on identifying the challenges and barriers within the educational framework, including inadequate funding, lack of skilled educators, outdated curricula, and poor infrastructure (Choice & Candour, 2021; Coker et al., 2021 and Nwekeaku, 2013). While these studies provide valuable insights into the systemic issues hindering effective entrepreneurship education, they often fall short in proposing comprehensive solutions to address these multifaceted challenges. There is a notable gap in exploring how collaborative partnerships between key stakeholders—industry, academia, and government—can serve as a strategic approach to enhance skill-based entrepreneurship education.

Most research in this field such as Pazos et al. (2022) and Oyinlola et al. (2024) has concentrated on individual aspects of the challenges. For example, numerous studies including Papageorgiou et al. (2021) and Okoro (2021) have emphasized the need for curriculum reform and the

incorporation of practical training within educational institutions. Others such as Maghfiorh et al. (2023) and Bozhikin et al. (2019) have highlighted the importance of changing societal attitudes towards entrepreneurship and improving access to resources for aspiring entrepreneurs. However, these studies frequently overlook the potential of a collaborative framework that integrates the strengths and resources of the private sector, educational institutions, and government agencies to create a more holistic and effective entrepreneurship education ecosystem.

Furthermore, the literature lacks an in-depth exploration of how a trio partnership can specifically address the unique challenges within Nigeria's entrepreneurship landscape. There is limited research on how industry-academia-government collaborations can be structured to provide students with the necessary skills, practical experience, and support systems required to succeed as entrepreneurs. For instance, while some studies such as Oyinlola et al. (2024), Blankesteijn et al. (2021) and Boudreaux (2020) suggest industry involvement in curriculum design to ensure alignment with market needs, they often do not examine how such partnerships can be practically implemented or sustained in the Nigerian context. Similarly, while the role of government in policy implementation and funding is acknowledged, the specifics of how governmental support can be leveraged in partnership with academia and industry to foster entrepreneurial talent remain underexplored.

The gap in literature is also evident in addressing gender-specific challenges in entrepreneurship education. While there is recognition of the barriers faced by women, such as gender stereotypes, limited access to resources, and lack of role models, there is insufficient exploration of how trio partnerships could specifically empower female entrepreneurs. The potential for industry,

academia, and government to collaborate in creating more inclusive and supportive environments for women in entrepreneurship education is an area that warrants further investigation.

This study therefore aims to fill these gaps by examining how partnerships between industry, academia, and government can be effectively leveraged to enhance skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. By focusing on the synergies that can be created through such collaborations, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for promoting entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria. It will explore the potential for industry partners to contribute practical expertise, mentorship, and real-world learning opportunities; for academic institutions to provide a robust educational foundation and adapt curricula to meet evolving market demands; and for government agencies to facilitate policy support, funding, and infrastructure development.

The study will also address how these partnerships can be structured to overcome specific challenges identified in the Nigerian entrepreneurship landscape, including cultural biases, gender disparities, and the need for practical experience. By investigating successful models of trio partnerships in other contexts and analyzing their applicability to Nigeria, this research aims to propose actionable strategies for implementing similar frameworks within the country.

Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the literature by providing a nuanced understanding of how collaborative efforts among industry, academia, and government can bridge the existing gaps in entrepreneurship education. It will offer insights into how such partnerships can create a more conducive environment for nurturing entrepreneurial skills, thereby supporting economic development and job creation in Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology designed to achieve the study's objectives by determining, identifying and analyzing the challenges, opportunities, most effective strategy and clarifying the key roles, responsibilities and contributions for fostering the partnership between industry, academia and government in promoting skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The study aims to enhance the entrepreneurial talent developments by leveraging the strengths of each sector. Methodological framework deals with the procedures that were adopted for the study under the following subheadings: Research design, Target population, Study population, Sample and Sampling techniques, Instrument for data collection, Validity and Reliability of the instrument, Ethical consideration, Procedures for data collection techniques and Plans for data analysis.

3.2. Research Design

A mixed-methods technique would be implemented, integrating quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis methods. Mixed-methods research (MMR) is a research approach that integrates many methods to effectively and ethically answer research issues, involving the collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of both qualitative and quantitative data. (Dawadi et al, 2021). This technique will be utilized for the study because it makes it possible to gather a variety of data to answer intricate research questions and provides a comprehensive

picture of how important Nigerian stakeholders collaborate to advance skill-based entrepreneurship education.

The Quantitative method aims to gather data on the perceptions of entrepreneurship education among students, educators, and industry professionals. On the other hand, the Qualitative method would explore in-depth the nature of partnerships between academia, industry, and government, and their contribution to entrepreneurial talent development.

3.3. Research Population and Sample

The population for the study comprises stakeholders involved in entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, including university students, educators, government officials, and industry partners. Purposive sampling would be employed to select participants who had direct involvement in or knowledge of skill-based entrepreneurship education programs. According to Campbell et al (2020), Purposive sampling tactics go beyond random sampling methods and are designed to ensure that particular types of instances are included in the final sample of the research project. The rationale for implementing a purposive technique is predicated on the concept that, in light of the study's aims and objectives, distinct groups of individuals may possess diverse and significant perspectives regarding the pertinent ideas and topics, necessitating their inclusion in the sample.

- **Sample Size**: A total of 200 participants will be surveyed across five universities in Nigeria, where entrepreneurship programs have been integrated into their curricula. In addition, 15 key informants from industry, academia, and government will be interviewed to gain deeper insights into the partnership dynamics.

3.4. Data Collection Method

Two primary data collection methods will be used; Questionnaires for the Quantitative survey and semi-structured interviews for Qualitative insights.

3.4.1. Questionnaires

A structured questionnaire will be designed to capture participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. The questionnaire will consist of both closed-ended questions using a 5-point Likert scale and open-ended questions to allow respondents to express their views more freely (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Key variables which will be assessed include the relevance of the curriculum, skills acquisition, and the impact of academia-industry-government collaboration.

3.4.2. Semi-Structured Interviews

For the Qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders from academia, industry, and government. According to Kvale (1996), semi-structured interviews are flexible, allowing for in-depth exploration of complex issues. Interviewees were asked about their experiences and the challenges in fostering partnerships, as well as the strategic initiatives they believed could improve skill-based entrepreneurship education (Mbeteh & Pellegrini, 2018).

3.5. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using both Descriptive and thematic analysis techniques.

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

The Quantitative data obtained from the Questionnaires will be analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, which allows for the generation of descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions (Field, 2018). These statistical methods will be used to summarize the perceptions of entrepreneurship education across the sample.

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews will be analyzed using thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. The analysis will focus on understanding the role of partnerships between academia, industry, and government, and the challenges in implementing entrepreneurship education programs in Nigerian universities.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

All interviewees and participants will provide informed permission, acknowledging that they are aware of the study's goal and their right to withdraw at any time. Secrecy and anonymity will be maintained, particularly when discussing delicate topics like gender and power relations in the distribution of help. Additionally, data security protocols will be put in place to guarantee the confidentiality of the collected data. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants,

ensuring that they were fully aware of the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any point (Orb et al., 2001). Confidentiality will be maintained by anonymizing the data, and all findings will be presented in aggregate form to protect participants' identities.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology employed in this study. The mixed-methods approach was adopted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. The subsequent chapter will present the findings of the study, focusing on how partnerships between academia, industry, and government can be leveraged to foster entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FOUR

Contents and Results

4.1. Introduction

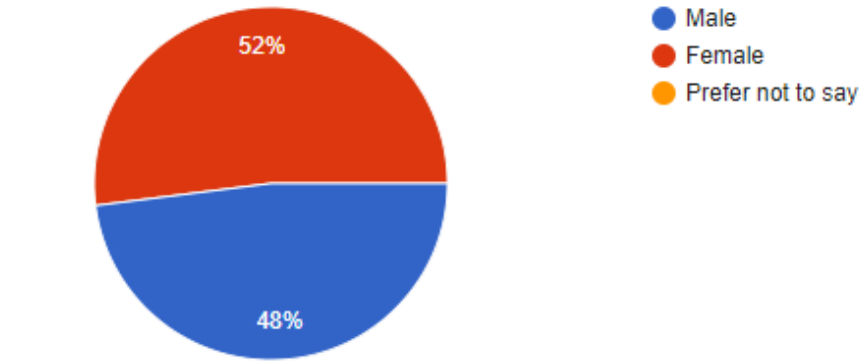
This chapter presents the results of the study on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities, drawing on data collected from both student surveys and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. The survey component consisted of 200 responses from students across various universities who offered insights on the effectiveness, relevance and practical application of their entrepreneurship education programs. The stakeholder interviews involved 15 participants from academia, industry and government sectors who provide additional context on partnerships, skill development and the challenges faced in entrepreneurship education. Visual representations such as tables, bar charts and pie charts are used to present the key findings from the survey responses. This is followed by a summary of results from stakeholder interviews, organised by major themes that emerged during the conversations.

4.2. Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the students who participated in the survey. The demographic data includes information on gender, age rage, year of study and participation in entrepreneurship courses.

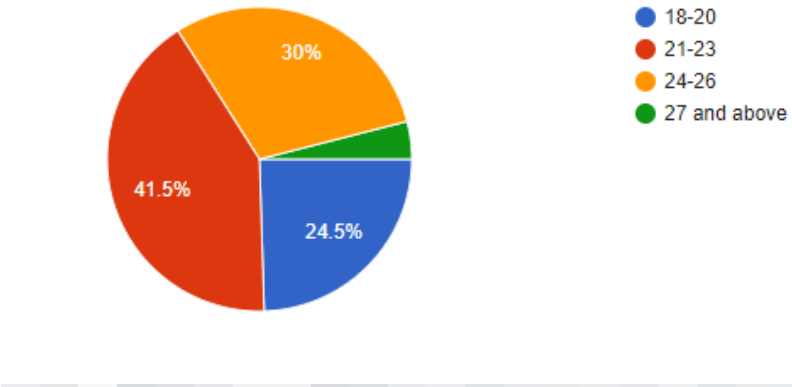
4.2.1. Gender Profile of Respondents

The survey responses included a total of 200 participants, with 104 female respondent (52%) and 96 male respondents (48%). This distribution highlights a relatively balanced perspective in study's data on the state of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.



4.2.2. Age Distribution of Respondents

The respondents were distributed across four age groups. The largest proportion of respondents fell within the 21–23 age range, accounting for 83 individuals (41.5%), followed by the 24–26 age range, with 60 respondents (30%). Younger students aged 18–20 comprised 49 participants (24.5%), while 8 respondents (4%) were aged 27 and above.



4.2.3. Year of Study

The respondents were distributed across various years of study. Second-year and third-year students each accounted for 72 respondents (36%), forming the majority of the sample. Fourth-year and above students comprised 43 respondents (21.5%), while first-year students made up the remaining 13 respondents (6.5%).

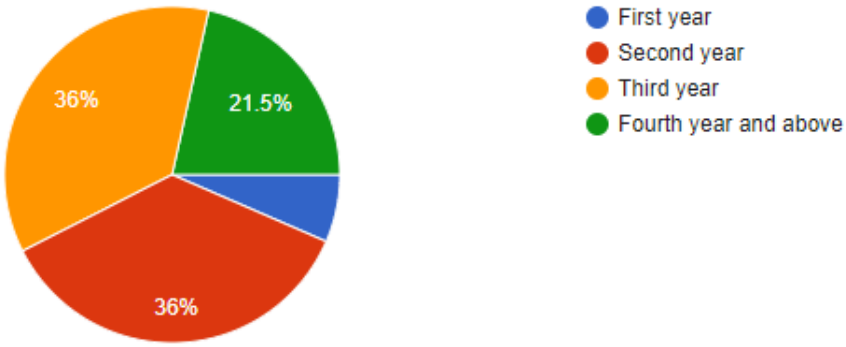


Figure 3: Respondents' Year of Study

4.2.4. Participation in Entrepreneurship Courses

When asked whether they had taken any courses in entrepreneurship education, the majority of the respondents, 179 students (89.5%) answered “Yes”, while 21 respondents (10.5%) answered “No” (Figure 4). This indicates that almost all the respondents had direct experience with entrepreneurship education.

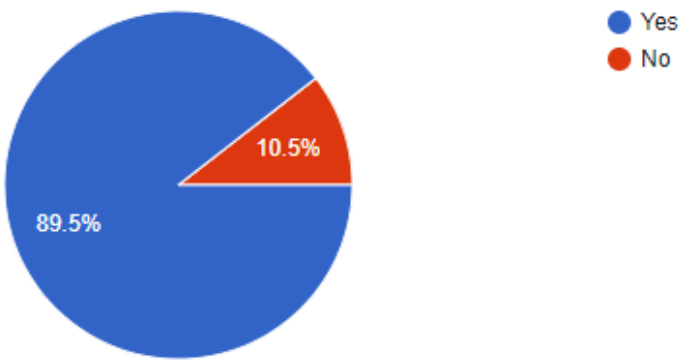


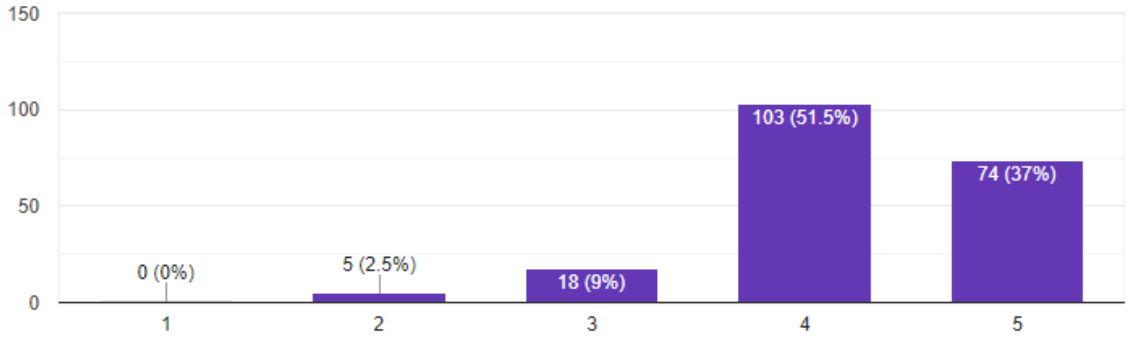
Figure 4: Respondents participation in entrepreneurship education

4.3. Survey Results

4.3.1. Perceptions of Entrepreneurship Education

4.3.1.1. Importance of entrepreneurship education for career success

The survey asked students to rate the importance of entrepreneurship education for career success on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "Very Unimportant" and 5 indicating "Very



Important". The results show that no respondents choose the lowest rating on 1 (Vey Unimportant), and only 5 respondents (2.5%) selected a rating of 2 (Unimportant). This indicates that a small number view entrepreneurship education as unimportant. 18 students (9%) rated it a

three, suggesting a neutral perspective. A majority of the respondents, 103 students (51.5%) rated it a 4, indicating they view entrepreneurship education as important. 74 respondents (37%) chose the highest rating of 5, indicating that they believe entrepreneurship education is very important for their career success. These results demonstrate that a significant majority (88.5%) of students perceive entrepreneurship education as important or very important for career success. (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Importance of entrepreneurship education for career success in Nigeria

4.3.1.2. Effectiveness of Entrepreneurship Programs in Preparing Students for Business Ventures

When asked to rate the effectiveness of their current entrepreneurship education program in preparing them for starting a business, students were asked to select a rating from 1 (very ineffective) to 5 (very effective). The results showed that 2 respondents (1%) rated the program as "very ineffective" (1), while 57 respondents (28.5%) chose a rating of 2, indicating that they felt the program was ineffective. A significant portion of respondents, 80 students (40%), rated the program as moderately effective (3). Additionally, 58 respondents (29%) rated it as effective (4), and 3 respondents (1.5%) selected the highest rating of 5, indicating that they found the program to be very effective in preparing them for entrepreneurship (Figure 6). The findings suggest that there is a general sense of moderate to low effectiveness, with the majority of students feeling that the program does not fully prepare them for starting a business.

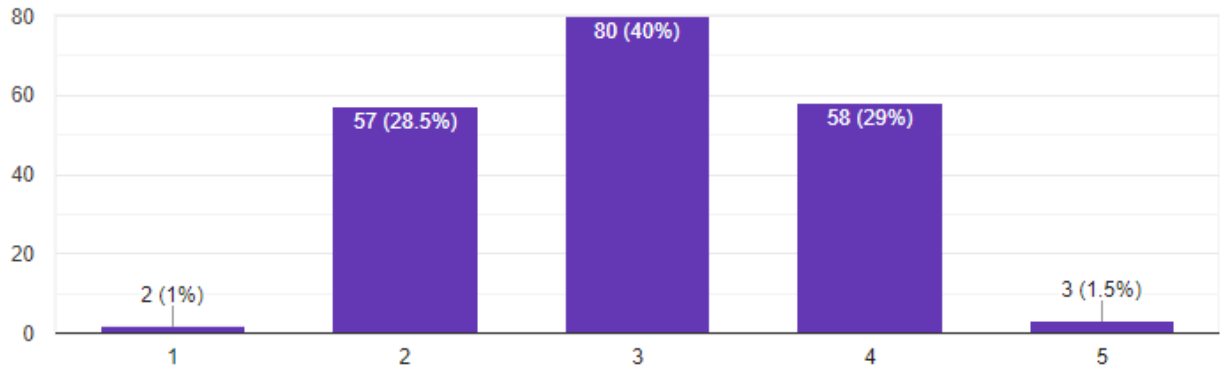


Figure 6: Effectiveness of current entrepreneurship education program

4.3.1.3. Satisfaction with the Quality of Entrepreneurship Education Provided at Institutions

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the quality of entrepreneurship education provided at their institutions, respondents were asked to select a rating from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). The results revealed that 11 respondents (5.5%) were very dissatisfied with the quality of the program, selecting a rating of 1. A larger proportion, 74 respondents (37%), reported being dissatisfied, with a rating of 2. 65 respondents (32.5%) were neutral, selecting a rating of 3. The remaining 46 respondents (23%) expressed satisfaction, rating the program as 4, while 4 respondents (2%) were very satisfied, choosing a rating of 5 (Figure 7). These findings indicate that while some students are satisfied with the quality of entrepreneurship education, a significant number were dissatisfied with the quality of the entrepreneurship education provided at institutions.

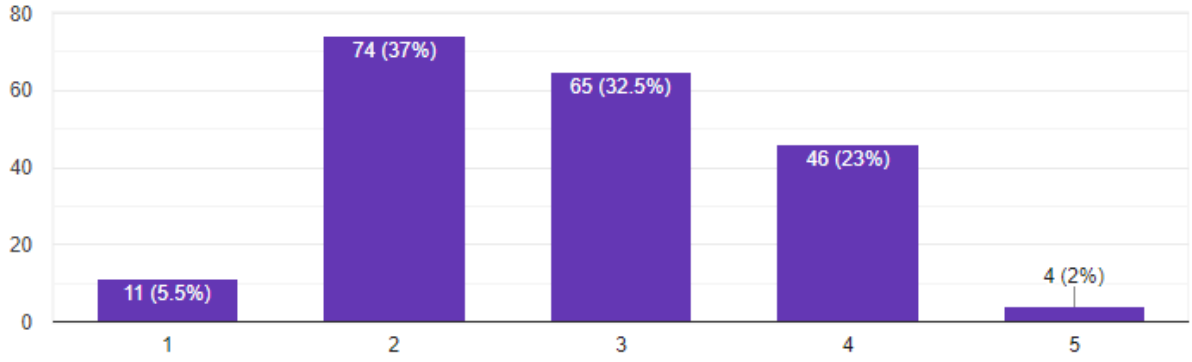


Figure 7: Satisfaction with quality of entrepreneurship education

4.3.2. Curriculum and Practical Training

4.3.1. Relevance of the curriculum to business skills

Students were asked to rate the relevance of the entrepreneurship curriculum at their institution to the skills needed to succeed in the business world, using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The responses showed that 3 respondents (1.5%) strongly disagreed with the relevance of the curriculum (rating 1), and 59 respondents (29.5%) disagreed (rating 2). A total of 60 respondents (30%) gave a neutral response (rating 3), indicating neither agreement nor disagreement. Meanwhile, 71 respondents (35.5%) agreed that the curriculum was relevant (rating 4), and 7 respondents (3.5%) strongly agreed, selecting the highest rating of 5 (Figure 8). These results indicate that while many students see some relevance in the curriculum, a substantial proportion either remain neutral or view it as lacking alignment with the skills needed for business success.

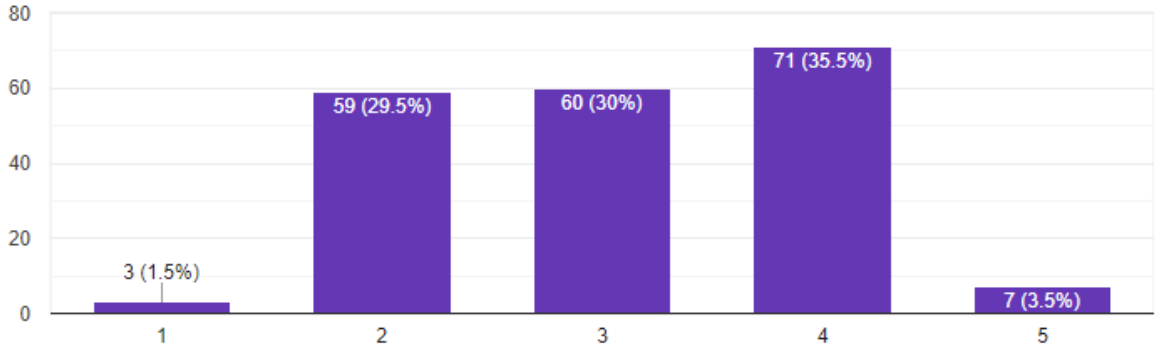


Figure 8: Curriculum relevance to business skills

4.3.2. Opportunities for practical training, including internships and real-life projects

Students were asked to rate whether their entrepreneurship education program provides sufficient practical experience, such as real-life projects and internships, to prepare them for running a business. The responses, rated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), indicated that a significant proportion of respondents viewed the opportunities for practical training as inadequate. A total of 45 respondents (22.5%) strongly disagreed with the adequacy of practical experience (rating 1), and 81 respondents (40.5%) disagreed (rating 2). Meanwhile, 46 respondents (23%) were neutral (rating 3), while 25 respondents (12.5%) agreed (rating 4), and only 3 respondents (1.5%) strongly agreed (rating 5). These results highlight that the majority of students perceive the program as lacking in practical training opportunities necessary for effective business preparation (Figure 9).

