

Entrepreneurial Education for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: An Exploratory Case Study

¹ Foluke Fayemi, ² Chizoba “Dr. Zee” Madueke

¹ College of Doctoral Studies, University of Phoenix, Phoenix, USA

² College of Business Administration, Columbia Southern University, Orange Beach, USA

Abstract: The lack of adequate education for entrepreneurship of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), executive managers, and owner-managers in Nigeria increases the high rate of poverty and unemployment. Lack of management training and experience contributed to 69% of SMEs’ failures. Research on entrepreneurial development and agency intervention for business growth lacks criteria for adequate entrepreneurial education for business growth and sustainability. The inadequacy in teaching entrepreneurship education encumbers Nigerian national development. The problem is that entrepreneurs in Nigeria lack good education in entrepreneurship and business sustainability. The qualitative exploratory case study addressed gaps and paucity in previous literature on why Nigerian SMEs lack adequate education for entrepreneurship and business sustainability. Ten entrepreneurs were interviewed to explore how to apply education to operate businesses strategically for growth and sustainability. Data analysis and interpretation revealed four themes: (a) inadequacy of entrepreneurship education and capacity building; (b) lack of a strategic management approach for competitive advantage; (c) lack of business leadership, orientation, and experience; and (d) unsustainable business strategy for sustainability and growth. The research findings provided entrepreneurs with strategic management approaches to achieve efficient business development for business growth and sustainability.

Keywords: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME), Entrepreneurship, Nigeria, Education, Training, Growth, Sustainability, Entrepreneurship Development Programs (EDP)

1. Introduction

After Nigerian independence in 1960, the government focused on industrialization at the expense of entrepreneurs’ input until the 1980s, when the government focused on accelerating the development of SMEs to grow the Nigerian economy (Aremu and Adeyemi 2011). The Nigerian government’s widespread awareness of establishing entrepreneurship recognizes the contributions of entrepreneurial activities and informal entrepreneurial training for the economy (Tony, 2016). Nigerians realized that growing the economy needed to diversify income and revenue to not depend on oil revenue alone (Chukuemeka, 2011). In 1987, the Nigerian government introduced entrepreneurship development programs (EDP) to encourage job creation and solve the growing unemployment problem (Osemeke, 2012). Governmental leaders also encouraged self-employment through various entrepreneurship programs to act as an antidote to unemployment and poverty from 1960 to date (Adike, Anosike and Wang, 2022; Fatunla, 1989; Nwambam, Nnennaya, and Nwankpu, 2018).

Yet, SMEs face challenges in the new competitive landscape for entrepreneurial growth and sustainability (Edet, 2015). Business activities are on the rise, but business owners lack the robust entrepreneurial abilities to run a business successfully, even with established government institutions and agency programs (Nwambam et al., 2018). Nigeria's demand for learning about entrepreneurship is increasing (Tony, Sefiu, Olamide, Monsuru, and Oluwatoyin, 2018). The changing aspects of the labor market in Nigeria resulted in the recent dynamism of entrepreneurship education (Nwambam et al., 2018; Okolie et al., 2021). The efforts to solve economic problems through increased SME activities have consistently faced the constraint of entrepreneurial adequacy of business owners for entrepreneurship for decades (Auwalu, Rosli, and Shukri, 2016).

2. Background

In the late 1980s, the Nigerian government introduced EDPs to potential and existing SMEs to promote entrepreneurial knowledge (Fatunla, 1989; Osemeke, 2012). The agencies and institutions included establishments such as the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), the Working for Yourself Program (WFYP), Youth Enterprise with innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN!), and similar programs. These establishments aimed to create awareness and support increased entrepreneurial activities, and many concentrated on a partial approach to the EDP (Osemeke, 2012). The established SMEs continue to go through different challenges that limit the ability to sustain enterprise because of entrepreneurs' inadequate knowledge, lack of experience, lack of funds, poor coordination, and bureaucracy (Aremu, 2011; Nosakhare, 2023; Osemeke, 2012; Tony, 2016; World Bank, 2008). Osemeke (2012) and Tony et al. (2018) argued that the lack of adequate entrepreneurial education accounted for the high rate of poverty and unemployment.

A 2013 World Bank report observed that most SMEs in developing countries have fewer than 10 workers. Close to the World Bank's report, the SMEDAN National Report (2017) revealed that small enterprises have between 11 and 49 employees and total assets (excluding land and buildings) between 10 and 100 million naira. Medium enterprises have between 50 and 199 employees and total assets (excluding land and building) between 50 and 500 million naira (Smedan, 2017). The model firm consists of just the owner, whose ability to grow in socio-economic development progression rests upon their ability to engage in high-growth entrepreneurship. The model of firms limits the number of the population that is employed.

Sanusi et al. (2017) argued that learners should be provided with business incubator plans to help them develop more sophisticated professional skills for organizing business ideas. Leveraging entrepreneurs' capacity with adequate entrepreneurial skills can enhance entrepreneurs' ability to take ownership of how to efficiently supply market demand to make a profit, improve household welfare, and strengthen the distribution of income and wealth (Aremu, 2011; Melwani, 2018; World Bank, 2013). Many Nigerian entrepreneurs are frustrated with limitations to total entrepreneurial capacity, such as techno-managerial development, and the business leaders are eager to have a process that supports building a sustainable enterprise (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012; Alarape, 2014; Nwambam et al., 2018). The World Bank's 2013 report opined that strengthening SMEs' productive capacity may influence the expansion of business and the ability to create good jobs.

Providing adequate entrepreneurial education offers a more effective way to tackle poverty and unemployment in Nigeria (EIU, 2014). For the Nigerian economy to benefit from EDP programs, the government must implement adequate entrepreneurship education that leverages the entrepreneurs' abilities to improve sustainable entrepreneurship and increase employment (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012; Osemeke, 2012). Adebayo (2018) argued that inadequate entrepreneurship education is a deterrent to effective skill acquisition in Nigeria, which continues to hinder the Nigerian government's objectives of an entrepreneurial economy. Ajayi and Ademokun (2012) contended that developing efficient business processes from ideas to full-fledged businesses, highlights the importance and need for developing entrepreneurial educational programs to help build capacities to sustain a business enterprise. Despite the Nigerian SMEs' abilities to establish commercial activities, limited management ability to support

established enterprises continues to drive high levels of poverty and unemployment (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012; Alarape, 2009; Umukoro, 2014).

The problem is that SME entrepreneurs in Nigeria lack adequate education for entrepreneurship and business sustainability (Nwambam et al., 2018; Tony, 2016). Entrepreneurs need good entrepreneurial education to act as a catalyst for creating job opportunities and for reducing the poverty level (Tony, 2016). The Nigerian SMEs entrepreneurs' lack of adequate education of entrepreneurship in Nigeria is increasing the high poverty and unemployment rates (Nosakhare, 2023; Osemeke, 2012; Tony, 2016). The increase in the number of Nigerians with a median age of 14 and population growth at close to 3% creates social distress and extreme poverty, causing a shortage of up to 50% in capacity development (World Bank Group [WBG], 2013; WBG, 2016a). Solving the increasing problem of the unemployment crisis and persistent poverty in the context of engaging sustainability skills depends on Nigeria's entrepreneurial development approach (Nwambam et al., 2018; Osemeke, 2012).

This qualitative case study explored why Nigerian SMEs entrepreneurs lack adequate education for entrepreneurship and business sustainability. The study focused on SME executives and owner-managers with at least a general educational diploma (GED) (West African Examination Certificate (WAEC)) degree and with two to five years of experience in business strategies. The goal was to understand entrepreneurs' views on the growing need for sustainable capacity development of the SME sector to create employment.

3. Literature Review

Researchers and scholars agree that entrepreneurship creates or expands an existing business (Carland et al., 1984; Davison, 2020). Yet, entrepreneurship has common elements that cut across the spectrum of purposeful and profitable actions (Davison, 2020). The Nigerian Commission Communication's discussion of promoting entrepreneurial mindsets through education and training acknowledges entrepreneurship as an individual's ability to turn ideas into action (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012).

Entrepreneurs recognize and seize economic opportunities, engage in innovative practices, or assume entrepreneurial risk (Davison, 2020). Entrepreneurship is vital to situating Nigerian SME entrepreneurs within the three broad categories of entrepreneurship definition: (1) the occupational notion of entrepreneurship, (2) the behavioral notion, and (3) entrepreneurship based on transmitting its functional ability for capacity development of new venture creation (Davison, 2020). The SME entrepreneurs' level of knowledge directly influences SMEs entrepreneur alertness for creativity, innovation, risk-taking, and managing projects to achieve objectives (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012). Entrepreneurship is essential to the development and sustainability of business operations or business recycling (Carland et al., 1984). Entrepreneurship is a fundamental part of economic development and speeds up the social and economic development rate of many countries, particularly developing countries (Melwani, 2018).

Exploring strategic management involves knowledge-transformative capacities for creative problem-solving and innovation (Mezirow 1997; Lin and Nabergoj, 2014). Mezirow's idea emphasizes exclusively the relevance of knowledge of entrepreneurship on economic elements of the business processes and its impact on economic development. The aspect of applying relevant knowledge when needed for entrepreneurship is entrenched in the capacity level of the entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial processes are key drivers of economic development (Davison, 2020) and require entrepreneurs' alertness of opportunity to search for and be able to respond to changes. EDP's impact on Nigerian economic development may need to rely on creating a suitable environment where an entrepreneur can respond to change and exploit it as an opportunity. RBV entrepreneurship sees change as the norm and as a healthy way of doing business (Kellermanns et al., 2016).

