

Entrepreneurship Education in Schools: The Need of the Hour

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Abstract

This research examines entrepreneurial education in the context of discussions about the future of the school with which management education is often associated and the need to establish connections between teaching and research in Nigeria. There is an emphasis on the broad applicability of entrepreneurial skills and attributes (e.g., innovation, independence of thought, opportunity detection and exploitation, etc.). Studies contend that entrepreneurial education provides a novel new framework for school education. In this study, the author will examine entrepreneurship and its relationship to education, as well as the significance of entrepreneurship education and how it may be presented to students. Their entrepreneurial skills and perspective mainly determine an individual's success. The success of this endeavour will enable job searchers to become successful entrepreneurs. A growing nation needs entrepreneurs for the development process, while an established country requires entrepreneurs to preserve it. The hour is necessary to maximize educational facilities' relevance and extend these possibilities equally to counteract such concerns.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship Education; Human Capital Theory; Experiential Learning; School Mentorship; Adolescent Skill Development

INTRODUCTION

Instruction in entrepreneurship is a course of learning that is known all over the world. It tries to give students the information, skills, and drive to be successful as entrepreneurs in an array of school settings (Uddin & Hoque, 2024). As a consequence, the Federal Government of Nigeria advised educational institutions to include entrepreneurship education into their programs in order to address the country's persistent unemployment rate (Welsh et al., 2016). Unfortunately, the government's good intentions and worries focus on higher education at the expense of lower levels of education, which serve as the foundation for higher learning (Statista, 2021) (Jasper, 2023).

Young people get ready for the world about work and college by going to lower-level schools. Because of this, subject teaching was given a lot of attention so that students could learn what they needed to know to meet their basic needs (Okoro, 2019). Because of this, primary school was seen as the foundation on which any additional systems were constructed, and it was blamed for the success or failure of the whole system (Ofili, 2017).

For many years, parts of basic education goals have included time for kids to learn how to use their hands to manipulate things. Schools looked into and used basic tools to help students get ready for local skills and crafts (G Carella & M Italia, 2024). Students were tested on how well they could show off

their talents and expertise while making things and crafts they had been taught. We are now losing these excellent notions or behaviours (Ng & Pei, 2020). Instead of practical arts, school management and teachers are increasingly demanding money or asking students to supply ready-made items for assessment (Morris, 2019).

Agriculture (gardening, food production, and administration); and cultural and creative arts (handicraft, sketching, ceramics, etc.) to instill entrepreneurial spirit in pupils. Thus, under the direction of school administration, education in primary schools followed a practical and experimental approach in the specified topic areas (Patrick J., 2015).

The researchers observed a pathetic shift in the emphasis placed on this all-important segment of primary school curricula, which informs the main problem of this study, which attempts to highlight the importance of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian primary schools and advocates for recapturing lost initiatives by calling on school administration to enforce practical teaching and learning habits in primary schools (Chidiebere, 2020). To achieve the main objectives of this paper, the researchers addressed the concept of entrepreneurship and its applicability in primary education subject delivery, the missed opportunities for entrepreneurship education, the role of school management in enforcing the culture of entrepreneurship in primary education, and the mechanisms for managing and restoring entrepreneurship culture in Nigerian primary schools (Agbeniga Mayowa Johnson & Ogundiran Opeyemi Toluwaleke, 2024). The paper finishes with recommendations for all stakeholders interested in promoting strong entrepreneurship education in Nigerian schools (Otache et al., 2021).

Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship

An entrepreneur is someone who takes on the risks and duties of beginning and managing a new company enterprise, usually for profit. Many entrepreneurs are creative thinkers who see a need or chance in the market and make a one-of-a-kind product or service to fill that need.

Entrepreneurs are also responsible for managing all aspects of their business including finance, marketing, sales, operations and personnel (Henry & F Hill, 2017). Entrepreneurs must adapt to ever-changing market situations and make tactical decisions for the long-term sustainability of their business.

Entrepreneurship is usually associated with creativity, invention, and the ability to take risks (Ramanigopal et al., 2012). Entrepreneurs often have the passion and purpose, with the goal of making an positive impact on their environment.