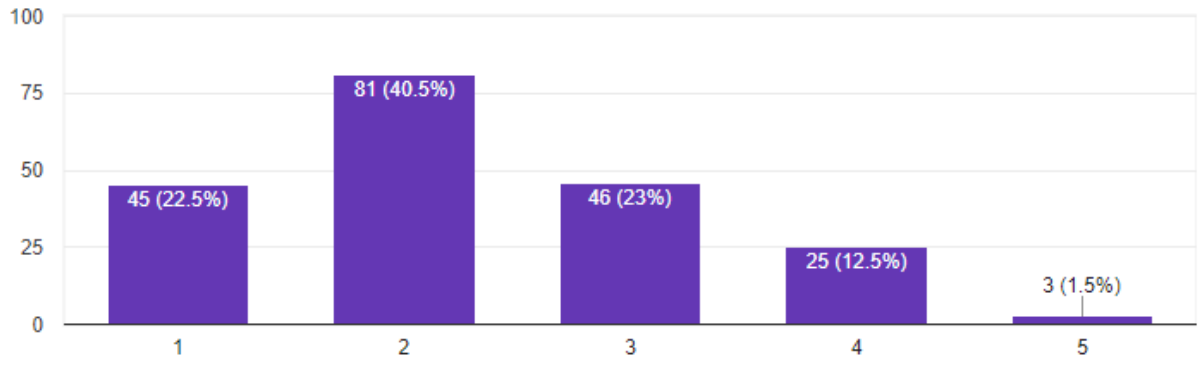


Figure 9: Opportunities for practical training

4.3.3. Balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application

Students were asked to rate the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application in their entrepreneurship program on a scale from 1 (very imbalanced) to 5 (very balanced). The responses showed that 42 respondents (21%) rated the balance as very imbalanced (rating 1), while 90 respondents (45%) gave a rating of 2, indicating significant imbalance. A further 40 respondents (20%) provided a neutral rating of 3. Only 28 respondents (14%) rated the balance positively (rating 4), and no respondent selected the highest rating of 5 (very balanced). These results indicate that most students perceive a strong imbalance between theoretical and practical components in their entrepreneurship education (Figure 10).

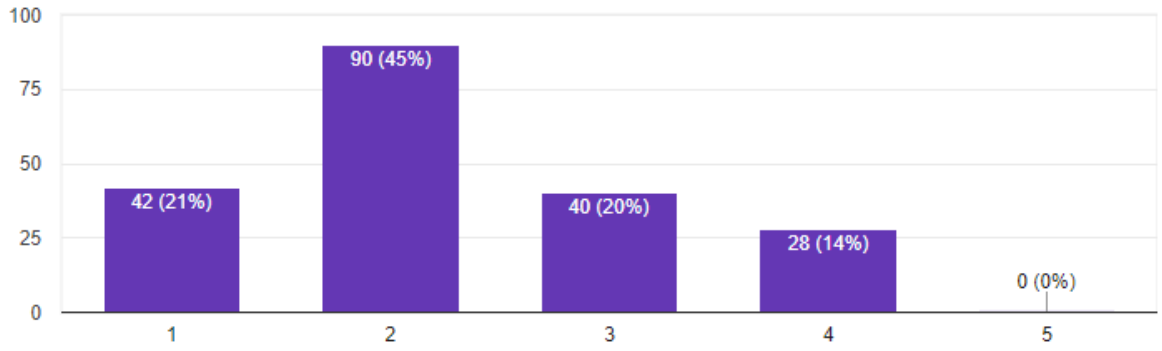


Figure 10: Balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application

4.3.3. Skills Development and Readiness

4.3.3.1. Skills gained through entrepreneurship courses

Students were asked to identify the skills they had gained through their entrepreneurship courses, with the option to select multiple responses. The results showed that the most commonly acquired skill was communication and networking, selected by 50 respondents. This was followed by technical/operational skills, chosen by 45 respondents, and financial management, identified by 43 respondents. Leadership and teamwork was selected by 41 respondents, while digital marketing and problem-solving were chosen by 36 and 30 respondents, respectively. Business planning was identified by 29 respondents. However, 19 respondents indicated that they had not gained any skills through their entrepreneurship courses (Figure 11).

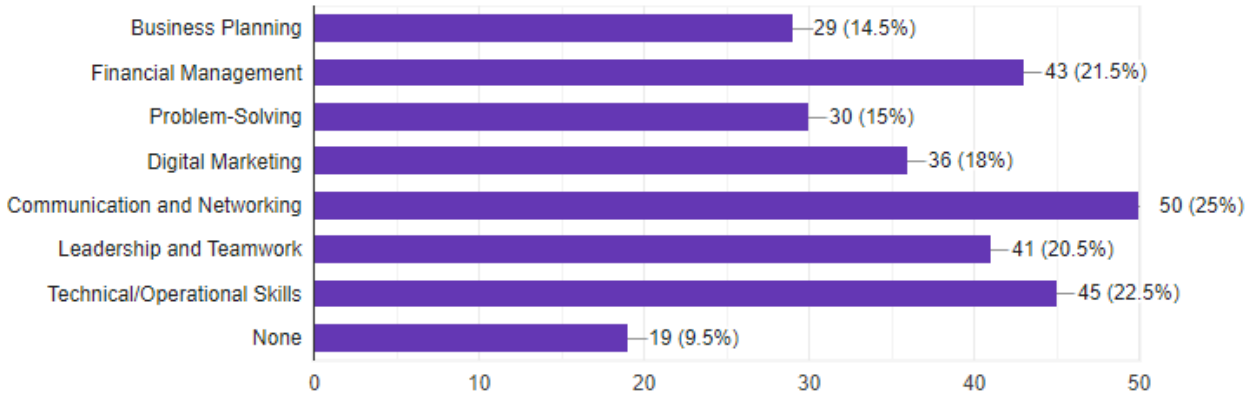


Figure 11: Skills gained through entrepreneurship courses

4.3.3.2. Applicability of these skills to real-world business situations

Students were asked to rate the applicability of the skills they gained through entrepreneurship education to real-world business situations, using a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The responses revealed that 1 respondent (0.5%) strongly disagreed (rating 1), while 20 respondents (10%) disagreed (rating 2). The largest group of respondents, 84 students (42%), provided a neutral rating of 3. A further 78 respondents (39%) agreed (rating 4), and 17 respondents (8.5%) strongly agreed (rating 5) (Figure 12).

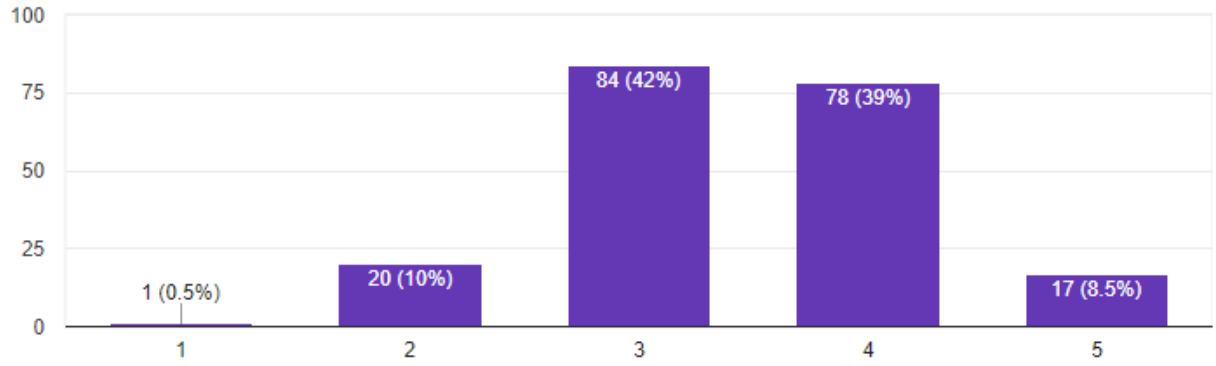


Figure 12: Applicability of skills gained through entrepreneurship education

4.3.3.3. Students' readiness for entrepreneurship based on skills acquired

Students were asked to rate the extent to which the skills they acquired through entrepreneurship education had improved their readiness for entrepreneurship. The responses were measured on a scale from 1 (very low extent) to 5 (very high extent). The results showed that 3 respondents (1.5%) felt the skills improved their readiness to a very low extent (rating 1), while 50 respondents (25%) rated it as a low extent (rating 2). The majority, 108 respondents (54%), chose a moderate extent (rating 3). A further 29 respondents (14.5%) rated the improvement as a high extent (rating 4), and 10 respondents (5%) selected the highest rating of very high extent (rating 5) (Figure 13).

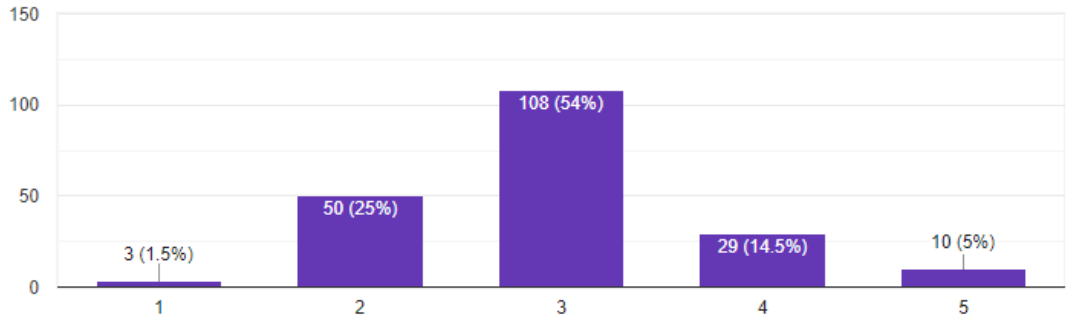
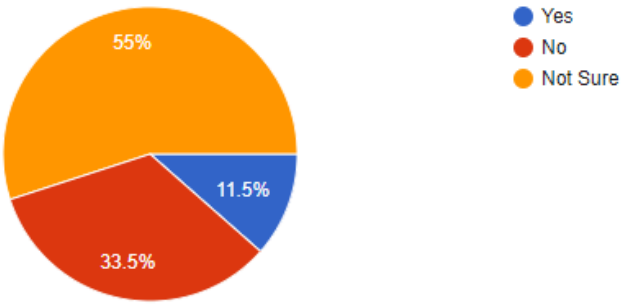


Figure 13: Students' readiness for entrepreneurship Based on skills acquired

4.3.4. Partnerships and Industry Engagement

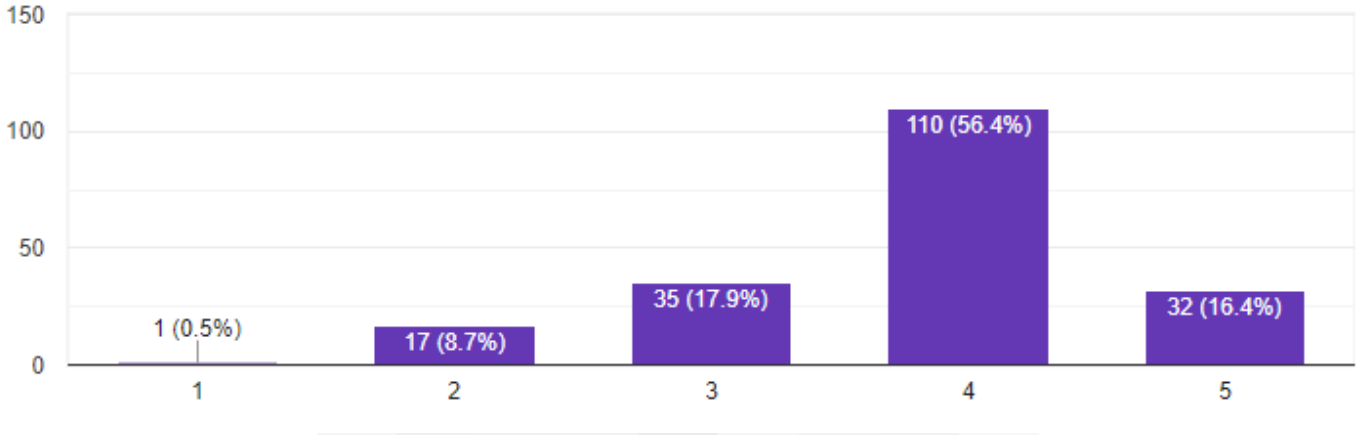
4.3.4.1. Awareness of university partnerships with industry or government

Students were asked whether they were aware of any programs or partnerships between their university and industry or government that support entrepreneurship education. The results revealed that the majority of respondents, 110 students (55%), were unsure about such partnerships. Additionally, 67 respondents (33.5%) answered "No," indicating that they were not aware of any partnerships. Only 23 respondents (11.5%) answered "Yes," confirming awareness of such initiatives (Figure 14).



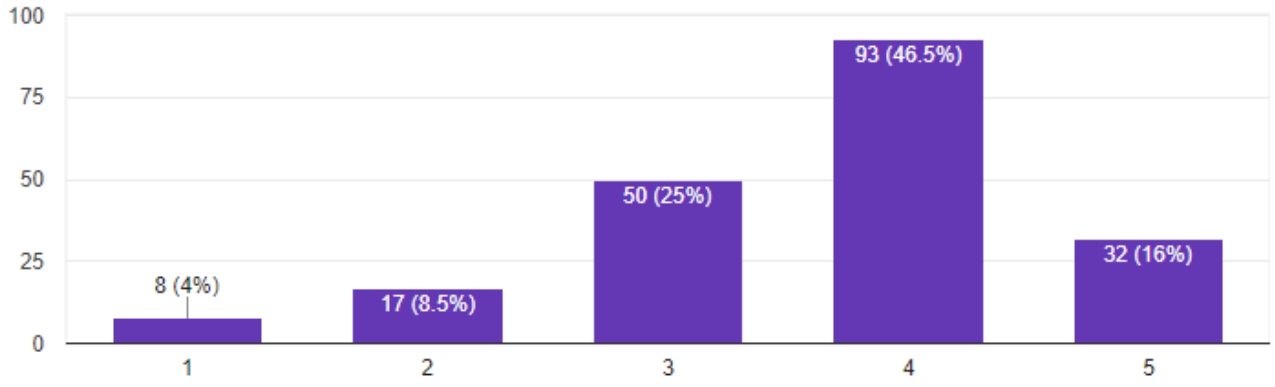
4.3.4.2. Perceived impact of Academia-Industry-Government partnerships

Students were asked to rate how impactful they believe partnerships between academia, industry, and government are in providing relevant entrepreneurial skills and opportunities, such as internships and mentorships. The responses, rated on a scale from 1 (not impactful at all) to 5 (very impactful), showed that 1 respondent (0.5%) rated the partnerships as not impactful at all (rating 1), while 17 respondents (8.7%) rated them as having low impact (rating 2). A total of 35 respondents (17.9%) selected a moderate impact (rating 3). The majority, 110 respondents (56.4%), rated the partnerships as impactful (rating 4), while 32 respondents (16.4%) rated them as very impactful (rating 5) (Figure 15).



4.3.4.3. Effectiveness of Partnerships in Bridging Academic and Job Market Skills

Students were asked to rate the extent to which partnerships between academia, industry, and government help bridge the gap between what is taught in school and the skills needed in the job market. The responses, measured on a scale from 1 (very low extent) to 5 (very high extent), showed that 8 respondents (4%) rated the impact as very low (rating 1), while 17 respondents (8.5%) rated it as low (rating 2). A total of 50 respondents (25%) provided a moderate rating (rating 3). The majority, 93 respondents (46.5%), rated the impact as high (rating 4), and 32 respondents (16%) rated it as very high (rating 5) (Figure 16).



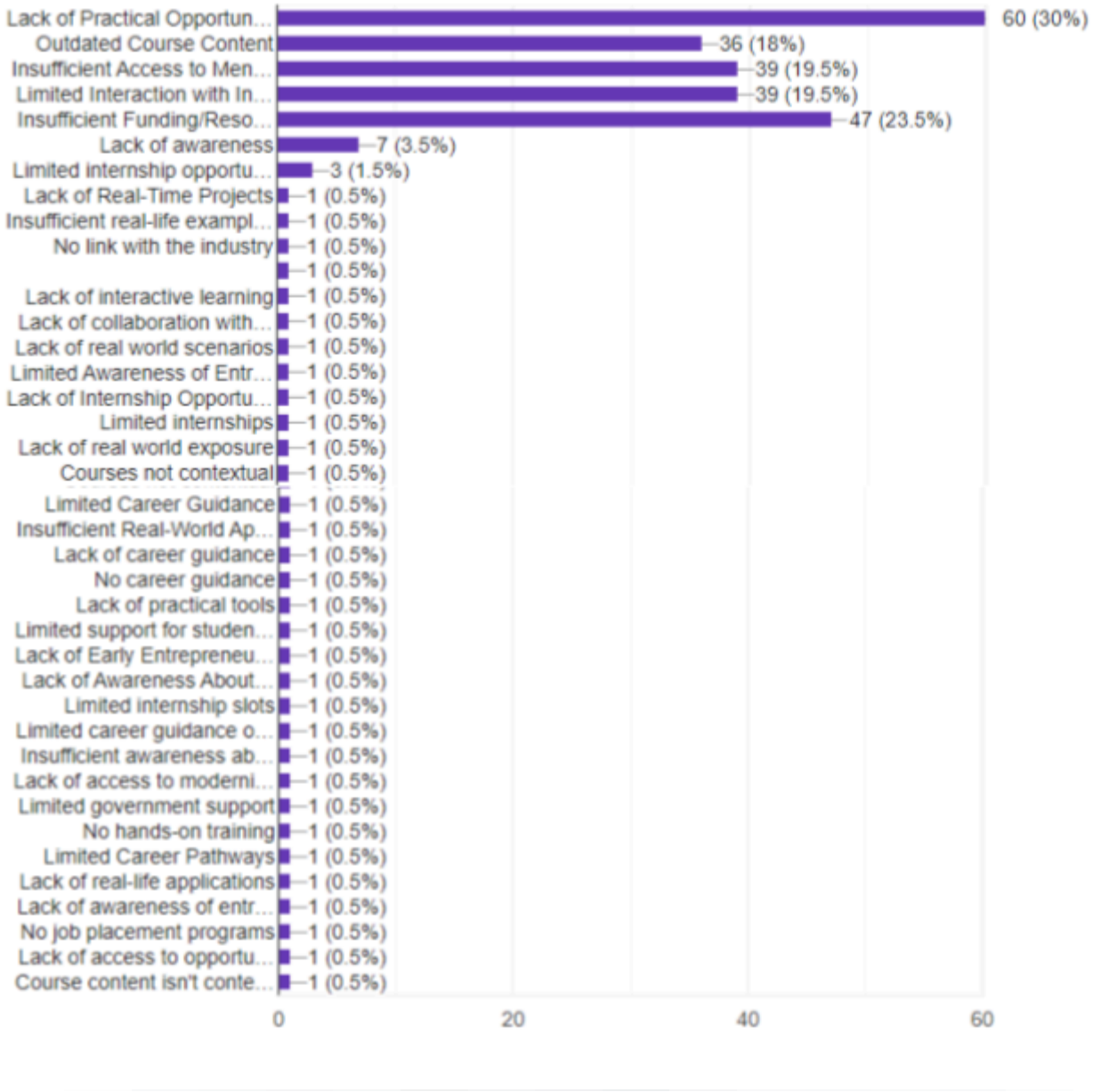
4.3.5. Challenges and Recommendations

4.3.5.1. Key challenges faced by students in gaining entrepreneurial skills

Students were asked to identify the biggest challenges they face in gaining entrepreneurial skills through their education, with multiple responses allowed. The most frequently cited challenge was lack of practical opportunities, selected by 60 respondents (30%). This was followed by

insufficient funding/resources for the program (47 respondents, 23.5%), and limited interaction with industry professionals and insufficient access to mentorship, both selected by 39 respondents (19.5%). Outdated course content was noted by 36 respondents (18%), suggesting concerns about the relevance of the material being taught (Figure 17).

In addition to these predefined options, the "others" category revealed a range of further challenges. Many respondents pointed to issues related to lack of awareness about entrepreneurship programs and limited internship opportunities, indicating that some students may not fully recognize or access available resources. Other frequently mentioned challenges included lack of real-world applications and projects, lack of career guidance, lack of modern tools or technologies, and insufficient real-time scenarios to apply theoretical knowledge. Some students also cited concerns about limited support for student businesses, lack of collaboration with government and other entrepreneurs, and insufficient funding or resources for programs. A few responses also indicated more specific issues, such as lack of access to opportunities, no job placement programs, and curriculum not being contextualized to present realities.