Entrepreneur quality contributes to the success of establishing and maintaining an enterprise. RBV scholars discovered that enterprise performance is determined by its internal resources rather than the external competition; hence, the resources in quality of SME entrepreneurs can make the difference in market differentiation in a competitive market (Kellermanns et al., 2016). Tony et al. (2018) discussed entrepreneurship as the outcome of a dynamic interaction between the entrepreneur and the environment that relies on the role of entrepreneurs' creativity in the resource acquisition process. Entrepreneurship education emphasizes nurturing creativity to develop entrepreneurial capacities and mindsets (Iwu et al., 2019; Osemeke, 2012; Tony et al., 2018). Many Nigerian university graduates and EDP recipients lack an entrepreneurial predisposition due to a lack of entrepreneurial mindsets (Jayeoba, 2015).

Nigerians in tertiary, technical, or vocational institutions embraced entrepreneurship to seek employment, with a small fraction indicating that they had taken entrepreneurial courses to start a business (Jayeoba, 2015; Sanusi et al., 2017). The population of students in tertiary institutions includes students at the National College of Education, Polytechnics, and universities clustered as higher institutions in Nigeria (Sanusi et al., 2017). Nigerian educational institutions and tertiary education curricula were deficient in entrepreneurship education (Iwu et al., 2019). The entrepreneurship programs designed by the Nigerian government to make recipients consider a career beyond white-collar jobs have not been fully implemented (Nwambam et al., 2018).

Discussion on a sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystem and high performance is becoming increasingly important in global entrepreneurship (Sanusi et al., 2017). The new competitive landscape created by globalization, in terms of information and communication, has drastically changed the mode of doing business globally (Edet, 2015). Thus, entrepreneurship education is promoted globally to help SME entrepreneurs adapt and respond to the global business dynamics of innovative practices (Edet, 2015). Developed countries such as the United States and most European countries have increased awareness of entrepreneurship as an essential part of the school curriculum from high school to university level, unlike Nigeria, which recently acknowledged the need to implement adequate entrepreneurship education from high school to tertiary level (Nwambam et al., 2018; Oseni, 2017).

Studies showed that global entrepreneurship educational practices focus on equipping SME entrepreneurs with the necessary entrepreneurial skills and practices (Louis Lim Vui Han et al., 2019; Sanusi et al., 2017). The change in developed countries from an industrial to an entrepreneurial production model unlocked a new paradigm that developing countries can model. However, Nigeria and other African countries recently introduced entrepreneurship education to various levels of education (Sanusi et al., 2017). Kenya taught entrepreneurship education at the preschool, middle, and high school levels. South Africa is still in the infant phase of developing entrepreneurship education beyond the informal educational setting (Sanusi et al., 2017). Like some other Asian countries, India also engaged in several approaches to build entrepreneurship activities to help generate the supply of entrepreneurs (Oseni, 2017).

Yet, little attention has been given to the sustainable training of SME owner-managers to enable them to act as agents for developing entrepreneurship in many developing countries, including Nigeria (Davison, 2020). Oseni (2017) posited that the gap in the supply of entrepreneurial classes in developing countries lacks value-adding activities. Consistent with Yadav, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) concluded that lack of education is one of the significant barriers to entrepreneurship and that developing economies have greater entrepreneurship education challenges (GEM, 2017-2018). The slow pace of making entrepreneurship education a subject matter and a mindset in most developing countries have contributed to the gap in global entrepreneurship supply. Nigeria is not exempt from the challenge of unemployment and adequate entrepreneurial education (Oseni, 2017).

Studies revealed that Nigeria embarked on creating entrepreneurship awareness for decades and is gradually shifting focus from just creating awareness to action-orientated entrepreneurship among SME entrepreneurs (Nwambam et

al., 2018; Sanusi et al., 2017). However, the intervention agencies' partial approach to entrepreneurial development programs still creates a significant deficit in creating employment to reduce poverty in Nigeria (Tony et al., 2018). The deficiency in entrepreneurial education in Nigeria needs a model focused on empowering students to start a business and create jobs rather than securing white-collar jobs for themselves (Iwu et al., 2019; Nwambam et al., 2018). The World Bank Group's (2016a) recommendation to unlock rapid growth and job creation is to promote ways to infuse critical elements of a national strategy for employment processes, from being hired to hiring. SME activities are key worldwide trends to economic development (Knight, 2000; "More Than Half," 2017).

The lack of adequate entrepreneurship education may prevent the development needed to bridge the gap in innovative practices (Tony et al., 2018). Entrepreneurship education focuses on value creation, from knowing and understanding to application and action (McGuigan, 2016). Adequate education can help owner-managers position their enterprise to cope with the industry environment (Nwambam et al., 2018).

Vocational and technical education quality may need revamping to meet the country's goal of building a sustainable economy (Edet, 2015). Entrepreneurs' focus on the heterogeneity of beliefs about the value of resources may call for an adequate education to efficiently allocate business resources (Tony et al., 2018). Nigeria must enhance its entrepreneurship education curriculum to include relevant sustainable development content to challenge and motivate entrepreneurs' capacities and mindsets (Tony et al., 2018).

Akinbami et al. (2016) described entrepreneurship as creating and promoting many capable entrepreneurs who can successfully start innovative enterprises and manage and nurture them to sustainable growth. Entrepreneurship education will achieve broad socioeconomic goals, such as job creation and employment generation (Jayeoba, 2015). Nwambam et al. (2018) revealed that the knowledge level of entrepreneurs from resource inadequacies continued to create a setback in the established entrepreneurship education implementation. The intent of the federal and state governments' intervention focused mainly on combatting the menace of unemployment.

The government's EDP intention to increase the pace at which new venture creation may have overlooked the entrepreneurial roles and factors of instructional efficiency and effectiveness in achieving Nigerian national development goals (Nwambam et al., 2018). The Nigerian system neglected and discriminated against implementing formal entrepreneurship education (Nwambam et al., 2018). Only private and sizeable informal sector operators were known to be entrepreneurs until the recent change in demand for learning entrepreneurship. The trend in building a sustainable economy from skills and competencies that lead to developing self-reliant individuals may need entrepreneurs' adequate training. Inadequate attention to sustainable goals in the EDP curriculum may have contributed to Nigeria's inadequacies in entrepreneurship education (Nwambam et al., 2018).

The ongoing unemployment distress in Nigeria's socioeconomic position from the economic recession in the 1980s requires a collaborative approach to enable SME entrepreneurs to engage in untapped hidden entrepreneurial potential (Tony et al., 2018). The literature revealed that the initial Nigerian entrepreneurial approach focused on creating entrepreneurship awareness with little attention to the challenges SMEs and business owners face with developing business potential (Adebayo, 2018; Nwambam et al., 2018; Tony, 2016). Nigeria desperately needs adequate resources to equip students with sufficient knowledge, resources, and skills to establish a sustainable enterprise (Nwambam et al., 2018). Adebayo (2018) posited that entrepreneurship is a strategic practice-oriented activity born out of innovation, risk-taking, and growth to demonstrate the entrepreneurial function of economic development. The World Bank (2013) revealed that the extreme poverty in Nigeria increased nationally from 10 million to 14 million from 1985 to 1992, with a tripling of headcounts from increased population in urban areas.

In 2008, the World Bank attributed formal and informal apprentice training in Nigeria to increased earnings by about 3% to 5%, reinforcing the potential of gaining higher productivity in the context of persistent entrepreneurs'

adequate training. Several scholars discussed the need to resolve entrepreneur skill inadequacy for entrepreneurship to reduce Nigeria's unemployment crisis and poverty (Adebayo, 2018; Edet, 2015; Nwambam et al., 2018; Osemeke, 2012; Tony, 2018; World Bank, 2018). The authors concluded that consideration given to adequate entrepreneurial education can support sustainable enterprise, increase employment, and improve the livelihoods of Nigerians.

The account of SME entrepreneurs' survival strategies can support the growing need for sustainable capacity development of local companies to strengthen the Nigerian economy. The Nigerian Commission Communication for Promoting Entrepreneurship described entrepreneurship as a process in which individuals who engage their abilities to turn ideas into action challenge the individual's ability to develop a strategic creative vision (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012).

Nwambam et al. (2018) illuminated the Nigerian citizenry's challenges in various entrepreneurial activities. The entrepreneurs may not have the necessary skills to develop sustainable enterprises, which can contribute to poverty and the unemployment rate in Nigeria (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012). SME entrepreneurs need management abilities to provide sustainable business productivity that accelerates job creation and economic development (Auwalu et al., 2016; World Bank, 2017). Understanding the ways to maximize the potential of existing Nigerian SME entrepreneurs can extend to a strategic allying of significant knowledge-based stimulants for business growth. Thus, it increases the chance for increased employment, business ownership, accountability, and overall nation-building. With adequate entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurs can develop sustainable business processes to accelerate employment generation and economic development (Alarape, 2014; Nwambam et al., 2018).

4. Research Question

One central research question and three sub-questions guided this research study. The research question is: Why do Nigerian SME entrepreneurs lack adequate entrepreneurship skills for developing business sustainability?

The following sub-questions guided the study:

SQ1: What experiences do SME entrepreneurs have in acquiring entrepreneurship skills?