Starting and running a new business is what entrepreneurship is all about. It means finding a need or chance in the market and making a unique product or service to meet it (Pache & Chowdhury, 2012). Entrepreneurship also involves the acceptance of the risks and responsibilities of managing all aspects of a business, including finance, marketing, sales, operations, and human resources.

Linking entrepreneurs with creativity, invention, and risk-taking makes sense. Entrepreneurs often start with intense passion and purpose, and a desire to effect positive change in the world.

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in stimulating economic growth and innovation. New businesses create new jobs, provide new products and services, and build competition in the marketplace. In addition, entrepreneurs contribute to the development of new technologies, business practices, and industries.

Entrepreneurship can take many shapes, from starting a small business to creating a new product or service within an existing organization. Entrepreneurship involves unique skills and attributes, including creativity, adaptability, persistence, and calculated risk-taker (Boldureanu et al., 2020).

Types of Entrepreneurships

There are several types of entrepreneurships, including:

1. ***Small Business Entrepreneurship:*** Small business entrepreneurship is about developing and managing a small business that provides goods or services to the community.
2. ***Scalable Startup Entrepreneurship:*** Scalable startup entrepreneurship is about developing and managing a startup that is designed to grow beyond, generally with funding and investment in order to capture a significant market share.
3. ***Social Entrepreneurship:*** Social entrepreneurship is about developing and managing a venture that offers an innovative and sustainable solution for social, environmental or community problems.
4. ***Intrapreneurship:*** Intrapreneurship is about implementing entrepreneurial ideas within a company with the full utilization of resources of the organization or company.
5. ***Online Entrepreneurship:*** Online entrepreneurship involves starting and running a business or venture in the digital environment, often in the form of an e-commerce website or online platform.
6. ***Corporate Entrepreneurship:*** Corporate entrepreneurship is the practice of developing and managing new business ventures within an established corporation; this can be in the form of corporate incubators or as a means of diversifying or growing existing offerings for a corporation.
7. ***Lifestyle Entrepreneurship:*** Lifestyle entrepreneurship means running a business that fits your values and goals, like a trip or health company.
8. ***Academic Entrepreneurship:*** Academic entrepreneurship involves creating and commercializing innovations and inventions arising from and utilized within academic research, which often involves intellectual property.

Importance of Creativity and Innovation in Entrepreneurship

In today's lively and very competitive business world, businesspeople need to be creative and come up with new ideas all the time. Here are some important reasons why creativity and innovation are essential to entrepreneurship:

1. ***Differentiation:*** Creativity and innovation can give entrepreneurs a competitive edge by developing new and innovative ideas that produce unique products or services in the marketplace.
2. ***Problem-Solving:*** Entrepreneurship involves solving problems and addressing unmet needs, and as such, creative thinking can help entrepreneurs discover new solutions to problems and new ways to follow through on the needs of their customers.
3. ***Adaptability:*** Entrepreneurs need to be adaptable, and responsive, to change, and creativity combined with innovation can help entrepreneurs be ahead of the game ahead by constantly evolving products, services, and business models.
4. ***Growth:*** Creativity and Innovation can help entrepreneurs scale up their businesses and achieve long-term growth. By constantly investigating new ideas and opportunities, entrepreneurs can provide increasing value, build new recurring customers, expand to new geographic markets, or build entirely new revenue sources for their businesses.
5. ***Competitive Advantage:*** Creativity and Innovation in today's hyper-competitive business environment can offer a significant competitive advantage: Entrepreneurs who can innovate better and faster than their competition will have greater opportunities for sustained success in the long run.
6. ***Importance of entrepreneurship skills at the school level***

Entrepreneurial skills are more important than ever in today's rapidly changing business world.

Developing these skills early on, such as in school, is beneficial to students personally and professionally. Below are some reasons why entrepreneurship skills are important at the school level:

1. **Encourages creativity and innovation:** Entrepreneurship skills develop creativity and innovation among students. Students learn to recognize problems and create solutions to those problems. Learning to ask questions and explore aspects of life builds a student's curiosity to understand new ideas.
2. **Builds Resilience and Flexibility:** Entrepreneurship allows a student to learn about experience. It teaches risks and what to learn from failure, flexibility for change, and skills naturally used to improve their circumstance. In all fields, these skills foster success for an individual to overcome barriers and enter uncertain situations with objective planning to succeed.
3. **Enhances Critical Forward Thinking:** Entrepreneurship involves research methods, data collection and analysis methods, decision making, and solutions. Entrepreneurship skills will develop a student's critique or opinion of what is observed. Curiosity develops into critical thinking and creative thinking to branch perspectives.
4. **Fosters Leadership, Teamwork and Collaboration:** Entrepreneurship involves teamwork, collaboration and leadership with the team or teams your consistently leading. Students can learn leadership skills (or not) and collaborate with their peers to develop ways of working together to make progress.
5. **Provides Economic Benefits:** using the entrepreneurship skills that a student learns, they will create new businesses that create jobs for the area (or, economy) where they plan to begin working/create profit.
6. **Fosters Social Impact:** entrepreneurship skills can be used to create businesses to create impact on society. They can ethically improve the world when they promote sustainable measures and approaches within the broader context of a social and environmental issues.

Entrepreneurship skills are critical at the school level because they empower students to build the skills and mindset needed to thrive in our fast-paced changing world. Building creativity, innovation, critical thinking, teamwork, and leadership skills prepares students for many workplaces and empowers them to be agents of positive change in the world.

Overview of the current education system

The current education system varies widely between countries, but some general trends can be observed in many places.

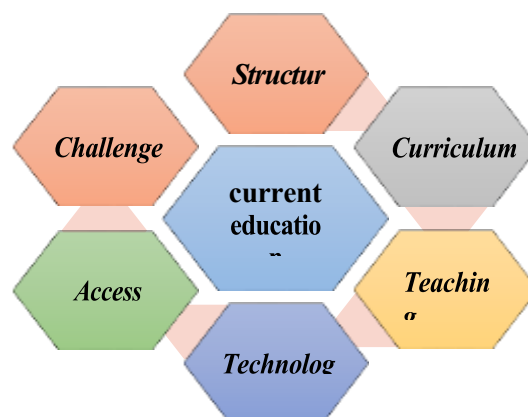


Figure of education system

1. **Structure:** The framework of most school systems is the same: 6–8 years of elementary school, then 4–6 years of higher school. After this point, students may have an opportunity to complete some type of post-secondary educational program in a college or university.
2. **Curriculum:** There are many areas taught in most schools, such as language arts, math, science, social studies, and physical education. Often the use of standardized tests is an emphasis to measure students' learning and effectiveness of educators.
3. **Teaching methods:** There are many areas taught in most schools, such as language arts, math, science, social studies, and physical education. Often the use of standardized tests is an emphasis to measure students' learning and effectiveness of educators.
4. **Technology:** In education, standard practices such as lectures, textbooks, and tests. But, more learning is student-driven; more collaboration and hands-on experiences.
5. **Access:** Access to education is different in every country, with some requiring children to pay to attend while others offer some form of free public education for all children. Access is also different by demographic (ethnicity, wealth, gender).
6. **Challenges:** Educational systems face many issues including funding, teacher shortages, overcrowding, and resource shortages in many cases. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how education systems must change to meet remote learning and hybrid learning.

The Necessity of Entrepreneurial Skills in Educational Institutions

Entrepreneurship skills are growing in importance in an increasingly rapid economy and it is critical for schools to create opportunities for students to build upon entrepreneurship skills. Here are some reasons why entrepreneurship skills should be taught at the school level:

- Students can think on the outside of the envelope and come up with new and interesting ideas when they know how to be an entrepreneur. This can develop students to become more creative and adaptable thinkers, which are critical skills to possess in a fast-moving economy.
- Entrepreneurs are typically faced with multiple, often, conflicting problems and they are expected to think of creative solutions. By teaching entrepreneurship skills, students are equipped with how to address the problems they face in their lives and in their community.
- To successfully run a business, entrepreneurs must have a thorough understanding of finance and accounting. By teaching entrepreneurship skills, students can develop essential financial literacy skills that will help them throughout their lives.
- Entrepreneurship skills encourage students to take the initiative and be self-motivated. This can help them become more independent and self-reliant, an essential skill in their personal and professional lives.
- Increases employability: Many companies today want to hire people with startup skills like being creative, able to solve problems, and able to change. By teaching these skills at the school level, students can increase their employability and be better prepared for the job market.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To Studying on entrepreneurship skills at the school level empowers and prepares students to become successful entrepreneurs.

