Kashere Journal of Management Sciences, Volume 8, Issue 2, September, 2025
ISSN 2636-5421, pp 62-81

PROPOSED EXPERIENTIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FRAMEWORK (PEEF) FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS

CHIJIOKE, Nwachukwu
Professor of Business Management and Economics
Horizons University, Paris
Scholars School System UK, France
Email: cesogwa@yahoo.com
ORCID: 000-0002-7982-2810

OMOFOWA, Shadrach, Ph.D
Department of Business Administration,
Global Polytechnic, Obe, Benin City
Email: shadrachomofowa@gmail.com
Tel: 08035472362, 08055253329
ORCID: 000-0002-9892-9605

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship education is an important driver of innovation and economic growth. The traditional approach ignored application, thus leaving students unprepared for real-world challenges. Using a qualitative literature review method, this study systematically analysed 20 peer-reviewed articles published between 2005 and 2025. The reviewed studies were drawn from diverse contexts but focused primarily on entrepreneurship education practices in developing economies, with particular attention to Sub-Saharan Africa and Nigeria as a focal context. Based on this synthesis, the authors proposed an Experiential Entrepreneurship Framework (PEEF). PEEF integrates experiential learning principles into entrepreneurship education, prioritising practical experience, mentorship, group work, and reflective practice to develop core entrepreneurial skills such as opportunity identification, strategic choice, innovation, and resilience. By linking practice and theory, this framework equips learners with cognitive and practical skills needed to thrive in fast-paced business environments. The study has policy, institutional, and pedagogical implications, advocating competency-based and outcome-oriented entrepreneurship programmes. The study recommends applying PEEF in Nigerian higher institutions to validate its relevance and effectiveness, thereby contributing to the development of adaptive, competent, and innovative entrepreneurs capable of thriving in complex entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, experiential learning, opportunity identification, PEEF, resilience.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Nigeria has emphasised entrepreneurship education as a strategic response to growing youth unemployment, economic instability, and the limitations of a job-seeking culture (Adebayo & Kolawole, 2013; Onuma, 2016). Entrepreneurship education is expected to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and mindset necessary for innovation, business creation, and self-employment (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2013). Despite its inclusion in university curricula, many graduates still lack the practical competencies and real-world exposure needed to succeed as entrepreneurs. This shortcoming raises questions about the effectiveness of current pedagogical models, which often prioritise theoretical instruction over applied learning.

Globally, entrepreneurship education has shifted towards experiential and practice-enabling approaches that simulate the reality of launching and running a business. As the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2024) points out, economies with practical entrepreneurship training experienced higher nascent entrepreneurial activity and higher survival rates for newly established businesses. For instance, countries such as Finland and Singapore have integrated entrepreneurship projects, incubators, and mentorship into higher education, which has led to graduates with concrete entrepreneurial competencies. Such global best practices suggest the need to move away from theoretical instruction to more experiential learning paradigms to succeed in a knowledge-based global economy. The need for reform in Nigeria is informed by the country's 13.8% of youth not in Employment, Education, nor Training (NEET) in Q2 of 2023 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023). High rates of unemployment have been linked to rising poverty, insecurity, and underuse of human capital, making entrepreneurship education an academic concern and socio-economic imperative. Traditional pedagogies involving lectures and memorization are increasingly seen as insufficient in preparing students for evolving realities of entrepreneurship (Olawale & Garwe, 2010).

To bridge this critical gap, experiential learning EL has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach. Rooted in Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, EL emphasises learning through ''concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation''. In the context of entrepreneurship education, experiential learning involves students engaging in real business scenarios, interacting with successful entrepreneurs, participating

in startup simulations, and reflecting critically on their experiences. Such practices are widely acknowledged to enhance entrepreneurial self-efficacy, creativity, and problem-solving ability (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). However, in Nigeria, the integration of experiential learning into entrepreneurship education remains limited and inconsistent. Several studies have focused on policy frameworks, curriculum content, or the generic importance of entrepreneurship education e.g., Ediagbonya, 2013), but few have explored how experiential methods are applied and perceived, as well as the outcomes or challenges associated with this pedagogical approach. The justification for this study lies in addressing this empirical and practical gap. As Nigeria confronts unprecedented youth unemployment and economic volatility, empowering students with hands-on entrepreneurial skills is timely and urgent. Traditional pedagogies dominated by lectures and rote learning are increasingly seen as inadequate in preparing students for the dynamic realities of entrepreneurship (Olawale & Garwe, 2010).

In response to this lacuna, the Proposed Experiential Entrepreneurship Framework (PEEF) brings mainstreamed experiential learning principles in entrepreneurship education into practice, emphasising direct experience, reflective practice, and iterative problem-solving. By integrating theory and practice, PEEF aims to develop entrepreneurial skills like opportunity recognition, risk management, strategic decision-making, and resilience. PEEF is not only designed to enhance the personal competence of future entrepreneurs but also to instill a culture of innovation and sustainable enterprise development. The PEEF framework draws on a structured approach that combines experiential learning activities, mentorship, teamwork projects, and experiential entrepreneurial challenges. These factors improve learners' mindset and skill set required for success in dynamic entrepreneurial environments. With a focus on experiential learning, the framework makes entrepreneurship education an active, effective, and results-driven experience rather than a passive process of learning. The study informs curriculum developers, policymakers, and educators on the practical and strategic value of experiential approaches in entrepreneurship training. Specifically, the research supports the development of robust, engaging, and impactful entrepreneurship education frameworks that align with national economic goals and global best practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kolb's experiential learning cycle

David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (1984) is an experiential learning theory that emphasises knowledge acquisition as an active and cyclical process whereby experience is translated into insight and action. Kolb defines experiential learning as ''the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience.''

