

Contributions of Entrepreneurship to the Development of the Nigerian Economy

Achu Anthonia¹, Oby Modest Ogbuoka², Tarek Yalouli³, Uchenna Rowland Ihejirika⁴

¹School of Business Studies and Management Technology, Federal Polytechnic Ohodo Nssuka Enugu State

²Coalcity University Enugu

³Faculty of Economics, Commerce and Management, Badji Mokhtar University-Annaba – Algeria

⁴Department of Banking & Finance University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus-Nigeria

ABSTRACT: This study evaluates entrepreneurship's contributions to Nigeria's economy from 2000 to 2024. The primary aim is to assess its influence on national growth, with specific focus on entrepreneurial financing, government support and policy, and entrepreneurship education and training. The theoretical framework integrates Schumpeter's Innovation Theory (emphasizing innovation's role in development), the Resource-Based View (RBV; stressing creative resource use), and Institutional Theory (examining formal and informal structures shaping entrepreneurship). Employing an ex post facto design, the study analyzes secondary data from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), and World Development Indicators (WDI). Results show statistically significant impacts from entrepreneurial financing ($p = 0.03$), government support and policy ($p = 0.00$), and education/training ($p = 0.00$) on economic development. The Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model and Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey (BPG) heteroscedasticity test confirm a long-run relationship between entrepreneurship and key economic indicators. The study concludes that entrepreneurship drives Nigeria's development via job creation, innovation, and industrial diversification. It recommends that government and private sectors expand funding, strengthen policy coherence, and bolster entrepreneurship education to build an inclusive ecosystem for sustainable growth.

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Economic Development, Nigeria, ARDL model, Government Policy

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has emerged as a pivotal driver of economic transformation in emerging economies, fostering innovation, employment, and diversification. In Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation with over 230 million inhabitants, entrepreneurship holds salience amid economic volatility, youth unemployment exceeding 40%, regional disparities, and overreliance on oil exports, which account for 90% of export earnings and over 50% of government revenue (Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN], 2023; World Bank, 2024). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), constituting 96% of businesses, contribute approximately 48% to gross domestic product (GDP) and 84% to employment, underscoring their role in income generation and resilience (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2024).

Nigeria's GDP reached \$362.81 billion nominally and \$2.523 trillion in purchasing power parity terms by 2023, yet structural oil dependency perpetuates vulnerability to global price shocks (World Bank, 2024). Historically, pre-colonial trade among ethnic groups like the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo instilled an entrepreneurial ethos, while colonial cash-crop systems and post-independence oil booms in the 1970s eroded non-oil sectors. The 1980s Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) spurred privatization and private-sector emphasis, culminating in post-2000 initiatives such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN, est. 2003), Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN), Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP), and National Enterprise Development Programme (NEDEP) (Ekekwe & Okoye, 2023; NBS, 2024). Entrepreneurial dynamism persists in agriculture (25.5% of GDP in 2022), information and communication technology (ICT; 18.44%), and services, propelled by Schumpeterian "creative destruction" through fintech and digital platforms, alongside resource-based view (RBV) leveraging of social capital in resource-scarce contexts (Onuoha & Ugochukwu, 2023; PwC Nigeria, 2023). Yet, barriers like infrastructure deficits, regulatory hurdles, finance gaps, insecurity, and policy inconsistency evident in Nigeria's 131st ranking in the World Bank's 2020 Doing Business Report constrain potential (World Bank, 2020; Adebayo & Olayemi, 2022).

Despite Nigeria's resource endowments and youth bulge, the economy from 2000 to 2024 has grappled with unemployment, poverty, low industrialization, and oil volatility, triggering recessions in 2016 and 2020 (CBN, 2023). SMEs promise diversification, yet face entrenched obstacles: limited finance, poor infrastructure, regulatory inefficiency, skill shortages, insecurity, and weak policy

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execution, yielding high failure rates and informal survivalism (Eze & Nwankwo, 2023; NBS, 2024). Literature gaps persist, with studies favoring sectoral anecdotes over quantitative impacts on GDP, jobs, innovation, and poverty, amid debates on productivity versus labor absorption (Akinwale & Oduwole, 2023; Ogundele & Adebayo, 2023). The core problem is ascertaining entrepreneurship's contributions to Nigeria's economy (2000–2024), evaluating enabling/constraining factors, intervention efficacy, and sustainability strategies. The primary objective is to evaluate entrepreneurship's contributions to Nigerian economic development from 2000 to 2024. Specific objectives are:

1. To assess entrepreneurial financing's impact on economic development.
2. To measure government support and policies' impact on economic development.
3. To evaluate entrepreneurship education and training's impact on economic development.