REVIEW OF NIGERIAN ARGUMENTS

A 2018 study found that the majority of entrepreneurship research came from five primary topics, one of which was related to institutional entrepreneurship. The Entrepreneurial State, Nigerian, presents three key arguments to buttress her thesis on the state's involvement in entrepreneurial efforts. These three arguments all point to the fact that the government, not companies, drives innovation. Second, firms are reluctant to invest if the social benefits outweigh the financial ones. As a consequence, the state should take the initiative in the development process. Third, the state must be a risk taker, while corporations should only participate in "last mile innovation".

A lot of research has been done on entrepreneurship. There is a lot of study on this subject, which shows how important it is to find out if the state really drives business. The work that was done in Nigeria centred on the idea that the government necessary to do much more than simply step in sometimes for businesses to succeed. It looks like there needs to be an Entrepreneurial State before business can thrive in a culture that encourages it. A state like this would actively make educated decisions along its innovation chain, which would help business owners find growth chances and get funds. These are spread out farther down.

Government as the driver for innovation

According to Nigeria, the state should be seen as a valuable private-sector partner, willing to take risks that companies would otherwise avoid. In particular, the role of the state in today's society should be questioned, and it should be seen as a catalyst for innovation. During Adam Smith's Day, it was widely believed that the government's role in society should be limited to a few key areas, such as government policy. Nigerian notes that the world has seen the elimination of governmental activity, placing the burden of competition and innovation solely on the shoulders of entrepreneurs. Some research has provided support for this hypothesis. Government policies, to some extent, play an important part in the entrepreneurship process, and certain governments throughout the world may see entrepreneurship as a crucial component of industrialization and encourage its expansion. The notion of governments fostering innovation as partners is valuable because governments may pass laws or implement regulations to stimulate entrepreneurial efforts or even intrapreneurship inside companies. In Malaysia, this has shown up in the form of past policies like the National Fiscal Policy, which was once thought to boost economic growth through business.

Businesses are unlikely to invest, and the State should lead the growth process

Companies frequently perceive themselves as encouraging people to start their own businesses. Nigerian says that, contrary to what most people think, one of the main reasons companies that focus on making money don't spend as much in fundamental study is that these costs are seen as high-risk. As a consequence, the Nigerian view is that the entrepreneurial environment consists of organisations that are hesitant to participate in risky ventures. While standard economic theory suggests that the state should intervene when societal benefits exceed private advantages, the author emphasizes that this is not always true. This is less than a fifth of all research investments made in the United States. Furthermore, Nigerians believe that the state should not just spend where businesses cannot, but also lead the development process in order to create a climate conducive to entrepreneurial activity. Nigerian officials say that investments and involvement in the earliest phases of technology development by the public sector could lead to the creation of new goods and markets. In the end, Nigerians believe that

government investments should come before business endeavours.

Onyeka Uche Ofili (2014) discusses the obstacles that Nigerian entrepreneurship faces and proposes solutions to build a more entrepreneurial society. Entrepreneurship is essential for the growth of communities (Ayoade & Agwu, 2016). Entrepreneurs, on the other hand, cannot operate in solitude; they need a conducive atmosphere to develop. The legal system, educational system, financial system, and overall government policies should all foster and promote entrepreneurship (Izekor & Ojeaga, 2021). According to Prince C. Nwakanma (2010), oil production and non-oil exports have little impact on the economy, and industrial capability is vastly underutilised. To make entrepreneurs more productive, the study suggests promoting non-oil exports more, making the business environment more financially stable, and using more Nigerians in the oil industry (Chhabra et al., 2021). This study looks at Nigeria's industry addition to GDP as a proxy for entrepreneur productivity using economic data from 1992 to 2004 and Granger's causality-adjusted regression equation (Ayoade & Agwu, 2016). Idam (2014) seeks to discover the causative elements that undermine the efficacy of government operations. Major government programs are evaluated to detect underlying flaws (Lynch et al., 2021). This study contends, based on empirical and theoretical research, that treating all small firms as entrepreneurial stifles the growth of entrepreneurship in Nigeria and other emerging countries, since policies and programs are administered uniformly. It proposes a separate categorisation to identify entrepreneurial companies from non-entrepreneurial small enterprises, as well as the formulation and execution of policies and strategies tailored to each kind of small company (Sommarström et al., 2020). While all small companies need assistance, entrepreneurial enterprises require additional support to play a catalytic role in job creation and economic growth (Hassi, 2016). In her 2019 study, Xiaolang Liu looks at how political knowledge and how people see business possibilities affect the connection between learning about entrepreneurship and creativity. It uses the structure equation to look at data collected from 269 Chinese undergraduate businesses (Wei et al., 2019). The results showed that (1) there may be a positive link between how people think about entrepreneurship education and how they think about innovation, (2) political expertise and recognising business opportunities both play a part in the link between how people think about entrepreneurial activities learning and creative thinking, and (3) political skills and recognising business opportunities work together to make the link between how people think about entrepreneurial spirit education and innovation stronger (Hoffman, 2020).

