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UTILIZATION OF INNOVATIVE BUSINESS EDUCATION STRATEGIES IN ENHANCING ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined utilization of innovative Business Education strategies in enhancing entrepreneurship development of students in South-East Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 262 Business Education lecturers in public tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria. A census sampling technique was used since the population was manageable. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire titled Innovative Business Education Strategies for Entrepreneurship Development in a Digitally Transformed Society Questionnaire (IBESEDTSQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation, while its reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.84 and 0.81 for the two clusters, with an overall reliability index of 0.83. A total of 254 copies (97% return rate) were retrieved and analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that innovative Business Education strategies are adopted to a moderate extent for entrepreneurship development in South-East Nigeria. It was also found that entrepreneurial competencies of students are developed to a moderate extent through these strategies. In addition, the hypotheses tested showed no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents based on years of teaching experience for both the adoption of innovative strategies and the extent of entrepreneurial competency development. The study concluded that although innovative Business Education strategies are being implemented, their adoption and effectiveness in enhancing entrepreneurial competencies remain moderate. The study recommended improved government funding for Business Education programmes to enhance the provision of ICT infrastructure and support the effective use of modern digital instructional tools.

Keywords: *Innovative strategies; Business Education, entrepreneurship development; entrepreneurial competencies.*

Introduction

The 21st century educational environment is increasingly characterized by digital transformation resulting from advancements in technologies. These technological innovations have significantly altered the methods through which knowledge is generated, disseminated, and utilized in educational settings. Digital transformation has significantly restructured business education delivery in Nigeria by creating opportunities for more flexible, technology-supported, and learner-centered approaches (Musa & Auwalu, 2024).

Similarly, Ukpaka et al. (2025) observed that emerging technologies and digital transformation have generated increasing demands for curriculum reforms and innovative instructional strategies capable of producing graduates equipped with relevant entrepreneurial competencies. The changing nature of workplaces has equally influenced expectations regarding graduate competencies. Contemporary organizations increasingly demand graduates who possess critical thinking abilities, creativity, communication skills, digital literacy, adaptability, and entrepreneurial competencies necessary for functioning effectively within technologically driven environments.

Consequently, educational institutions are under increasing pressure to redesign instructional strategies in order to align learning outcomes with labour market expectations.

Business Education occupies a strategic position within this transformation process because it is a practical and skill-oriented programme designed to prepare learners for employment, entrepreneurship, and economic participation. Nwokike and Ezenwafor (2021) defined business education as a programme aimed at equipping recipients with occupational and entrepreneurial competencies needed for successful performance in modern workplaces. Likewise, Ayeni and Omoleye (2024) maintained that business education equips students with practical, technological, and entrepreneurial competencies necessary for sustainable development.

Similarly, Mamman and Hassan (2024) emphasized that business education enhances self-reliance by preparing learners for both paid employment and entrepreneurial ventures. Despite the important role of business education, conventional instructional methods characterized by excessive dependence on lectures and memorization are increasingly becoming inadequate for addressing the demands of a digitally transformed society. Traditional approaches often provide limited opportunities for practical engagement and may not sufficiently develop entrepreneurial competencies among learners. Consequently, there is increasing recognition of the need for innovative Business Education strategies capable of promoting active learning and practical skill acquisition.

Innovative Business Education strategies refer to modern learner-centered instructional approaches that integrate technology, collaborative activities, and experiential practices into teaching and learning processes. These strategies include blended learning, flipped classrooms, project-based learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning, simulation techniques, and technology-enhanced instructional approaches (Atakpa & Aijene, 2025). Such strategies facilitate active participation, critical thinking, creativity, and meaningful learning experiences among students. Okenema (2025) observed that the effectiveness of innovative instructional strategies in Business Education significantly improved instructional effectiveness and promoted active student participation in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Likewise, Abubakar, Paris, and Sambo (2025) reported that the integration of digital technologies into Business Education enhanced the development of creativity, collaboration, communication, and problem-solving competencies among students.