Lack of Practical Opportun...
60 (30%)
Outdated Course Content
36 (18%)
Insufficient Access to Men...
39 (19.5%)
Limited Interaction with In...
39 (19.5%)
Insufficient Funding/Reso...
47 (23.5%)
Lack of awareness
7 (3.5%)
Limited internship opportu...
3 (1.5%)
Lack of Real-Time Projects
1 (0.5%)
Insufficient real-life exampl...
1 (0.5%)
No link with the industry
1 (0.5%)
1 (0.5%)
Lack of interactive learning
1 (0.5%)
Lack of collaboration with...
1 (0.5%)
Lack of real world scenarios
1 (0.5%)
Limited Awareness of Entr...
1 (0.5%)
Lack of Internship Opportu...
1 (0.5%)
Limited internships
1 (0.5%)
Lack of real world exposure
1 (0.5%)
Courses not contextual
1 (0.5%)
Limited Career Guidance
1 (0.5%)
Insufficient Real-World Ap...
1 (0.5%)
Lack of career guidance
1 (0.5%)
No career guidance
1 (0.5%)
Lack of practical tools
1 (0.5%)
Limited support for studen...
1 (0.5%)
Lack of Early Entrepreneu...
1 (0.5%)
Lack of Awareness About...
1 (0.5%)
Limited internship slots
1 (0.5%)
Limited career guidance o...
1 (0.5%)
Insufficient awareness ab...
1 (0.5%)
Lack of access to moderni...
1 (0.5%)
Limited government support
1 (0.5%)
No hands-on training
1 (0.5%)
Limited Career Pathways
1 (0.5%)
Lack of real-life applications
1 (0.5%)
Lack of awareness of entr...
1 (0.5%)
No job placement programs
1 (0.5%)
Lack of access to opportu...
1 (0.5%)
Course content isn't conte...
1 (0.5%)
0
20
40
60

4.3.5.2. Recommendations for improving entrepreneurship education

In response to the question on how to improve entrepreneurship education, students provided a range of recommendations aimed at enhancing both the practical and theoretical aspects of the program. A significant number of students emphasized the need for more opportunities for real-world projects and increased practical training. Many students highlighted the importance of internships, with suggestions for more internships or field experiences, as well as stronger partnerships with industries and the government to facilitate these opportunities. Some students recommended introducing entrepreneurship courses earlier in students' academic journeys, with a suggestion that entrepreneurship should be made a prerequisite for graduation.

Students also recommended increased mentorship programs and better access to industry experts, with many suggesting more role models from the industry and regular mentorship opportunities. To ensure the education is more aligned with real business scenarios, students suggested updating course materials to reflect current trends and making the curriculum more applicable to real-life situations, particularly focusing on digital skills and modern business practices. Some students proposed incorporating interactive learning, practical workshops, and business simulations into the curriculum to provide hands-on experiences.

Financial support emerged as another key recommendation, with students suggesting more funding for student businesses, financial support for startups, and seed grants for entrepreneurial projects. Furthermore, students expressed the need for better facilities and resources for practical learning and more collaboration with local businesses, incubators, and financial institutions.

Other suggestions included organizing entrepreneurship fairs and competitions, providing structured internships with SMEs, and creating entrepreneurship hubs where students can

collaborate on projects and access mentorship. There were also repeated suggestions for increased awareness about entrepreneurship programs, career guidance for entrepreneurship, and developing partnerships with successful entrepreneurs to provide mentorship.

4.4. Stakeholder Interview Results

4.4.1. Partnership Dynamics

4.4.1.1. Stakeholder perspectives on academia-industry-government collaborations

The 15 stakeholders shared a range of views on the importance of collaborations between academia, industry, and government in improving entrepreneurship education. Many emphasized how these partnerships help students gain practical experience. One university representative explained, "*When we partner with industry, our students get the chance to see how businesses operate in the real world. It's the kind of exposure that textbooks can't provide*."

A government stakeholder also stressed the importance of policy, saying, "*Government support and policies make these collaborations possible. They set the framework that brings universities and industries together to make education more relevant to what's actually happening in the business world*." From the industry side, one stakeholder shared, "*We get to work with students on real projects and offer mentorship, which gives them a taste of what it's like to start and run a business. It's all about practical learning*."

Across all sectors, there was a shared belief that these partnerships are crucial for making entrepreneurship education more hands-on and connected to what's needed in the marketplace.

They believe that strategic, long-term partnerships between academia, industry, and government can help create an ecosystem that supports the development of entrepreneurial skills and increases the employability of graduates.

4.4.1.2. Key examples of successful partnerships

Several stakeholders highlighted key examples of successful partnerships between academia, industry, and government, which have significantly contributed to entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. One stakeholder mentioned the University of Ibadan's partnership with local SMEs, aimed at addressing the challenges faced by small businesses. They explained, "*The University has been working closely with small businesses to provide practical support, and the recent SME Fair in 2024 was a prime example of how academia can collaborate with local enterprises to foster innovation and entrepreneurship.*"

Another example shared was Covenant University's Centre for Entrepreneurial Development Studies (CEDS), which collaborates with various industry players to empower graduates with entrepreneurial skills. A stakeholder commented, "*Through CEDS, students gain practical exposure, mentorship, and networking opportunities, helping them connect with industries and understand market demands.*" The University of Lagos' Entrepreneurship Skills Development Centre also emerged as a successful model. A stakeholder shared, "*The University's collaboration with organizations has provided students with business planning training and risk management skills. These partnerships have been important in preparing students for entrepreneurship in the real world*."

The School of Entrepreneurship and Digital Innovation (SEDI) in Anambra State, in collaboration with the Rome Business School, was mentioned as a noteworthy initiative. A

stakeholder noted, "*SEDI's work with the Rome Business School has helped nurture digital entrepreneurship among Nigerian youth, which is critical for the future of the Nigerian economy.*" Additionally, the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) was highlighted as a successful program that has bridged the gap between academia and industry. A government stakeholder emphasized, "*SIWES has been instrumental in providing students with real-world industry experience"*. The program helps students understand the application of classroom learning in real-life business scenarios, which is crucial for their entrepreneurial development.

Finally, public-private partnerships were also emphasized as critical in driving entrepreneurship education. For example, companies like MTN have collaborated with universities to enhance ICT facilities, and financial institutions have funded scientific research, both of which have contributed to curriculum development and improved practical training opportunities for students. A government stakeholder stated, "*The support from private companies has been key in providing the resources and expertise necessary to update the curriculum and improve student learning outcomes*."

4.4.2. Curriculum and Skill Development

4.4.2.1. Alignment of curriculum with industry needs

Stakeholders were generally divided on the extent to which the current university curriculum aligns with industry needs. Some stakeholders, particularly from industry, expressed concern that academic curricula do not fully reflect the skills required in the business world. One industry representative shared, *"What students learn in school is often outdated. We need graduates who*

are ready to work, but what they're taught doesn't always match up with what we actually need in the real world." However, some university stakeholders noted efforts to improve curriculum alignment through collaborations with industry. A representative from Covenant University shared, "*We've been trying to integrate more hands-on experiences into our courses. We're working with businesses to make sure our students are gaining practical knowledge that's actually useful when they start working."* A government stakeholder also emphasized the role of policy in ensuring curriculum relevance, stating, "*There's a push for policies that help universities update their curriculums to include skills that are actually in demand, like tech skills and entrepreneurial thinking, so students are more prepared for the job market*".

While some stakeholders pointed out gaps, particularly in technical and operational skills and entrepreneurial thinking, there was a consensus that stronger and more systematic collaborations between academia and industry are needed to bridge these gaps. A government stakeholder concluded, "*To really keep up with what businesses need, the curriculum has to be flexible and evolve as the job market changes. We need industry professionals involved in the process to make sure that happens."*

4.4.2.2. Skills gaps identified in university graduates

Stakeholders unanimously acknowledged that university graduates often face significant skills gaps when entering the entrepreneurial and business world. A major concern raised by multiple industry representatives was the lack of practical problem-solving abilities. One industry stakeholder stated, "*Many graduates come in with impressive degrees, but when it comes to applying their knowledge to solve real-life business challenges, they're lost. They've spent too much time focusing on theory and not enough on the practical side of things*."

Another prominent issue was the insufficient emphasis on technical and digital skills. A government representative remarked, "*We're living in a digital world, and businesses need people who understand technology and how to use it effectively. Unfortunately, many graduates still lack even the most basic digital and operational skills. Universities need to do more to prepare students for this reality*." In addition to technical deficiencies, stakeholders also pointed to a lack of soft skills, such as leadership and teamwork. A university stakeholder explained, "*Most students work on individual assignments, but in the real world, you need to work in teams. Leadership and collaboration are crucial, and we're just not giving students enough opportunities to develop those skills while they're in school*."

A number of stakeholders noted the absence of an entrepreneurial mindset in graduates. One industry representative said, "*It's not just about teaching students how to start a business; it's about cultivating an attitude of innovation, resilience, and adaptability. Right now, we're producing graduates who are afraid to take risks or think outside the box. That's a big problem*." The mismatch between academic training and industry expectations was another recurring theme. A stakeholder from the private sector added, "*Sometimes it feels like universities are stuck in the past. The world is moving fast, and the curriculum isn't keeping up with the skills businesses actually need*."

Stakeholders emphasized that addressing these gaps will require more practical learning opportunities, stronger industry-academia collaborations, and curriculum updates that reflect modern business realities. One government official concluded, "*If universities can integrate more real-world projects, internships, and mentorship programs, we'll see a huge difference in how prepared graduates are for the entrepreneurial world*."

4.4.3. Specific challenges in encouraging effective partnerships between academia, industry and government in Nigeria

Stakeholders identified several challenges hindering the effectiveness of partnerships between academia, industry, and government. One of the most frequently mentioned barriers was misalignment of goals. An industry representative explained, "*Sometimes, universities focus more on academic research, while businesses are looking for immediate solutions. It's hard to get everyone on the same page*." Another significant issue was poor communication among stakeholders. A government official shared, "*There are often gaps in how universities and industries share information about their needs and expectations. Without proper communication, it's difficult to build partnerships that work for everyone."*

Stakeholders also highlighted insufficient funding as a major obstacle. A university representative commented, "*We have great ideas for collaboration, but the resources to implement them just aren't there. Funding is always a limiting factor*." Similarly, an industry stakeholder noted, "*Businesses are willing to invest, but they need to see clear value in these partnerships. Right now, there's a lack of trust in the system*." Regulatory barriers and bureaucracy were also cited as challenges, particularly in the Nigerian context. A government stakeholder remarked, "*The process of formalizing partnerships can be slow and complicated. Bureaucratic hurdles make it harder for industries to commit to working with universities.*"

Finally, stakeholders pointed to cultural factors that discourage collaboration. One participant noted, "*There's a mindset issue where some institutions or businesses don't see the benefit of working together. They're too focused on their own goals to think about the bigger picture*." Despite these challenges, stakeholders agreed that strengthening communication, increasing

funding, and streamlining regulatory processes could significantly improve the effectiveness of these partnerships.

4.4.4. Strategic Initiatives and Solutions

4.4.4.1. Proposed strategies to enhance partnerships

Stakeholders shared several actionable strategies to strengthen partnerships between academia, industry, and government, focusing on fostering collaboration and improving the impact of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. A recurring suggestion was to establish structured communication platforms. One industry stakeholder explained, "*We need regular forums or meetings where universities, industries, and policymakers can sit down and discuss what each side needs and can offer. Without that, we're just operating in silos*." Another added, "*Clear communication channels would help align goals and expectations, so everyone is working towards the same objectives.*"

Another strategy emphasized the importance of policy incentives to encourage collaboration. A government representative suggested, "*Policies that reward businesses for investing in education—like tax breaks or recognition programs—could make a big difference. Companies are more likely to get involved when they see direct benefits*." Many stakeholders highlighted the need for more practical learning opportunities facilitated through partnerships. One university representative suggested, "*Industries could host more internships and training programs, giving students a chance to gain real-world experience while still in school. It's a win-win situation."* Similarly, an industry stakeholder remarked, "*Hands-on projects and internships create a pipeline of talent for companies, so we'd definitely benefit from closer ties with universities*."

Funding partnerships also emerged as a priority. Stakeholders recommended creating joint funding programs to support entrepreneurship initiatives. A government stakeholder proposed, "*If we pool resources—government funding, industry contributions, and university budgets; we can run bigger, more impactful programs that benefit everyone*." Another recurring theme was the involvement of industry professionals in curriculum development. A participant noted, "*Businesses should have a say in what's being taught. They know what skills are needed, and their input can make the curriculum much more relevant*." Another added, "*Guest lectures and mentorship programs led by professionals would also expose students to real-world challenges and opportunities*."

To overcome bureaucratic delays, stakeholders recommended simplifying processes for formalizing partnerships. A university representative suggested, "*There should be a centralized system or office that handles partnership agreements to make the process faster and more efficient*." Lastly, stakeholders stressed the importance of changing mindsets and building trust. A university stakeholder shared, "*We need to start seeing partnerships as essential, not optional. Building trust and understanding among all parties will take time, but it's the foundation for effective collaboration.*"

4.4.4.2. Recommendations for improving entrepreneurship education

Stakeholders provided a range of recommendations to enhance entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities, emphasizing the need for practical, collaborative, and student-focused approaches. One of the most widely discussed recommendations was the need for practical learning opportunities. Stakeholders repeatedly called for an increase in hands-on training, internships, and real-life projects that allow students to apply their knowledge. A university

representative explained, "*Entrepreneurship isn't something you can fully learn from a textbook. Students need to run simulations, work on real-world problems, and interact with businesses to understand the challenges of starting and sustaining ventures."* Industry stakeholders also proposed expanding programs like SIWES (Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme) to include entrepreneurial placements, where students can shadow successful entrepreneurs or gain experience in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Curriculum modernization was another recurring theme. Many stakeholders emphasized that university curricula should reflect the realities of the evolving business landscape. A government official stressed, "*The curriculum needs to include emerging topics like e-commerce, digital skills, and sustainable business practices. These are areas where businesses are growing, and graduates need to be ready to lead in them*." Another stakeholder suggested the inclusion of case studies of successful Nigerian entrepreneurs, noting that "*When students see examples of people thriving in the same environment, it inspires them and makes entrepreneurship feel more achievable*."

In addition to content updates, stakeholders recommended improving the structure of entrepreneurship courses to balance theoretical and practical elements. One industry representative remarked, "*Too often, the courses lean heavily on theory, which doesn't prepare students for the unpredictability of running a business. There needs to be a deliberate focus on teaching adaptability, creative thinking, and problem-solving."* Strengthening partnerships between academia, industry, and government was seen as critical to improving entrepreneurship education. Stakeholders highlighted the need for more structured collaborations, such as having industry professionals serve as guest lecturers, establishing mentorship programs, and providing students with access to business networks. A university stakeholder stated, "*We need industries*

to engage directly with schools, whether through internships, joint projects, or resource sharing. This will help students see the direct application of what they're learning." A government representative added, "*Policies that incentivize industries to work with universities, such as tax breaks or public recognition, could encourage these partnerships to grow.*"

Mentorship was a recommendation raised by nearly all stakeholders. Many emphasized the value of having students connect with successful entrepreneurs who can guide them through the challenges of building a business. One industry stakeholder said, "*Mentorship provides students with insights they won't get in the classroom. It's also a confidence booster when they see people who've succeeded in the same environment they're navigating*." Universities were encouraged to develop structured mentorship programs and involve alumni entrepreneurs in guiding current students. Adequate funding was another key recommendation, with stakeholders urging increased investment from both the public and private sectors. A government official proposed, "*We need targeted funding for entrepreneurship programs i.e. resources for training, access to tools and facilities, and grants for students with viable business ideas. Without financial backing, even the best curriculum will fail to achieve its goals.*" Industry representatives echoed this, suggesting a matching fund model where government and private sector organizations collaborate to support entrepreneurship education.

Stakeholders also stressed the importance of raising awareness about entrepreneurship as a career option. One university representative explained, "*Many students still see entrepreneurship as a backup plan rather than a viable career path. We need to expose them to entrepreneurial concepts earlier in their education and highlight success stories to change that mindset*." Suggestions included organizing entrepreneurship fairs, hackathons, and workshops to showcase entrepreneurial opportunities and teach students the basics of starting and managing businesses.

Integration of technology into entrepreneurship education was also highlighted. A participant shared, "*In today's world, understanding technology is crucial for any business. Universities need to include courses on digital tools, marketing platforms, and emerging technologies like AI and blockchain.*" Practical access to technology, such as simulation tools for business scenarios, was also recommended to give students hands-on experience. Finally, stakeholders called for post-graduation support for student entrepreneurs. A university stakeholder suggested, "*Creating business incubators within universities could give graduates a safe space to experiment with their ideas and receive guidance. Entrepreneurship shouldn't stop at graduation—it needs to be nurtured.*" Other ideas included funding seed grants, providing access to co-working spaces, and building networks of industry partners who can help students transition from education to the business world.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the study's objectives and existing literature presented in the literature review. Based on the results of data collection, this chapter provides a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, the challenges impeding its implementation, and the role of partnerships between academia, industry and government in encouraging entrepreneurial talent. Thus, this chapter highlights areas of progress, identifies gaps and proposes directions for enhancing entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

5.2. Key Challenges in Skill-Based Entrepreneurship Education

The first objective of this study was to identify and analyze the key challenges preventing the effective implementation of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria and to understand how these challenges impact the development of entrepreneurial talent. The findings revealed several significant barriers, including a lack of practical opportunities, outdated curricula, limited mentorship and industry interaction. These challenges collectively hinder the ability of students to develop the skills and experiences necessary to succeed as entrepreneurs in Nigeria's evolving business landscape.

5.2.1. Lack of Practical Opportunities

A recurring theme in the study's findings is the limited availability of practical opportunities in entrepreneurship education programs across Nigerian Universities. Both survey responses and stakeholder interviews emphasized this challenge as a significant barrier to equipping students with the skills needed to thrive in entrepreneurial endeavors. Findings from the survey revealed that 60 respondents (the largest percentage in the response) identified lack of practical opportunities as one of the most significant challenges they face in gaining entrepreneurial skills. Respondents frequently pointed out the entrepreneurship education is highly theoretical, with limited hands-on activities such as real-world projects, internships or business simulations. Similarly, interviewed stakeholders expressed significant concern over the imbalance between theoretical knowledge and practical application. One industry stakeholder noted, "*Students graduate with high hopes but no real-world experience. They've never run a mock business or been involved in an internship where they can apply the theories they've learned*." This lack of exposure to practical sessions leaves many graduates underprepared for the challenges of starting and managing a business in Nigeria's complex and competitive environment.

Programs such as the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) were mentioned by stakeholders as an attempt to provide practical training. However, they pointed out that SIWES placements are often limited, poorly structured or misaligned with entrepreneurship education goals. One of the stakeholders highlighted that "*SIWES is a good concept, but the focus is mostly on engineering and technical fields. For entrepreneurship, the placements and supervision is often lacking, which limits its impact on students' entrepreneurial skills."* The absence of adequate practical opportunities however, extends beyond SIWES. Stakeholders noted that universities rarely offer incubator programs, on-campus business competitions or partnerships

with local businesses that could provide students with hands-on learning experiences. According to them, many Nigerian universities lack infrastructure such as incubators or co-working spaces where students can experiment with business ideas or work collaboratively on entrepreneurial projects. One of the interviewed stakeholders pointed out that "*Lots of universities don't have the resources to create business incubators or funds entrepreneurial projects on campus. So, students have to find opportunities themselves if they want to gain any practical experience."* Industry representations also highlighted several missed opportunities for collaborative projects, suggesting that universities could engage with local SMEs or startups to give students exposure to the realities of business operations. For example, internships with small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which could provide students with valuable hands-on learning are rare. This gap is usually due to a lack of structured collaboration mechanisms between academia and industry.

The absence of adequate practical poses a significant barrier to the development of entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria. Findings from this study emphasize that practical training is important for bridging the gap between academic concepts and real-world business challenges. It is also important for developing competencies such as problem solving, decision making, leadership and risk management. Without such opportunities, students often graduate with only a theoretical understanding of entrepreneurship but lack the confidence and skills to apply their knowledge in real-life situations. According to one of the interviewed stakeholders, *"Nigeria's economy needs entrepreneurs who can innovate and create jobs, but our educational system isn't producing them. Practical experience is the missing link. Without it, we're just producing graduates who seek jobs instead of creating them"*. This lack of practical training has ripple effects on the students, the business ecosystem and the country. Findings from this study

suggests that students who are ill-prepared for the realities of entrepreneurship often face difficulties in establishing successful businesses. This high failure rate can discourage other aspiring entrepreneurs and weaken the overall perception of entrepreneurship as a viable career path. Over time, this cycle contributes to a stagnant entrepreneurial ecosystem where growth and innovation is limited.

The lack of practical opportunities also prevents the growth of important entrepreneurial soft skills. Skills such as adaptability, resilience and innovation which are important in navigating Nigeria's volatile economic environment are often learned through experience rather than theory (Bhattarai, n.d.). Without exposure to real-world scenarios during training, students are unable to develop such skills. This is consistent with this study's findings that highlight that the limited access to internships and absence of business simulations deprives students the chance to learn from failure. Interviewed stakeholders emphasized that trial-and error is important for entrepreneurial success, sadly, the current education system leaves no room for students to experiment or test their business ideas with low risk. This gap in the Nigerian education system encourages a sense of hesitation, as students fear failure and lack the resilience to overcome early setbacks in their entrepreneurial journeys. The findings of this study align with existing research from Nabi et al. (2017) which emphasizes the importance of practical and experiential training in entrepreneurship education. In addition, Tan and Ng (2006) emphasize the importance of experiential learning in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. According to Morris et al. (2013), hands-on experience is crucial to effective learning, especially in entrepreneurship where success depends on applying abstract concepts in constantly changing environments.

In the Nigerian context, studies by Coker et al. (2021) and Okoro (2021) have similarly noted that the lack of practical training opportunities is a persistent challenge. Coker et al. (2021) found that most Nigerian Universities offer entrepreneurship courses that are purely theoretical, with little or no focus on experiential learning methods. This observation is consistent with findings of this study, where surveyed students pointed to the absence of practical trainings such as internships, simulations or fieldwork as one of the major limitations of their programs. Findings from Okoro (2021) further argue that the lack of practical training contributes to a skill mismatch between graduates and the demands of the business world. Findings from the study highlight that graduates often lack critical skills such as negotiation, financial management and market analysis which are usually gotten through experiential learning. Okoro's (2021) findings align with findings from the stakeholders' interviews in this study, where a majority agreed that the Nigerian education system is not producing innovative and resilient entrepreneurs. In addition, studies on entrepreneurship education from developed countries all agree that integrating experiential learning through internships, hackathons etc. into entrepreneurship programs significantly improves entrepreneurial outcomes (Rasmussen & Sørheim, 2006). This signifies the important role of practical and experiential learning in entrepreneurial success. Without such hands-on training, Nigerian Universities are limiting the development of entrepreneurial talent, hindering graduates' confidence and their readiness to succeed in the business ecosystem.