According to KOKO (2019), a return-to-the-roots culture in primary school subject delivery is advocated, with the goal of instilling an entrepreneurship culture in students in order to offer chances for lifelong learning (Blankesteijn et al., 2021). Primary education serves as the basis for all subsequent educational systems. The aims of this level of education include developing the kid's capacity to adjust to his changing surroundings and providing the youngster with basic tools for preparation for local trades and crafts. Unfortunately, these admirable objectives have been downplayed or ignored in most primary school subject delivery, while some urban schools require students to submit ready-made arts and crafts when grading creative arts practical (KOKO, 2019). Dianne H. B. Welsh (2016) Improving entrepreneurial education, we believe that change is the foundation of reality--our entrepreneurship students are in the process of becoming something they were not before (Davidsen & Højlund, 2022). The implications and parallels of process theory as applied to entrepreneurship education are examined. Transformative developments are taking place in entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions across the globe. These conceptual and technical developments are the result of global, social, political, and technological upheaval (Welsh, 2016).

Cornelius C. Okoro (2019) investigated the definition, goals, and significance of entrepreneurship education, as well as its impact on entrepreneurial inclinations. It suggested the 'catch them young' idea, suggesting that the optimal educational stage for introducing entrepreneurship education is elementary school. While the relevance of entrepreneurship education has been universally recognised, the depth and scope of its implementation in Nigeria's educational system have raised severe concerns that need ongoing public debate. The challenges of how it was administered and who included the beneficiaries were among the elements that prompted the authors to produce this study (Okoro, 2019).

SUGGESTION FOR ENTREPRENEUR SKILLS AT SCHOOL LEVEL: THE NEED OF HOUR

Entrepreneurship is the process of recognising, developing, and pursuing possibilities for starting and running a firm. It demands a distinct set of skills, including creativity, innovation, risk-taking, problem-solving, leadership, and communication. In a fast changing world like today's, entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly important because it leads to innovation, economic development and jobs. Truly, entrepreneurs are the innovators of the world. As the saying goes, "Entrepreneurship can't be taught, but it can be learnt." With some people having an entrepreneurial flair naturally, and for others frankly needing teaching and assistance to develop their entrepreneurial skills, it is critical to incorporate entrepreneurial education at the schooling level. Below are some suggestions to develop entrepreneurial skills at the school level.

Integrate entrepreneurship into the curriculum: schools can integrate entrepreneurship into the curriculum by offering courses or modules on entrepreneurship. These courses should cover topics such as ideation, market research, business planning, funding, and marketing.

Encourage creativity and innovation: encourage students to think creatively and come up with innovative ideas. Teachers can assign projects that require students to think outside the box and come up with unique solutions to real-world problems.

Foster a culture of risk-taking: entrepreneurship is inherently risky, and students must learn to take calculated risks. Teachers can encourage students to take risks by creating a safe environment where failure is seen as an opportunity for learning and growth.

Develop problem-solving skills: entrepreneurs need to be excellent problem-solvers. Teachers can support the development of problem-solving skills for students through the design of project-based learning where students are required to identify and resolve problems in the real world.

Develop leadership skills: entrepreneurs are expected to be great leaders and inspire and motivate those around them. Teachers can help students develop leadership skills by providing them with group project opportunities, including the opportunities to lead.

Develop communication skills: entrepreneurs need to be great communicators who can clarify their ideas and persuade others to buy-in to their vision. Teachers can help students develop communication skills by providing presentation and public speaking opportunities.