Similarly, Bisong et al. (2025) found that experiential learning strategies substantially improved entrepreneurial competencies by exposing learners to practical and real-life entrepreneurial experiences. Entrepreneurship development has emerged as a central objective of higher education programmes because of increasing unemployment and economic challenges confronting many developing nations, Nigeria inclusive. Entrepreneurship development involves equipping individuals with entrepreneurial knowledge, attitudes, values, and competencies necessary for identifying opportunities, establishing ventures, and effectively managing entrepreneurial activities. It includes the development of innovation, creativity, risk-taking tendencies, adaptability, leadership capabilities, and problem-solving skills.

In Nigeria, unemployment among graduates remains a major concern despite increasing access to tertiary education. Supporting this concern, Atakpa and Aijene (2025) described entrepreneurship education in Business Education programmes as one of the most effective approaches for addressing unemployment because it equips students with practical competencies necessary for self-employment and wealth creation.

Similarly, Bisong et al. (2025) observed that practical and experiential instructional strategies significantly improve entrepreneurial competencies by exposing learners to real-life entrepreneurial situations. Furthermore, Olawoyin et al. (2025) found that entrepreneurship education positively predicts innovation adoption and entrepreneurial performance in digitally evolving environments. The growing emphasis on entrepreneurship development reflects increasing concerns regarding graduate employability and self-reliance.

Olawoyin et al. (2025) observed that entrepreneurship education positively predicts entrepreneurial performance and innovation adoption within the digital environment. Similarly, Peterson and Tilley (2023) argued that entrepreneurial competencies have become essential for thriving in contemporary economies characterized by uncertainty and technological advancement.

In support of this view, Kuratko (2023) posited that practical and learner-centered strategies are critical for bridging the gap between theoretical learning and entrepreneurial practice. Business education programme has experienced significant transformation resulting from technological advancement. Business education programme increasingly emphasizes digital literacy, information management systems, communication technologies, and modern office applications. Therefore, the programme is expected to integrate innovative instructional strategies that prepare students for technologically driven workplaces.

However, despite the recognized benefits associated with innovative instructional strategies, Agbagbue (2018) reported low adoption of instructional technologies in Business Education, while Ajadi et al. (2018) found significant underutilization of web-based instructional tools in tertiary institutions. Similarly, Usman, Obisesan and Ifabiyi (2025) noted that meaningful educational progress depends substantially on effective technology integration, yet several constraints including poor funding, inadequate ICT infrastructure, insufficient lecturer competencies, and limited curriculum restructuring continue to hinder effective implementation.

Years of teaching experience may influence the effectiveness of innovative Business Education strategies by affecting educators' instructional practices, technological competencies, and attitudes toward innovation adoption. In this study, teaching experience is categorized into 1–5 years and above 5 years**.** Business educators with 1–5 years of experience may demonstrate greater adaptability to emerging technologies due to recent professional training, whereas those with above 5 years of experience may possess stronger pedagogical expertise and broader classroom management skills developed through accumulated teaching practice. Therefore, considering increasing unemployment challenges, rapid technological transformation, and growing demands for entrepreneurial competencies, there is a compelling need to investigate innovative Business Education strategies for enhancing entrepreneurship development among students in a digitally transformed society.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing rate of unemployment among graduates in Nigeria, particularly Business Education graduates has become a major concern to educators, policymakers, and employers of labour. Despite possessing academic qualifications, many graduates are unable to create or secure employment opportunities, raising questions about the effectiveness of Business Education programmes in equipping students with relevant entrepreneurial competencies needed for self-reliance in a digitally driven economy.