5.2.2. Outdated Curricula

This study found that outdated curricula was a significant challenge in entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. According to the survey data and stakeholders interview, there is a wide

gap between the theoretical knowledge taught in universities and the evolving demands of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. In the survey, 36 respondents (18%) identified outdated course content as one of the barriers to getting entrepreneurial skills. These suggests that much of the content being taught in Nigerian universities was designed years ago with little or no revision and inclusion of modern trends and technologies. Findings from this suggests that while foundational business theories were taught, areas such as e-commerce, sustainability and digital marketing were underrepresented. This is consistent with findings from Ofili (2014) and Ogunmola *et al.* (2024) which suggests that most entrepreneurship curricula in Nigeria universities are usually disconnected from current realities.

According to findings in this study, not only were the curricula outdated, students were also dissatisfied with its content and its relevance to current realities. The students' dissatisfaction were reflected in their ratings of curriculum relevance. When asked about the extent to which their entrepreneurship curriculum aligned with the skills needed for real world business success, only 39% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed on its relevance. The remaining 61% either disagreed or were neutral, indicating a significant mismatch between course content taught in Nigerian universities and the practical demands of entrepreneurship. For students, this lack of alignment often translated into feeling inadequate and unprepared for the realities of starting and running a successful business. According to this study's findings and previous research from Balusji et al. (2023) and Okoro (2021), this implies that entrepreneurship curricula are largely focused on theoretical concepts with little or no emphasis on practical application. This study also found that the gap was particularly pronounced among students in public universities, who are more likely to rate their curricula as outdated compared to their colleagues in private

institutions. This finding is however, not largely reflected in previous research due to their focus being solely on either public universities or private institutions.

The problem of outdated curricula was also highlighted in the stakeholders' interviews. Majority of them emphasized that the curricula in most Nigerian universities is outdated and disconnected from the demands of the job market. One university lecturer stated that *"the content we're teaching today hasn't been updated in over a decade. It's no wonder our graduates struggle to keep up in the modern business world"*. According to them, there are lots of bureaucratic hurdles involved in curriculum reform hence its outdated state. One of them explained that *"It takes years to get approval for even minor changes in the curriculum, so by the time the updates are implemented, they're already outdated"*. This suggests that this delay is curriculum reforms is the major reasons why many Nigerian universities fail to keep up with the rapid advancements in global business practices and technologies. Similarly, the bureaucratic delay in curriculum reforms identified in this study resonate with findings from Ofili (2014). Agbonlahor (2016) also supports this suggesting that the slow approval process for updating course content further widen the gap between industry realities and what is taught in classrooms.

Apart from bureaucratic delays, the stakeholders also highlighted lack of collaboration between academia and the industry in designing curricula as the main cause of the problem. Without input from industry professionals and entrepreneurs, course content often fails to reflect the day-to-day realities of running a business. To place emphasis on the lack of collaboration, one entrepreneur emphasised that *"Universities are designing courses in isolation, without input from those of us in the industry. We need graduates who understand digital tools and can adapt, but the curriculum remains outdated because of poor engagement between academia and industry."* Previous literature such as Zhang *et al.* (2022) and Moses *et al.* (2017) emphasize the

importance of industry-academia collaboration in shaping effective curricula. Findings from Nwabufo & Mamman (2015) argue that robust partnerships between universities and industries lead to programs and courses that produce graduates ready for entrepreneurship. However, this study reveals that such collaboration remain limited in Nigeria. With stakeholders highlighting the inadequate involvement of industry professionals in curriculum design. This therefore contributes to a theoretical approach to entrepreneurship education, as observed in both survey and interview findings.

This study found that while global case studies and theoretical models are commonly included in the curricula, they are rarely adapted to address the unique challenges of doing business in Nigeria. Often times, issues such as navigating regulatory challenges, economic problems such as inflation, dealing with infrastructural deficits are often overlooked. One of the interviewed stakeholder highlighted this gap by saying, *"entrepreneurship education needs to be rooted in the Nigerian experience. We need to start preparing our students for the realities of doing business in Nigeria."* This mismatch discourages students from pursuing business opportunities within Nigeria, driving some to consider opportunities abroad instead. The stakeholder observations about curriculum misalignment are consistent with findings from Qian (2017) and Maghfiorh *et al.* (2023) who emphasizes the need for more localized content on entrepreneurship education. According to Mbah *et al.* (201), the lack of contextualisation to Nigeria-specific challenges as reflected in this study's findings directly affect students' ability to address issues peculiar to the Nigerian market. This gap emphasises the need for a current curriculum that balance global perspectives with relevance to the Nigerian context. Findings from stakeholder interviews in this study and Oyinlola *et al.* (2024) therefore suggest incorporating local case studies and examples to better reflect the Nigerian reality.

This study also found that the problem of outdated curricula is often compounded by traditional teaching methods which focus heavily on lectures and rote learning. The students surveyed in this study highlighted limited opportunities for interactive learning such as case study analysis and hands-on projects. This method of teaching often leaves students ill-prepared to handle the different challenges associated with running a business in Nigeria. Additionally, this study found that the structure of the curricula and teaching methods limits creativity and innovation and students. With little room for experimentation, students are often limited by the educational system that prioritises rote learning over critical thinking. To add credence to this, one of the interviewed stakeholders highlighted that *"our education system teaches students to memorize, not to innovate".* This shows that the lack of innovation, exploration and creativity in Nigerian students is a major obstacle in promoting entrepreneurial talent. This findings align closely with existing research on the limitations of outdated curricula in encouraging entrepreneurial talent. The emphasis on traditional, theoretical education over practical and contemporary knowledge mirror concerns raised by Mbeteh and Pellegrini (2018) and Ubogu (2020). Pompa (2015) argues that Nigerian higher institutions fail to adequately prepare students for the realities of doing business. Findings from DeJaeghere and Baxter (2014) also highlight this disconnect, which has also been documented by Ubogu (2020) as a major impediment to entrepreneurial success.

Despite these challenges, this study acknowledged isolated examples of progress in modern curriculum. For example, private universities like Covenant University has included modules on digital marketing and financial literacy into its entrepreneurship program, providing students with skills that are directly applicable in modern business environments. Similarly, initiatives like the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) are working to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application. There is therefore a need to increase such

efforts and put forward a more systematic approach to curriculum reform that involves collaboration between academia, industry and government; as well as balances global perspectives and the unique Nigerian experience.

5.2.3. Limited Mentorship and Industry Interaction

One of the prominent challenges highlighted in both survey responses and stakeholder interviews was the lack of mentorship and industry interaction in the Nigerian entrepreneurship education system. Many of the survey students reported difficulty in accessing experienced entrepreneurs and business leaders who could provide mentorship or guidance on navigating the realities of starting and running a successful business. In the survey, 39 respondents (19.5%) identified insufficient mentorship opportunities as a major challenge, while 39 others (9.5%) also cited limited interactions with industry professionals as a significant gap in their entrepreneurship journey. The fact that nearly 40% highlight these as a barrier indicates a lack of mentorship in the current Nigerian entrepreneurship training model. Thus, further widening the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Stakeholders during the interviews also echoed these concerns, emphasizing that mentorship programs are either non-existent in many institutions or not well-structured enough to provide adequate support to students. This gap thereby leaves students without access to the kind of knowledge and practical insights that mentorship provides.

According to the findings in this study, the absence of structured mentorship programs and limited industry interaction by students significantly limit their ability to develop entrepreneurial competencies. This is because mentorship plays an important role in providing real-world

knowledge, shaping successful business strategies and building confidence. Without access to experienced mentors from several industries, students struggle with decision making, risk assessment and strategic planning which are skills best acquired through direct exposure to the business ecosystem. Furthermore, this study also found that mentorship is known to influence entrepreneurial motivation and persistence. One stakeholder commented that "*When students learn about business challenges through their mentors, they gain valuable experience and are motivated*". Many students usually lack the confidence to pursue business ventures due to uncertainty and fear of failure. Having a mentor can reduce these fears by getting practical guidance, encouragement and access to valuable insights and networking experiences. This is consistent with findings from existing literature reviewed earlier in this study that identified mentorship as a key driver of resilience in entrepreneurial ventures. Studies by Ojo *et al.* (2014), Nwosu (2018) and Magaji and Nanle (2014) found that young entrepreneurs with mentors are more likely to persist through business challenges and demonstrate higher levels of resilience and innovation. This aligns with observation from stakeholders in this study, where interviewed industry experts emphasized that the absence of mentorship leaves students without role models to guide them through the complexities of entrepreneurship. Without such exposure, graduates enter the workforce without knowing how to deal with customers, suppliers, debt management and other important skills needed to start and sustain a business.

This study also found that mentorship and interaction with industry experts help provide students with access to funding opportunities and investments. According to this study's findings, entrepreneurs who have access to mentors and build a strong network with industry experts whilst in school are more likely to secure funding to pursue their entrepreneurial ventures and contribute to the economic development of the county. This implies that if students are not

exposed to investors or successful business owners, they would not know how or where to begin when seeking capital for entrepreneurship ventures. Existing literature also points to the financial and economic benefits of mentorship-driven entrepreneurship programs. According to Carpenter and Wilson (2021) and Zhang *et al.* (2022), mentorship not only improves individual entrepreneurial success and chances to secure funding, but also contributes to job creation and economic growth. The lack of structured mentorship in Nigeria entrepreneurial system, as highlighted in this study, therefore represents not just an educational gap but missed economic opportunities for the country.

The findings of this study align with existing research by Nwosu (2018) and Afolabi et al. (2017) that highlight the importance of mentorship and industry partnership in entrepreneurship education. According to Moses et al. (2017), structured mentorship program significantly contribute to the success rates of young entrepreneurs. Apart from securing funding, Richardson and Hynes (2008) also found that young entrepreneurs who have mentors are more likely to experiment with new business models and adopt new technologies. In agreement, studies by Nwabufo & Mamman (2015) and Mwangi (2011), argue that students who engage with experienced mentors are more likely to develop viable business ideas, secure funding and sustain their ventures beyond the start-up phase. This is consistent with findings of this study, where students who lacked mentorship expressed concerns about their ability to transition from theoretical knowledge to practical entrepreneurship. This implies that a lack of mentorship leaves students without role models to inspire creativity and encourage risk taking. Without these, most students prefer safer, traditional business ideas instead of innovative, high growth ventures.

Beyond mentorship, industry partnership remain weak, thereby limiting students' exposure to learning from industry experts. Several stakeholders highlighted the lack of structured collaborations between academia and industry as the cause of missed opportunities for mentorships, internships, networking and hand-on learning. One stakeholder remarked "*We invite business leaders and industry experts for seminars, however there is no continuity. There is no structured mentorship or lasting program that allow students engage meaningfully over an extended period."* Some stakeholders also linked this gap in mentorship to the poor collaboration between academia, industry and government. According to findings in this study, there is no framework linking these three key players in entrepreneurship education therefore causing each player to work in isolation. This lack of coordination means that students are often left to work without guidance at crucial stages of their entrepreneurial journey.

This is consistent with findings from Zhang *et al.* (2022) and Enu (2012) that emphasize the role of industry participation in entrepreneurship education. According to Zhang *et al.* (2022) when universities establish strong partnerships with businesses, students will be able to access opportunities for internships, mentorships and real-life case studies. These opportunities will in turn improve their entrepreneurial capabilities and readiness for the business ecosystem. However, findings from this study indicate that most Nigerian universities fail to provide a structured framework for engaging with the private sector, thereby leaving students with little or no exposure to industry practices. Another important aspect highlighted in existing literature is the role of policy and institutional frameworks in facilitating mentorship. Some of the stakeholders interviewed in this study and findings from Maifata and Mohammed (2016) argue that mentorship should not be left to chance but should be embedded within formal university programs. To give credence to this, Ubogu (2020) and Afolabi *et al.* (2017) suggests that policies

should mandate universities to partner with business associations, industry leaders and key stakeholders in the entrepreneurial ecosystem such as incubators and accelerators to create a structured framework for mentorship. This recommendation is consistent with those proposed by stakeholders in this study, who called for government interventions and incentives to encourage collaboration between universities and businesses.

5.2.4. Insufficient Funding and Resources

The role of funding in entrepreneurship education has been widely studied, with researchers emphasizing that adequate financial support is a key determinant of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship training programs (Afolabi et al., 2017). This study revealed that financial constraints are a major barrier to the effective implementation of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. In the survey, 47 respondents (23.5%) identified insufficient funding and resources as a key challenge in gaining entrepreneurial skills. This challenge ranked among the most significant concerns, alongside lack of opportunities (30%) and limited mentorship and industry interaction (19.5%). The problem of funding was also reflected in multiple aspects of this study's findings. Many students reported that their universities lacked essential financial support mechanisms such as seed funding for student-led business, business incubation centres and structured internship placements. The absence of these resources means that while students are introduced to entrepreneurship theories and concepts, they often lack the opportunity to apply their knowledge in real-world business settings (Unachukwu, 2010). This contributes to the widespread perception that entrepreneurship education remains mainly theoretical rather than practical. As a

result, we have graduates who are theoretically knowledgeable but lack the hands-on experience required to succeed in business.

In addition to student concerns, stakeholders from universities and industry also emphasized that limited financial resources restrict the ability of institutions to deliver high-quality entrepreneurship programs. University representatives interviewed noted that budgetary limitations prevent the frequent updating of entrepreneurship curricula to reflect industry trends. Without adequate funding, many institutions struggle to provide training in areas such as digital entrepreneurship, business technology and global trade which are increasingly important for modern business success. Without funding to regularly update course content and integrate technology-driven business models, students are left learning outdated business strategies that may not align with current market realities. This misalignment creates a gap between academic training and industry needs, reducing the competitiveness of graduates in the global entrepreneurial space.

Another major impact of inadequate funding, according to this study, is the lack of modern learning facilities to support entrepreneurship education and practical training opportunities**.** Effective entrepreneurship education relies on experiential learning, where students gain exposure to real-world business operations through internships, startup incubation, and project-based learning. Miller *et al.* (2018) and Rossano-Rivero and Wakkee (2019) found that entrepreneurship education is most impactful when it incorporates experiential learning opportunities, such as business incubators, seed funding for startups, and structured internship programs**.** Findings from Saeed *et al.* (2015) and Wasaik and Jain (2023) also suggests that well-funded entrepreneurship programs in countries with strong industry-academia partnerships provide students with hands-on business experience, access to startup capital, and structured

mentorship programs. In contrast, universities with limited financial resources struggle to offer these crucial learning components**,** leaving students ill-prepared to transition from academic training to real-world entrepreneurship (Ogunmola & Olayemi, 2020).The survey and stakeholder interviews in this study reinforce this notion, as respondents repeatedly pointed out that without financial support, practical training initiatives remain underdeveloped or completely absent in Nigerian universities. Unlike institutions in developed countries where students have access to such business incubation hubs and simulation labs, findings from this study suggests that Nigerian universities often lack dedicated spaces where students can experiment with entrepreneurial ideas. Many interviewees highlighted that business plan competitions, prototyping spaces, and technology-driven entrepreneurial labs are virtually non-existent in most Nigerian universities due to funding shortages. As a result, many students complete their entrepreneurship courses without ever engaging in business simulations, pitching to investors, or managing real projects, leaving them ill-prepared to navigate the realities of entrepreneurship.

The lack of funding also limits access to structured mentorship programs, which play a crucial role in shaping students' entrepreneurial skills and decision-making abilities. Mentorship helps students refine their business ideas, build networks, and understand market dynamics from experienced entrepreneurs. In well-funded entrepreneurship ecosystems, universities establish partnerships with industry leaders who provide direct mentorship to students through one-on-one coaching, workshops, and networking events. However, in Nigeria, these mentorship opportunities remain scarce and unstructured due to the financial burden associated with coordinating and sustaining such programs. Without formal mentorship arrangements, students are left to rely on personal connections or self-learning, which does not offer the same level of structured guidance or professional insights that formal mentorship provides. Furthermore, the

research literature examined in Chapter 2 such as Ogunmola and Olayemi (2020), Afolabi *et al.* (2017) and Saeed *et al.* (2015) support the argument that entrepreneurial mentorship plays a significant role in shaping students' confidence, decision-making skills, and business acumen. Well-structured mentorship programs which is often funded through university-industry collaborations or government-supported initiatives allow students to engage with experienced entrepreneurs who offer guidance, networking opportunities, and industry insights. Studies in developed economies, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, show that entrepreneurial ecosystems thrive when universities allocate financial resources to mentorship and industry engagement programs (Miller et al., 2018). The absence of such structured support in Nigeria, as indicated in this study's findings, reinforces the challenges faced by students who lack direct access to industry professionals and business leaders.

Beyond institutional constraints, the absence of financial incentives for students was also a significant challenge. Some universities in other countries offer seed funding, grants, low-interest loans, or government-backed funding schemes to support student entrepreneurs, but such initiatives are rare in Nigeria. Without financial assistance, many students are unable to translate their business ideas into viable ventures. Without access to funding, many students abandon their entrepreneurial ambitions altogether, opting instead for traditional employment due to financial insecurity. A university administrator interviewed for the study noted that even when students demonstrate strong entrepreneurial potential, a lack of access to capital prevents them from starting and sustaining businesses. This contributes to a cycle where entrepreneurship education produces graduates who are knowledgeable about business principles but unable to put them into practice due to financial constraints. The funding gap in Nigerian universities is also consistent with global research on the relationship between financial investment and entrepreneurial

success rates. Scholars argue that early-stage funding opportunities, such as student business grants and university venture capital funds, significantly enhance the likelihood of business survival and growth (Enu, 2012). Without such funding, students who wish to launch their businesses often face high barriers to entry, limiting their ability to develop innovative solutions and contribute to economic development (Nwosu, 2018). The findings from this study indicate that Nigerian students lack access to these financial lifelines, making it difficult for them to transition from academic learning to entrepreneurship in practice.

Stakeholders from the private sector and government also highlighted the role of inadequate funding in limiting academia-industry-government collaborations. According to them, the lack of financial investment in academia-industry-government collaborations weakens the overall entrepreneurial ecosystem**.** Well-funded partnerships between universities, businesses, and government agencies enable students to gain exposure to industry trends, participate in co-op programs, and receive mentorship from professionals actively engaged in business. However, many universities struggle to establish formalized industry partnerships because they lack the financial capacity to set up internship programs, sponsor student training workshops, or collaborate with local businesses on entrepreneurial initiatives. In many cases, industry players expect universities to provide financial support for such initiatives, but without government backing or private-sector funding, these partnerships remain limited. Therefore, students miss out on valuable industry connections, internships, and collaborative research opportunities that could enhance their entrepreneurial readiness**.** In addition, existing literature highlights the importance of government and private sector involvement in funding entrepreneurship education. Research from Ofili (2014) and Agbonlahor (2016) suggests that successful entrepreneurial ecosystems often rely on a tripartite collaboration between academia, industry, and government, where

financial resources are pooled to support entrepreneurship programs. Countries with strong public-private partnerships in entrepreneurship education have been able to establish innovation hubs, provide startup grants, and create sustainable models for funding student-led ventures (Saeed et al., 2015). The absence of structured government and private sector funding in Nigeria, as revealed in the study, aligns with research on the limitations faced by underfunded entrepreneurial ecosystems, where students and graduates struggle to access the financial resources needed to build and sustain their businesses.

This study's findings further suggest that government funding for entrepreneurship education remains insufficient. Although there are national policies promoting entrepreneurship development, the actual budgetary allocations to universities remain inadequate for full implementation. While some government-led initiatives, such as the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), provide limited support for industry training, they do not fully address the funding gaps for entrepreneurship incubation, startup financing, or mentorship programs. The findings of this study confirm what existing literature has long emphasized, that financial investment is essential for the success of entrepreneurship education. Without adequate funding, students remain constrained by a lack of practical training, limited mentorship, and weak industry connections, which ultimately reduces their ability to transition into entrepreneurship effectively.

5.2.5. Lack of Awareness and Early Exposure

This study revealed that a lack of awareness about entrepreneurship programs and delayed exposure to entrepreneurial concepts are major challenges faced by students in Nigerian

universities. When asked about their knowledge of university partnerships with industry or government supporting entrepreneurship education, 110 students (55%) reported that they were not sure if such programs existed, while 67 students (33.5%) stated outright that no such programs were available. These responses indicate that many students are either unaware of the entrepreneurship opportunities available within their institutions or only become exposed to them at later stages of their education, reducing the time available to develop the necessary skills. This also suggests that even where collaborations exist, they are not well-publicized or structured in a way that ensures students benefit from them early in their academic journey. Studies by Burbridge and Morrison (2021) show that when universities actively promote entrepreneurship education and make resources accessible, students are more likely to engage with available opportunities. In this present study, a lack of awareness emerged as a significant barrier, with 55% of students reporting uncertainty about existing partnerships between universities, industry, and government. This aligns with the argument that merely having entrepreneurship programs is not enough, students must be made aware of these opportunities through structured outreach, mentorship programs, and promotional efforts (Alonso & Santander, 2021).

According to findings of this study, early exposure to entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial intent, confidence, and skill acquisition. The findings from this study suggest that the late introduction of entrepreneurship concepts in Nigerian universities significantly reduces students' ability to develop an entrepreneurial mindset, thereby affecting their willingness and preparedness to pursue business ventures. Furthermore, limited awareness of entrepreneurship programs within universities prevents students from accessing critical support structures such as mentorship, funding, and incubation programs. Stakeholders in the study noted that without clear promotion of available resources, students often do not engage in

entrepreneurial activities until they are forced to do so out of necessity after graduation. Several studies such as Boldureanu *et al*. (2020), Pazos *et al.* (2022) and Carriker (2021) highlight that early exposure to entrepreneurship education influences students' career choices, risk-taking ability, and confidence in starting a business. For example, Pazos *et al.* (2022) found that students who engaged with entrepreneurship education early in their academic journey were more likely to pursue self-employment than those introduced to it later. This is because early exposure provides time for students to experiment with business ideas, learn from failures, and refine their entrepreneurial skills over time. The results of this study reflect similar patterns, as many stakeholders emphasized that late exposure limits students' ability to engage meaningfully with entrepreneurship programs before graduation.