Provide mentorship and networking opportunities: schools can also provide mentorship and networking opportunities for students through their interest in entrepreneurship. Mentors will provide guidance and support while networking helps students establish relationships with other entrepreneurs and potential investors.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To move beyond descriptive advocacy, the manuscript is re-anchored in three complementary theoretical

lenses:

Human Capital Theory

Education represents an investment that enhances individuals' productivity and earnings potential. Entrepreneurship education builds a bundle of human capital elements opportunity recognition, basic financial literacy, problem-solving, and socio-emotional attributes (initiative, persistence) that increase employability and self-employment capacity. Policy levers that expand access to these investments at earlier educational stages can reduce long-term unemployment and underemployment.

Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb)

Kolb's learning cycle (concrete experience → reflective observation → abstract conceptualization → active experimentation) explains why hands-on projects, mentorship, and iterative feedback outperform lecture-only approaches in entrepreneurship education. Effective school programs therefore require structured experiences (markets, mini-ventures), guided reflection (teacher/mentor debriefs), concept linking (basic business principles), and opportunities to re-apply learning.

Institutional Support & Ecosystem Perspective

Entrepreneurial outcomes depend on the interaction of policy, school leadership, resources, community partnerships, and cultural expectations. Evidence from Nigeria and other contexts shows that when school management prioritizes practical work, allocates time, and forges community linkages, student entrepreneurial engagement rises—indicating ecosystem effects beyond individual motivation.

Methodology

A mixed-methods quasi-experimental design was used in five government-supported secondary schools. Students aged 13–18 who enrolled in entrepreneurship training formed the treatment group; an equal number of non-enrolled peers acted as controls, matched by age and grade. Total sample size was approximately 350 students plus 20–30 educators for qualitative input.

Data collection tools included a structured student questionnaire measuring entrepreneurial skills, exposure, and attitudes, and semi-structured interviews/FGDs with educators and students. Content validity was established through expert review and pilot testing; factor analysis supported construct validity.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS: descriptive statistics profiled baseline skills; t-tests and ANOVA examined group differences; Chi-Square assessed associations with school/educator support; regression and factor analysis informed framework development. Qualitative data were thematically coded to explain contextual influences and refine recommendations. Ethical clearance was obtained; informed consent and anonymity were ensured.

6. Streamlined Conceptual Definitions

Streamlined Conceptual Definitions To reduce repetition, all key terms are defined once here and used consistently thereafter.

Entrepreneurship Education (School Level): Structured curricular or co-curricular learning experiences in K–12 settings designed to build opportunity recognition, problem-solving, initiative, and basic enterprise competencies.

Entrepreneurial Skills: Applied capabilities including creativity, opportunity spotting, risk awareness, teamwork, leadership, and basic financial/market literacy relevant to initiating or improving ventures (commercial, social, or community).

School Entrepreneurship Initiatives: Programs, clubs, practical subjects, fairs, student markets, agricultural or craft production activities, or project-based learning modules with enterprise intent.

Mentorship in Schools: Ongoing guidance from teachers, local entrepreneurs, alumni, or community resource persons that helps students reflect on and improve enterprise-related ideas or projects.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of school-based entrepreneurship education in developing adaptive problem-solving and innovation skills among teenagers. The mixed-methods study found that organised efforts like entrepreneurship programs, practical projects, and mentoring had a substantial impact on students' entrepreneurial skill development. Statistical evidence (ANOVA, Chi-Square, regression) showed a robust correlation between school-level supports and student capabilities. Thematic analysis emphasised the importance of experience cycles and educator participation in translating policy purpose into real practice. These findings support the importance of Human Capital and Experiential Learning theories in influencing early entrepreneurial education, and highlight disparities between well-resourced and low-resource schools.

To bridge these gaps, schools should include entrepreneurship into curriculum and co-curricular areas, with help from skilled mentors and community connections. The suggested School Entrepreneurship Enablement (SEE) Model provides a scalable, phased approach that prioritizes curriculum anchoring, experiential projects, mentor networks, and lightweight evaluation. Implementing this paradigm has the potential to change entrepreneurship education from policy rhetoric to quantitative results, preparing young learners to be resilient innovators and future job creators. Further study is needed to assess the effects of the SEE Model in various settings and identify cost-effective solutions to promote equality in entrepreneurial learning opportunities.

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