Geographically confined to Nigeria, the study examines regional variations among entrepreneurs, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders via purposive sampling across micro, small, medium, and established enterprises in sectors like agriculture, ICT, and services. Temporally, it spans 2000–2024, capturing policy evolutions such as compulsory tertiary entrepreneurship courses (2006), Youth Entrepreneurship Support (YES), Labour Employment and Empowerment Programme (LEEP), and SMEDAN.

It analyzes financing (grants, loans, microfinance), policies (reforms, incentives, infrastructure), and education/training (formal, vocational, mentorship), using quantitative secondary data from government reports, academic sources, and databases to quantify impacts on growth, scalability, startups, and innovation. This study illuminates entrepreneurship's role in job creation, innovation, sectoral growth (e.g., agriculture, tech), and inclusive development, guiding investors toward high-impact opportunities and social equity via ventures addressing education, health, and sustainability. For policymakers, it furnishes evidence-based recommendations on finance access, regulations, infrastructure, and training, exposing policy gaps in ABP, YouWiN, and NEDEP to foster enabling ecosystems. Academically, it bridges literature voids on Nigeria-specific empirics, integrating Schumpeterian and RBV frameworks, reconciling productivity debates, and signaling research on cultural/regional influences. Ultimately, it informs strategies for dynamic, sustainable growth, benefiting stakeholders in Nigeria's context.

1. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Entrepreneurship extends beyond the mere act of business creation; it is a dynamic process through which individuals identify opportunities, mobilize resources, assume risks, and create value through innovation. It involves creativity, strategic decision-making, and the introduction of new or improved products, services, and production processes aimed at sustainable growth. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) conceptualize entrepreneurship as the pursuit of opportunities to create value, while Kanothi (2009) emphasizes its role in coordinating economic resources under uncertainty in anticipation of profits. These perspectives highlight entrepreneurship as a critical mechanism for economic transformation, particularly in developing economies such as Nigeria.

Entrepreneurial activity is fundamentally linked to innovation, risk-taking, and efficient resource allocation. Scholars such as Acs and Storey (2004), Minniti and Lévesque (2008), and Naudé (2007) argue that entrepreneurship reshapes industries, creates new markets, and enhances productivity. Drucker (1970) further identifies entrepreneurship as a vehicle for new value creation, organizational formation, and wealth generation through innovation. In Nigeria, these attributes have become increasingly relevant since 2000, as entrepreneurship has emerged as a response to rising unemployment, poverty, and the limitations of an oil-dependent economy.

Economic development differs from mere economic growth by emphasizing qualitative improvements in living standards, income distribution, productivity, and inclusiveness (Todaro & Smith, 2015). Entrepreneurship contributes directly to economic development by generating employment, stimulating innovation, fostering industrial diversification, and promoting inclusive growth. In Nigeria, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute the backbone of entrepreneurial activity. According to SMEDAN (2022), SMEs contribute approximately 48% of GDP and employ over 80% of the workforce, underscoring their central role in economic development between 2000 and 2024.