SQ2: How do SME entrepreneurs identify EDP agencies' best approach to resolving the lack of adequate entrepreneurship skills for developing business sustainability?

SQ3: What is the SME entrepreneurs' understanding of how EDP agencies can enhance their knowledge of entrepreneurship skills to develop sustainable businesses?

The above research question and three sub-questions helped focus the study.

5. Methodology

A qualitative case study is the most appropriate method to explore why Nigerian entrepreneurs lack adequate education for entrepreneurship and business sustainability. The qualitative research method offered a knowledge-building process for the study to extract meaning from diverse perspectives of data accuracy to generate knowledge (Lerner and Tolan, 2016). Unlike quantitative methods, qualitative methods allow the researcher to explain and explore possibilities or phenomena that produce detailed data to help understand this case (Ridder, 2017).

The occupational concept of entrepreneurship refers to owning and managing one's business enterprise (Davison, 2020). The individual business owner depends upon a few essential resources, of which the entrepreneurial competencies are the most crucial and intangible (Noor, Azmi Bin, Saqlain, and Mohd Sobri, 2018). The qualitative research approach assumed each case is unique, which allowed capturing details of the individual cases to gain insight into why entrepreneurs lack adequate education for entrepreneurship and business sustainability (Arghode, 2012).

The in-depth qualitative process offered an optimal collection of data on an individual's experience and perspectives on business processes (Lerner and Tolan, 2016). Although data interpretation was subjective to participants'

opinions and the researchers' interpretations, the analysis advances the reflective process from a participant's experience to convey authenticity (Given and Schensul, 2008). Using the qualitative method supported the methodology cross-data analysis from various ventures to reveal emerging patterns that helped understand why Nigerian SMEs lack adequate education for entrepreneurship and business sustainability (Ridder, 2017).

Open-ended questions allowed participants to respond freely, in their own words and enabled clarifications when necessary (Chenail, 2011). Open-ended questions are unstructured questions that do not suggest possible answers. The open-ended questions allow the participants to answer questions using their capability and understanding in their own words (Roulston, deMarrais, and Lewis, 2003).

The case study design offered meaning through an interpretative approach (Yin, 1993), applying a critical perspective to exploring the entrepreneurial activities of SME entrepreneurs in Nigeria for a better understanding of the situation. With the quest for more profound knowledge, the qualitative case study design allows for uncovering and learning more about a little-known or poorly understood situation (Green, 2018).

6. Results

Ten entrepreneurs' participant experiences and perspectives helped explain the role of the lack thereof of adequate entrepreneurship skills for business sustainability. The respondents' views established the reality about the challenges and survival strategy in the Nigerian economy and business environment to better understand why entrepreneurs lack adequate entrepreneurship education to grow and develop a sustainable enterprise. Clustering of meanings occurred to group similar participants' experiences, forming the study's themes.

Six phases of thematic analysis were conducted: (1) familiarization with transcribed interview data to identify the item of potential interest to create nodes, (2) generating codes from the nodes created, (3) generating initial themes, (4) reviewing initial themes, (5) defining and naming the themes, and (6) developing a report were utilized after transcribing 10 participants' interviews. The triangulation of interview responses, observations, and documents culminated into compiled codes, nodes, themes, and thematic that address the central research question of this study. Core themes emerged from clusters and elements of shared experiences. Core themes were then ranked based on participants' views from the most relevant to the least. The highest response identified the core themes selected for the study's analysis.

In the first phase, the results of 207 nodes were mentioned 272 times by the participants. In the second phase, causal observation notes resulted in several identified sentences constructed as patterns in the third phase. In the fourth phase, the emergent theme of engaging adequate entrepreneurship capacity developed from the occurrence of the following codes: (a) entrepreneurial leadership skills and orientation, (b) operational business strategy and management for competitive advantage, and (c) knowledge of entrepreneurship to facilitate an operational business strategy for growth and sustainability. Table 1 summarizes the most reoccurring codes about understanding issues SME entrepreneurs face to engage sustainability skills to bridge the gap of inadequate entrepreneurship education during the data analytic coding process.

The nodes culminated into four core emergent themes addressing the central research question guiding this study. Data analysis and interpretation revealed four themes: (a) inadequate entrepreneurial education and capacity building (IEECB), (b) competitive advantage and strategic management (CASM), (c) business leadership, orientation, and experience (BLOE), and (d) operational business strategy (OBS; Table 2).

Table 1: The Four Most Reoccurring Codes

Code	Occurrence	Percentage
Bridging inadequacy of entrepreneurship education and capacity building	84	31
Adopting strategic management for competitive advantage	98	36
Demonstrating business leadership through orientation and experience	38	14
Deployed operational business strategy for growth and sustainability.	52	19
Total	272	100%

Table 2: Codes and Themes Summary

No	Themes	Codes	FRQ	Position
1		Business Education Strategy	20	1
2	Inadequate	Business Operation Strategy	7	7
3	Entrepreneurship	EDP Efficiency	16	3
4	Education and Capacity	Human Resources Management Strategy	13	4
5	Building	Research and Development Strategy	8	5
6		Self-Development Strategy	20	1
Theme total and class			84	B
1		Business Development and Competitive Strategy	44	1
2		SME Cooperate Impact	20	2
3	Strategic Management for	Customer Orientation Strategy	11	3
4	Competitive Advantage	Inventory Management Strategies	9	4
5		Networking Strategies	8	5
6		Marketing Strategy	3	6
7		Product development strategies	3	6
Theme total and class			98	A
1	Business Leadership,	Cooperate Governance Strategies	4	3
2	Orientation, and	Experience	13	2
3	Experience	Financial Management Strategy	18	1
4		Operational Management Strategy	3	4
Theme total and class			38	D
1	Operational Business	Business Ethics	33	1
2	Strategy for Growth and	Business Sustainable Strategy	9	3
3	Sustainability	Growth and Expansion Strategy	5	4
4		Risk Management Strategy	11	2
Theme total and class			58	C

Note: FRQ: Frequency, No: Numbers

Table 2 summarizes the reoccurring codes from the potential clustered patterns of meaning used to identify the four emergent themes addressing the research questions of this study. Emerging themes on why Nigerian entrepreneurs lack adequate education for entrepreneurship and business sustainability are in order of the appearance of the phenomenon identified in the interview transcripts. Theme 1 emerged from answers to interview questions 1, 5, 7, and 12 about the experiences entrepreneurs have in acquiring entrepreneurship skills. Themes 2 and 4 were derived from answers to interview questions 2, 3, 8, 11, and 13 about understanding the entrepreneurs' level of knowledge for competitive advantage and strategic management. Theme 3 emerged from answers to interview questions 4, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, and 16 about operational business strategies for growth and sustainability. Bridging the inadequacy of entrepreneurial education and capacity building (IEECB) was the first identified theme (Table 3).

Table 3: Summary of Theme 1. Inadequate Entrepreneurial Education and Capacity Building (IEECB)

Categories		Common Responses	Percentage
Business Strategy	Education	Determination and commitment, Passion, and Self-determination	24%
Business Strategy	Operation	Plan production, Vision plan, and share with the team	8%
EDP Efficiency		Practical activities, Develop classroom Simulations	19%
Human Management Strategy	Resources	Knowledge sharing and self-development (e.g., on-the-job training, seminars, and workshops)	15%
Research and Development Strategy		Collaborate, Partnership, Creativity, Understand Entrepreneurship	10%
Self-Development Strategy		Engage effective communication, networking, or partnership with others for knowledge sharing	24%
Total			100%

Theme 1: Inadequacy of Entrepreneurial Education and Capacity Building (IEECB)

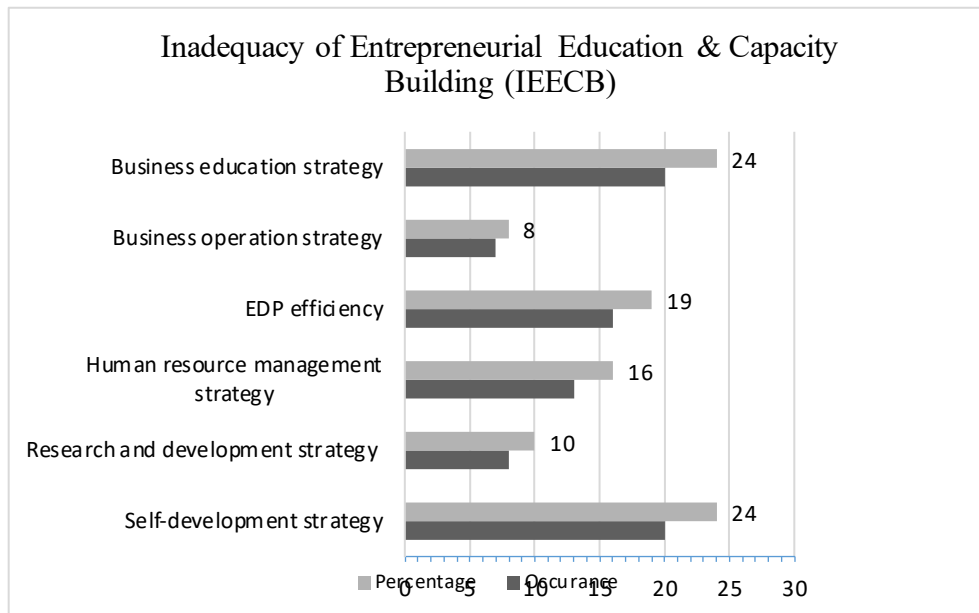
SQ1: What experiences do entrepreneurs have in acquiring entrepreneurship skills?