Additionally, in response to challenges faced in gaining entrepreneurial skills, some students in this study identified limited awareness about entrepreneurship programs as a barrier, reinforcing the concern that many students are unaware of the resources and support structures intended to help them develop their business skills. Scholars have consistently argued that the earlier students are introduced to entrepreneurship, the more likely they are to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and take proactive steps toward business creation (Cheon, 2014). One main consequence of limited awareness and late exposure is reduced confidence in entrepreneurial abilities. Entrepreneurial confidence develops through gradual learning, hands-on experience, and testing business ideas (Mbah et al., 2018). However, when students encounter entrepreneurship for the first time in their third or final year, they have little time to experiment, fail, and refine their ideas before graduation**.** This contrasts with global best practices, where students start engaging with entrepreneurial activities from early education**,** allowing them to build confidence over years rather than months**.**

Stakeholder interviews further emphasized the issue of delayed exposure to entrepreneurial concepts, particularly in how entrepreneurship education is introduced at the university level rather than being embedded throughout the education system. Several industry and academic stakeholders pointed out that by the time students are introduced to entrepreneurship, they have already developed career mindsets that prioritize traditional employment over self-employment or business creation. One university official noted, "*We introduce entrepreneurship as a compulsory course in the later years of study, but by then, many students have already mentally checked out or are focused on securing a job rather than building a business.*" Moreover, research suggests that countries with strong entrepreneurship ecosystems tend to introduce entrepreneurial education at the primary and secondary school levels (Yuntao, 2018). In developed economies, programs such as Junior Achievement and Young Enterprise provide students with hands-on experience in business creation before they enter university (JA-YE Europe, n.d.). In contrast, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is typically introduced at the tertiary level, often as a mandatory course rather than an integrated learning experience. This study's findings echo concerns raised by Alonso and Santander (2018), who argue that introducing entrepreneurship only in higher education is often too late to cultivate a risk-taking and innovation-driven culture among students. One of the most significant effects of delayed exposure is a lack of entrepreneurial intent among students. Research has shown that students who are introduced to entrepreneurship early tend to be more open to self-employment and innovation, while those who encounter it later in their education are more likely to prioritize traditional employment pathways (Bozhikin et al., 2019). The study findings support this, as stakeholders repeatedly emphasized that students in their final years often see entrepreneurship courses as an academic requirement rather than a real career option. A government official

involved in policy planning for youth entrepreneurship noted, *"By the time students engage with entrepreneurship education, many have already decided they want to work in a corporate job. If we want to see more young entrepreneurs, we need to introduce these concepts much earlier."*

This delayed introduction limits students' ability to develop and refine business ideas over time. In contrast, many successful entrepreneurship ecosystems emphasize early exposure, where students begin learning about business creation, innovation, and financial literacy from secondary school or even primary school levels (Cheon, 2014). A government official who participated in this study observed, "*In developed countries, entrepreneurship is taught early, and students are encouraged to take risks and start small businesses from a young age. Here, most students only begin thinking about business when they graduate, and by then, they feel lost*." Early exposure to entrepreneurship allows students to see real-world examples of successful entrepreneurs, which can inspire them to pursue business opportunities with more confidence. The lack of structured entrepreneurship education at earlier stages of learning means that many Nigerian students do not see entrepreneurship as a viable career path. A stakeholder from an entrepreneurship training program noted, "*We find that students who were exposed to business and entrepreneurship early, perhaps through family businesses or secondary school programs tend to be more proactive in seeking opportunities, while others remain hesitant."* Furthermore, stakeholders highlighted that many universities do not have a structured outreach program to actively promote their entrepreneurship initiatives. As a result, even when there are business development hubs, startup competitions, or mentorship programs within institutions, students who do not actively seek out these opportunities may never realize they exist. One entrepreneur working with student-led businesses shared, "*We run occasional business seminars in collaboration with a university, but every year, students tell us they only found out about it*

through word of mouth. There's no formal structure to make sure every student knows what's available."

The findings of this study suggest that early exposure to entrepreneurship education significantly enhances students' confidence, business acumen, and willingness to take entrepreneurial risks. According to Nwabufo and Mamman (2015), students who engage in entrepreneurship from an early age develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy, which increases their likelihood of launching businesses in the future. The findings of this study suggest that the absence of such exposure in Nigerian universities means that many students do not consider entrepreneurship as a primary career option, reducing the overall pool of young entrepreneurial talent in the country. Addressing these issues through structured awareness campaigns, curriculum reforms, and engagement with students from earlier academic stages would help create a stronger entrepreneurial culture and ensure that students graduate with both the mindset and skills needed to succeed as entrepreneurs (Palmér & Johansson, 2018). The stakeholder perspectives in this study reinforce this argument, as several experts emphasized the need for earlier engagement with industry professionals, structured mentorship programs, and real-world entrepreneurial case studies to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practice.

5.3. Enhancing Academia-Industry-Government Partnerships

Strong partnerships between academia, industry, and government are essential for bridging the gap between theoretical entrepreneurship education and real-world business demands. The findings from this study highlight several opportunities to improve these collaborations, ensuring that students gain practical experience, mentorship, and financial support necessary for

entrepreneurial success. While some partnerships already exist, such as government-backed funding programs and industry internships, they remain underutilized or poorly integrated into university curricula. Strengthening these linkages could significantly enhance the impact of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

One key opportunity identified in this study is the expansion of industry-academia linkages. Stakeholders from the private sector emphasized that many businesses are willing to engage with universities through mentorship, curriculum co-development, and internship programs, but structural barriers hinder these partnerships. Some organizations have partnered with universities through initiatives such as the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), which provides students with real-world exposure by placing them in industries for hands-on training. However, stakeholders noted that SIWES could be enhanced by incorporating structured entrepreneurial training and networking opportunities with industry professionals. A representative from an entrepreneurship hub explained: *"Companies want to work with universities, but there's no clear framework. If institutions reached out more proactively, we could integrate more students into real-world business environments."* Beyond SIWES, there have been successful models such as Covenant University's Centre for Entrepreneurial Development Studies (CEDS), which collaborates with businesses to provide students with startup incubation support, mentorship, and practical learning experiences. The expansion of such models to other institutions could significantly enhance students' entrepreneurial preparedness.

Government intervention was also seen as an important factor in promoting sustainable partnerships. Existing initiatives such as the Bank of Industry's Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES) Program and the National Universities Commission's entrepreneurship curriculum

initiatives have created some support structures for young entrepreneurs. However, stakeholders observed that these programs often function in isolation, with little coordination between universities and funding agencies. A policymaker noted that "*We fund a lot of startup initiatives, but they often lack coordination with academic institutions. A more structured approach where universities work directly with funding bodies would ensure students receive both education and financial support.*" Additionally, public-private partnerships, such as those between telecommunications companies and universities to provide digital literacy training, could be leveraged to enhance entrepreneurship education and ensure students gain access to modern business tools.

Another opportunity highlighted in this study lies in the use of digital platforms to improve collaboration. Some universities have begun partnering with technology firms and online business incubators to offer virtual entrepreneurship training and mentorship. For instance, institutions collaborating with Google's Digital Skills for Africa program have seen increased student participation in online entrepreneurship courses. Expanding such partnerships could help overcome geographical and logistical barriers, giving students access to a broader range of learning experiences. Digital platforms can also facilitate knowledge-sharing between academia, industry professionals, and government agencies by creating virtual networking spaces where students can engage with business leaders.

Additionally, this study found that strengthening alumni networks presents another avenue for enhancing partnerships. Several universities have begun using their alumni as mentors, guest lecturers, and funding contributors, but many institutions lack formal structures for sustained engagement. An industry expert and university alumnus remarked: "*Universities should tap into their alumni networks more. Many of us want to give back, but there's no formal channel for*

engagement." Creating structured alumni mentorship programs and entrepreneurial networking platforms could provide students with ongoing support, practical insights, and even funding opportunities for their ventures. Universities with established entrepreneurship centers, such as the University of Lagos' Entrepreneurship Skills Development Centre, have shown the value of alumni involvement in bridging gaps between academic learning and real-world business application.

The importance of academia-industry-government collaboration has been widely discussed in the literature, with many studies emphasizing the role of the Triangular Partnership Model in encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. According to Chakrabarty and Prabhu (2022), successful partnerships between universities, businesses, and government agencies enhance students' entrepreneurial competencies, create employment opportunities, and drive economic growth. In the Nigerian context, however, literature has consistently highlighted weak linkages between these sectors, resulting in a lack of coordinated efforts to develop entrepreneurial talent. Studies by Mehari *et al.* (2013) and Alonso and Santander (2021) found that most universities operate in isolation from industry needs, with curricula that remain largely theoretical and disconnected from market realities. This aligns with findings from this study, where students and stakeholders alike pointed to limited industry engagement as a major barrier to effective entrepreneurship education.

While successful global models like the Silicon Valley ecosystem in the United States have demonstrated the benefits of strong industry-academia-government collaborations, adapting these approaches to the Nigerian context requires addressing unique challenges such as inconsistent government policies, funding gaps, and infrastructural deficiencies (Burbridge & Morrison, 2021). Comparative studies such as Eisenhaber *et al.* (2022) and Weinberg (2019)

indicate that institutions in countries with well-integrated entrepreneurship ecosystems tend to have higher rates of student-led startups, increased access to venture capital, and stronger mentorship structures. The lack of such an enabling environment in Nigeria suggests that more effort is needed to create structured pathways for students to transition from academic learning to entrepreneurial practice.

This study's findings therefore suggests that enhancing academia-industry-government collaborations requires a more structured approach to industry engagement, better integration of government entrepreneurship programs, increased use of digital learning platforms, and the strengthening of alumni networks. Existing programs like SIWES and CEDS provide useful models that could be expanded to offer more comprehensive entrepreneurial training. Comparisons with literature on partnership models reinforce the importance of structured collaboration in improving student readiness for business ventures. By addressing these areas, universities can ensure that students receive not just theoretical knowledge but also the practical exposure, mentorship, and financial backing needed to navigate Nigeria's entrepreneurial landscape successfully.

5.4. Strategies for Developing Sustainable Partnerships

Developing sustainable partnerships between academia, industry, and government is critical for enhancing entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Findings from this study highlight several key strategies that can strengthen these collaborations, including structured mentorship programs, improved funding mechanisms, and policy alignment. While some initiatives exist, they often lack consistency and long-term sustainability. A deliberate effort is required to formalize these partnerships, ensuring they effectively equip students with entrepreneurial skills.

5.4.1. Structured Mentorship Programs

A well-structured mentorship framework is important for bridging the gap between academic knowledge and practical entrepreneurial experience. Findings from this study indicate that many students struggle to access mentorship opportunities, limiting their exposure to real-world business challenges. The survey results revealed that 39 respondents (19.5%) identified insufficient mentorship access as a major barrier to gaining entrepreneurial skills. Stakeholders echoed this concern, with several industry professionals emphasizing the importance of structured mentorship in shaping entrepreneurial success. Currently, mentorship in Nigerian universities is often informal and inconsistent, with few structured programs that provide long-term guidance. One stakeholder from an entrepreneurship hub noted, "*Many students are eager to learn from real-world entrepreneurs, but there are no structured mentorship pipelines. Universities need to establish long-term mentorship programs rather than relying on one-off guest lectures*." Another stakeholder in the private sector highlighted the issue of accessibility, stating, "*Even when mentorship opportunities exist, they are often limited to select students, leaving out a majority who would benefit equally*." These insights suggest that mentorship is not yet an integrated component of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria but rather an ad hoc initiative that does not reach all students effectively.

To address this gap, stakeholders suggest that universities can develop formalized mentorship programs where students are paired with industry professionals over extended periods. Unlike guest lectures or ad hoc workshops, structured mentorship involves long-term engagement, enabling students to receive sustained guidance as they navigate their entrepreneurial journeys. Some Nigerian institutions, such as Covenant University and the University of Lagos, have piloted mentorship initiatives with private-sector partners, but these efforts need to be expanded

to reach a broader student base. A more structured approach to mentorship could involve long-term pairings between students and entrepreneurs, allowing for sustained interactions that encourage deeper learning. Industry professionals could provide sector-specific advice, helping students understand market trends and business challenges firsthand. Digital mentorship platforms could also play a crucial role in overcoming geographical barriers, enabling students to connect with mentors remotely. Additionally, universities could establish alumni-driven mentorship networks where successful graduates provide guidance to emerging entrepreneurs.

The importance of structured mentorship programs is well-supported by existing research. Studies have consistently shown that mentorship significantly influences entrepreneurial success by increasing confidence, improving business acumen, and promoting resilience (Omoniyi et al., 2022). Research by Boudreaux (2020) highlights the role of mentorship in helping students transition from theoretical learning to practical application, noting that students with consistent access to experienced mentors demonstrate stronger entrepreneurial intent. The study highlights that exposure to real-world business challenges through mentorship increases students' ability to identify opportunities, assess risks, and make strategic business decisions. Similarly, Richardson and Hynes (2024) emphasize that structured mentorship programs provide critical networking opportunities, enhance problem-solving skills, and expose students to real business environments, ultimately improving their likelihood of launching successful ventures. They argue that mentorship should be embedded within entrepreneurship curricula rather than treated as a supplementary initiative, as it serves as a key mechanism for knowledge transfer between experienced entrepreneurs and students. In addition, research from Oyinlola *et al.* (2024) suggests that mentorship programs are most effective when they are designed as part of an ecosystem that includes university incubators, government support, and industry partnerships.

For instance, a study by Maina (2014) found that mentorship programs in the United States, when integrated with business incubators, significantly improved students' entrepreneurial capabilities and increased their access to funding opportunities. These findings suggest that mentorship works best when supported by a broader entrepreneurial support system rather than functioning in isolation.

Despite the benefits, implementing structured mentorship programs in Nigerian universities presents challenges. Some stakeholders in this study pointed out that mentorship programs often lack funding, leading to inconsistencies in their execution. Others noted that the absence of proper monitoring mechanisms makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of existing mentorship initiatives. These concerns align with research by Mwangi (2011), which found that mentorship programs in developing economies often struggle due to inadequate funding, weak institutional support, and limited participation from industry professionals. This suggests that for mentorship programs to be sustainable, they must be backed by strong institutional policies, financial incentives for mentors, and long-term engagement frameworks.

5.4.2. Improved Funding

One of the most significant barriers to effective entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is the lack of adequate funding. Both survey respondents and stakeholders highlighted insufficient funding as a major constraint, affecting the quality of entrepreneurship programs, the availability of practical training opportunities, and students' access to startup capital. The study found that 47 respondents (23.5%) identified insufficient funding as a major challenge, with stakeholders reinforcing this concern by emphasizing the financial limitations universities face in delivering high-quality, skill-based entrepreneurship education. A university administrator interviewed in

the study noted, *"Our entrepreneurship centers are underfunded, and this limits what we can do. We don't have enough resources to bring in guest lecturers from the industry, fund business incubation programs, or even provide students with access to digital tools."* Another stakeholder from an industry association added, *"A big problem is that students learn about entrepreneurship, but they don't have access to funding or even small grants to test their ideas. Without capital, many good ideas never go beyond the classroom."* These findings highlight the critical need for sustainable funding models that ensure long-term support for entrepreneurship education. Many Nigerian universities rely on limited government allocations, which are often insufficient to support practical training, research, and mentorship initiatives. Additionally, students often lack access to funding sources such as grants, seed capital, and venture funds, limiting their ability to develop and scale business ideas. The lack of financial incentives also discourages industry professionals from actively participating in mentorship programs, further weakening the connection between academia and industry.

Comparative studies from emerging economies, such as India, provide relevant insights for Nigeria. In India, for example, universities collaborate with government agencies and private investors to provide funding support for student-led startups. Programs such as Atal Innovation Mission in India and Startup India provide financial assistance to young entrepreneurs, demonstrating how institutional funding and tax benefits can be leveraged to support student entrepreneurs (Mishra & Gupta, 2023). For Nigeria to replicate such successes, a more structured funding approach is needed. Stakeholders interviewed in this study suggested that universities and policymakers need to explore alternative funding mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships, industry-sponsored grants, and student-focused venture funds. Some institutions in Nigeria, such as Covenant University, have begun leveraging partnerships with corporate

organizations to secure funding for entrepreneurship training and business incubation. However, such initiatives remain limited and need to be scaled up across more institutions. Many interviewees also emphasized the need for a more structured and diversified funding model to ensure entrepreneurship education programs receive sustainable financial support. One university administrator suggested that "*universities should actively seek endowments from successful alumni who have benefited from entrepreneurship training. Alumni funding could be used to establish grants for student-led businesses and to improve entrepreneurship centers on campuses.*" This aligns with global best practices where institutions such as Harvard and Stanford have leveraged alumni networks to create multi-million-dollar entrepreneurship funds that provide ongoing financial support for students and faculty-led ventures.

Another common suggestion was for universities to collaborate more effectively with corporate organizations through public-private partnerships. One industry representative highlighted that *"businesses are willing to invest in entrepreneurship programs if they see clear value, such as well-trained graduates who can contribute immediately to the workforce or even launch scalable startups."* Stakeholders from the private sector argued that corporate-sponsored grants, competitions, and incubator programs should be more widely integrated into university curricula. A senior executive from a financial institution suggested that *"banks and venture capital firms should be engaged to establish student entrepreneurship loan schemes with low-interest rates. If structured properly, these loans could be backed by government guarantees, ensuring that students have access to capital without excessive risk."* Policymakers and government representatives interviewed in the study also emphasized the need for national funding initiatives dedicated to student entrepreneurship. A government official proposed that *"there should be a dedicated budget allocation at the federal and state levels for skill-based entrepreneurship*

education. Just as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) supports academic research, a similar initiative should be created for entrepreneurship training." Some stakeholders further recommended tax incentives for companies that invest in university entrepreneurship programs, arguing that financial institutions and large corporations would be more willing to participate if they received government-backed incentives in return.

Another suggestion was the establishment of university-run business incubators where students could receive initial seed funding to test their ideas. A stakeholder from a business development firm explained that *"universities should have startup acceleration programs where students pitch ideas, receive mentorship, and get small seed grants to develop their businesses. Right now, the few incubators available are either poorly funded or not accessible to the average student."* Some stakeholders also pointed to the need for universities to explore international funding opportunities. One academic noted that *"development agencies and global institutions such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have funding opportunities for entrepreneurship programs. Nigerian universities should be more proactive in applying for these grants."* The importance of sustainable funding in entrepreneurship education is well-documented in academic literature. Research by Ofili (2014) emphasizes that entrepreneurship programs thrive when they are backed by stable financial resources that enable institutions to provide state-of-the-art training, technology, and support services. His study highlights that universities in developed economies often secure industry sponsorships and government-backed funds to sustain their entrepreneurship programs, ensuring students have access to necessary resources. Similarly, a study by Beugré (2017) on entrepreneurship ecosystems emphasizes the role of financing mechanisms such as seed funds, angel investors, and university-backed venture capital in

fostering innovation. In agreement, this study argues that for entrepreneurship education to be effective, students must be able to access funding to test business models and develop startups. Without this, the theoretical training provided in universities remains disconnected from real-world entrepreneurial practice.

5.4.3. Policy Alignment

Policy alignment plays an important role in promoting sustainable partnerships between academia, industry, and government in entrepreneurship education. Findings from this study indicate that weak policy coordination has contributed to fragmented engagement among stakeholders, leading to inconsistencies in curriculum relevance, limited industry participation, and inadequate mentorship opportunities for students. Stakeholders interviewed in this study emphasized that without a structured policy framework, university-industry collaborations often depend on individual efforts rather than institutionalized mechanisms. One academic representative noted that universities design their entrepreneurship courses with minimal industry input, making it difficult to ensure alignment with the realities of the business environment. Industry representatives echoed similar concerns, stating that companies are willing to engage with universities but lack a formal structure that facilitates consistent collaboration. One business leader explained that firms that invest in student entrepreneurship programs in other countries often receive tax benefits or government recognition, which incentivizes participation. In contrast, Nigerian businesses have no clear policy-driven motivation to engage in such programs, resulting in limited interaction between students and industry professionals.

Government officials interviewed in this study also acknowledged that while various entrepreneurship policies exist, their implementation remains fragmented. Several agencies are

involved in promoting entrepreneurship, but coordination between them and universities is weak. One policymaker observed that "*there is no national roadmap linking academia, industry, and government"*, which has led to a scenario where universities operate entrepreneurship programs without clear pathways to industry integration. The absence of a unified policy direction means that industry collaboration is not embedded into the structure of entrepreneurship education, leaving many students without practical business exposure. Some stakeholders suggested that the government should introduce a policy requiring universities to establish advisory boards that include representatives from industries and business associations, ensuring that entrepreneurship education is continuously updated to reflect current market needs. Others recommended that incentives such as tax reductions or grants be offered to companies that actively support university-based entrepreneurship programs. This is similar to strategies used in countries like India as highlighted by Mishra and Gupta (2023), where structured partnerships have led to increased private sector involvement in entrepreneurship training.

Another policy recommendation emerging from the interviews was the expansion of experiential learning models such as the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). While SIWES has successfully provided industrial placements for students in technical fields, its structure does not adequately support entrepreneurship-focused training. One stakeholder suggested that an entrepreneurship-focused internship program should be developed, where students are placed with startups, venture capital firms, or business development agencies to gain hands-on experience. This would ensure that entrepreneurship education goes beyond theoretical instruction and provides students with the skills and networks necessary to transition into self-employment or business leadership roles.