Entrepreneurship has also facilitated Nigeria's structural transformation from a predominantly agrarian and oil-dependent economy toward services, manufacturing, and technology-driven sectors. The rise of technology hubs in Lagos and Abuja, agribusiness ventures adopting modern farming techniques, and renewable energy startups illustrate how entrepreneurial innovation has improved productivity, enhanced food security, expanded financial inclusion, and generated employment. These developments align with Schumpeter's theory of creative destruction, where entrepreneurial innovation replaces inefficient systems with more productive alternatives. Access to finance remains a critical determinant of entrepreneurial success in Nigeria. Studies consistently identify inadequate financing as a major constraint on SME growth due to high interest rates, stringent collateral requirements, and weak financial infrastructure (Adebayo & Olagunju, 2019). While government-backed institutions such as the Bank of Industry (BOI) and NIRSAL, alongside microfinance banks and fintech platforms, have expanded access to credit, challenges relating to policy inconsistency, limited coverage, and financial literacy persist (Omeje et al., 2020; Akinyemi & Salawu, 2023). Nonetheless, the expansion of digital finance since the mid-2010s has improved funding accessibility, especially for young and technology-oriented entrepreneurs.

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Government policies and institutional support have significantly shaped entrepreneurial outcomes in Nigeria during the period under review. Baumol (1990) and Acs et al. (2014) argue that the quality of government policy determines whether entrepreneurship is productive or unproductive. In Nigeria, initiatives such as SMEDAN, BOI, NDE, YouWin!, and NEEDS were designed to stimulate enterprise creation, innovation, and employment. Although these programs have contributed positively to SME growth and entrepreneurial orientation (Adebayo & Oluwaseun, 2024), their effectiveness has been constrained by bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and weak implementation. Entrepreneurship education and training have further strengthened the contribution of entrepreneurship to Nigeria's economic development. The compulsory introduction of entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities by the National Universities Commission in 2007 marked a major policy shift toward self-employment and skills acquisition. Programs by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Tony Elumelu Foundation, and other institutions have enhanced entrepreneurial intentions, business survival rates, and innovation capacity (Linus et al., 2025). However, gaps remain in curriculum implementation, practical training, and inclusivity, particularly for women and rural entrepreneurs.

This study draws on Schumpeter's innovation theory (creative destruction driving development), Resource-Based View (RBV; Penrose, 1959; Barney, 1991; Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001), and Institutional Theory (Weber/North, 1990; Scott, 2001) to analyze entrepreneurship's contributions via financing, policies, and training (2000–2024).

RBV posits entrepreneurs orchestrate valuable, rare, inimitable, non-substitutable (VRIN) resources like Nigeria's youth human capital, agriculture, and networks into value via bootstrapping/social capital, yielding GDP/jobs (e.g., Dangote's acumen/connections; Paystack's tech).

Institutional Theory emphasizes formal (CBN regulations, SMEDAN/BOI policies) and informal (ethnic ties, norms) structures shaping behavior/legitimacy. In Nigeria, weak enforcement hinders finance access/scale, but alignment boosts outcomes (e.g., Paystack's regulatory compliance enabling growth). Schumpeter complements by framing resource/institutional orchestration as innovation disrupting oil dependency. Together, they explain SME impacts (48% GDP, 84% jobs), highlighting needs for resource mobilization, policy coherence, and training to enhance economic diversification/resilience.

Empirical evidence on entrepreneurship in Nigeria consistently affirms its significant contribution to economic development through employment generation, sectoral productivity, financial inclusion, and human capital development. However, the magnitude of these contributions is strongly conditioned by access to finance, institutional quality, policy coherence, and entrepreneurship education. Recent empirical studies emphasize the developmental impact of entrepreneurship, particularly within agriculture and SMEs. Umar et al. (2024), using Nigeria Enterprise Survey Data (2014–2020), demonstrate that entrepreneurship supported by the Anchor Borrowers' Programme (ABP) generated approximately 2.5 million jobs and contributed about 25% to agricultural GDP. This finding highlights entrepreneurship's role in stimulating rural economies, strengthening agricultural value chains, and enhancing food security key dimensions of Nigeria's economic development since 2000. The study provides concrete evidence that targeted entrepreneurial interventions can translate into measurable macroeconomic outcomes.