The cycle has four interdependent phases:
Concrete Experience (CE): Being directly involved in an experience or reworking an already had one using new perception.
Reflective Observation (RO): Systematic review and reflection upon the experience, about discrepancies between expectations and outcomes.
Abstract Conceptualisation (AC): Developing or elaborating theory and concepts out of reflection and observation.
Active Experimentation (AE): Applying these newly developed ideas to practical situations to experiment with them and test them out, thus creating new concrete experiences.
Kolb emphasises that optimal learning is a full cycle through these stages, and that students enter the cycle at any point depending on situational requirements. The cyclical flow of the stages emphasises their interdependence: "each stage interacts with the stage that follows" to render learning unified and practical. In addition, Kolb postulates a learning styles theory based on this cycle. Individuals exhibit preferences characterised by strengths on two dimensions: grasping experience (Concrete Experience vs Abstract Conceptualisation) and reflecting on it (Reflective Observation vs Active Experimentation). These dimensions result in four learning styles: Diverging, Assimilating, Converging, and Accommodating. Kolb's model is a robust instructional design framework that motivates teachers to create learning that involves active experience, reflection, conceptual knowledge, and application. Its integration of experience, reflection, cognition, and behaviour makes it an integrative educational psychology model. A diagram of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle is presented in Figure 1.

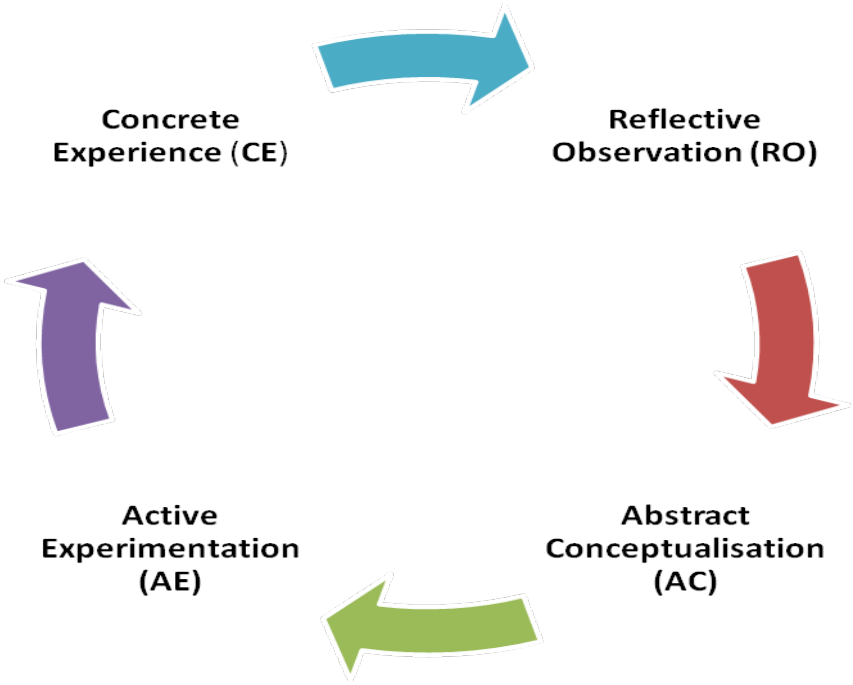

Figure 1: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Conceptualising entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurial education aims to develop cognitive and behavioural skills that prepare individuals for entrepreneurial ventures. For Fayolle and Gailly (2015), such an education enhances vigilance by providing scripts for identifying and evaluating opportunities as well as undertaking proactive behaviours. Liñán (2004) categorised EE into four types: entrepreneurial awareness education, start-up education, entrepreneurial dynamism education, and continuing education for entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial awareness education is the first, which seeks to develop broad knowledge about entrepreneurship as well as a favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship. Its purpose is not necessarily to produce entrepreneurs but to embed an entrepreneurial spirit and understanding of the societal role of entrepreneurship. The second type, start-up education, is more practical and specific, equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to start a business enterprise. This includes training in business planning, financing, and market entry strategy. The third category is entrepreneurial dynamism education, aimed at already-started-up entrepreneurs who require knowledge and skills to cope with growth, innovation, and competitiveness. This training considers strategic thinking,

leadership, and adaptability. Finally, entrepreneurial education through continuing education enables entrepreneurs to be abreast with future trends, technology, and market developments. It is an ongoing learning process that enhances entrepreneurial performance in changing circumstances. This category suggests that entrepreneurship education is not a one-size-fits-all approach but a developing and situation-oriented framework that facilitates entrepreneurs at different entrepreneurial stages (Liñán, 2004).