In recent years, entrepreneurship education has been recognized as a critical pathway to reducing unemployment through the development of practical skills such as creativity, innovation, business planning, and opportunity recognition. However, the researcher is concerned that many Business Education graduates still lack adequate entrepreneurial competencies required to establish and sustain viable enterprises. This deficiency may be linked to the inadequate adoption of innovative Business Education strategies such as blended learning, project-based learning, collaborative learning, and the use of emerging digital technologies that enhance experiential and skill-based learning.

Furthermore, despite the global shift towards digital transformation in education, many tertiary institutions in South-East Nigeria appear to still struggle with low adoption of emerging technologies in teaching Business Education courses. This situation limits students' exposure to practical, technology-driven learning experiences essential for entrepreneurship development in the 21st century. Consequently, the persistence of traditional teaching methods may be contributing to the weak development of entrepreneurial competencies

among students, thereby worsening the problem of graduate unemployment. It is against this backdrop that the researcher is concerned about the extent to which innovative Business Education strategies are adopted and how effectively they contribute to the development of entrepreneurial competencies among students in universities in South-East Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine utilization of innovative business education strategies for enhancing entrepreneurship development of students in a digitally transformed society**.** Specifically, the study examined the extent;

1. innovative business education strategies are adopted for entrepreneurship development of students in South-East Nigeria.
2. entrepreneurial competencies are developed through innovative business education strategies among students in South-East Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study;

1. To what extent are innovative business education strategies adopted for entrepreneurship development of students in South-East Nigeria?
2. To what extent are entrepreneurial competencies of students developed through innovative business education strategies in South-East Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance;

H_{o1}: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent innovative business education strategies are adopted for entrepreneurship development of students in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience (1-5 years and above 5 years).

H_{o2}**:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent entrepreneurial competencies of students are developed through innovative business education strategies in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience.

Methods

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine innovative Business Education strategies for enhancing entrepreneurship development of students in a digitally transformed society. The study was conducted in South-East Nigeria**.** The population comprised 262 Business Education lecturers in public tertiary institutions offering Business Education programmes within the region. Since the population was manageable and accessible, the entire population was studied using a census sampling technique**.** Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Innovative Business Education Strategies for Entrepreneurship Development in a Digitally Transformed Society Questionnaire (IBESEDTSQ). The instrument consisted of two sections: Section A elicited respondents' demographic information, including years of teaching experience, while Section B contained two clusters (B1 and B2) with a total of 15 items designed to address the research questions. The questionnaire was structured on a five-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) = 5, High Extent (HE) = 4, Moderate Extent (ME) = 3, Low Extent (LE) = 2, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1.

To ensure validity, the instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts drawn from Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability was established through a pilot study using the Cronbach alpha technique, which yielded coefficients of 0.84 and 0.81 for clusters B1 and B2 respectively, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.83, indicating adequate internal consistency. The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher with the assistance of six trained research

assistants. Out of the 262 copies distributed, 254 copies (97%) were successfully retrieved and found suitable for analysis. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and assess the degree of homogeneity in respondents' ratings, while the independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance**.** In testing the null hypotheses, when p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($P < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise, the null hypothesis was accepted. The computations were done using Special package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

Result

Research Question 1: To what extent are innovative business education strategies adopted for entrepreneurship development of students in South-East Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the extent Innovative Business Education Strategies are Adopted for Entrepreneurship Development of Students (N = 254)

S/N	Innovative Business Education Strategies and Entrepreneurship Development	$\bar{}$	SD	Decision
1	Digital learning platforms are adopted for entrepreneurship development of business education students.	3.45	0.71	Moderate Extent
2	Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are adopted to enhance entrepreneurial learning among business education students.	2.41	0.68	Low Extent
3	Blended learning approaches are adopted for entrepreneurship development.	3.56	0.72	High Extent
4	Digital simulation activities are adopted to develop entrepreneurial skills.	2.39	0.67	Low Extent
5	Collaborative online learning strategies are adopted to enhance entrepreneurial competencies among students.	3.51	0.73	High Extent
6	Digital marketing training strategies are adopted for entrepreneurship development.	2.10	0.68	Low Extent
7	Project-based learning supported with digital technologies is adopted for entrepreneurial capacity building.	3.76	0.74	High Extent
8	Digital networking platforms are adopted to enhance students' entrepreneurial development.	2.17	0.67	Low Extent
	Cluster Mean	2.91		Moderate Extent