Complementing this sectoral perspective, Akinyemi et al. (2020) examine the broader institutional environment and find that financial development and effective government support significantly enhance SME performance. Their results suggest that entrepreneurship contributes more meaningfully to economic development when supported by inclusive financial systems and strong institutions. However, regulatory inefficiencies and weak enforcement mechanisms undermine the sustainability of entrepreneurial gains, indicating that institutional quality mediates the entrepreneurship–development nexus in Nigeria. Despite the recognized importance of entrepreneurship, access to finance remains a major constraint. Abdullahi Umar (2024) reveals that only about 5% of Nigerian SMEs access formal credit, forcing most entrepreneurs to rely on informal financing. This finding aligns with Olowe et al. (2013), who observe that intervention schemes such as SMEEIS and ABP are often weakened by bureaucratic delays, political interference, and urban bias. Together, these studies suggest that while entrepreneurship has strong development potential, its contribution is uneven due to structural and financial exclusion, particularly among rural and emerging entrepreneurs.

Microfinance institutions have attempted to address this financing gap. Eniola and Entebang (2016) find that MFIs expand access to credit for women and underserved entrepreneurs, thereby promoting inclusivity and poverty reduction. However, high interest rates and short repayment periods limit their developmental impact. Ibrahim and Aliero (2012) further argue that limited financial literacy exacerbates loan mismanagement and business failure, reinforcing the view that entrepreneurship contributes optimally to development only when financial access is complemented by capacity building. From a policy standpoint, earlier studies provide important longitudinal insights. Obaji and Olugu (2014) report that government policies positively influenced entrepreneurship in agriculture, ICT, and services, supporting diversification away from oil dependence. Conversely, Oyelola (2013) and Akinyemi and Adejumo (2018) contend that Nigeria's entrepreneurship policies suffer from fragmentation, corruption, and infrastructural deficits, which dilute their developmental impact. These findings indicate that entrepreneurship's contribution to economic development depends not merely on policy presence but on policy effectiveness and coordination.

Institutional collaboration has emerged as a potential solution. Ojo (2019) advocates public–private partnerships (PPPs) as a mechanism for scaling entrepreneurial support and enhancing program effectiveness. This perspective reflects a gradual shift in empirical literature toward ecosystem-based approaches, recognizing entrepreneurship as a systemic rather than isolated activity.

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Entrepreneurship education represents another critical channel through which entrepreneurship contributes to long-term economic development. Muiyiwa Oyinlola et al. (2024) find that Nigeria's entrepreneurship education policy increases entrepreneurial intentions but suffers from outdated curricula and weak university industry linkages. Similar concerns are raised by Okebukola (2015) and Onuma (2016), who argue that theoretical emphasis and poor pedagogical delivery limit competence development. Nonetheless, Matthew Abiodun et al. (2020) provide evidence that government-supported entrepreneurship education has improved youth competencies such as innovation, resilience, and risk-taking skills essential for sustainable enterprise creation.

Gender-focused studies further underscore entrepreneurship's inclusive development role. Aliyu (2020) demonstrates that higher education significantly enhances women's entrepreneurial outcomes, although inadequate practical training limits scalability. This reinforces the argument that entrepreneurship contributes to inclusive economic development when education and training are well-structured and experiential. Overall, the empirical literature indicates that entrepreneurship has made substantial contributions to Nigeria's economic development between 2000 and 2024 through employment generation, sectoral diversification, innovation, and human capital development. However, these contributions are constrained by financial exclusion, weak institutions, fragmented policies, and gaps in entrepreneurship education. This study builds on existing empirical evidence by providing a comprehensive, time-bound analysis of how entrepreneurship has shaped Nigeria's economic development trajectory over the period under review. Despite extensive empirical evidence on entrepreneurship in Nigeria, significant gaps remain. Most studies examine isolated dimensions such as financing, policy, or education without integrating their combined effects on long-term economic development. Existing works are largely sector-specific or short-term, offering limited insight into entrepreneurship's cumulative contribution to national development over time. Moreover, insufficient attention is paid to how institutional quality and policy coherence condition entrepreneurial outcomes. This study fills these gaps by providing a holistic, longitudinal assessment of entrepreneurship's contribution to Nigeria's economic development from 2000 to 2024.

2. METHODOLOGY

Several databases served as the source of the data set for this research. They are pre-existing data that has been gathered by several researchers and scholars other than the researcher and is easily accessible from other sources, they are primarily secondary in nature (See appendix 8 for data sources).