Entrepreneurial education consciousness is aimed at students who lack knowledge of establishing a business. Entrepreneurship education programmes in Nigeria have proliferated to address youth unemployment and encourage economic independence (Osotimehin et al., 2018). Entrepreneurship education is also a key driver of alertness. It entails formal and informal learning processes that confer individuals with knowledge, skills, and attitudes supportive of entrepreneurship (Fayolle & Gailly, 2015). Entrepreneurship education enhances opportunity recognition by developing cognitive schemata and sensitivities to changing markets (Bae et al., 2014). Entrepreneurship education programmes are becoming integrated into Nigerian tertiary-level curricula to enhance self-employment and economic stability in the context of high youth unemployment (Osotimehin et al., 2018)

Experiential learning pedagogy and entrepreneurship education

Experiential learning (EL) is a cornerstone of contemporary entrepreneurship education (EE) on the premise that students acquire entrepreneurial attitudes and competencies by doing, reflecting, conceptualising, and experimenting rather than through passive receipt of information (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Kolb, 2009). This is translated into EE pedagogies such as startup simulations, live projects with micro-ventures, internships, hackathons, and incubator-linked challenges, which systematically support action and reflection (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Jackson, 2016). Contemporary research suggests that they are well-suited to complex, uncertainty-laden tasks such as opportunity recognition, effectuation, and venture resilience because they enable students to test assumptions and receive authentic feedback (Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Nzembayie et al., 2024). Empirical studies and reviews increasingly provide evidence for the efficacy of EL and EE outcomes. Systematic syntheses identify positive impacts of EE on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, and intention, where courses are created with real venture activities alongside facilitated reflection (Koustas & Keshavarz, 2020).

Non-Nigerian studies are particularly relevant to a Nigerian context for three reasons. First, they identify the mechanisms through which EL achieves its effects: authentic tasks, iterative feedback, coaching, and market engagement, which are portable across contexts where enabling conditions are met (Harvey et al., 2010). Secondly, they offer low-cost adaptations that have been experimentally found suitable in resource-constrained environments. For instance, Dobson et al. (2018) document Ghana's Transformational Incubation Programme, a university-based incubator that combines mentoring, business model development, and blended training to equip youth entrepreneurs. Strathmore University's iBizAfrica in Kenya integrates live client projects, mentoring, and investor engagement into its programme, demonstrating a sustainable model for university-based EL platforms (Ogenga, 2017). South African universities also institutionalised experiential approaches using innovation hubs and venture-creation units dedicated to faculty development and industry partnerships (Soelberg et al., 2024). Third, these comparative cases reveal the moderators that shape EL outcomes, including class size, faculty coaching capacity, access to workspace and technology, offering a diagnostic lens for Nigerian researchers evaluating programme fidelity and effectiveness. Furthermore, these comparative cases are relevant for Nigeria because they highlight opportunities and constraints of scaling EL in contexts characterised by limited faculty capacity, high student numbers, and resource shortages.

In Nigeria, the National Universities Commission (NUC) made EE compulsory in 2007, mandating the setting up of entrepreneurship centres within universities. Implementation is uneven, with resource constraints, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient mentoring capacity being widely reported (Oyinlola et al., 2025). Empirical evidence is mixed but increasingly instructive. Nwaukwa and Ushie (2023) reported no significant relationship between specific processes of the Kolb cycle and entrepreneurial intention among Rivers State University students, suggesting that courses may remain theory-based despite policy demands. Nweke, Eze, and Ugwu (2025) document significant gains in entrepreneurial competence following a 476-student interdisciplinary EL workshop at Godfrey Okoye University, demonstrating the potential of well-designed, low-cost, hands-on activities when paired with structured reflection. Complementary research in polytechnics and TVET colleges (Adeniyi et al., 2022) also emphasises the importance of practice-based curricula in developing entrepreneurial readiness, suggesting that

Nigerian higher education institutions can learn from vocational education's emphasis on competence-based assessment.

Cumulatively, Nigerian and comparative evidence indicate that the efficacy of EL is dependent on design fidelity: outcome alignment clarity, structuring of reflection cycles, authenticity of tasks with market testing exposure, and availability of coaching and maker spaces. For resource-constrained systems, scholars now advocate for low-cost, scalable models such as community-embedded initiatives, micro-internships, blended/online venture competitions, and pop-up incubators (Harvey et al., 2010; Jackson, 2016). The global narrative has shifted from asking whether EL works to debating how to do EL effectively in the context of budgetary, infrastructural, and capacity limitations (Koustas & Salehi, 2022). For Nigerian EE, this change underscores the need for rigorous programme assessment, including quasi-experimental and mixed-methods designs to ascertain context-sensitive pathways that translate policy directives into concrete entrepreneurial capacity development at scale. These studies suggest that the success of EL in Nigeria hinges on fidelity of programme design, especially authentic tasks, structured reflection, coaching, and access to maker spaces or technological resources. Globally, the discussion has shifted from 'whether EL is effective to how to conduct EL effectively with limited resources. Recent research in higher education emphasises moving beyond activity-intensive but pedagogy-light teaching by (1) aligning EL activities with clear entrepreneurial learning outcomes, (2) integrating reflective cycles and feedback loops, (3) integrating ecosystem partners, and (4) investing in faculty coaching development (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Harvey et al., 2010; Jackson, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative literature review strategy in examining the application of experiential pedagogy in Nigerian higher institution entrepreneurship education. This choice is informed by an interpretivist paradigm, which assumes that knowledge is socially constructed and meaning can be obtained by examining different perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Based on this, the review seeks to interpret and make sense of how the experiential pedagogy has been defined, taught, and evaluated in Nigeria's higher education context. A qualitative literature review was found to be appropriate since it allows interpretation and synthesis of different studies. This approach enables thematic analysis of empirical and theoretical studies, which

is particularly suitable in entrepreneurship education; a domain that is interdisciplinary in nature and marked by heterogeneity in terms of scope, context, and methodology.