Responses to questions 1, 5, 7, and 12 answered SQ1, which helped to understand entrepreneurs' views and experiences about entrepreneurship skills. The goal was to provide better insight into the level of adequacy of entrepreneurship programs and what has been the positive impact or value added to entrepreneurs and business enterprises. Ten participants integrated the knowledge acquired from EDP programs into their business management insight for growth and sustainability. Theme 1 emerged from three patterns of the meaning of entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurship skills, and capacity development. Theme categories' meaningful patterns were related to six codes of business education strategy, business operation strategy, EDP efficiency, self-development strategy, research and development strategy, and human resources management strategy, which emerged from participants' responses. These six categories supported common responses describing EDP program effectiveness.

Ten participants viewed the construct of EDP entrepreneurial education efficiency as business education strategy (BES), business operational strategy (BOS), EDP efficiency, self-development strategy (SDS), research and development strategy (RDS), and human resources management strategy (HRMS). All 10 participants agreed that self-development and business education strategies were the two major categories of inadequate entrepreneurial education and capacity building (see Table 2).

IEECB represents 31% of the 272 references on the code occurrence in Table 2 summary. Self-development and business education strategies represent 48% of the six identified codes from the 10 participants' interview responses. Each code occurred 20 times, representing 24% of 84 code references in theme 1. The most prominent nodes among the nodes used to generate SDS and BES codes include passion, self-determination, listening to customers, and paying attention to competitors. The efficiency of entrepreneurial education programs, termed *EDP efficiency*, occurred 16 times, representing 19% of the 84 code references in theme 1. On the other hand, HRMS, RDS, and BOS appeared 13, 8, and 7 times representing 16%, 10%, and 8% of 84 code references in theme 1, respectively (Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Theme 1, IEECB code occurrence in percentage



IEECB 1 is the second most (31%) theme after theme 2 (Table 2). The following are the experiences entrepreneurs had in acquiring entrepreneurship skills. Ten (100%) entrepreneurs affirmed conducting business activities through self-determination, commitment, and passion (Table 3). P1 stated, "You have to have passion. Business is not easy, and it comes with different challenges. If you are not strong, it's easy to lose hope." P2 stated:

I love what I do, so I challenge myself daily to make it work. Doing a business is like an empowerment to be self-employed. It comes back to bite you if you don't make it work. My business relies on me to succeed, So I do all it takes to get going to grow my business. The learnings from pieces of training or seminars are usually helpful at the moment. I am trying to implement some. Like when I got a contract on stadium work. I didn't know how to get all the requirements. But I was lucky to be working with foreign personnel who helped me on ways to get them done. In fact, they sent me training materials that opened my eyes to various options of collaborating or partnership with others to meet the delivery requirements. I got new equipment and have since been able to even work as a consultant.

P3 stated, "I educate myself on how to meet my business need by learning from my experience." P5 said, "My integrity is at stake when I don't do good work. I enjoy and encourage myself to make the business work." P4 stated, "Determination and commitment are two major things that help me drive my business." P7 said, "My

innermost strength helped me the most working with people.” P8 stated, “When you love what you do, your passion keeps you in the game.” P9 said, “I feel committed to what I believe in; even if I don’t know what to do, I’ll reach out to good friends for advice.” P10 stated, “It’s not really the program itself, but my innermost strength helped me first, then my friends second, and then the program third.”

The participants’ integrated their entrepreneurial knowledge into the day-to-day business activities. P1 stated, “It is the grace of God. I wake up every morning and use my intuition to take any action.” P2 said, “...to learn entrepreneurship will help you in business organization, but you also have to be disciplined, teach yourself how to be firm to manage people.” P3 stated:

Learning has helped me with the ability to initial business processes. I believe real-life business activities are understanding what you can do when the chips are down. I train my staff weekly; maybe it would have been better if one could learn from simulations.

P10 stated, “I read all the time to learn how to train my staff and run the business. So, my experience has helped me develop documentation to repeat business processes.” P4 stated, “I have learned to manage people over time.” P6 stated, “I will say schooling provided me a bedrock to know how to plan my workforce.” P9 stated, “My experience has helped me to know how to manage and keep business records. P8 stated:

I apply division of labor to organize my activities. However, I manage and make decisions based on what I know. Although eight (80%) participants described the EDP program benefit as intuition for business opportunities, participants described their experiences of self-development strategies for business growth and sustainability.

P7 stated:

Partnership with other business owners has been helpful for me in my business. Although this is a business I have done for a long time, so I know what I do. But one thing I find most valuable, though, is effective communication. In my experience, working with different people requires us to be on the same page. So, I think ahead by empowering my workers with the necessary skills to help them perform their work effectively when I’m not there.

Similarly, the other nine participants discussed effectively communicating with stakeholders. All 10 participants mentioned daily communication with staff to achieve employee buy-in to the company vision. P10 stated, “I align workers' mindset to production plan and align factory workers to follow production plan.” Ten participants described using effective communication to bridge the knowledge gap. Nine participants discussed their experience as a significant resource for day-to-day business operations. In addition, two participants discussed integrating EDP learning into everyday business activities for strategic planning. For example, P2 stated:

EDP is well related to growing a business because at the training, you get all the necessary tips needed, you gain knowledge on how to go about your business, how to set up, how to relate and build the love for whatever you do, knowledge is power and learning begins to give you a broader view of what you are required to do.

P8 stated, “The EDP program has impacted my business's functionality. My training has helped me to develop a way to replicate processes.” Both participants expressed their experiences and views of EDP programs' adequacy in training in growing their business; however, all ten participants discussed their experiences as a significant resource for day-to-day business operations.

Nine participants described EDP training as theoretical. For example, P5 stated, “EDP... (sic) trainings are very theoretical. It should include practical activities relevant to current society's needs. I believe the entrepreneurial knowledge gained from EDP agencies is fairly okay.” P2 stated, “Our trainings are not really adequate but a good starting point.”

P3 stated: I talk with people of like minds to gain knowledge. To me, the degree of adequacy of the EDP is why many businesses fold up so quickly. I keep good friends in the line of my business to pick their brains for ideas and discover that partnership helps, but it can be challenging to carry other people on your vision about your business.

P7 stated: All aspect of the EDP programs needs an overhaul for interactive learning. Maybe if they include simulations in the learning curriculum, it will help you start to think about applying the training to real-life business. I train myself to be intuitive to customers' needs, and I also reach out to other business owners sometimes to come up with something creative and appropriate. Again, nine entrepreneurs affirmed that the EDP had a basic impact on their capabilities of managing a business enterprise.

Similarly, P4 stated: Definitely, they'll give you some basics; but you have to develop, you have to, like as you go into business, as you're ranging your services, there are some problems you need to solve that on your own you now have to like to make out some studies but like, before what they have taught, they only teach you few things. Likewise, P3 stated, "Let me say some pieces of training kind of woke me up because I guess I was sleeping before, and it has helped me to monitor my staff that carry cameras," P10 stated, "It opened my eyes." Ten participants (100%) engaged in entrepreneurship through self-development, from training and capacity building to bridging the gap in the EDP program.

P4 stated: Definitely, they'll give you some basics, but you have to develop, you have to, like as you go into business, as you're ranging your services, there are some problems you need to solve that on your own you now have to like to make out some researches but like, before, what they have taught, they only teach you few things, they'll just give an outline to each course; definitely you have to develop yourself.

Similarly, P10 indicated that "unless you enroll again for a different program when you can, you still have to go ahead with a bit of self-learning approach." The entrepreneurs also expressed their approach to human resource management. P1 stated, "It is better to invest in building a working team so we all be on the same page." P2 stated, "I am big on building relationships to help staff commitment." P3 said, "Be creative to help employ more staff."

P7 stated, "Communication for buying...need to communicate processes to staff daily to get the employees by-ins through training." SME entrepreneurs shared the need for full-swing entrepreneurship capacity to develop a sustainable enterprise. The second identified theme was competitive advantage and strategic management (see Table 4).