Secondary data comprises of data which though needed for the current study, were collected primarily for another study (Onwumere, 2019). Secondary data are typically located in data archives or repositories like the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin, the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the World Development Indicators (WDI), etc. They are arranged according to natural frequency and are regarded as time series statistics and are fully quantitative. (Brooks, 2014).

The theory that suitably underpins this work is Schumpeter's Innovation Theory. The theory emphasizes that economic development is driven by innovation and the entrepreneurial process of creative destruction.

The research work model was a modified version of Haruna Dzuguwhai & Prof. Aliyu Idris (2025) work. The Impact of Entrepreneurship on Economic Development in Nigeria was the title of the study that the researcher conducted. The regression method was employed by the researcher. The study examines the relationship between Small and Medium-scale Enterprise Growth (SMEG) and Nigeria's GDP from 1999 to 2022, using multiple regression analysis.

$$GDP = \beta_0 + \beta_1(SMEG) + \beta_2(INF) + \beta_3(INTR) + \varepsilon$$

Where:

GDP = Gross Domestic Product

SMEG = Small and Medium-scale Enterprise Growth

INF = Inflation Rate

INTR = Interest Rate

ε = Error term

To evaluate the contribution of entrepreneurship to the development of the Nigerian economy, where gross domestic product per capita (GDPPC) is used as a proxy, the model was adjusted to fit or suit the nature of the research effort. Auto Regressive Distributed Lag Model (ARDL) estimation techniques is used in this study and specified thus:

$$GDPPC_t = \beta_0 + \sum_{n=1}^k \beta_1 \Delta GDPPC_{t-n} + \sum_{n=1}^k \beta_2 \Delta FFE_{t-n} + \sum_{n=1}^k \beta_3 \Delta GSPE_{t-n} + \sum_{n=1}^k \beta_4 \Delta ETE_{t-n} + \rho_1 FFE_t + \rho_2 GSPE_t + \rho_3 ETE_t + \varepsilon_t$$

Where:

$GDPPC_t$ Represents the dependent variables, (Gross domestic product per capita).

FFE Represents the independent variable (Financing for Entrepreneurs)

$GSPE$ Represents the independent variable (Government support and policies for entrepreneurship).

ETE Represents the independent variable (Entrepreneurship education).

β_0 Represents the constant or the intercept.

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$\beta_1 - \beta_4$ Represents the coefficient of the short run parameters.

$\rho_1 - \rho_3$ Represents the coefficient of the long run parameters.

$t - n$ Represents time series data

ε_t Represents the residual, noise or error term.

$\sum_{n=1}^k \Delta$ Represents the short run regression equation

$\beta_1 > 0, \beta_2 > 0, \beta_3 > 0$

The analytical framework for this study includes measures such as measures of aggregative tendencies, measure of dispersion, symmetrical properties of the series and measure of the degree of peakness of the distribution, correational analyses and test for unit root These are considered as preestimation tests which are relevant for the determination of the adequacy of the datasets.

The model to be employed in this study is Auto Regressive Distributed Lag model (ARDL) which is followed by the underlisted post estimation test.

1. Test for Significance of the result
2. Test for auto correlation conducted using Breusch-Godfrey Langrange Multiplier test (BG LM).
3. Test for heteroscedastic residuals conducted following the Breusch, Pegan and Godfrey test (BPG).
4. Test for model stability conducted by adopting Ramsey RESET and CUSUM test.

While the preestimation tests determine the validity of the estimates, inferences are based on 0.05 level of significance.

4. RESULTS

In Table 1, the distributional characteristics of the study's variables are shown with proper consideration for their aggregative, and variability tendencies. There is a predominance of playkurtosis as the observations in ETE, GDPPC and FFE have kurtosis that are less than 3 ($K < 3$) and on the other hand GSPE shows leptokurtosis which means that the observations have kurtosis that are greater than 3 ($K > 3$) and a predominantly positive skewness ($S < 0$). The coefficient of variation compares the degree of variation from one data series to another. The coefficient of variation of the variables herein are predominantly greater than 1 which indicates that the distribution is highly dispersed except for GDPPC which is approximately equal to 1.