Data Collection and Selection

Data was collected from secondary sources, which included peer-reviewed articles in journals, academic books, conference papers, and policy briefs. The Scopus and Google Scholar databases were searched using keywords such as "experiential learning and entrepreneurship education" and "Kolb's experiential learning theory and entrepreneurship pedagogy". To ensure currency, we focused on papers published between 2005 and 2025, corresponding to the period during which the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced entrepreneurship education as a mandatory course in Nigerian universities. Earlier publications were mentioned only if they were pioneering contributions (e.g., Kolb's 1984 theory of experiential learning). Inclusion criteria comprise studies that (a) examined experiential or active pedagogies, (b) were situated in higher education entrepreneurship courses, and (c) showed scholarly rigour. Exclusion criteria included opinion pieces, studies outside higher education, publications before 2005 (except landmark studies), and non-peer-reviewed sources with inadequate methodological transparency. 20 articles that met the criteria were used for our review. The selection of 20 articles was based on thematic saturation. Additional articles were screened until no new themes emerged. While a wider sample would contribute to breadth, the purpose of this review was interpretive depth, not comprehensive coverage. In the future, scholars may wish to employ a wider sample or triangulate across other databases (e.g., Web of Science) to provide expanded coverage.

Thematic Analysis

The included studies were examined according to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis guide: (1) reading the data several times to familiarise with the data, (2) creating initial codes through open coding, (3) grouping codes into potential themes, (4) review and refining themes for internal and external heterogeneity, (5) naming and defining the themes so that their underlying substance is conveyed, and (6) creating a coherent narrative that integrate the themes with existing literature. NVivo 12 was used for coding and to manage patterns across the studies. Themes were deductively, according to Kolb's experiential learning cycle (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation), and

inductively established to allow emergent categories articulating context-specific Nigerian higher education practices. In this manner, analysis captured both theory-led insights and contextually situated innovations. Potential selection biases are acknowledged, including the fact that database coverage (Scopus and Google Scholar) may not include all African or locally published journals. Snowballing techniques were employed to reduce selection bias by reviewing the reference lists of included articles for other relevant publications.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the qualitative literature review results and discussion of experiential learning pedagogy and entrepreneurship education in Nigerian higher education. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns across the studies reviewed, with focus on how Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) was implemented as an inspirational framework. The discussion integrates viewpoints from Nigerian universities, highlighting opportunities and challenges when applying experiential learning to teaching entrepreneurship. Literature synthesis from international and Nigerian sources recognises some inherent patterns within the role and impact of experiential learning (EL) in entrepreneurship education (EE).

Empirical studies and systematic reviews globally suggest that EL contributes positively to entrepreneurial self-efficacy, opportunity discovery, and intention, particularly when programmes blend real venture experience and reflection guidance (Kolb & Kolb, 2009; Koustas & Keshavarz, 2020; Santoso et al., 2023). Experiential pedagogies such as venture creation modules, client projects, hackathons, and incubator-linked challenges fared better than lecture-based settings when developing entrepreneurial competencies and sustaining entrepreneurial aspirations. The findings validate global evidence that experiential learning is a prime source of entrepreneurial skill and intent. EL provides learners with experience of the entrepreneurial process in real-world contexts, test hypotheses, and develop resilience through self-reflection and feedback. These benefits position EL as appropriate for uncertainty-prone tasks such as effectuation and opportunity recognition.

In Nigeria, the literature captures a more haphazard terrain. Since the mid-2000s, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has mandated EE across all universities, establishing centres for entrepreneurship and including courses in curricula. While this policy has secured national coverage, some studies attest to structural challenges, large class sizes, inadequate resources, low

mentoring capacity, and weak industry connections that hinder experiential delivery (Oyinlola et al., 2025). South-South university data attest that faculty perceive EL as effective, yet empirical research is mixed. For example, no significant relationship was observed between Kolb cycle process and entrepreneurial intention in a study conducted by Rivers State University, where theory-based teaching practices persist (Nwaukwa & Ushie, 2023; Koko et al., 2023). These contradictory findings point not to the ineffectiveness of EL but to differences in design quality and integrity of implementation. When experiential learning activities are organised around clear learning objectives, with embedded reflection opportunities, and led by seasoned facilitators, outcomes are positive and sustained. Conversely, when EL is reduced to isolated classroom exercises bereft of reflective processing or meaningful exposure to entrepreneurial networks, it can become "activity for activity's sake" without contributing to resilient entrepreneurial competencies. On the contrary, evidence from Godfrey Okoye University indicated a 25.5 percentage-point difference in entrepreneurial knowledge and awareness following a sequentially designed experiential workshop among 476 undergraduate students (Nweke et al., 2025). These gains are also achieved by Covenant University and University of Lagos, whose curricula have included venture simulation and mentorship programmes, which have led to higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy as well as cases of new start-ups after graduation.