Source: Field work 2026

Data in Table 1 revealed that out of the 8 innovative Business Education strategies listed for entrepreneurship development of students in a digitally transformed society, respondents rated items 3, 5, and 7 as being adopted to a high extent, with mean scores ranged from 3.51 to 3.76 respectively. Item 1is being adopted to a moderate extent with a mean score of 3.45.

However, the respondents rated the remaining four items (items 2, 4, 6, and 8)as being adopted to alow extent, with mean scores of 2.41 to 2.17. The cluster mean score of 2.91 indicates that, overall, innovative business education strategies are adopted to a moderate extent for entrepreneurship development of students in South-East Nigeria. The standard deviations for all the items ranged from 0.67 to 0.74**,** indicating that the respondents were not widely dispersed in their ratings.

Research Question 2: To what extent are entrepreneurial competencies students developed through innovative business education strategies in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Ratings of Respondents on the Extent Entrepreneurial Competencies of Students are Developed through Innovative Business Education Strategies (N = 254)

S/N	Entrepreneurial Competencies Developed through	$\bar{}$	SD	Decision

	Innovative Business Education Strategies			
9	Innovative Business Education strategies develop digital literacy competencies among students.	3.62	0.74	High Extent
10	Innovative Business Education strategies develop problem-solving competencies among students.	3.55	0.71	High Extent
11	Innovative Business Education strategies develop critical thinking competencies among students.	2.43	0.69	Low Extent
12	Innovative Business Education strategies develop communication competencies required for entrepreneurial activities.	3.48	0.76	Moderate Extent
13	Innovative Business Education strategies develop decision-making competencies among students.	2.29	0.67	Low Extent
14	Innovative Business Education strategies develop leadership and team-building competencies among students.	3.58	0.72	High Extent
15	Innovative Business Education strategies develop adaptability and entrepreneurial resilience competencies among students.	2.40	0.70	Low Extent
	Cluster Mean/SD	**3.05**		**Moderate Extent**

Source: Field work 2026

Data in Table 2 revealed that out of the **7** entrepreneurial competencies listed, respondents rated items 9, 10 and 14 as being developed to a high extent, with mean scores ranging from 3.55 to 3.62. Item 12 is being adopted to a moderate extent with mean score of 3.48. Items 11, 13, and 15 are being developed to a low extent, with mean scores ranged from 2.29 to 2.43.

The cluster mean score of 3.05 indicates that, overall, entrepreneurial competencies of students are developed to a moderate extent through innovative Business Education strategies in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria. The standard deviations for all the items ranged from 0.67 to 0.76, showing that respondents were not widely dispersed in their ratings.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent innovative business education strategies are adopted for entrepreneurship development of students in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience (1-5 years and above 5 years).

Table 3:Independent t-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Business Educators on the Extent Innovative Business Education Strategies are Adopted for Entrepreneurship Development of Students Based on Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	N	$\bar{}$	SD	df	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
1–5 years	107	2.88	0.69				
Above 5 years	147	2.94	0.72	252	0.67	0.504	Not Significant

Source: Field work 2026

Table 3 reveals that business educators with 1–5 years of teaching experience have a mean rating of2.88 and standard deviation of 0.69, while those with above 5 years of teaching experience have a mean rating of 2.94 and standard deviation of 0.72 regarding the extent innovative Business Education strategies are adopted for entrepreneurship development of students in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria. The calculated t-value is 0.67 with a p-value of 0.504, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Since p-value is greater than the alpha level ($p > 0.05$), the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent innovative business education strategies are adopted for entrepreneurship

development of students in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent entrepreneurial competencies of students are developed through innovative business education strategies in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience (1-5 years and above 5 years).