Table 4: Summary of Theme 2, Competitive Advantage and Strategic Management (CASM)

Categories		Common Responses	Percentage
Business Development and Competitive Strategy		Diversification, Good product, Networking, and Continuous Improvement	45%
SME Cooperate Impact		Be sensitive to employee needs and maintenance a good business culture	20%
Customer Strategy	Orientation	Be proactive, proactiveness, and have a good business environment	11%
Inventory Strategies	Management	Inventory management, branding, "I am always at the wheel with my keys," and Productivity	9%

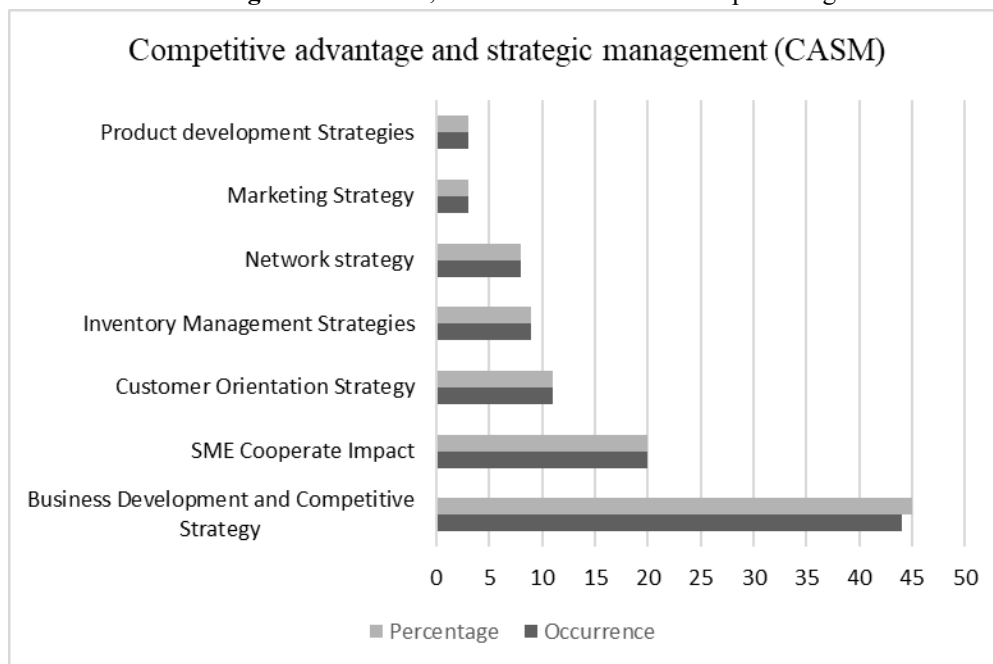
Networking Strategies	Collaborate and Partnership	8%
Marketing Strategy	Advertisement, Build Relationships, and	3.5%
Product development strategies	Make viable products and Choose the specific customer	3.5%
Total		100%

SQ2: How do entrepreneurs identify EDP agencies’ best approach to resolving inadequacy in their lack of adequate entrepreneurship skills for developing business sustainability?

Participants answered interview questions 2, 3, 8, 11, and 13 about theme 2—how entrepreneurs identify EDP agencies’ best approach to resolving inadequacy in their lack of adequate entrepreneurship skills for developing business sustainability. SQ2 was to understand how entrepreneurs bridge the skill gaps in entrepreneurial education offered by EDP agencies to ensure business continuity and sustainability. Competitive advantage and strategic management (CASM) were the most mentioned theme, with 98 code references. CASM represents 36% of the 272 references on the code occurrence to construct the second theme (see Table 2). The data analysis helped capture seven codes to create theme 2.

The codes included: (a) business development and competitive strategy (BDCS), (b) cooperation impact of SME (CISME), (c) customer orientation strategy (COS), (d) inventory management strategies (IMS), (e) networking strategies (NS), (f) marketing strategy (MS), and (g) product development strategies (PDS). Data established that competitive advantage and strategic management are critical to EDP program effectiveness. BDCS was the most mentioned code across participants’ interview responses, data sources, and research questions. BDCS code occurred 44 times, representing 45% of all the code references related to the seven codes identified as CASM from participants’ interview responses (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Theme 2, CASM code occurrence in percentage



Thirty-three nodes generated BDCS code, and the most prominent nodes included business diversification, good product, consultation, maintenance, proactiveness, branding, good business environment, and productivity. Among the nodes (sub-codes), business diversification and business environment occurred three times each, while the other sub-codes appeared two times each.

The second most mentioned code is CISME. The code occurred 20 times, representing 20% of the 98 code references that construct CASM. From the code and node summary shown in Table 2, CISME included 20 nodes, each occurring one time. Theme 2 construct also had (COS), (IMS), (NS), (MS), and (PDS), which were mentioned in 11%, 9%, 3%, 8%, and 3% of 98 codes, respectively. The thematic mapping captured the relevance of field interview data to the central organizing concept of how entrepreneurs use entrepreneurial sustainability skills to grow businesses. The mapping included business diversification, good product, networking, maintenance, proactiveness, branding, good business environment, and workforce production.

Entrepreneurs' engaging business diversification as a competitive advantage strategy is most prevalent for developing a sustainable enterprise. P1 stated, "You cannot just stay with one business and think you can spread the way we spread. I try to pay attention to what the customers demand to help me know what's next to work on."

P1, P2, P4, P6, and P8 stated: drive business passion through excellent work. I seek to give people the products they want so that I can stay relevant in my business. When you partner with others, it opens up new opportunities. I buy new gadgets as needed to improve production.

P3 stated: When many people ask for something, I know I need to bring my operations to speed to meet people's needs. This could mean developing a new thing entirely, which can be tough sometimes if you don't know how to go about it. But I do my best to and look for ways to meet market demands.

P10 stated, "Seek out opportunities to meet society's demands with a new feature or product."

All participants emphasized the importance of validating a business diversification strategy to stay sustainable. Similarly, two entrepreneurs described maintenance as a significant factor that has helped them develop business sustainability.

P1 stated: I still do not understand the misery behind why some Nigerian SMEs cannot embrace good maintenance culture. We (Nigerians) don't like maintaining things. We don't have that maintenance culture, as when you open up a business, you need to keep all your tools in top shape to keep your business. Entrepreneurs need a maintenance culture as part of the EDP entrepreneurial orientation.

P2 stated: One major thing that has helped us in this business is good maintenance culture. I do not allow my staff to go home until the team cleans all the machines. This is one of the ways I ensure good products for my clients. Understanding the importance of delivering good products to customers was discussed as a way to be competitive. Participants discussed their views on the importance of having good products and product development strategies.

P1 stated, "I believe customers will always come back to patronize our business because our product is good." P2 stated: I am always at the wheel with my keys. I take ownership of the business enterprise by demonstrating proactiveness in my business strategy. I think of what to bring to my business to make it unique. I believe a well-done job will attract referrals.

P3 stated, "Partnering with others, like the tailors I use, has helped me design unique table cover different from common ones." P6 said, "I also buy new equipment to produce quality service." P8 stated, "Having a good product

is a strategy to sustain a good business enterprise." P10 said, "We create templates for process and product consistency." Similarly, P5 and P7 discussed challenges with sharing visions or ideas with others.

P5 stated, "Because you are the brain behind your business, people don't get it many times you need them to do something. You have to sit there to ensure they do the right thing." P7 stated, "I engage consulting with others but careful with it...because of the difficulty involved in managing others." Eight participants discussed their competitive advantage strategies. P1 stated, "I always look out for cheaper alternatives to lower costs to draw more clients." P4 said, "I consider ways to lower cost by making lower quotations that can make me the choice for the job."

All 10 participants described their understanding of engaging adequate entrepreneurship skills for developing business sustainability. In addition, participants shared views on the economic impact of their activities regarding social responsibilities. The three most mentioned activities include local employment, local production, and supporting livelihood.

P1 stated, "One should be creative to help keep and employ more staff." P2 said, "The way we execute our project, we involve the locals who can help to give back to society." P10 expressed, "...give out contracts to help us meet with demands from clients. That has helped us to continue to have means of livelihood too."

P6 stated, "Through local production, our strategies contribute to the Nigerian economy and its survival because we help reduce poverty, create jobs, and improve the lifestyle of the citizens." On the contrary, P5 stated, "I just do my business. The corruption in Nigeria does not make it easy to involve people in your business." P7 said, "Engage consulting with others but be careful with it because of the inability to manage them well."

Participants' discussed customer orientation strategies that bridge the entrepreneurial education gap. P2 stated, "We take advantage of customers' requests to develop ways to meet the demand. My staff is mostly students; they already know that's our strategy to keep our work going." P4 stated, "I attach gifts to items to build good client relationships." P7 said, "...build good relationships with staff and customers." P10 stated, "I learned that better customer relationships will get me customer loyalty. I also advertise my business for awareness to the people (create awareness)."

Customer relations occurred four times, while customer needs' were mentioned once. P2, P4, and P7 acknowledged that maintaining good customer relations is a veritable business strategy. Similarly, P3, P7, and P10 acknowledged that meeting customer needs is a veritable business strategy that keeps an owner in business.

Entrepreneurs also described inventory management as a practical approach to successful entrepreneurship. P3 stated, "I save money when I know what is in the store. I don't have to buy what is not selling." P3 said, "...by paying attention to what I have in store so that I do not disappoint my customers." Other participants discussed their marketing strategies. P1 stated, "Do advertisements to get more people to come and buy from you." P3 stated, "I do constant market surveys to know what is relevant." P8 said, "When you advertise your business, you create awareness among the people." Three participants stressed the need for product development and consumer awareness as a competitive approach to strategic management. Business Leadership, Orientation, and Experience (BLOE) were the third identified theme (see Table 5).