Addressing these challenges requires a balance of focus on both faculty capacity and infrastructural supplies. Faculty development emerges as a primary lever, as instructors must be able to conceptualise and implement experiential cycles of action, reflection, and conceptualisation. Nationally coordinated training programmes, peer mentoring schemes, and experiential pedagogy courses included in postgraduate programmes could fill this gap. Alongside this, resource constraints can be managed through innovative solutions such as inexpensive pop-up incubators, community-led social enterprise programmes, and micro-internships in local businesses, which have been successful in institutions such as Ahmadu Bello University and University of Ibadan. The ability of some institutions (e.g., Godfrey Okoye University) to achieve significant outcomes with inexpensive, systematic EL interventions suggests that it is possible to scale up within the limitations of design principles. This supports the argument that in constrained environments, the question is not whether EL has an effect but how to implement it in a meaningful way with limited resources.

Alignment of EL activities with distinct learning outcomes prevents "activity for activity's sake" and favours pedagogical consistency. Organised rounds of reflection and feedback loops are the solution to turning experience into knowledge, and prevent the risk of "experience without sense-making." Engaging ecosystem partners can serve as a countermeasure to institutional resource limitations. Investment in faculty coaching can improve the level of support for students. Nigerian evidence also supports the potential of low-cost and scalable approaches such as community-based businesses, micro-internships, and pop-up incubators, especially when combined with blended or technology-supported delivery. Combined, these findings suggest that the effectiveness of EL in Nigeria hinges on programme design fidelity. It is essential to adopt real entrepreneurial activities, provide structured reflection and coaching, and ease access to technological tools such as maker spaces. Globally, attention has shifted away from debating the effectiveness of EL to debating how it could be put into practice effectively in a resource-constrained environment, with key design principles emphasising alignment of outcomes, reflective spirals, ecosystem interaction, and faculty capacity building (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Harvey et al., 2010; Jackson, 2016). Low-cost, scalable models such as community-based programmes, micro-internships, and pop-up incubators, supported by blended or technology-facilitated facilitation, are suggested by Nigerian studies.

In response to these findings, this research presents the Proposed Experiential Entrepreneurship Framework (PEEF) as an organised framework to guide EE design and implementation. The model puts the highest priority on authenticity, with emphasis on students engaging in real entrepreneurial activities rather than being restricted to theoretical exercises; reflection, through employing disciplined loops of feedback that translate experience into learning; integration with entrepreneurial ecosystems, through employing industry and community ties; and faculty capability, through sustained investment in training and mentoring. All these enable a context-aware and scalable approach to translating national policy priorities into concrete outcomes for entrepreneurial capacity building.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The Proposed Experiential Entrepreneurship Framework (PEEF), as given in Figure 2, is an extension of Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) in the context of Nigeria's tertiary education. The framework highlights a cycle of

concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation, while recognising that institutional and socio-cultural factors shape learning processes and entrepreneurial competencies.

At the concrete experience stage, students engage in hands-on entrepreneurial activities such as short-term internships with local SMEs, incubator initiatives, and business simulation exercises. For instance, an internship scheme with a semester structure could involve a six-week work placement with a start-up or family business whereby students observe founders, undertake assigned tasks, and collect data for business problems. The learning is not left unguided; students are directed towards predicted learning outcomes and keep weekly records of the best observations, issues raised, and entrepreneurial decisions encountered.

The reflective observation stage provides structured opportunities to make sense of these experiences. Practical tools include reflective diaries, peer debriefing sessions, and mentor-supported feedback meetings. For example, journal prompts can ask students to answer the following: What was the most intriguing entrepreneurial decision that you observed last week? In what way did it support or contradict theoretical concepts that you have studied? What would you do differently and why? That type of reflection translates real experience into understanding, builds self-awareness, and critical thinking.

During the abstract conceptualisation phase, students relate their immediate experience to entrepreneurial theory, models, and case studies taught in class. This might involve integrating field observations into assignment work, contrasting how real business strategy applies to concepts such as effectuation, lean start-up precepts, or resource-based view of the firm. This phase strengthens understanding of concepts and enables students to develop frameworks for interpreting future entrepreneurial challenges.

At the active experimentation phase, students apply their learning to real or simulated enterprise. This may involve the running of small-scale ventures, developing prototypes, or testing new business models under supervision. Student-run mini "pop-up incubators" or entrepreneurship fairs can provide low-cost platforms for experimentation and customer validation.