The study's findings align with research emphasizing the role of policy in facilitating sustainable entrepreneurship education. Studies such as Ezeani (2018) have shown that national policies explicitly mandating collaboration between academia and industry are instrumental in ensuring that entrepreneurship training is both practical and aligned with labor market needs. Countries with strong entrepreneurship ecosystems, such as Germany and Singapore, have policies requiring universities to work closely with businesses in designing curricula, mentorship programs, and student incubators (Bozward, 2024; Bhattarai n.d.). This institutionalized approach prevents entrepreneurship education from becoming outdated and ensures that graduates are well-equipped for business ventures. Research from India has also demonstrated that government-backed policies play a significant role in shaping effective academia-industry linkages (Chahal and Chahal, 2023). For Nigeria, these examples suggest that aligning policy frameworks with international best practices could create more effective and sustainable entrepreneurship partnerships. Institutionalizing industry involvement through structured advisory boards, providing financial incentives for corporate participation, coordinating entrepreneurship initiatives at a national level, and expanding experiential training models could significantly enhance the impact of entrepreneurship education. The study's findings highlight that without these policy interventions, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria will continue to face inconsistencies, limiting its effectiveness in preparing students for the realities of business ownership and innovation. Moving forward, a concerted effort from policymakers, university administrators, and industry leaders will be required to develop policies that not only encourage collaboration but also ensure that entrepreneurship education becomes a structured and dynamic pathway for fostering business innovation and economic growth.

5.5. Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

The success of entrepreneurship education depends on the collaboration between academia, industry, and government. Each of these stakeholders plays an important role in shaping the entrepreneurial ecosystem by contributing to curriculum development, practical training, mentorship, funding, and policy support. However, findings from this study suggest that gaps in coordination and execution have affected the effectiveness of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. This section examines the contributions of each stakeholder, the challenges they face, and how their roles align with global best practices.

5.5.1. The Role of Academia in Entrepreneurship Education

Universities play a fundamental role in shaping entrepreneurship education by developing curricula, designing skill-building programs, and creating an environment that encourages innovation and enterprise development. According to Davey *et al.* (2016), their responsibilities extend beyond theoretical instruction to providing students with the necessary competencies, experiences, and industry connections to succeed in business. Findings from this study suggest that while Nigerian universities have taken steps to integrate entrepreneurship education into their programs, significant gaps persist in curriculum design, skill-building initiatives, and industry collaboration. These shortcomings hinder students' ability to transition from academic learning to practical entrepreneurial ventures.

According to Puri (2020), well-designed entrepreneurship curriculum should equip students with the theoretical foundations of business creation while simultaneously providing practical exposure to real-world challenges. However, findings from this study indicate that many Nigerian universities continue to offer outdated curricula that do not align with current industry

needs. Survey results revealed that while 39% of students agreed or strongly agreed that their entrepreneurship curriculum was relevant, the majority either remained neutral or disagreed. This suggests that students are not fully confident in the applicability of their training. One industry stakeholder stated, "*Universities need to revise their course content frequently. The business landscape is evolving, but our students are being taught concepts that were relevant a decade ago."* This finding is consistent with research by Foss *et al.* (2013), who emphasizes that effective entrepreneurship education should be dynamic, regularly updated, and responsive to changes in the business environment. Similarly, Nabi et al. (2017) highlight that universities must ensure that their curricula reflect contemporary business trends, emerging technologies, and evolving market demands. In global best-practice models, such as those in Germany, entrepreneurship curricula are co-designed with industry professionals to ensure that students acquire relevant and up-to-date knowledge. However, this study found little evidence of such collaboration in Nigerian universities, with many institutions still relying on theoretical frameworks that do not sufficiently prepare students for modern business realities.

Beyond curriculum development, universities are also responsible for implementing skill-building programs that equip students with hands-on experience in entrepreneurship. Findings from this study indicate that Nigerian universities fall short in this area, with students citing a lack of practical opportunities as a major limitation in their education. The survey results revealed that 45% of students strongly disagreed or disagreed that their program provided adequate practical training, while only 14% agreed that it sufficiently prepared them for business. Stakeholder interviews reinforced this concern, with one academic admitting, "*We are teaching students theories of entrepreneurship, but they graduate without ever engaging in a real business environment."* This aligns with findings from Tudor (2017), who stresses that entrepreneurship

education should incorporate experiential learning approaches, such as business simulations, real-life case studies, and startup incubation programs. Studies by Bell and Bell (2020) further emphasize that skill acquisition should not be limited to the classroom but should be embedded in hands-on experiences that allow students to practice what they learn. Countries like the United States and Singapore have adopted models where universities partner with businesses to provide mentorship, internships, and real-world exposure, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements. However, in Nigeria, such partnerships remain limited, and many universities do not have structured programs that facilitate hands-on learning.

Although some Nigerian universities have introduced initiatives such as entrepreneurship centers, business plan competitions, and small incubation hubs, findings suggest that these programs are often limited in scope and impact. Stakeholders in this study pointed out that many of these initiatives lack sustained funding, strategic industry partnerships, and structured mentorship programs. One industry representative stated, "*The universities that are making progress in entrepreneurship education are those that have active collaborations with private sector players. But unfortunately, these collaborations are still rare."* Compared to international best practices, Nigerian universities need to enhance their industry linkages to provide students with better access to mentorship, funding, and business development support. Studies by Davey *et al.* (2016) and Puri (2020) emphasize the importance of universities serving as facilitators of entrepreneurial ecosystems rather than mere providers of theoretical knowledge. In developed economies, universities act as innovation hubs where students receive not just instruction but also incubation support, networking opportunities, and exposure to venture capital. This study found that while some Nigerian universities have taken steps in this direction, the majority still struggle with weak industry collaboration, inadequate practical training, and limited mentorship

opportunities. Universities in Nigeria have an important role to play in shaping the future of entrepreneurship education through curriculum development, skill-building programs, and industry engagement. However, this study's findings reveal that many institutions have not fully adapted to the changing needs of the entrepreneurial landscape. The reliance on outdated curricula, lack of practical training, and weak industry partnerships have limited the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. Compared to global best practices, Nigerian universities must take more proactive steps in promoting experiential learning, integrating real-world business exposure into academic programs, and strengthening collaborations with industry and government stakeholders. Without these improvements, graduates will continue to face challenges in translating their academic knowledge into successful entrepreneurial ventures.

5.5.2. Role of Industry in Entrepreneurship Education

The role of industry in shaping entrepreneurship education is very important, as businesses serve as the primary drivers of real-world economic activity. In successful entrepreneurial ecosystems, private sector stakeholders actively engage in mentoring students, providing hands-on business experiences, and collaborating with universities to develop industry-relevant curricula (Palanikumar et al. (2019). However, findings from this study indicate that industry involvement in Nigeria's entrepreneurship education remains limited, with gaps in mentorship, internship opportunities, and curriculum alignment with market needs. These shortcomings hinder students from gaining the practical exposure, industry networks, and business acumen required to navigate Nigeria's entrepreneurial landscape successfully.

One of the key contributions that industry can make to entrepreneurship education is structured mentorship. Findings from this study reveal that mentorship is largely absent in Nigerian

universities, with many students reporting that they lack direct access to experienced entrepreneurs who can provide guidance and insights. One stakeholder emphasized, *"We are seeing too many graduates with theoretical knowledge but no real grasp of what it takes to start and run a business. A structured mentorship program, where students are paired with business owners or industry leaders, would make a huge difference."*

Mentorship has been widely recognized as a key factor in developing entrepreneurial talent. Scholars like Oyinlola *et al.* (2024) and Mwangi (2011) have found that entrepreneurs who receive mentorship are more likely to develop critical thinking skills, resilience, and adaptability, which are essential for navigating business challenges. In global best practices, universities often formalize mentorship through incubator programs, accelerator initiatives, and industry advisory panels that connect students with business leaders. However, this study found that such programs remain underdeveloped in Nigeria, leaving students without structured mentorship opportunities. Another important role of industry in entrepreneurship education is the provision of internships and hands-on business experiences. Findings from this study indicate that almost all students cited a lack of practical opportunities as a major gap in their entrepreneurial training. Despite the presence of initiatives such as Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), many students and stakeholders expressed concerns that existing programs do not adequately cater to entrepreneurship education. One stakeholder remarked, *"SIWES focuses on technical fields like engineering and sciences, but there's nothing similar for business and entrepreneurship students. If students could intern at startups, SMEs, or financial institutions, they would gain a far better understanding of how businesses actually work."*

Research by Omoniyi *et al.* (2022) supports the importance of work-integrated learning models in entrepreneurship education. Findings from James *et al.* (2018) also suggest that students who

engage in internships or apprenticeships within startups and SMEs are more likely to develop problem-solving abilities, market insights, and risk management skills, all of which are necessary for entrepreneurial success. Unlike in developed economies, where universities and industries collaborate to place students in real-world business settings, this study found that Nigerian entrepreneurship students have limited structured internship opportunities, reducing their ability to transition seamlessly into business ownership or employment. Beyond mentorship and internships, the private sector can also play a role in curriculum development, ensuring that entrepreneurship education aligns with current market demands. However, findings from this study suggest that industry involvement in shaping curricula is minimal. One stakeholder noted, *"Academia operates in a silo. Universities create business courses without seeking input from those of us in the industry. The result is that students graduate with knowledge that is outdated or completely irrelevant to today's business environment."* This lack of collaboration between universities and industry is a major limitation, as research has shown that market-driven curricula produce better entrepreneurial outcomes (Nabi et al., 2017). In countries like Germany and Singapore, universities actively involve business leaders in designing entrepreneurship courses, integrating case studies, guest lectures, and real-world business challenges into the curriculum. However, this study found that Nigerian entrepreneurship education remains overly theoretical, with minimal industry participation in shaping course content.

While industry stakeholders acknowledge the need for greater engagement in entrepreneurship education, several barriers were identified in this study that limit their active participation. A key challenge highlighted by stakeholders is the absence of structured collaboration frameworks between universities and businesses. Unlike in developed economies where universities establish formalized industry advisory boards, business incubation centers, and corporate-sponsored

projects, this study found that most Nigerian universities lack institutionalized mechanisms to facilitate industry engagement. One industry expert observed, *"There is no system that connects businesses with universities in a structured way. If companies had a clear pathway to engage with students whether through mentorship, internships, or research collaborations, more of us would get involved."* Another challenge is the lack of incentives for businesses to invest in entrepreneurship education. Findings from this study indicate that industry stakeholders are often reluctant to invest time, resources, or funding into university programs, as they do not see immediate benefits. One stakeholder noted, *"Engaging with universities takes time and money, and businesses here operate in a tough economy. If there were tax breaks, funding support, or some kind of policy-driven incentives, companies would be more willing to participate."*

This finding aligns with international research, where government-backed incentives have been shown to drive stronger industry engagement in education (Blamlesteijn et al., 2021). In countries like United Kingdom and the United States, businesses that mentor students, sponsor entrepreneurship initiatives, or provide internships receive financial incentives, making it easier for them to commit resources to academia-industry partnerships (Miller et al., 2018). In contrast, this study found that Nigerian businesses receive no such support, reducing their willingness to collaborate with universities. While industry stakeholders have the potential to provide mentorship, internships, and input into curriculum design, the study revealed that these contributions remain largely untapped, leaving students with limited exposure to real-world business practices. Compared to global best practices, Nigeria still faces structural challenges in facilitating academia-industry partnerships, including the absence of structured engagement frameworks, lack of industry incentives, and weak policy support for entrepreneurship education. To address these gaps, this study suggests that Nigerian universities must proactively engage

businesses in structured collaborations, developing mechanisms for industry-led mentorship programs, co-designed curricula, and work-integrated learning initiatives. Likewise, policymakers must consider providing incentives such as tax breaks or grants to encourage businesses to invest in entrepreneurship education. By adopting global best practices and strengthening academia-industry linkages, Nigeria can build a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem, ensuring that graduates are better equipped to navigate the complexities of business ownership and market competition.

5.5.3. Role of Government in Entrepreneurship Education

The role of government in entrepreneurship education has been widely studied in both developed and developing economies, highlighting its significance in shaping policies, providing funding, and fostering industry-academia collaboration. Findings from this study align with prior research that emphasizes the necessity of government intervention in ensuring that entrepreneurship education effectively equips students with relevant skills and opportunities. However, gaps in policy implementation, inadequate funding, and weak linkages between government, academia, and industry continue to hinder the effectiveness of entrepreneurship programs in Nigeria.

A major aspect of government involvement is the formulation of policies that mandate entrepreneurship education and ensure its alignment with national economic goals. Research from Praag and Versloot (2007) indicates that successful entrepreneurship ecosystems, such as those in the United States, India and Germany are supported by strong policy frameworks that integrate entrepreneurship education with national development strategies. For example, in Germany, the government actively promotes vocational training and entrepreneurship education as part of its dual education system, ensuring that students gain both theoretical knowledge and

hands-on business experience (Bhattarai, n.d.). These policies are supported by structured industry engagement initiatives that ensure students receive practical exposure. In contrast, this study found that while Nigeria has made entrepreneurship education mandatory in universities through the National Universities Commission (NUC), the policy lacks clear implementation guidelines and mechanisms for enforcing industry collaboration. Stakeholders emphasized that universities are left to design their own programs with minimal oversight, resulting in inconsistencies in curriculum content and effectiveness. Research by Skica *et al.* (2014) similarly notes that Nigeria's entrepreneurship education policies are often poorly implemented, with little emphasis on practical skill development and limited industry partnerships.

The issue of inadequate funding for entrepreneurship education in Nigeria in this study also aligns with findings from existing literature. Numerous studies have highlighted that without sufficient financial investment, universities struggle to provide students with access to incubators, business development resources, and hands-on training opportunities. Research by Wasnik and Jain (2023) highlights the importance of financial support in entrepreneurship education, emphasizing that well-funded programs tend to produce more innovative and business-ready graduates. Countries such as United Kingdom have prioritized government funding for entrepreneurship programs, ensuring that universities have the necessary resources to support student startups and business incubation. In contrast, this study found that Nigerian universities often lack the financial capacity to establish and maintain entrepreneurship centers, making it difficult for students to gain real-world experience. One stakeholder pointed out that while universities attempt to provide entrepreneurial hubs, these efforts are often constrained by financial limitations, leading to under-equipped training centers and insufficient mentorship programs. This finding is consistent with findings from Zhang *et al.* (2022), which highlights

that Nigerian universities rely heavily on external grants and donations due to inadequate government funding for entrepreneurship education.

Another critical finding from this study is the weak implementation of government-led initiatives such as the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). SIWES is designed to provide students with practical exposure by placing them in industry settings. However, stakeholders noted that the program primarily serves technical and engineering disciplines, with limited opportunities for business and entrepreneurship students to gain relevant experience. This aligns with research by Omoniyi *et al.* (2022), which found that SIWES placements for entrepreneurship students are often misaligned with their areas of study, leading to limited skill development. In comparison, countries such as the United States and Germany have established structured internship programs specifically for entrepreneurship students, enabling them to work in startup incubators, venture capital firms, and business innovation hubs. These programs are supported by government funding and tax incentives that encourage companies to take on entrepreneurship students as interns. The lack of such targeted programs in Nigeria means that students miss out on critical opportunities to develop entrepreneurial competencies in real-world settings.

This study also found that government bureaucratic processes and regulatory challenges prevent students from transitioning into business ownership. Many stakeholders expressed concerns about the complexity and inefficiency of business registration, access to startup funding, and compliance with regulatory requirements. This aligns with research by Wasnik and Jain (2023), which emphasizes that bureaucratic barriers are a significant barrier to entrepreneurship in developing economies. Countries with thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems, such as Singapore, have simplified business registration processes, reducing the time and cost required to start a

business. This study's findings suggest that Nigeria's complex regulatory environment discourages young entrepreneurs, reinforcing the need for policy reforms to streamline business registration and provide easier access to funding. Another area of concern identified in this study is the lack of awareness and accessibility of government entrepreneurship support programs. While stakeholders acknowledged that the Nigerian government has introduced initiatives such as the Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN!) program and the N-Power initiative, they also noted that many students are unaware of these opportunities. This finding is supported by findings from Kiradoo (2020), which argues that poor dissemination of information about government entrepreneurship programs leads to low participation rates. In contrast, countries like the United States and Germany actively promote entrepreneurship support schemes through university partnerships, government websites, and social media campaigns. This ensures that students are well-informed about available funding, mentorship, and training opportunities. The lack of similar awareness strategies in Nigeria means that many potential entrepreneurs miss out on valuable resources.

Furthermore, this study highlights the important role of government in facilitating partnerships between academia and industry. Previous research suggests that in countries with well-developed entrepreneurship ecosystems, governments provide incentives for businesses to collaborate with universities. In contrast, this study found that Nigerian policymakers have not established structured incentives to encourage industry participation in entrepreneurship education. One stakeholder noted that "*businesses are willing to engage, but there are no structured mechanisms in place to facilitate collaboration between universities and industry players*." This aligns with findings from Ojo *et al.* (2014), who argue that the lack of structured incentives results in weak engagement between Nigerian universities and the private sector. Comparisons with global best

practices suggest that Nigeria can strengthen its entrepreneurship education system by adopting policies that ensure greater alignment between universities and industry, increasing financial support for business incubation programs, and simplifying regulatory procedures for startups. Without these interventions, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria will continue to face significant challenges, limiting its effectiveness in developing a new generation of business leaders.

5.6. Limitations of the Study

While this study provides valuable insights into how partnerships between industry, academia, and government can foster entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria, several limitations must be acknowledged. These limitations highlight areas where future research can expand upon the findings to further refine understanding and develop more effective strategies. One primary limitation of this study is its geographical scope. The research focused on five universities in Nigeria, which, while diverse, may not fully represent the broader higher education landscape of the country. Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria varies across institutions due to differences in funding, regional economic conditions, and institutional policies. As such, findings from these selected universities may not be entirely generalizable to all Nigerian universities, particularly those in rural areas or institutions with stronger government-industry linkages.

Another key limitation is response bias in the data collection process. The study relied on self-reported data from students and stakeholders, meaning that the responses could be influenced by personal perceptions or expectations rather than objective assessments. There is a possibility that some students provided socially desirable answers rather than fully candid

responses, a common challenge in survey research (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Likewise, stakeholders may have emphasized challenges or solutions based on their organizational priorities rather than providing a holistic analysis of the entrepreneurship ecosystem. The qualitative component of the study, which involved semi-structured interviews with 15 key stakeholders, provided in-depth insights but was limited in its ability to capture the full range of perspectives. While efforts were made to include representatives from academia, industry, and government, the number of participants remains relatively small given the complexity of Nigeria's entrepreneurship landscape. A larger sample of stakeholders, including representatives from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and policymakers, could have provided a more comprehensive view of the barriers and opportunities in skill-based entrepreneurship education.

Additionally, the study faced constraints in accessing detailed institutional data on entrepreneurship programs. While students and stakeholders provided insights into the curriculum and its relevance, a more in-depth analysis of official course content, funding allocations, and university-industry partnership agreements would have provided additional context. Institutional reluctance to share internal data on program funding and effectiveness limited the ability to compare different universities' entrepreneurship education structures comprehensively. The study also primarily focused on university-level entrepreneurship education, with limited consideration of other training pathways such as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions and informal entrepreneurship programs. Given that a significant proportion of Nigerian entrepreneurs operate outside formal university settings, future studies could explore how alternative training pathways contribute to entrepreneurship development and how they compare to university-based programs.

Another limitation is that the study was conducted within November and December 2024, capturing only a snapshot of current entrepreneurship education efforts. Government policies, industry engagement, and university curricula evolve over time, meaning that some findings may shift in response to new reforms, funding initiatives, or economic changes. A longitudinal study tracking changes in entrepreneurship education and stakeholder engagement over time would provide a more comprehensive understanding of long-term trends and effectiveness. Additionally, while the study explored academia-industry-government partnerships, it did not deeply examine the motivations and barriers from the industry perspective. The perspectives of businesses, particularly SMEs that might be potential collaborators in entrepreneurship training, were included primarily through stakeholder interviews but were not studied in depth. Understanding what incentives and challenges businesses face in engaging with universities could provide more targeted recommendations for fostering stronger collaborations. Finally, external socio-economic factors, such as Nigeria's broader economic challenges, regulatory hurdles, and political instability, were acknowledged in the study but not analyzed in depth. These factors play a significant role in shaping entrepreneurship opportunities and could be studied further to understand how macroeconomic conditions influence the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a strong foundation for understanding the gaps in Nigeria's entrepreneurship education landscape. It offers actionable insights into areas requiring improvement while paving the way for future research that can build on these findings with broader datasets, institutional analysis, and longitudinal tracking.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion to the study on skill-based entrepreneurship education and the role of industry-academia-government partnerships in fostering entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria. It synthesizes the key findings from the research, highlighting the major challenges identified, the effectiveness of existing collaborations, and the strategies proposed to enhance entrepreneurship education. The chapter also discusses the study's contribution to the field, outlining how the findings expand knowledge on entrepreneurship education and stakeholder collaboration within the Nigerian context. Additionally, the practical implications of the study are examined, emphasizing the roles that universities, industry players, and policymakers can play in addressing the gaps in entrepreneurship training.

This chapter also provides recommendations for further research, offering directions for future studies to build upon the findings and explore additional aspects of entrepreneurship education that could strengthen Nigeria's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

6.2. Summary of Key Findings

This study was guided by four key research objectives, each addressing different aspects of skill-based entrepreneurship education and the role of partnerships between academia, industry, and government. The findings from surveys and stakeholder interviews provided critical insights

into the challenges, roles, and strategies necessary for strengthening entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

6.2.1. Challenges Preventing the Effective Implementation of Skill-Based Entrepreneurship Education

The study identified several key challenges that hinder the effectiveness of skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria:

- **Lack of Practical Opportunities:** A major concern among students was the heavy theoretical focus of entrepreneurship education, with limited exposure to real-life business scenarios, internships, and hands-on training. Stakeholders emphasized that entrepreneurial skills cannot be fully developed without experiential learning, and the absence of structured industry placements, incubation hubs, and business simulation programs weakens students' readiness for entrepreneurship.