Table 4: Independent t-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Business Educators on the Extent Entrepreneurial Competencies of Students are Developed through Innovative Business Education Strategies Based on Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	N	( )	SD	df	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
1–5 years	107	3.02	0.70				
Above 5 years	147	3.08	0.73	252	0.59	0.556	Not Significant

Source: Field work 2026

Table 4 data show that business educators with 1–5 years of teaching experience have a mean rating of 3.02 with a standard deviation of 0.70, while those with above 5years of teaching experience have a mean rating of 3.08 with a standard deviation of 0.73 on the extent entrepreneurial competencies of students are developed through innovative Business Education strategies in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria. The calculated t-value of 0.59 with a p-value of 0.556, which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent entrepreneurial competencies of students are developed through innovative business education strategies in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that innovative Business Education strategies are adopted to a moderate extent for entrepreneurship development of students in South-East Nigeria. This suggests that although innovative strategies such as blended learning, collaborative learning, and project-based learning are gradually being integrated into Business Education programmes, the adoption of several emerging and technology-driven approaches remains inadequate. The moderate level of adoption may be attributed to inadequate technological facilities, poor funding, limited digital competencies among lecturers, and insufficient curriculum restructuring to accommodate emerging technologies. Supporting this finding, Igwe and Chima-Uduma (2023), and Mbah, Eze and Aduhueke (2024) reported that digital technologies were utilized to a low extent in Business Education teaching and learning in Nigerian higher education.

Similarly, AbdulRafiu et al. (2025) disclosed that innovative strategies significantly contributed to entrepreneurial skill development among Business Education students. Chen et al. (2024) and Kolb and Kolb (2023) also emphasized the need for innovative educational strategies that prepare students for emerging entrepreneurial opportunities, while Anderson and Thomas (2024) found that innovative learning strategies improved students' entrepreneurial capabilities. The findings further revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent innovative Business Education strategies are adopted for entrepreneurship development based on years of teaching experience. This finding agrees with Nwokike and Onochie-Ogene (2023), who found that years of experience did not significantly influence respondents' perceptions regarding technology integration in educational practices.

Findings of the study revealed that entrepreneurial competencies of students are developed to a moderate extent through innovative Business Education strategies in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria. This finding concurs with that of Ndom-Uchendu (2026) which revealed that digital pedagogy was moderately utilized for enhancing

entrepreneurship skill acquisition of business education students. Tasker (2025) reported that AI and digital instructional tools improve learner engagement, creativity, productivity, and practical skill acquisition among students. Okoro and Eze (2023) noted that integration of advanced digital resources enhanced business education students' entrepreneurial skill development.

Similarly, Akinola (2024) and Uzoagulu (2022) found that ICT-based instruction had a positive effect on students' creativity, innovation, and business planning skills. It was also revealed that that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on the extent entrepreneurial competencies of students are developed through innovative business education strategies in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria based on years of teaching experience. This implies that teaching experience does not significantly influence educators' perceptions of students' entrepreneurial competency development in a digitally transformed society in South-East Nigeria.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that innovative Business Education strategies are moderately adopted and only moderately enhance the development of students' entrepreneurial competencies in South-East Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The governments in Nigeria should improve funding for Business Education programmes in tertiary institutions to ensure adequate provision of ICT infrastructure and modern digital teaching tools that support innovative instructional strategies.
2. Business educators in tertiary institutions in South-East, Nigeria should be regularly trained and retrained on emerging digital teaching methods and AI-supported instruction to enhance effective adoption of innovative strategies.
3. Business Education departments in tertiary institutions South-East, Nigeria should strengthen practical, technology-driven entrepreneurship training by integrating real-life business simulations, digital platforms, and experiential learning activities to improve students' entrepreneurial competencies.

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