Importantly, the PEEF recognises the role of contextual moderators such as institutional support mechanisms, infrastructure availability, industry partnerships, and prevalence of entrepreneurial culture. University-based centres for entrepreneurship, focused maker spaces, and established relationships with regional firms are more relevant to facilitate strong

experiential cycles. Institutional support gaps and shortages of enabling infrastructure can affect opportunities for tangible experience and experimentation. The PEEF learning outcomes include enhanced entrepreneurial knowledge, technical and managerial capabilities, critical thinking, innovative potential, and employability. The PEEF cycle graduates will be able to demonstrate business acumen, resilience, opportunity identification, and risk management skills. Adoption of PEEF at Nigerian universities will require collective efforts to overcome emerging challenges. Faculty capacity building is central: national or regional programme development can strengthen lecturers' skills in experiential pedagogy, for instance, workshop facilitation, industry partnership development, and reflective coaching skills. Resource constraints can be overcome by leveraging partnerships with local industry, NGOs, and government schemes to provide internship opportunities and project-based learning. Technology-enabled solutions such as virtual internships, online reflective journals, and web-based collaboration tools can make experiential experiences available with no upfront capital-intensive infrastructure needed.

Practical example: Implementing PEEF in Nigerian Higher Education

In the 2026 academic session, test the Proposed Experiential Entrepreneurship Framework (PEEF) in an undergraduate entrepreneurship course for 150 students. The course duration is 12 weeks. The course is based on the four phases of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, adapted for the Nigerian context.

During the concrete experience phase (weeks 1-4), students will be allocated to micro-internships with local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Enugu. Each student will spend 10 hours per week observing entrepreneurs, participating in activities such as inventory management, bookkeeping, customer engagement, and social media marketing. Students will also participate in a venture creation simulation, where they form small teams to develop a micro-business idea and basic operational plan. To support learning, they will maintain weekly logs recording tasks performed, challenges encountered, and initial self-reflections.

From weeks 6–8, students entered the reflective observation phase. They will attend biweekly peer debriefing sessions, facilitated by faculty mentors. They will be required to complete and submit their reflective journals guided by prompts such as: *Which entrepreneurial decision surprised you the most and why? How does this experience challenge or align with what you have learned*

in class? These activities encouraged critical thinking and facilitated the transformation of practical experience into actionable insights.

The abstract conceptualisation phase occurred during weeks 5-8. Students will revisit their field experiences and simulation data, linking them to core entrepreneurial theories and case studies. For instance, they will evaluate their business simulation outcomes using lean start-up principles, opportunity recognition models, and risk management models taught in class. Students are encouraged to identify patterns and connect real-world observations with theoretical concepts.

In the active experimentation phase (weeks 9-12), student teams will launch their simulated businesses within a campus-based "pop-up incubator." They will apply marketing strategies, test pricing models, and iterate on products or services based on feedback from peers and faculty. Selected students with promising venture ideas will be offered mini-grants and mentorship from local entrepreneurs, providing a real-world application of the experiential cycle.

Throughout the semester, contextual moderators**,** including faculty mentorship, access to campus maker spaces, partnerships with SMEs, and university support for venture fairs, enhanced the learning process. At the end of the course, students will demonstrate measurable gains in entrepreneurial knowledge, opportunity recognition, innovation capability, and risk management skills, as assessed through reflective journals, simulation reports, and mentor evaluations.

The model in Figure 2 highlights a cyclical and context-specific process, aligning Kolb's theory with the Nigerian university context. Integrating concrete experience with reflective, conceptual, and applied phases, incorporating institutional and socio-cultural moderators, the model provides a roadmap for developing and delivering effective experiential entrepreneurship programmes. Experiential learning pedagogy based on Kolb's cycle can enhance entrepreneurial competencies in Nigerian tertiary education. Context and institution-based challenges can arise, but the synergy of concrete experiences, reflective practice, theoretical integration, and applied experimentation is a robust strategy for generating competent and resilient entrepreneurs. The PEEF positions experiential learning as a strategic tool for driving employability, innovation, and entrepreneurship-driven economic development.