Table 1: Basic Descriptive Statistics

Variables	$\bar{x}$	$\mu \frac{1}{2}$	S	K	σ	$\frac{\sigma}{\bar{x}}$
ETE	39.80	35.00	0.34	1.95	133.90	3.36
GSPE	200.35	75.00	1.97	6.75	266.21	1.33
GDPPC	415331.9	389505.5	0.52	2.34	278623.4	0.67
FFE	39.80	35.00	0.35	1.94	133.90	3.36

Note: $\bar{x}$ is the mean of the sampled observation, $\mu \frac{1}{2}$ is the median, S is the skewness, which is the degree of symmetry or departure from symmetry, K is the kurtosis, which is the degree of peakedness,

σ and $\frac{\sigma}{\bar{x}}$ represent the standard deviation and coefficient of variation, respectively

To ascertain the linear relationship between the variables, correlational matrix was computed using the level series and is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of correlational matrix

Correlation (R) t-Statistic (*) Probability(**)	GDPPC	ETE	FFE	GSPE
GDPPC	1.000000			
ETE	R 0.989255 *30.26056 **0.0000	1.000000		
FFE	R 0.968023 *17.25693 **0.0000	R 0.964737 *16.39118 **0.0000	1.000000	

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GSPE	R 0.800904	R 0.777482	R 0.785891	1.000000
	*5.981630	*5.528662	*5.683709	-----
	**0.0000	**0.0000	**0.0000	-----

R = Correlation * = t- Statistics ** = Probability

For a variable to share linear relationship with the other, the t-stat should be > 2.5 and the probability should be < 0.05 . From table 2 above, GDPPC shares a positive linear relationship with the three independent variables.

The stationarity test was conducted to examine the stationarity properties of the variables and the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) following the Traditional Unit Root Test was used.

Table 3: Unit Root Test Results

Variable	ADF (Trend and Intercept)			
	ADF Stat	Critical Value@5%	P value	Inference
ETE	-5.24	-3.61	0.0016	I (0)
GDPPC	-4.55	-3.63	0.0079	I (1)
FFE	-5.25	-3.62	0.0017	I (0)

Source: Extracted from E-views

From table 3 above, all the variables were found to have attained stationarity at levels except for GDPPC which attains stationarity at first difference. Based on this, the series in the result above was found have a mixed order of integration. This provides a justification for the use of the ARDL estimation approach.

Next, the Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model (ARDL) econometric technique was used as the key estimation method.

The table 4 below presents the summary of the ARDL regression results showing the coefficients, statistical significance and implications of the variables in the model.

Table 4: Summary of ARDL regression result

PANEL A					
MODEL (1, 1, 1, 0, 1)					
Variables	Long run estimates				
	Coefficient	Std. Error	T-stat	P-value	
FFE	0.002	0.001	2.504	0.0312	
GSPE	0.33	0.027	11.817	0.0000	
ETE	-0.055	0.006	-8.454	0.0000	
PANEL B: DIAGNOSTICS TEST					
BG-LM	1.55 (0.27)				
BPG	0.83 (0.59)				
RESET	1.74 (0.21)				
PANEL C: BOUNDS TEST					
COEFFICIENT		CRITICAL VALUE	I(0)	I(1)	INFERENCE
4		5%	2.56	3.49	Co-integration Exists

The post-estimation test which are shown in Panel B of Table 4 demonstrates the accuracy and validity of the estimates. The BG-LM is the test for higher auto correlation for the diagnostics tests in Panel B of table 4, and the insignificant p-value of the BG-LM test demonstrates that there is no higher auto correlation for the models. The BPG is a test for heteroscedasticity. The BPG test insignificant p-value implies that there are no heteroscedastic residuals in the model. The Ramsey RESET (Regression Error Specification Test) is insignificant (> 0.05) which suggests that there is no specification error or misspecification in the model.

The bounds test is a test to ascertain the long run relationship or co-integration between the variables. From the bounds test result in table 4 (Panel C), a long run relationship can be found among all the independent variables to GDPPC. This implies the existence of co-integrating relationship in the model with GDPPC as the dependent variable, as the F-statistics is greater than the upper bound (3.49) as stated in the table above.