- **Outdated Curricula:** The study revealed that entrepreneurship curricula in many Nigerian universities do not align with current industry demands. Many students and stakeholders noted that courses often fail to incorporate digital entrepreneurship, financial technology (FinTech), global trade, and modern business strategies, making graduates ill-prepared for the realities of the business world.

- **Limited Mentorship and Industry Interaction:** A significant gap in mentorship and networking opportunities was reported, with students lacking access to experienced entrepreneurs and industry professionals who could guide them in navigating business challenges. Stakeholders stressed that structured mentorship programs and academic-industry collaborations are essential for bridging this gap.

- **Insufficient Funding and Resources:** Entrepreneurship education programs suffer from limited financial support, affecting the quality of training, access to technology, and the availability of incubation centers and startup funding for students. Government funding for entrepreneurship initiatives was found to be inadequate and inconsistently distributed, limiting program expansion and innovation.

- **Lack of Awareness and Early Exposure:** The study found that many students were unaware of available entrepreneurship programs, partnerships, or funding opportunities within their institutions. Additionally, the delayed introduction of entrepreneurship education at the university level meant that students did not develop an entrepreneurial mindset early enough, reducing their willingness to explore business ventures.

6.2.2. Opportunities for Enhancing Partnerships and Collaborations in Skill-Based Entrepreneurship Education

The study explored existing opportunities for strengthening collaborations between academia, industry, and government to improve entrepreneurship education and skill acquisition in Nigeria. Findings from both survey responses and stakeholder interviews highlighted several areas where strategic partnerships could be developed or expanded to address existing gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. These include:

- **Existing Partnership Models and Their Potential for Expansion:** Some universities have entrepreneurship centers and industry collaborations, such as the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), which offers students internship placements in businesses and government agencies. However, these programs often face funding

constraints and limited industry participation. Expanding SIWES and similar initiatives to include longer-term placements, mentorship components, and structured learning outcomes could significantly improve students' practical business experience.

- **Private Sector Engagement in Entrepreneurship Training:** Findings revealed that many businesses are interested in supporting student entrepreneurs but lack clear frameworks for engagement. Some stakeholders emphasized that providing tax incentives and recognition for companies that mentor students or invest in university incubation programs could encourage more industry participation. There is also an opportunity to create corporate-sponsored entrepreneurship challenges and startup accelerators within universities to foster early-stage business development.
- **Using Technology for Entrepreneurship Education:** Digital platforms offer significant opportunities for bridging the gap between academia and industry. Stakeholders suggested that universities should integrate more online mentorship programs, virtual incubators, and e-learning resources that connect students with entrepreneurs, investors, and industry leaders beyond their immediate environment. Establishing partnerships with global business schools, multinational corporations, and online learning platforms could further enrich entrepreneurship education.
- **Government-Led Initiatives to Strengthen Academia-Industry Linkages:** Several stakeholders noted that the Nigerian government has entrepreneurship support programs, such as the YouWiN! Connect program and the National Enterprise Development Programme (NEDEP). However, there is minimal integration between these programs and university entrepreneurship training. Policymakers could create structured linkages

where students are directly connected to government-backed business grants, startup funding, and industry-specific entrepreneurship training programs.

- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for Funding and Infrastructure Development:** Universities often struggle with insufficient resources for practical entrepreneurship training, including business incubation centers, co-working spaces, and startup funding. The study identified a strong opportunity for public-private partnerships (PPP), where the government collaborates with private investors to establish entrepreneurship hubs within universities. These hubs could serve as innovation centers where students access business development resources, legal and financial advisory services, and seed funding opportunities.
- **International Collaborations and Knowledge Exchange:** The study also pointed to the potential of global partnerships in enhancing Nigeria's entrepreneurship education system. Some universities have begun collaborating with international institutions to develop exchange programs, guest lecture series, and research initiatives focused on entrepreneurship. Expanding these efforts to include joint business incubation programs, investment summits, and cross-border mentorship opportunities could further strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

6.2.3. Strategies for Enhancing Partnerships to Improve Entrepreneurship Training and Skill Acquisition

The study identified several strategies for improving academia-industry-government partnerships to enhance entrepreneurship education and skill acquisition:

- **Curriculum Reform:** There is a need for continuous curriculum revision to align with industry demands. Stakeholders suggested integrating digital business models, financial literacy, global trade, and emerging technologies into entrepreneurship courses.
- **Structured Mentorship and Internship Programs:** Establishing structured mentorship schemes where students are paired with experienced entrepreneurs was widely recommended. Additionally, strengthening programs like the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) could provide students with more practical training opportunities in real business environments.
- **Increased Funding and Resource Allocation**: Expanding financial support for entrepreneurship programs through government grants, private sector investments, and university-led initiatives was identified as critical. Some stakeholders emphasized the need for more business incubation hubs and entrepreneurship labs on university campuses.
- **Policy Alignment and Stakeholder Engagement:** Strengthening policy frameworks that encourage private sector participation in university entrepreneurship programs was recommended. This includes tax incentives for companies that support student entrepreneurs, regulatory policies that streamline business registration for young founders, and dedicated funds for entrepreneurship training.
- **Awareness and Early Exposure:** The study highlighted the need for early introduction of entrepreneurship education, beginning at the secondary school level. Universities were also encouraged to increase awareness campaigns about available entrepreneurship programs, funding opportunities, and industry collaborations.

6.2.4. The Role of Academia, Industry, and Government in Fostering Entrepreneurship Education

The study examined the distinct contributions of academia, industry, and government in developing an effective entrepreneurship education ecosystem. These include:

- **Academia's Role:** Universities are responsible for curriculum design, research, and skill-building programs, yet findings suggest they often operate in isolation from industry realities. Many institutions lack mechanisms for regular curriculum updates, leading to outdated course content and ineffective teaching methods. While some universities have entrepreneurship centers, their impact is limited by funding and inadequate industry engagement.
- **Industry's Role:** Businesses and private sector actors play a crucial role in mentoring students, providing internships, and offering real-world business exposure. However, findings indicated that most companies in Nigeria lack structured collaborations with universities, and many businesses are reluctant to invest in student training due to concerns about talent retention and institutional bureaucracy.
- **Government's Role:** Policymakers are expected to provide funding, develop policies that support entrepreneurship education, and create linkages between academia and industry. However, findings revealed gaps in implementation, with stakeholders citing inconsistent policies, limited budget allocations, and a lack of coordination among government agencies responsible for entrepreneurship promotion.

6.3. Contribution to the Field

This study advances knowledge on entrepreneurship education and stakeholder collaboration, particularly in Nigeria's skill-based entrepreneurship ecosystem. It identifies key structural barriers, explores partnership opportunities, and proposes strategies to enhance academia-industry-government collaboration for entrepreneurial talent development.

This study makes the following contributions:

1. **Addressing Challenges in Entrepreneurship Education:**
    - This study presents empirical evidence on lack of practical opportunities, outdated curricula, limited mentorship, and insufficient funding.
    - This study highlights how these factors hinder skill acquisition and entrepreneurial readiness.
2. **Insights into Stakeholder Roles and Collaboration:**
    - This study demonstrates how academia, industry, and government interact (or fail to interact) in promoting entrepreneurship education.
    - This study evaluates existing initiatives like SIWES, identifying gaps and areas for improvement.
3. **Enhancing Industry-Relevant Training:**
    - This study reinforces the need for work-integrated learning, structured mentorship, and industry-driven curricula.
    - This study aligns with global best practices in practice-oriented entrepreneurship education.
4. **Contextualizing Entrepreneurship Education in Emerging Economies:**

- This study highlights Nigeria-specific challenges, including policy gaps, funding constraints, and limited industry engagement.
- This study contributes to global discussions on tailored, country-specific entrepreneurship education models.

5. **Partnership-Driven Solutions for Skills Gaps:**
   - This study identifies successful models for academia-industry-government collaboration in skill-based training.
   - This study suggests structured mentorship, public-private funding, and industry-led curriculum reform as viable interventions.

6.4. Practical Implications

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for academia, industry, government, and aspiring entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Addressing the challenges in skill-based entrepreneurship education requires a collaborative approach where each stakeholder plays a crucial role in creating an ecosystem that equips students with relevant, industry-driven skills.

6.4.1. Implications for Academia

- **Curriculum Restructuring:** Universities must revise entrepreneurship curricula to incorporate practical skill development, ensuring alignment with industry needs.
- **Industry-Oriented Learning:** Collaboration with businesses should be strengthened through real-world projects, business simulations, and guest lectures from entrepreneurs.

- **Emphasis on Experiential Learning**: Institutions should integrate mandatory internships, apprenticeships, and hands-on business training into entrepreneurship courses.

6.4.2. Implications for Industry

- **Structured Mentorship Programs**: Companies should establish mentorship initiatives, pairing students with experienced entrepreneurs and professionals.
- **Internship and Graduate Training Schemes**: Organizations can bridge the skills gap by offering structured internship and entrepreneurship incubation programs for students.
- **Financial and Resource Support**: Industry stakeholders can contribute by sponsoring entrepreneurship competitions, providing seed funding, and offering workspace or equipment for student startups.

6.4.3. Implications for Government

- **Policy Formulation and Support**: Policymakers must implement stronger policies that mandate and incentivize academia-industry partnerships in entrepreneurship education.
- **Increased Funding Allocation**: Public funding should be allocated towards business incubation centers, research grants, and student entrepreneurship support programs.
- **Regulatory Improvements**: Government intervention is required to create a conducive environment for student startups, including tax incentives for entrepreneurship programs and investment in business development infrastructure.

6.4.4. Potential Benefits for Students and Aspiring Entrepreneurs

- **Increased Practical Exposure**: With an industry-integrated approach, students will gain real-world business experience, making them better equipped to start and sustain businesses.
- **Stronger Industry Connections**: Access to mentorship and networking opportunities will enhance students' entrepreneurial mindset and expand career options.
- **Access to Funding and Support**: Improved public-private funding mechanisms will provide aspiring entrepreneurs with the capital and resources needed to launch viable businesses.

6.5. Recommendations for Further Research

This study has highlighted critical challenges and opportunities in skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, but further research is necessary to deepen understanding and drive impactful reforms. Future studies should expand the scope beyond universities to include technical institutes and informal entrepreneurship training programs, offering a more comprehensive view of skill acquisition pathways.

Longitudinal research tracking entrepreneurship graduates over time would provide insights into the long-term impact of training, policy reforms, and industry partnerships on business success. Additionally, further investigation is needed to understand industry motivations and barriers to deeper collaboration with academia, particularly in funding, mentorship, and curriculum development. Government interventions in entrepreneurship education also require closer examination. Future studies should assess the effectiveness of existing policies, their

implementation challenges, and their impact on bridging the gap between education and industry needs. Expanding research in these areas will strengthen evidence-based policymaking and improve stakeholder collaboration in fostering entrepreneurial talent.

6.6. Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive examination of the challenges and opportunities in skill-based entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, emphasizing the critical role of academia-industry-government partnerships in fostering entrepreneurial talent. The findings highlight persistent gaps such as inadequate practical training, outdated curricula, limited mentorship, insufficient funding, and lack of awareness, all of which hinder the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. However, the study also highlights significant opportunities for strengthening collaborations to bridge these gaps and enhance skill acquisition.

Stronger partnerships between universities, businesses, and policymakers are essential to creating an ecosystem where entrepreneurship education aligns with industry demands and economic realities. By encouraging deeper collaboration, ensuring adequate funding, integrating hands-on training, and updating curricula to meet market needs, Nigeria can better equip its young entrepreneurs with the skills necessary for success. Moving forward, sustained commitment from all stakeholders will be important in transforming entrepreneurship education into a more impactful driver of economic growth and innovation.

APPENDIX

A. **Questionnaire for Students on Entrepreneurship Education in Nigeria**

Purpose: This survey seeks to gather students' insights on the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, including curriculum relevance, skill acquisition, and the role of collaborations between academia, industry, and government.

Instructions: Please respond to each question honestly. Your responses are confidential and will be used solely for academic research purposes.

Section 1: Demographics

1. **Gender**:

   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female
   ☐ Prefer not to say

2. **Age Range**:

   ☐ 18-20
   ☐ 21-23
   ☐ 24-26
   ☐ 27 and above

3. **Year of Study**:

   ☐ First Year
   ☐ Second Year
   ☐ Third Year
   ☐ Fourth Year and above

4. **Have you taken any courses in entrepreneurship education?**

   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

Section 2: Perceptions of Entrepreneurship Education

5. How important do you believe entrepreneurship education is for career success in Nigeria?

   ☐ Very Unimportant

☐ Unimportant
☐ Neutral
☐ Important
☐ Very Important

6. How effective do you find your current entrepreneurship education program in preparing you for starting a business?

   ☐ Very Ineffective
   ☐ Ineffective
   ☐ Neutral
   ☐ Effective
   ☐ Very Effective

7. Rate your level of satisfaction with the quality of entrepreneurship education provided at your institution.

   ☐ Very Dissatisfied
   ☐ Dissatisfied
   ☐ Neutral
   ☐ Satisfied
   ☐ Very Satisfied

Section 3: Curriculum Relevance

8. The entrepreneurship curriculum at my institution is relevant to the skills needed to succeed in the business world.

   ☐ Strongly Agree
   ☐ Agree
   ☐ Neutral
   ☐ Disagree
   ☐ Strongly Disagree

9. The program provides enough practical experience (e.g., real-life projects, internships) to prepare me for running a business.

   ☐ Strongly Agree
   ☐ Agree
   ☐ Neutral
   ☐ Disagree
   ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. How would you rate the balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application in the entrepreneurship program?

    ☐ Very Balanced
    ☐ Balanced
    ☐ Neutral
    ☐ Imbalanced
    ☐ Very Imbalanced

Section 4: Skill Acquisition

11. Which of the following skills have you gained through your entrepreneurship courses? (Select all that apply)

    ☐ Business Planning
    ☐ Financial Management
    ☐ Problem-Solving
    ☐ Digital Marketing
    ☐ Communication and Networking
    ☐ Leadership and Teamwork
    ☐ Technical/Operational Skills
    ☐ Other (please specify): _____

12. The skills I have gained through entrepreneurship education are applicable to real-world business situations.

    ☐ Strongly Agree
    ☐ Agree
    ☐ Neutral
    ☐ Disagree
    ☐ Strongly Disagree

13. To what extent do you feel that the skills acquired have improved your readiness for entrepreneurship?

    ☐ Very High Extent
    ☐ High Extent
    ☐ Moderate Extent
    ☐ Low Extent
    ☐ Very Low Extent

Section 5: Impact of Academia-Industry-Government Collaboration

14. Are you aware of any programs or partnerships between your university and industry or government that support entrepreneurship education?

    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No
    ☐ Not Sure

15. How impactful do you feel these partnerships are in providing relevant entrepreneurial skills and opportunities (e.g., internships, mentorships)?

    ☐ Very Impactful
    ☐ Impactful
    ☐ Neutral
    ☐ Not Very Impactful
    ☐ Not Impactful at All

16. To what extent do you think these partnerships help bridge the gap between what is taught in school and the skills needed in the job market?

    ☐ Very High Extent
    ☐ High Extent
    ☐ Moderate Extent
    ☐ Low Extent
    ☐ Very Low Extent

Section 6: Challenges and Suggestions

17. What are the biggest challenges you face in gaining entrepreneurial skills through your education? (Select all that apply)

    ☐ Lack of Practical Opportunities
    ☐ Outdated Course Content
    ☐ Insufficient Access to Mentorship
    ☐ Limited Interaction with Industry Professionals
    ☐ Insufficient Funding/Resources for Programs
    ☐ Other (please specify): _____

18. In your opinion, what improvements could make entrepreneurship education more effective?

B. Semi-structured Interview for Stakeholders

Section A: Background and Role

1. Can you tell me about your role in entrepreneurship education or partnerships with academia, industry, or government?
2. How long have you been involved in this area, and what motivated your involvement?
3. What are the primary goals of your organization/institution regarding entrepreneurship education?

Section B: Experiences with Partnerships

4. How would you describe your experience with partnerships between academia, industry, and government?
5. Can you provide specific examples of successful partnerships you have been part of or are aware of?
6. What factors contributed to the success of these partnerships?

Section C: Challenges in Partnerships

7. What are the main challenges you face in fostering effective partnerships?
    - Probes: Communication issues, alignment of goals, funding, regulatory barriers.
8. Are there specific challenges related to the Nigerian context, such as policy or cultural factors?
9. How do these challenges impact the effectiveness of skill-based entrepreneurship education?

Section D: Curriculum and Industry Alignment

10. How well do you think the current university curriculum aligns with industry needs?
11. What skills do you think are most lacking in university graduates entering the entrepreneurial space?
12. What role should industry and government play in shaping the curriculum?

Section E: Strategic Initiatives

13. What strategies or initiatives do you believe could improve partnerships and their impact on entrepreneurship education?

14. Are there specific policies or programs that could foster better collaboration between academia, industry, and government?

15. How can universities better engage with industry professionals and government representatives to create sustainable partnerships?

Section F: Final Thoughts

16. In your opinion, what is the most critical change needed to enhance entrepreneurship education in Nigeria?

17. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences or recommendations?

REFERENCES

Aaltio, I., & Wang, Q. (2015). Entrepreneurship education as learning to form identities cross-cultural perspective. https://doi.org/10.5772/59061.

Abdul, Z., Aruwa, P., & Adamu, A. (2018). Tax incentives and entrepreneurship in Nigeria. *Public Economics: Fiscal Policies & Behavior of Economic Agents eJournal*.

Agbonlahor, A. (2016). Challenges of entrepreneurial education in Nigerian Universities: Towards a repositioning for impact. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 6, 208-208. https://doi.org/10.5901/JESR.2016.V6N1P208.

Aladejebi, O., & Amao-Taiwo, B. (2023). Drivers, challenges, and support of student entrepreneurship at the University of Lagos, Nigeria. *Archives of Business Research*. https://doi.org/10.14738/abr.114.14455.

Almahry, F., Sarea, A., & Hamdan, A. (2018). A review paper on entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurs' skills. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, 21.

Alonso, J., & Santander, G. (2021). Triangular cooperation: Change or continuity? *The European Journal of Development Research*, 34, 248-271. https://doi.org/10.1057/S41287-021-00370-8.

Amini (2019). The role of academic entrepreneurship in the development of technological entrepreneurship. *Research Journal of Library and Information Science 3*(3), pp. 14-21. https://sryahwapublications.com/research-journal-of-library-and-information-science/pdf/v3-i3/4.pdf

April, K., & April, A. (2007). Growing leaders in emergent markets. *Journal of Management Education*, 31, 214 - 244. https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562906297595.

Asaul, V., Krishtal, V., Petukhova, J., & Manufacturers, D. (2020). Implementation of national projects aimed at investing in infrastructure support for entrepreneurial activity: problems and prospects, 17, 209-218. https://doi.org/10.23968/1999-5571-2020-17-4-209-218.

Asimakopoulos, G., Hernández, V., & Miguel, J. (2019). Entrepreneurial intention of engineering students: The role of social norms and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/SU11164314.

AWP Network (2024). Looking for Funding? Here Are 7 Financing Programs for Nigerian Entrepreneurs. https://awpnetwork.com/2017/02/looking-for-funding-here-are-7-financing-programs-for-nigerian-entrepreneurs/

Balushi, S., Balushi, H., Shukaili, N., Naidu, V., Reales, L., & Jesrani, K. (2023). The influence of higher education curriculum on entrepreneurship education. *Proceedings of SOCIOINT 2023- 10th International Conference on Education and Education of Social Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.46529/socioint.202331.

Belitski, M., & Heron, K. (2017). Expanding entrepreneurship education ecosystems. *Journal of Management Development*, 36, 163-177. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-06-2016-0121.

Bell, R., & Bell, H. (2020). Applying educational theory to develop a framework to support the delivery of experiential entrepreneurship education. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 27, 987-1004. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-01-2020-0012.

Beugré, C.D. (2017). Role of government in building entrepreneurial ecosystems in Sub-Saharan Africa: Palgrave studies of entrepreneurship in Africa. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-56894-6_4

Bhattarai (n.d.). Bridging the Gap: A study on the best practices in industry-academia partnership. *Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development (ICE), Canada.* https://www.icecommittee.org/reports/Report-Industry-Academia-Partnerhsip-Final-1.pdf

Bhinekawati, R. (2016). Government initiatives to empower small and medium enterprise: Comparing one stop shop for licensing in Indonesia and Australia. *Journal of Asean Studies*, 4, 87-106. https://doi.org/10.21512/JAS.V4I1.964.

Bi, Q., & Collins, J. (2021). Proactivity, mindsets and the development of students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy: behavioural skills as the catalyst. *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 52, 526 - 538. https://doi.org/10.1080/03036758.2021.1999993

Blankesteijn, M., Bossink, B., & van der Sijde, P. (2021). Science-based entrepreneurship education as a means for university-industry technology transfer. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, *17*(2), 779-808.

BOI (2024). Youth Entrepreneurship Support Programme (YES-P). https://www.boi.ng/products/youth-entrepreneurship-support-programme-yes-p/

Boldureanu, G., Ionescu, A., Bercu, A., Bedrule-Grigoruță, M., & Boldureanu, D. (2020). Entrepreneurship education through successful entrepreneurial models in higher education institutions. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12031267

Boudreaux, C. J. (2020). The importance of industry to strategic entrepreneurship: Evidence from the Kauffman Firm Survey. *Journal of Industry, Competition and Trade*, *20*(1), 93-114.

Bozward, D. (2024). Real-world impact: Case studies in teaching entrepreneurship education. https://david.bozward.com/2024/04/real-world-impact-case-studies-in-teaching-entrepreneurship-education/

Bozhikin, I., Macke, J., & Costa, L. (2019). The role of government and key non-state actors in social entrepreneurship: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JCLEPRO.2019.04.076.

Burbridge, M., & Morrison, G. (2021). A systematic literature review of partnership development at the University–Industry–Government Nexus. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132413780.