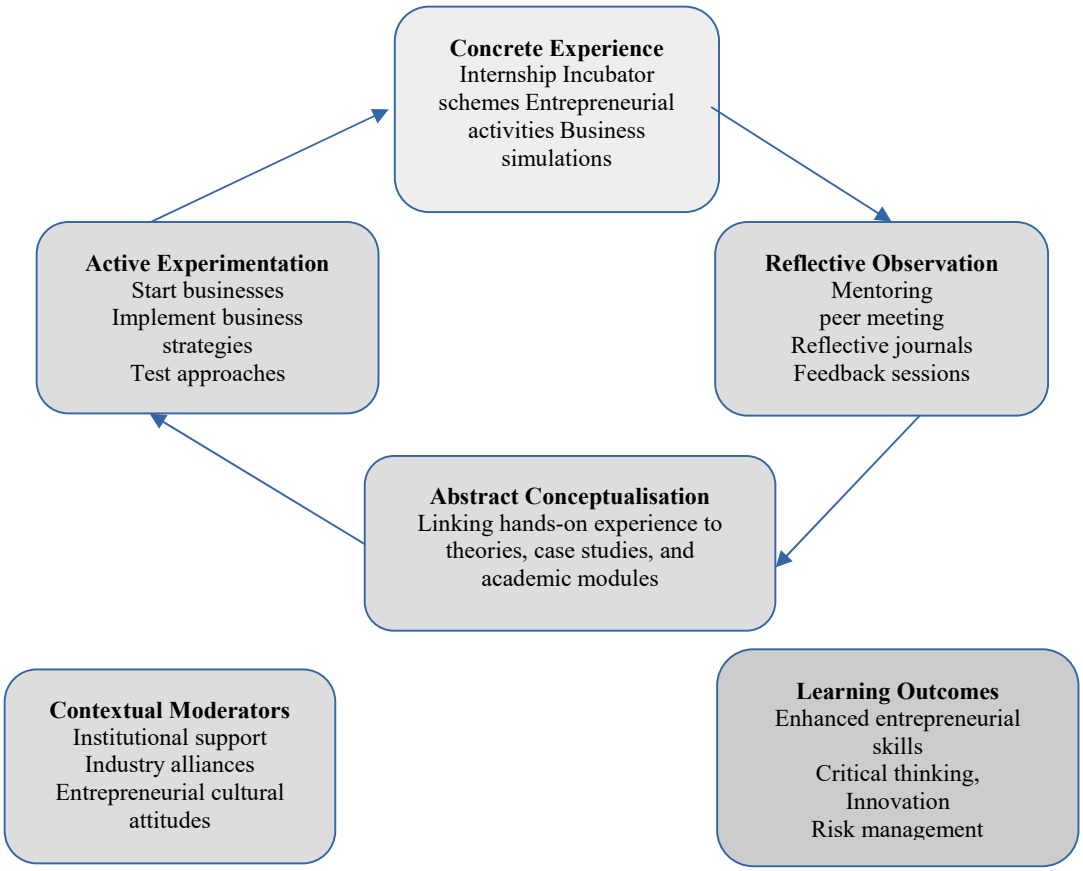

Figure 2: Experiential Entrepreneurship Framework
Source: Authors' work

CONCLUSION

The Proposed Experiential Entrepreneurship Framework (PEEF) is an integrated model of entrepreneurship education that involves experiential learning principles in curriculum design and actual participation. Traditional entrepreneurship studies, often lecture-based and case-study, require theoretical knowledge but rarely prepare students with the skills and attitudes to deal with the uncertainties and complexities of real business situations. PEEF addresses this gap by combining experiential learning exercises, reflective practice, mentoring, and iterative problem-solving for developing entrepreneurial competencies. While the Proposed Experiential Entrepreneurship Framework (PEEF) provides a rigorous and context-sensitive model of entrepreneurship education, it is not without limitations. PEEF implementation is resource-dependent, requiring faculty trained in experiential pedagogy, supporting

infrastructure such as incubators or makerspaces, and extended partnership with industry and community stakeholders. Institutions with fewer resources or less developed local entrepreneurial ecosystems may face challenges in fully implementing the framework, hindering the coherence and intensity of student engagement.

Empirical studies are needed to pilot PEEF across several Nigerian universities, not only examining outcomes such as entrepreneurial competencies, innovation, and venture creation, but also moderating effects of resource availability, faculty quality, and socio-cultural factors. Comparative studies can examine the degree to which institutional support differences, class size, or industry connections influence the effectiveness of the framework. Particularly valuable would be long-term research to ascertain whether participation in PEEF leads to long-term entrepreneurial action, increased employability, and resilience in real business environments. PEEF is a promising framework for bridging the theory-practice divide in entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, but its potential must be empirically validated. A systematic, evidence-driven evaluation of the framework will provide important insights for educators, policymakers, and institutional leaders, ensuring that experiential learning translates to measurable entrepreneurial competencies, innovation potential, and economic development outcomes. By calling for rigorous empirical testing, this study motivates the academic community to translate experiential pedagogy from theoretical promise to empirical impact in the Nigerian university context.

Practical Implications

The use of PEEF has significant practical implications for teachers, institutions, policy makers, and planners of entrepreneurship education. First, entrepreneurship education needs to go beyond lecturing and incorporate systematic experiential learning exercises such as project-based activities, simulation, business incubators, and connect to industry partners. Such experiences enable students to transfer theoretical concepts into practice, developing competence and confidence. Second, mentorship is the focal point in the design. Seasoned mentors offer learning, feedback, and business experience that enable learners to navigate complex issues, avoid traps, and build networks that support entrepreneurial activities. Institutionalisation of mentorship schemes and experiential learning can contribute to the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education. Third, the model places reflective

practice at the centre of learning. Asking learners to critically reflect on their experiences, test results, and improve strategies integrates adaptable thinking and resilience, determinants of long-term entrepreneurial success. The addition of reflection exercises, such as learning journals, peer feedback, and post-project reflections, ensures experiential learning translates into successful skill transfer. PEEF has policy and curriculum implications. Policymakers and higher education leaders can apply the framework to develop competency-based, outcome-oriented entrepreneurship programmes that address shifting market needs. Beyond degree programmes, accelerators, incubators, and professional training programmes can apply PEEF principles to build entrepreneurial capabilities in participants, leading to innovation and sustained business growth. PEEF not only enhances the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education but also equips learners with the applied, intellectual, and reflective skills to thrive in contemporary entrepreneurial settings, contributing to personal success and economic advancement at large.