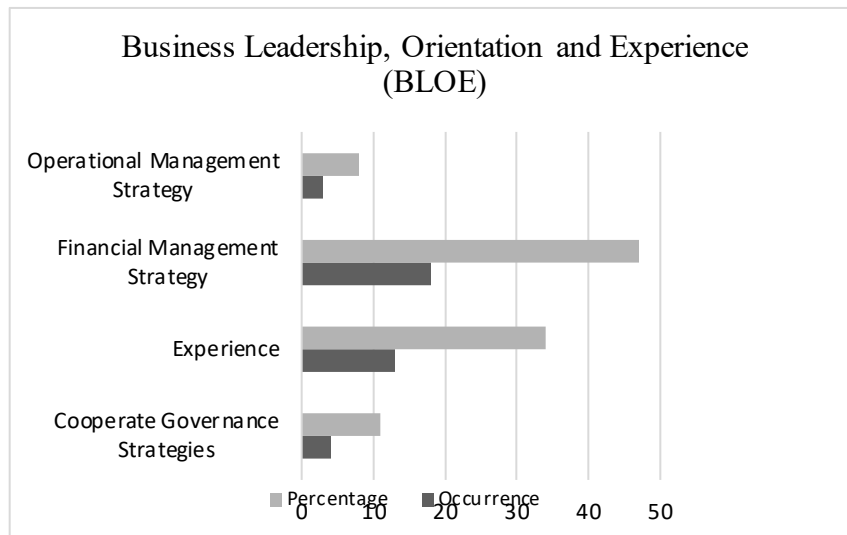
Table 5: Summary of Theme 3, Business Leadership, Orientation, and Experience (BLOE)

Categories	Common Responses	Percentage of participants
Cooperate Governance Strategies	“...the core principle guiding my business operations is goal setting to develop a successful entrepreneurship.”	11%
Financial Management Strategy	Management principles focus on planning, fiscal management (low cost), Articulate vision to carry others along, Quick market responses	47%
Operational Management Strategy	Business goals and fiscal management when planning operations	8%
Experience	Leadership, orientation, and experience, Leadership entrepreneurial orientation.	34%
Total		100%

SQ3: What is the entrepreneurs’ understanding of how EDP agencies can enhance their knowledge of entrepreneurship and their skills to develop sustainable businesses?

Interview questions 4, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, and 16 provided answers to SQ3 on how EDP agencies can enhance their knowledge of entrepreneurship skills to develop sustainable businesses. FMS is the code that occurred most under BLOE, while OMS is the code that occurred least (Table 5). Participants discussed the FMS code 18 times, representing 47% of all four code references under the BLOE theme (Figure 3). BLOE occurred 38 times, making it the least-mentioned theme in code occurrence analysis (Table 2). BLOE appeared as four codes with 19% of the 275 codes occurrence (Table 2). The four codes were: (a) corporate governance strategies (CGS), (b) experience, (c) financial management strategy (FMS), and (d) operational management strategy (OMS). We used twelve nodes to generate FMS code, and the most prominent codes (Figure 4) included funding, strategy, and accounting.

Figure 3: Theme 3, BLOE code occurrence in percentage



The respondents discussed the funding strategy seven times, while the accounting strategy occurred five times. Entrepreneurs' ways of thinking affect strategic planning, organizing, directing, and controlling financial undertakings. Entrepreneurs discussed their ways of thinking regarding business goals and fiscal management and how EDP agencies can enhance their knowledge of entrepreneurship. For example, P7 stated: If we need funds for any business, I think very well about moving funds around the departments so that I don't look bad when a problem shows. If you do not balance the funds appropriately, it can negatively affect the job.

P3 stated I have gained so much from my training. They teach us to save money by diversifying into other products to grow our business. Many people think they need so much money to do business. But many financial organizations are willing to lend you money even without knowing you. I just learned that online financial institutions can lend you money once you have a bank verification number (BVN). I recently got approved for a seven thousand Naira (N700,000.00) loan for my business from one of the financial institutions. I didn't even need to meet with anyone. All that was required from me to approve the loan were some documents linked to my bank account using my BVN.

On the other hand, P4 stated, I focus on business goals and fiscal management to avoid financial constraints when planning operations. You know that money is not that easy to get. I mean getting bank funding or even someone to borrow money.

P7 stated, "If we need funds for any business, I just go to the other departments and pick up the funds." P2 said, "...businesses are actualized through appropriate funding." P5 and P9 stated, "Knowledge from entrepreneurship training help in accounting." P6 stated, "I am in control of my business funds. The transport companies also get paid and so many other things. So, once we are in business, it blesses other people too." P10 stated, "Computerizing accounting process and embracing information and communication technologies (ICT tools), and inventory management as basic orientation acquired by SME workers during EDP."

Seven entrepreneurs described how they leverage the knowledge of FMS for business sustainability. The participants also discussed the importance of leadership, orientation, and experience, emphasizing developing sustainable business enterprises. Participants described their curriculum comprehension to reason, problem-solve, and make decisions.

P8 stated: One has to be creative and be flexibility to maintain agile decisions when working with projections. I understand the importance of decision-making, so we set a 5-year plan to guide every action taken, and the plan has been beneficial in achieving meaningful business goals.

P5 stated, "Learning has helped me to understand the importance of developing a business back-up plan." P10 stated: We envision and work religiously with the 5-year plan to guide our decisions. Sometimes we had to change things around to meet the immediate business needs, but most of the decisions I make are from experience and something I have learned from different trainings.

Others described their cognitive insight as an orientation for developing sustainable businesses. P1 stated, "My passion for business helps me make the right decisions, like planning well to outsource to restaurants and independent buyers effectively." P6 said, "I gained management skills from my experience. My business success is in my hands, 'where there is a will, there is a way.'"

P3 stated: I focus on ways to minimize the risk of multiple stakeholders by having a back-up plan, like having many raw materials suppliers to allow low-cost options. Besides, one cannot do this job alone. I reach out to friends, especially those that always give good advice and collaborate with others to improve my business.

P4 stated, “The core principles guiding my business operations is my integrity and goal setting....to develop a successful entrepreneurship.”

The study participants discussed the financing sources as critical to SME growth for eliminating poverty in Nigeria; participants agree entrepreneurs are agents of change and development in the market economy by disseminating innovation and creative ideas.

P5 stated: I evaluate business capacity to identify the best contractors for the job. Look out for cheaper alternatives to lower costs and attract more clients. The more we can be firm/assertive with a leadership approach and have reasonable control over business activities, the more we can be in business.

P2 stated, I trust what I do and work hard to know what decision to make to grow my business. I engage my passion to be more creative with ideas that can move the business forward. Once in business, we must think proactively to know how to stay in business. One thing that most people don’t realize is how to do your work, work for you.

P10 stated, “I believe in consistently producing quality products. This is why I engage myself to ensure that everything goes as planned. This, to me, is upholding the integrity of our business.”

Participants described the concept of corporate governance strategies on the environment through the lens of core principles guiding business operations. Only four participants agreed on the need to scan the business environment constantly. P4 stated: I constantly do market surveys to know what is relevant to my business. As much as you are passionate about your work, you must persevere to understand your market and what your customers want. People are assets; providing staff members with a good work environment is important. I believe my staff will be motivated by a good environment and happy to come to work. It will help everyone thrive in their jobs. I seek feedback to know how to make necessary changes for business growth.

P10 stated, “When many people ask for something, then I know I need to think quickly to bring my operations to speed, to meet people’s needs.” Similarly, P3 stated, “I consider the risk involved when managing the business quick response to customer’s needs.” P4 said, “It’s sometimes very challenging to develop new ideas because it’s hard to carry employees on technical matters.”

Participants agreed on the need for strategic distribution of resources and linking prior experience as a source of knowledge for a successful enterprise. P1 stated, “Learning provided me an insight to strategic management. But I learned the real deal on the job.” P3 stated: Learning has helped me with the ability to initial business processes. I believe real-life business activities are understanding what you can do when the chips are down. I train my staff weekly, hoping to get everyone on the same page for our goals. I know my learnings did help me to think, but my experience pushes me there; maybe it would have been better if one could learn from simulations.

Participants described that entrepreneurs’ experience caps successful EDP programs that include social responsibilities and human resource investment. P2 stated: Experiences have helped me to manage people and create employment. I didn’t know I was creating employment; I was just doing what I love to do: feed my family. Plus, I enjoy helping people. I sometimes give my staff rewards to help them with their family responsibilities. I also took an interest in one of them and paid the school fees.

P7 stated, “I was just thinking survival when doing my business, although it creates employment.” P5 stated, “I train my staff to increase their skills and abilities to be on the same page with me.” P6 said, “I am the manager and rely on my experience with others’ input to determine the best way for operations.” Business ethics is the code that occurred the most under OBS (Table 6).

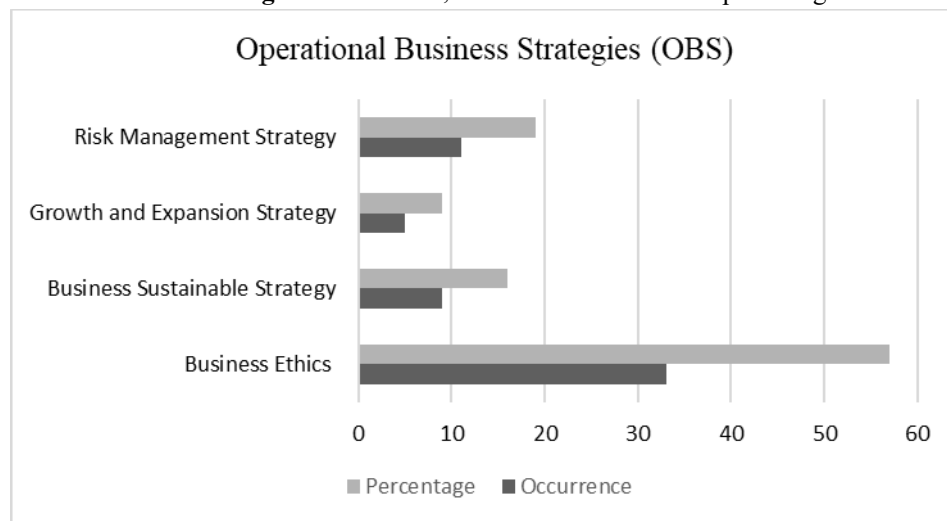
Table 6: Summary of Theme 4, Operational Business Strategy (OBS)

Categories	Common Responses	Percentage of participants
Business Ethics	Good policies and practices, Leadership creativity, Continuous improvement	57%
Business Sustainable Strategy	Knowledge sharing (Training), Structured business	15%
Growth and Expansion Strategy	Strategic management, Partnership, Networking, Initiating innovative processes	9%
Risk Management Strategy	Continuous internal practices assessment, Stakeholders’ effective management	19%
Total		100%

SQ3: What are SME entrepreneurs understanding on how EDP agencies can enhance knowledge of entrepreneurship skills in order to develop sustainable business?