Evaluating the elasticity of economic growth to access to funding, the result reveals that Financing for entrepreneurs has a significant impact on the development of the Nigerian economy. The p-value of Financing for entrepreneurs (FFE) of table 4 is significant $<$

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0.05 (0.03) which allows for a conclusion that Financing for entrepreneurs has a significant impact on the development of the Nigerian economy.

Financing for entrepreneurs plays a crucial role in driving the development of the Nigerian economy. Access to funding enables entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses, creating jobs and stimulating economic growth. Without adequate financing, entrepreneurs may struggle to turn their ideas into reality, hindering economic progress. With access to funding, entrepreneurs can invest in research and development, driving innovation and entrepreneurship in various sectors. Furthermore, financing for entrepreneurs can help to address some of the unique challenges facing the Nigerian economy, such as infrastructure deficiencies and insecurity. By providing entrepreneurs with access to funding, they can develop innovative solutions to these challenges, contributing to the growth and development of the economy. This enabled the growth of the African Fashion industry as opined by Kalu, Okeke, Nwokike, & Eleje (2023).

Government support for entrepreneurship have a significant impact on the development of the Nigerian economy. Government support and policies for entrepreneurship (GSPE) has a significant p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 allowing for a conclusion that government support and policies for entrepreneurship have a significant impact on the development of the Nigerian economy. Government support and policies for entrepreneurship play a vital role in driving the development of the Nigerian economy. One way government support impacts the economy is through the creation of jobs. When the government implements policies that support entrepreneurship, it can lead to the creation of new businesses, which in turn create employment opportunities. Additionally, Government support also fosters innovation by providing resources and funding for research and development. This can lead to the creation of new products, services, and processes that drive economic growth. In addition government support promotes ease of doing business and drives the economy to greater productivity (See Ogbonna, Lawal, and Okafor, 2024)

Lastly, entrepreneurship education and training (EFE) is a significant enabler of growth as shown by the significant pvalue ($0.00 < 0.05$). It can be said that entrepreneurship education and training have a significant impact on the development of the Nigerian economy as one of the key outcomes of entrepreneurship education and training is the development of entrepreneurial skills (Simba, Kalu, Onodugo, Okoyeuzu & Ogundana, 2022). When individuals receive training in entrepreneurship, they acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to start and grow a successful business. Interestingly, entrepreneurship education and training can help address unemployment and promote economic growth. By providing individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to start and grow a business, entrepreneurship education and training enable them to create their own employment opportunities and contribute to economic growth.

Additionally, entrepreneurship education and training can help promote a culture of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. By teaching individuals, the value of entrepreneurship and providing them with the skills and knowledge necessary to start and grow a business, entrepreneurship education and training can help promote a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation in the country.

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

There is scarce literature on evaluation of contribution of entrepreneurship to the development of the Nigerian economy. Most studies reviewed concentrated on impact of financial development on entrepreneurship growth in Nigeria which sparked the motivation for this research work. The data set covers the years 2000 through 2024 and was sourced from various databases.

Testing the contribution of entrepreneurship to the development of the Nigerian economy using the ARDL estimation method, some significant results were obtained. The research reveals that Financing for entrepreneurs has a positive and significant impact on the development of the Nigerian economy. Furthermore, the study reveals that Government support and policies for entrepreneurship have a positive and significant impact on the development of the Nigerian economy. Again, the research found out that Entrepreneurship education and training have a significant impact on the development of the Nigerian economy. Also, the study reveals that there is a long run relationship between the dependent and independent variables as depicted by the bound's tests.

It is recommended that government agencies and private investors should drive funding initiatives that target entrepreneurs working on innovative solutions to these challenges, providing them with the necessary resources to develop and implement their ideas.

Also, the research suggests that the government establishes policies that encourage financial institutions to provide funding to entrepreneurs and invest in infrastructure development to support business growth.

Conclusively, government and private sector provide funding and support for entrepreneurship education and training programs, enabling more individuals to access these programs and develop their entrepreneurial skills. This will not only engender growth in entrepreneurial endeavours, it will also propel the economy to greater productivity.

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