Campos, J., & Campos, J. (2023). Structural equation model evaluating Katz's triplet managerial skills and its relationship to human capital. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*. https://doi.org/10.31098/jsetp.v2i2.2027.

Carland, J., & Carland, J. (2010). Entrepreneurship education: Building for the future. *Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship*, 22, 40.

Carriker, J. (2021). A framework for developing nascent entrepreneurs: Entrepreneurship education's Kobayashi Maru. *International Journal for Business Education*. https://doi.org/10.30707/ijbe161.1.1648090824.248879.

Chahal, R., & Chahal, A. (2023). A study of the impact of the startups India scheme on the Indian economy. *International Journal of Financial Management and Economics*. https://doi.org/10.33545/26179210.2023.v6.i1.171.

Chaker, H., & Jarraya, H. (2021). Combining teaching "about" and "through" entrepreneurship: A practice to develop students' entrepreneurial competencies. *Industry and Higher Education*, 35, 432 - 442. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950422221991005.

Chakrabarty, M. & Prabhu, S. (2022). Triangular development partnerships are the need of the hour. https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/triangular-development-partnerships-are-the-need-of-the-hour#:~:text=Published%20on%20Nov%2004%2C%202022&text=The%20rapid%20growth%20of%20developing,development%20concerns%20in%20developing%20countries.

Cheon, B. Y. (2014). Skills development strategies and the high road to development in the Republic of Korea. *Transforming economies: Making industrial policy work for growth, jobs and development*, 213-238.

Choice, & Candour, O.H. (2021). Undergraduate entrepreneurship education: The Pros and Cons for the Nigerian context [A 10-Year (2008 vs. 2018) gap comparative case study of Federal Polytechnic Ede, Nigeria]. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*.

Coker, A.A., Sule, B.A., Mohammed, U.S., & Jirgi, A.J. (2021). Analysis of entrepreneurial skills and job preference among undergraduate students of agriculture: Evidence from

Federal University of Technology Minna, Niger State, Nigeria. *Journal of Agripreneurship and Sustainable Development*.

Damnjanovic, V., Cicvarić-Kostić, S., & Neskovic, E. (2017). How to write cases and teaching notes in marketing education. *Marketing Science*, 48, 41-49. https://doi.org/10.5937/markt1701041D.

Davey, T., Hannon, P., & Penaluna, A. (2016). Entrepreneurship education and the role of universities in entrepreneurship: Introduction to the special issue. *Industry and higher education*, *30*(3), 171-182.

Degree Apprenticeship (2022). Academia and industry partnership for skill development. https://degreeapprenticeship.teamlease.com/blog-detail/academia-and-industry-partnership-for-skill-development

Deveci, İ., & Seikkula-Leino, J. (2018). A review of entrepreneurship education in teacher education. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*. https://doi.org/10.32890/MJLI2018.15.1.5.

Dohse, D., & Walter, S. (2012). Knowledge context and entrepreneurial intentions among students. *Small Business Economics*, 39, 877-895. https://doi.org/10.1007/S11187-011-9324-9.

Elliott, C., Mantler, J., & Huggins, J. (2021). Exploring the gendered entrepreneurial identity gap: implications for entrepreneurship education. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijge-04-2020-0048.

Einav, G., & Blekher, M. (2022). Do we practice what we preach? Applying startup practice to entrepreneurship education. *European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. https://doi.org/10.34190/ecie.17.1.611.

Eisenhaber, F., Thakar, J., Ponte-Sucre, A., & Dandekar, T. (2022). Editorial: Innovative strategies from synthetic biology and bacterial pathways to master biochemical environmental challenges. *Frontiers in Bioengineering and Biotechnology*, 9. https://doi.org/10.3389/fbioe.2021.828632.

Eze, T., & Obidile, J. (2018). Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9, 22-24.

Ezeani, E. (2018). Barriers to graduate employment and entrepreneurship in Nigeria. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEEE-02-2017-0009.

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2024). Triangular cooperation: Pursuing new forms of cooperation. https://www.bmz.de/en/ministry/working-approach/triangular-cooperation

Fiet, J. (2001). The theoretical side of teaching entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 16, 1-24. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0883-9026(99)00041-5.

Foss, L., Oftedal, E. M., & Iakovleva, T. (2013). Action-based education in academic entrepreneurship: A new role of the student? In *Cooperation, Clusters, and Knowledge Transfer: Universities and Firms towards Regional Competitiveness* (pp. 249-263). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Frimanslund, T., Kwiatkowski, G., & Oklevik, O. (2022). The role of finance in the literature of entrepreneurial ecosystems. *European Planning Studies*, 31, 372 - 391. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2022.2055962.

Ghafar, A. (2020). Convergence between 21st century skills and entrepreneurship education in higher education institutes. *The International Journal of Higher Education*, 9, 218-229. https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v9n1p218.

Glassman, A., Moore, R., Rossy, G., Neupert, K., Napier, N., Jones, D., & Harvey, M. (2003). Academic entrepreneurship. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 12, 353 - 374. https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492603258979.

Grivokostopoulou, F., Kovas, K., & Perikos, I. (2019). Examining the impact of a gamified entrepreneurship education framework in higher education. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11205623.

Gupta, V., Turban, D., Wasti, S., & Sikdar, A. (2009). The role of gender stereotypes in perceptions of entrepreneurs and intentions to become an entrepreneur. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 33, 397 - 417. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2009.00296.x.

Hägg, G., Politis, D., & Alsos, G. (2022). Does gender balance in entrepreneurship education make a difference to prospective start-up behaviour? *Education + Training*. https://doi.org/10.1108/et-06-2021-0204.

Hahn, D., Minola, T., Bosio, G., & Cassia, L. (2019). The impact of entrepreneurship education on university students' entrepreneurial skills: A family embeddedness perspective. *Small Business Economics*, 55, 257 - 282. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-019-00143-y.

Hardie, B., Highfield, C., & Lee, K. (2022). Attitudes and values of teachers and leaders towards entrepreneurship education. *Research Papers in Education*, 38, 690 - 714. https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2022.2028891.

Harfst, K. L. (2010). The evolution and implications of entrepreneurship curriculum at universities. *Online Journal for Workforce Education and Development*, *1*(3), 3.

Hermann, R., & Bossle, M. (2020). Bringing an entrepreneurial focus to sustainability education: A teaching framework based on content analysis. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 246, 119038. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2019.119038.

Higgins, D., Smith, K., & Mirza, M. (2013). Entrepreneurial Education: reflexive approaches to entrepreneurial learning in practice. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 22, 135 - 160. https://doi.org/10.1177/0971355713490619.

JA-YE Europe (n.d.). Junior achievement – Young enterprise initiative. https://learning.itcilo.org/ilo/youthemployment/PDF/2d/2d_Europe_Junior-Acheivement_26Nov07_.pdf

James, Y., Adamu, A., & Opara, I. E. (2018). The roles of entrepreneurship education in ensuring economic empowerment and development. In *World Educators Forum* (Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 1-10). https://www.globalacademicgroup.com/journals/world%20educators%20forum/THE%20ROLES%20OF%20ENTREPRENEURSHIP%20EDUCATION%20IN%20ENSURING.pdf

Jardim, J., Bartolo, A., & Pinho, A. (2021). Towards a global entrepreneurial culture: A systematic review of the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programs. *Education Sciences*. https://doi.org/10.20944/PREPRINTS202104.0432.V1

Josué, A., Bedoya-Flores, M., Mosquera-Quiñonez, E., Mesías-Simisterra, Á. & Bautista-Sánchez, J. (2023). Educational platforms: Digital tools for the teaching-learning process in education. *Ibero-American Journal of Education & Society Research*. https://doi.org/10.56183/iberoeds.v3i1.626.

Kathayat, B. (2022). Skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development: Evidence from business students. *Journal of Nepalese Management and Research*. https://doi.org/10.3126/jnmr.v4i1.52783.

Kiradoo, G. (2020). Identifying and evaluating the factors necessary for promoting entrepreneurship in a country. *ERPN: Other Societies (Sub-Topic)*. https://doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.13.165.

Kusio, T., & Fiore, M. (2020). The perception of entrepreneurship culture by internal university stakeholders. *European Business Review*, 32, 443-457. https://doi.org/10.1108/ebr-05-2019-0087.

Leon, R. (2018). Developing entrepreneurial skills: An educational and intercultural perspective. *Entrepreneurship & the Social Sciences eJournal*. https://doi.org/10.7341/20171346.

Li, M., Ma, S., & Shi, Y. (2023). Examining the effectiveness of gamification as a tool promoting teaching and learning in educational settings: A meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1253549.

Lina, D., Ionescu, A., & Bedrule-Grigoruță, M. (2019). Entrepreneurial orientation in Romanian higher education. *EDULEARN19 Proceedings*. https://doi.org/10.21125/EDULEARN.2019.2458.

Link, A., & Scott, J. (2010). Government as entrepreneur: Evaluating the commercialization success of SBIR projects. *Research Policy*, 39, 589-601. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.RESPOL.2010.02.006.

Litzky, B., Winkel, D., Hance, J., & Howell, R. (2020). Entrepreneurial intentions: Personal and cultural variations. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 27, 1029-1047. https://doi.org/10.1108/jsbed-07-2019-0241.

Liu, P. (2023). An entrepreneurship incubation process model and gamified educational software designed for sustainable education. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/su151914646

Maghfiroh, M., Kusdiyanti, H., & Maharani, S. (2023). The mediating effect of self-efficacy on entrepreneurship knowledge on student entrepreneurial interest at vocational state school in Mojokerto Regency. *International Education Trend Issues*. https://doi.org/10.56442/ieti.v1i3.298.

Maifata, N., & Mohammed, Z. (2016). Challenges of teaching and learning entrepreneurship education in library and information science schools in Nigeria. , 49, 37-47. https://doi.org/10.4314/JNLA.V49I1-2.

Maina, S. (2014). The role of entrepreneurship education on job creation among youths in Nigeria. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences, 15*, 87-96. https://doi.org/10.18052/www.scipress.com/ILSHS.15.87

Martz, W., Hughes, J., & Braun, F. (2017). Creativity and problem-solving: Closing the skills gap. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 57, 39 - 48. https://doi.org/10.1080/08874417.2016.1181492.

Mbaeri, C., Muoemenam, I., Nwachukwu, T., & Njoku, G. (2016). Entrepreneurship education: A gate way for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, 3, 202-208.

Mbah, C. O., Obi, C. U., Ehimen, T. E., & Onyebuchi, N. (2018). Improving school-industry partnership in skill development of TECT students for matching skill demand in Anambra State. In *A paper presented at the 2nd Annual National Conference of centre for technical and vocational education, training and research (CETVETAR), University of Nigeria Nsukka* (pp. 20-20).

Mehari, E., Gebeyehu, K., Dickinson, K., & Watts, M. (2013). Triangular partnership: The power of the diaspora. https://katysblog.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/triangular-partnership-book-sep2013-small.pdf

Miller, K., Alexander, A., Cunningham, J., & Albats, E. (2018). Entrepreneurial academics and academic entrepreneurs: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Technology Management,* 77, 9-37. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTM.2018.10012933.

Mishra, S., & Gupta, S. (2023). Atal tinkering labs and the global notion of STEM education. *Shodh Sari-An International Multidisciplinary Journal*. https://doi.org/10.59231/sari7629.

MSME Africa (2024). Nigerian government agencies that support entrepreneurship in 2024. https://msmeafricaonline.com/nigerian-government-agencies-that-support-entrepreneurship/

Morris, M., Webb, J., Fu, J., & Singhal, S. (2013). A competency‐based perspective on entrepreneurship education: Conceptual and empirical insights. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 51, 352 - 369. https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12023.

Montes, J., Ávila, L., Hernández, D., Apodaca, L., Zamora-Bosa, S., & Cordova-Buiza, F. (2023). Impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial intention of university students in Latin America. *Cogent Business & Management*, 10. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2023.2282793.

Mwangi, S. M. (2011). The contribution of entrepreneurship education course in enhancing management skills of informal entrepreneurs. *Journal of Education and Vocational Research*, *2*(3), 86-92.

Nabi, G., Liñán, F., Fayolle, A., Krueger, N., & Walmsley, A. (2017). The impact of entrepreneurship education in higher education: A systematic review and research agenda. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 16, 277-299. https://doi.org/10.5465/AMLE.2015.0026.

Nwekeaku, C. (2013). Entrepreneurship education and challenges to Nigerian universities. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4, 51-56.

O'Connor, A. (2013). A conceptual framework for entrepreneurship education policy: Meeting government and economic purposes. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 28, 546-563. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.JBUSVENT.2012.07.003.

Odia, J., & Odia, A. (2013). Developing entrepreneurial skills and transforming challenges into opportunities in Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 3, 289-289. https://doi.org/10.5901/JESR.2013.V4N3P289.

Ofili, O. (2014). Challenges facing entrepreneurship in Nigeria. *International Journal of Biometrics*, 9, 258. https://doi.org/10.5539/IJBM.V9N12P258.

Okoro, P. (2021). Entrepreneurship skills needed by Nigerian tertiary institution students and graduates for global relevance. *International Journal of Higher Education*. https://doi.org/10.5430/IJHE.V10N4P247.

Olufemi, A. (2020). Entrepreneurship: An option to solving unemployment problem among Nigerian youths, 6, 151. https://doi.org/10.11648/J.EBM.20200606.14.

Omoniyi, I. B., Gamede, B. T., & Olaniran, S. S. (2022). Amplifying entrepreneurship development in the knowledge economy: The role of entrepreneurship education. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, *16*(2), 432-449. https://www.ijicc.net/images/Vol_16/Iss2/16215_Iwaloye_2022_E_R.pdf

Oyinlola M, Kolade O, Okoya SA, Ajala O, Adefila A, Adediji A, Babaremu K, Tijani B, Adejuwon J, Wambui F, Akinlabi ET. Entrepreneurship and innovation in Nigerian universities: Trends, challenges and opportunities. Heliyon, *10*(9):e29940. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29940

Palanikumar, K., Shanmugasundar, G., & Latha, B. (2019). Role of industry in entrepreneurship education: Implementation and success factors.

Palmér, H., & Johansson, M. (2018). Combining entrepreneurship and mathematics in primary school – what happens? *Education Inquiry*, 9, 331 - 346. https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2018.1461497.

Panteli, N., Hjeltnes, T., & Strand, K. (2019). Learning to lead online collaborations: Insights from student-based global virtual teams between UK and Norway. , 785-796. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29374-1_64.

Papageorgiou, G., Mihai-Yiannaki, S., Ioannou, M., Varnava-Marouchou, D., & Marneros, S. (2021). Entrepreneurship education in an era of digital communications. https://doi.org/10.1108/S2040-724620210000011005.

Pazos, P., Pérez-López, M., & González-López, M. (2022). Examining teamwork competencies and team performance in experiential entrepreneurship education: emergent intragroup conflict as a learning triggering event. *Education + Training*. https://doi.org/10.1108/et-06-2021-0208.

Penialber, J. A. & Samson, J. M. (2024). Supporting "would-be" entrepreneurs: The roles of academia in entrepreneurship. Far eastern university, institute of accounts, business and finance, business administration department.

Piefer-Söyler, N., & Aigües, N. (2020). The value added of triangular co-operation. . https://doi.org/10.1787/f9aa8833-en.

Praag, M., & Versloot, P. (2007). What is the value of entrepreneurship? A review of recent research. *Small Business Economics*, 29, 351-382. https://doi.org/10.1007/S11187-007-9074-X.

Prantz, S., & Zhang, X. (2021). Triangular cooperation: Different approaches, same modality. *IDS Bulletin*. https://doi.org/10.19088/1968-2021.125.

Puri, S. (2020). Effective learning through the case method. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 59, 161 - 171. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2020.1811133.

Qian, H. (2017). Skills and knowledge-based entrepreneurship: Evidence from US cities. *Regional Studies*, 51, 1469 - 1482. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2016.1213383.

Raposo, M., & Paço, A. (2011). Entrepreneurship education: Relationship between education and entrepreneurial activity. *Psicothema*, 23 3, 453-7

Richardson, I., & Hynes, B. (2008). Entrepreneurship education: Towards an industry sector approach. *Journal of Education and Training*, 50, 188-198. https://doi.org/10.1108/00400910810873973.

Rogers-Draycott, M., Bozward, D., Smith, K., Mave, M., Curtis, V., & Maragh, D. (2024). Does entrepreneurship education deliver? A review of entrepreneurship education University programmes in the UK. *Education Sciences*, *14*(4), 361.

Rossano-Rivero, S., & Wakkee, I. (2019). Academic entrepreneurship in the context of education. *Journal of Science and Technology Policy Management*. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTPM-03-2018-0034.

Rusu, V., Roman, A., & Tudose, M. (2022). Determinants of entrepreneurial intentions of youth: The role of access to finance. *Engineering Economics*. https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.ee.33.1.28716.

Saberi, M., & Hamdan, A. (2019). The moderating role of governmental support in the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*. https://doi.org/10.1108/jeee-10-2017-0072.

Saeed, S., Yousafzai, S., Yani-De-Soriano, M., & Muffatto, M. (2015). The role of perceived university support in the formation of students' entrepreneurial intention. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 53, 1127 - 1145. https://doi.org/10.1111/jsbm.12090.

Sanchez-Hernandez, M., & Maldonado-Briegas, J. (2019). Sustainable entrepreneurial culture programs promoting social responsibility: A European regional experience. *Sustainability*. https://doi.org/10.3390/SU11133625.

Shepherd, D., & Gruber, M. (2020). The lean startup framework: Closing the academic–practitioner divide. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 45, 967 - 998. https://doi.org/10.1177/1042258719899415.

Singh, S., Mordi, C., Okafor, C., & Simpson, R. (2010). Challenges in female entrepreneurial development — A case analysis of Nigerian entrepreneurs. *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 18, 435-460. https://doi.org/10.1142/S0218495810000628.

Skica, T., Bem, A., & Żygadło, K. (2014). The role of local government in the process of entrepreneurship development. *e-Finanse*, 9, 1-24.

Sousa, M., Moreira, A., Leão, J., Sousa, M., Biancone, P., & Lanzalonga, F. (2023). International entrepreneurship: an approach for entrepreneurial skill development. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*. https://doi.org/10.1108/jeim-02-2023-0091.

St-Jean, É., Tremblay, M., Janssen, F., Baronet, J., Loué, C., & Nafa, A. (2017). May business mentors act as opportunity brokers and enablers among university students? *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 13, 97-111. https://doi.org/10.1007/S11365-016-0397-4.

Swiss EP. https://swissep.org/our-impact/success-stories

Tan, S., & Ng, C. (2006). A problem‐based learning approach to entrepreneurship education. *Journal of Education and Training*, 48, 416-428. https://doi.org/10.1108/00400910610692606.

Tok, M., & d'Alessandro, C. (2019). Locality, leadership and pedagogies for entrepreneurship education. *Teaching Educational Leadership in Muslim Countries*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-6818-9_7.

Tudor, S. (2016). A teaching approach of the digital competence into the school curriculum. *2016 8th International Conference on Electronics, Computers and Artificial Intelligence (ECAI)*, 1-4. https://doi.org/10.1109/ECAI.2016.7861140.

Tudor, S. (2017). Skills-centered design - A model design centered on skills of training activities /development of communicative skill in integrated perspective. *Journal Plus Education*, 14, 100-111.

Ubogu, R. (2020). Entrepreneurship education: Challenges and strategies towards promoting entrepreneurship in higher education in Nigeria. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. https://doi.org/10.36941/ajis-2020-0091.

Udefuna, P., Akalefu, C., & Asogwa, C. (2013). Entrepreneurship education and economic development in Nigeria: Policy issues and options. *Industry and Higher Education*, 27, 343 - 348. https://doi.org/10.5367/ihe.2013.0173.

Undiyaundeye, F., & Otu, E. (2015). Entrepreneurship skills acquisition and the benefits amongst the undergraduate students in Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research*, 2, 9. https://doi.org/10.26417/EJSER.V4I1.P9-14.

United Nations (2019. Triangular partnership. https://operationalsupport.un.org/sites/default/files/20191216_fact_sheet_-_triangular_partnership.pdf

Velinov, E., Ashmarina, S., & Zotova, A. (2020). Importance of international entrepreneurship skills among MBA students: Global Comparative Study. , 78-84. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-53277-2_9.

Ven, H. (1993). The development of an infrastructure for entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 8, 211-230. https://doi.org/10.1016/0883-9026(93)90028-4.

Wade Institute. https://wadeinstitute.org.au/

Warhuus, J., Blenker, P., & Elmholdt, S. (2018). Feedback and assessment in higher-education, practice-based entrepreneurship courses. *Industry and Higher Education*, 32, 23 - 32. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950422217750795.

Wasnik, A., & Jain, A. (2023). Government support for startups: A comprehensive analysis of funding initiatives and the role of the Indian government in nurturing the startup ecosystem. *Journal of Economics and Business*. https://doi.org/10.31014/aior.1992.06.03.523.

Weinberg, C. (2019). Entrepreneurial ecosystems in Israel: The changing role of government support: A historical perspective. *2019 Portland International Conference on Management of Engineering and Technology (PICMET)*, 1-3. https://doi.org/10.23919/picmet.2019.8893690.

Yuntao, L. (2018). Analysis on the role of government in college students' innovation and entrepreneurship. https://doi.org/10.23977/ETMHS.2018.29093.

Zegers, F., Dyer, S., Mouzon, J., Kupka, M., Banker, M., Ishihara, O., Chambers, G., & Adamson, G. (2022). O-152 The role of South-South and triangular cooperation in the establishment of national and regional registries. *Human Reproduction*. https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/deac105.058.

Zhang, J., Li, B., Zhang, Y., Gong, C., & Liu, Z. (2022). From entrepreneurship education, government support, and global competence to entrepreneurial behavior: The serial double mediating effect of the self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.838232.

Zotov, V., Frolova, N., Prasolov, V., & Kintonova, A. (2021). The effectiveness of case studies in entrepreneurship education. *International Journal of Instruction*, *14*(4), 1033-1046.