Interview questions 4, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, and 16 answered SQ3. SQ3 intertwined with SQ1, answering interview questions 1, 5, 7, and 12 to understand entrepreneurs’ orientation, experience, and business leadership ability. The four codes are business ethics, business sustainability strategy (BSS), growth and expansion strategy (GES), and risk management strategy (RMS). Participants discussed the business ethics code 33 times, representing 57% of all the four codes referenced under the OBS theme (Figure 4). OBS occurred 58 times, with four codes at 21% of the 275 codes occurrence (Table 2).

Figure 4: Theme 4, OBS code occurrence in percentage



Theme 4 captured how EDP agencies can enhance knowledge of entrepreneurship skills to develop sustainable businesses. Successful entrepreneurs’ strategic implementation of business ethics (policies and practices) from training and learning from others is to allow growth and sustainability. P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, and P10 described that business owners need to develop competitive advantage skills for business growth is leadership, training, networking and cultivate continuous assessment behavior for quick response to business needs. Entrepreneurs defined ways to identify business opportunities and enhance business processes for sustainability as a

"values-driving process." Out of 10 participants, only two consider delivering excellent outputs through innovation. P1 stated, "I drive business passion through excellence work."

All 10 participants discussed how their passion supports business tenacity. P7 stated, "I only learned the idea of good customer service from my experiences with different clients. I can't remember our teacher discussing trying to please customers or doing different things to make customers happy." P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, and P10 explained how passion and little training here and there support continued business. P3, P4, and P6 shared their views on business repositioning. P10 stated, "I do constant market surveys to know what is relevant." P4 stated: It took me about three years to make my work relevant as an artist. I only designed and painted artwork for companies when I started my business. As time passed, my perseverance allowed me to realize I could make other designs like wall painting, which made me delve into painting school walls. I later thought about ways to share my skills to meet more needs. So, I designed an abandoned wall in the city's center. Now this wall became a place of relaxation that brought about social development. The participants' focus defines business ethics as nurturing businesses and creating new ones as anchors of national economic development.

All 10 participants agreed on the need to improve the curriculum to allow SME entrepreneurs' critical thinking ability to engender individual sustainability development within entrepreneurial development processes. P5 stated: I seek continuous improvement by developing new templates to stimulate customers' desires and meet their tastes. Of course, people like the quality of what we do, but putting in the new template creativity is a secret of why more people take photos with us.

P2 stated, "I evaluate product objectives to know if a partnership is needed." P7 said, "Search for ways to improve the process- seek opportunity for something new...like have a niche." P4 stated, "I look for ways to take advantage of what many people are asking for to meet customer's desires." P8 said, "It is important to seek out opportunities to meet society's demands with a new feature or product."

Operational management strategy is action to achieve managing a sustainable enterprise. P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P9, and P10 pointed out the need for collaboration with colleagues to improve business processes. P9 stated, "I deal with a lot of people, and excellent service is important for customers to back....am work hand in hand with employees to produce quality service." Besides continuous improvement, participants discussed the importance of training and knowledge sharing for sustainable practices.

Nine participants discussed knowledge-sharing through stakeholders' partnerships and collaboration. P2 stated, "Partnership ability to work with others goes a long way in developing a sustainable business." P6 and P7 said, "I partner with friends when I lack the skills to complete a process. I discover networking with others has helped me improve my business knowledge." P4 stated, "Talk with people of like minds to gain knowledge." P8 stated, "Competitive advantage for business growth opens up new opportunities for business expansion." P9 said, "I like to have better structure, but I partner with some businesses to be able to delivery my service."

Entrepreneurs described business ethics and sustainable practices to help identify business opportunities and how participants linked strategic capacities in management and organizational practices. P3 stated, "I enjoy the benefits of networking and collaboration." P2 and P3 discussed how they train themselves and their staff to do well. P1 said, "Continuous training out there in the real world. I wish I had data to help with strategies for business expansion." P6 stated: I go to seminars on how to make my business work. I use my passion to drive your business growth; I remember one workshop I attended; I had to stop the trainer from giving me a minute to call my office and apply what I had just learned immediately. I shuffle my staff by moving one staff member to another location. You won't believe that by shuffling staff, I identified bad practices within one of the offices, which resulted in restructuring the entire business to improve my internal practices. Since then, I have made sure I evaluate each staff every week.

P10 stated, “People are assets. I use production plan to align worker’s mindset.” P6 said, “Have monthly reviews with staff for proper evaluation of strategies. P7 stated, “I give workers training to help the understand work expectations.”

6.1. Corroborate Evidence

The study results aligned with the evidence from documentary materials from the First Bank of Nigeria SME blog series (public record), *Switch Magazine*, and participant data. In 2016, First Bank supported 5,153 SMEs’ capacity building by financing up to 12 million naira. The document provided participants with shared experience with learning for business growth and sustainability in a program coordinated by the First Bank of Nigeria organization in conjunction with the Enterprise Development Center (EDC).

Featured SMEs stated, “I knew I was made to do it; there was no way I could get bored, knowing it was easy to sustain that drive. I relish the difficult situation because it kept me going and kept things interesting.” The entrepreneur discussed attending parties as a resource for learning business operations strategies. The discussion included the challenges with business operations. The featured SMEs stated, “... I wanted to be an authority in my field and knew that in order to be an authority, I had to acquire more knowledge.”

7. Findings

The four themes identified in the data analysis established knowledge about the role of adequate entrepreneurial education on business growth and sustainability. The themes also captured the impact of a growing need for sustainable capacity development of the SME sector in creating employment. The themes included (a) inadequate entrepreneurial education and capacity building (IEECB); (b) competitive advantage and strategic management (CASM); (c) business leadership, orientation, and experience (BLOE); and (d) operational business strategy (OBS). This study's professional and academic literature review included SMEs’ historical views on business growth and sustainability.

Theme 1. Inadequate entrepreneurial education and capacity building

The 21st century has created continuous change in developing entrepreneurship in many developing countries (Davison, 2020). Historically, entrepreneurs relied on creativity in the resource acquisition process for a successful outcome of a dynamic interaction between the entrepreneur and the environment (Tony et al., 2018). Nine participants expressed that education from EDP programs was inadequate and that they constantly relied on individual resource capacities to engage in entrepreneurship. P2 stated: I am always at the wheel with my keys. I take ownership of the business enterprise by demonstrating proactiveness in my business strategy. I think of what to bring to my business to make it unique. I believe a well-done job will attract referrals.

P2 also stated, “I think a lot of new ideas to improve the services provided.” The entrepreneurs’ ability to determine strategies for entrepreneurial growth and business sustainability remains challenging (Sanusi, 2017).

The study’s findings align with the conceptual framework, knowledge resource capacities, and literature on effective business implementation strategies. The study results repudiate the belief that entrepreneurship education is to build entrepreneurial attitudes and skills to start or own a business. Instead, findings revealed that entrepreneurship education is to lead entrepreneurs’ metacognitive (think about their thinking) insights on critical thinking for reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making (Radulović, and Stančić, 2017). The findings of this study established how the resource based-view (RBV) of an enterprise links with the connection between resources and performance, where resources are defined as assets, capacities, routines, and knowledge that are connected to or controlled by the enterprise (Borch et al., 1999; Kellermanns et al., 2016; Lin and Nabergoj, 2014).

The entrepreneurs' level of entrepreneurial knowledge directly influences their creativity, innovation, risk-taking, and management of projects to achieve objectives (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012; Tony et al., 2018). P10 stated, “It’s not really the program itself, but my innermost strength helped me first, then my friends second, and then the program third.”

Entrepreneurs require more than commitment and determination to develop a successful and sustainable business. The study results confirmed limitations in the knowledge of EDP program recipients to engage in entrepreneurship and understanding the limitations of recipients as potential entrepreneurs (Jones, 2010). Yadav (2016) posited that there is a gap in the supply of entrepreneurial classes with value-adding activities in developing countries. P1 confirmed, “Value-adding activities are key to business sustainability. I look for ways to be relevant by offering different products my customers can relate to.” Findings confirmed that little attention had been given to the sustainable training of SME owner-managers to enable them to act as agents for increasing entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Arokiasamy, 2012; Davison, 2020).

7.1. Capacity Building

The conceptual framework supports the development of entrepreneurial capacities and a paradigm shift tailored to enabling entrepreneurs to reflect on learning to build and grow sustainable businesses (Tony et al., 2018). The resource view, or the “capacities view,” from the entrepreneur educational approach, is individual knowledge-based thinking for entrepreneurship (Pettigrew, Thomas, and Whittington, 2006). Further emphasizing the need to understand fundamental human enterprise-efficiency of knowledge, skills, and abilities to help shape business efficient behavior for developing distinctive and unique capacities for a successful business.