REFERENCES

Adebayo, O., & Kolawole, J. A. (2013). The historical background of entrepreneurial development in Nigeria: Its gains, shortcomings and needful. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Economics and Management Sciences*, 4(5), 493–500.

Adeniyi, A. O., Derera, E., & Gamede, V. (2022). Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy for Entrepreneurial Readiness in a Developing Context: A Survey of Exit Level Students at TVET Institutions in Nigeria. *SAGE Open*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221095059

Akhuemonkhan, I. A., Raimi, L., & Sofoluwe, A. O. (2013). Entrepreneurship education and employment stimulation in Nigeria. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*, 3(1), 55–79.

Bae, T. J., Qian, S., Miao, C., & Fiet, J. O. (2014). The Relationship Between Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Intentions: A Meta-Analytic Review. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *38*(2), 217–254.

Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

Dobson, S., Maas, G., Jones, P., & Lockyer, J. (2018). Experiential learning through the Transformational Incubation Programme: A case study from Accra, Ghana. In P. Jones, G. Maas, & S. Dobson (Eds.), Experiential learning for entrepreneurship: Theoretical and practical perspectives on enterprise education (pp. 225–244). Palgrave Macmillan.

Ediagbonya, K. (2013). The roles of entrepreneurship education in ensuring economic empowerment and development. *Journal of Business Administration and Education*, 4(1), 35–46.

Fayolle, A., & Gailly, B. (2015). The impact of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial attitudes and intention: Hysteresis and persistence. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 53(1), 75–93.

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). (2024). *GEM 2023/2024 Global report: 25 years and growing.* GEM Consortium. https://www.gemconsortium.org/report/global-entrepreneurship-monitor-gem-20232024-global-report-25-years-and-growing

Harvey, M., Coulson, D., & McMaugh, A. (2010). Towards a theory of the ecology of reflection: Reflective practice for experiential learning in higher education. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 7(2), 1-15. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1101277.pdf

Jackson, D. (2016). *Work-integrated learning: A guide to effective practice.* Routledge.

Koko, M. N., Badey, N. T., & Bupo, G. O. (2023). Experiential learning processes and business education students' entrepreneurial intention development in Rivers State-owned Universities. *International Journal of Innovative Education Research, 11*(3), 76–84.

Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2009). The learning way: Meta-cognitive aspects of experiential learning. *Simulation & Gaming, 40*(3), 297–327. https://doi.org/10.1177/1046878108325713

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development.* Prentice Hall.

Koustas, S. N., & Keshavarz, E. (2020). Entrepreneurship education and experiential learning in higher education. *Experiential Learning & Teaching in Higher Education, 4*(1). https://nsuworks.nova.edu/elthe/vol4/iss1/8/

Liñán, F. (2004). Intention-based models of entrepreneurship education. *Piccola Impresa/Small Business*, 3, 11–35.

National Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Nigeria labour force survey, Q2 2023: Key highlights*. https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241429

Nwaukwa, V. E., & Ushie, P. U. (2023). Effectiveness of experiential learning method in entrepreneurship education in tertiary institutions in South-South Nigeria. *International Journal of Vocational Education, 40-47.*ijorved.com

Nweke, L. O., Okebanama, U. F., & Mba, G. U. (2025). Enhancing entrepreneurial skills through experiential learning in IoT, AI, and cybersecurity. *Discover Education, 4*, 149.

Nzembayie, K. F., Buckley, A. P., & Talay, I. (2024). Experiential Pedagogies for Cultivating Entrepreneurial Mindsets: Action Design Learning as Tailored Framework. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy.* https://doi.org/10.1177/25151274241292276

Ogenga, F. (2017, March 30). *iBizAfrica at Strathmore University on the verge of becoming Kenya's Silicon Savannah*. Standard Media. https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001234495/ibizafrica-at-strathmore-university-on-the-verge-of-becoming-kenya-s-silicon-savannah

Olawale, F., & Garwe, D. (2010). Obstacles to the growth of new SMEs in South Africa: A principal component analysis approach. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(5), 729–738.

Onuma, N. (2016). Entrepreneurship education in Nigerian tertiary institutions: A remedy to graduates' unemployment. *British Journal of Education*, 4(5), 16–28.

Oyinlola, M., Adefila, A., Okoya, S. A., Kolade, O., Babaremu, K., Ajala, O., Tijani, B., & Akinlabi, E. (2025). Fostering Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Nigerian Universities. In S. Kamuriwo, S. Jones, N. Marshall, & M. Wanjiru Kinoti (Eds.), *Developing University Entrepreneurial Ecosystems in Sub-Saharan Africa* (1 ed., pp. 255-292).

Osotimehin, K. O., Falola, H. O., & Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, B. (2018). Entrepreneurial education and youth empowerment in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges. *Journal of Entrepreneurship Education*, *21*(2), 1–14.

Santoso, R.T.P.B., Priyanto, S.H., Junaedi, I.W.R. *et al.* (2023). Project-based entrepreneurial learning (PBEL): a blended model for startup creation at higher education institutions. *J Innov Entrep* 12(18). https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-023-00276-1

Soelberg, F., Botha, M., Moos, M. N., & Stokvik, H. (2024). Creating value through entrepreneurial learning and education. Southern African Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management, 16(1), a851. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajesbm.v16i1.851