The lack of business education strategies affirmed how participants integrate and conduct day-to-day business. P1 stated, “You have to have passion. Business is not easy, and it comes with different challenges. If you are not strong, it’s easy to loss hope.” To confirm the inadequacy of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, P7 acknowledged, “We were given an abstract education. One can only do well if you develop yourself to know how to manage people and business.” P4 confirmed, “Determination and commitment as the two major factors that help drive my business.”

Peer-reviewed literature confirmed that the lack of management training and experience contributes to 69% of SMEs' business failures (Okpara and Kabongo, 2009). SME entrepreneurs establish self-development through training from seminars and workshops to increase individual entrepreneurship confidence. P2 stated, “I continue to learn how to stay in business on the job.”

Findings showed that inadequate entrepreneurship training contributes to 75% of EDP program recipients looking for jobs, while 25% of graduates from tertiary institutions became entrepreneurs (Alarape, 2009). P5 stated, “Let me say some training woke me up because I was sleeping before. In fact, I almost closed my office to go look for another job.” As observed by Nafziger (1969), the lifespan of Nigerian SMEs is short because “rarely can a small- and medium-sized firm survive more than three years of entrepreneurship in Nigeria if they do not have adequate training.” Similarly, inadequate entrepreneurship education of entrepreneurs creates an obstacle to efficient business development (Nwambam et al., 2018; Okolie et al., 2021; Osemeke, 2012).

The results established that entrepreneurship education delivered in Nigerian universities is suitable for theoretical knowledge only (Nosakhare, 2023; Nwambam et al., 2018) but lacks appropriate agents to enable an environment of learning that can translate theoretical knowledge into innovative, practical ventures. P2 stated, “‘Knowledge is power’ learning begins to give you a wider view of what you are required to do to be successful.” Nigerian entrepreneurs focus on developing businesses or reinventing existing enterprises. P3 stated, “It opened my eyes. I realize how much I have lost from not paying attention to tiny details as little as shuffling staff from one location to another.” These quotes suggest that entrepreneurial education and business sustainability skills offered by EDPs are

only partially adequate for business development and knowledge of entrepreneurship. The 21st-century demands ensuring and nurturing EDP recipients' entrepreneurial skills and abilities to innovate, create, cope with uncertainty, and think creatively about new business approaches (Adike et al., 2022; Lin and Nabergoj, 2014).

Theme 2. Competitive advantage and strategic management (CASM)

The resource capacities involved knowledge management as a strategic resource and source of sustainable competitive advantage imbedded in RBV (Louis Lim Vui Han et al., 2019). P7 stated, “I learned overtime to carry my staff along to align our processes.” The limitation of knowledge impedes entrepreneurs' business ability through the holistic process, even as newly emerging forms of order and processes are revealed in business environment changes (Lowe et al., 2007). Successful EDP is to develop a curriculum to bridge the gap in entrepreneurs' ability and capability for business organization, business progression, and capacity building.

Competitive advantage central to strategic management (Gancarczyk, 2016) needs consideration for entrepreneurs' ability to understand financial management strategy. P9 stated, “I focus on business goals and fiscal management when planning operations, so I don't run into financial constraints.” The resource capacities involved knowledge management as a strategic resource and source of sustainable competitive advantage imbedded in RBV (Louis Lim Vui Han et al., 2019). This theme aligned with RBV and limitations of knowledge in entrepreneurship constructs of individual participant experience for entrepreneurship growth and sustainability within multiple social contexts. The study results aligned with RBV and limits of knowledge in the entrepreneurship conceptual framework.

Theme 3. Business leadership, orientation, and experience (BLOE)

The study results revealed that despite EDPs at different levels for entrepreneurs and other entrepreneurs, the reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making skills necessary for entrepreneurial leadership and engagements are absent. P4 stated, “My passion for excellence drives the success of my business because people keep referring others to me.” The EDP curriculum geared toward nurturing entrepreneurs' commitment to success is passion, determination, and attention to meeting customers' needs. The findings revealed a shortfall in participants' ability and understanding of entrepreneurship when describing how EDP agencies can enhance their knowledge of skills to develop sustainable businesses. P8 stated, “Let your passion drive your confidence for staying in business.” Nigeria's lack of structure in entrepreneurship education limits SMEs' ability to implement full entrepreneurship. The study findings established the lack of participants' entrepreneurship skills as a wide range in the under-developed, hidden potential within SME workers (Osemeke, 2012). Entrepreneurs must apply appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitude for competencies. It is time for Nigeria to enhance its entrepreneurship education curriculum to include relevant, sustainable development contents to challenge and motivate entrepreneurs' capacities and mindsets (Adike et al., 2022; Tony et al., 2018).

Theme 4. Operational Business Strategy (OBS)

The inadequacy in teaching entrepreneurship education encumbers Nigerian national development (Nwambam et al., 2018). All 10 participants confirmed that strategic management involves transformative capacities for creative problem-solving and innovative practices (Lin and Nabergoj, 2014). P3 stated, “I do constant market surveys to know what is relevant.” P4 said, “I keep good friends in the line of my business to rob mind for ideas and discover that partnership helps but can be challenging to carry people on your vision about your business.” Eight participants discussed resorting to friends and people in their circle for needed knowledge for a sustainable business. Yadav (2016) posited that the gap in the supply of entrepreneurial classes in developing countries lacks value-adding activities. P1 stated, “Value-adding activities are key to business sustainability. I look out for ways to be relevant by offering different products my customers can relate to.” Participants are unaware of entrepreneurship as a factor that can be especially beneficial to social and commercial activities. P2 stated: Experiences have helped me to manage people and create employment. Although I didn't know I was creating employment, I was just doing what I love to do, to feed my family. Plus, I enjoy helping people.

This historical review of entrepreneurial sustainability on productive capabilities is to support increased employment and possibly lower poverty in Nigeria (Nwambam et al., 2018). P1 stated that entrepreneurial education “will increase revenue for the country and more people working means more taxes to the government, will translate to reduced poverty improve the quality of life that will improve citizens livelihood.” The literature review supported that adequate education and training are necessary for entrepreneurship growth and sustainability.

7.2. Unanticipated Findings

An unanticipated finding was the significant knowledge gap between the awareness of alternative funding sources to sustain adequate business planning and management practices. Only one participant discussed alternative funding as a way of sourcing capacity to develop a sustainable enterprise. The other nine participants reported challenges in accessing adequate business funding. Lack of awareness about alternative sources of financing impacts 66% of entrepreneurs' ability to grow a business beyond three years (Liu, 2015). The study's findings established a lack of adequate education on how financial management negatively impacts entrepreneurs' ability to develop sustainable businesses. P9 stated: I focus on business goals and fiscal management to avoid financial constraints when planning operations. You know that money is not easy to get; I mean getting funding from a bank or even getting someone to lend you money. The result established inadequate knowledge about strategic leadership theory, which could help entrepreneurs make strategic choices and changes that determine firm performance (Auwalu et al., 2016).

Engaging sustainability in businesses is daunting to Nigerian SMEs due to a lack of information on the sustainable program or strategic capacity to reassess, refocus, and redefine businesses to support business growth (Clegg et al., 2013; Conway, 2014; Osemeke, 2012). The study's results confirm that providing entrepreneurs with adequate education can enhance their management ability to develop sustainable enterprises, thus creating a society of wealth (Adebayo, 2018; Edel, 1970; Nwambam et al., 2018; Osemeke, 2012; Sanusi, 2017; Tony, 2016). Entrepreneurial education in Nigeria needs a resource-based training model that can help entrepreneurs use resources through a knowledge-based lens for entrepreneurial activities to improve Nigerian society. Entrepreneurial ability to start, nurture, and grow new and existing enterprises will involve acquiring entrepreneurial skills (Jayeoba, 2015).

8. Limitations

A limitation of this study is the accuracy or credibility of the interviewees' responses, which their perceptions may limit. As such, the outcome of this study may not establish absolute truth. The scale and scope of the study may not have allowed access to every possible viewpoint with interviewees, including the limitation of the researchers.

9. Recommendations to Leaders and Practitioners

The qualitative case study involved exploring the experience and views of 10 entrepreneurs on issues faced in engaging sustainability skills that (a) support how businesses how manage sustainable business strategy, (b) bridge the gap of inadequate management education as it relates to unemployment, (c) influence sustainable growth-oriented entrepreneurship, (d) influence economic growth, and (e) benefit SME entrepreneurial management ability. In unification with the study's conceptual framework and literature review analysis, the study's findings provide a rich academic groundwork to improve professional practices.

SME executive managers and owner-managers must address why entrepreneurs lack adequate education for entrepreneurship and business sustainability. Successful SME leaders must acknowledge challenges that limit their ability to sustain enterprise because of inadequate knowledge, lack of experience, lack of funds, poor coordination, and bureaucracy. SME leaders interested in engaging sustainability skills for business in Nigeria must embrace the following professional practices: (a) engage a rapid and proactive approach to bridge the inadequacy of entrepreneurship education and capacity building; (b) adopt strategic management for a competitive advantage; (c)

demonstrate business leadership, orientation, and experience; and (d) deploy operational business strategy for sustainability and growth.

The findings revealed that SME executive managers and owner-managers rely on intuition, passion, determination and commitment, partnership with other business owners, on-the-job training, seminars, and workshops to conduct day-to-day business operations. To be successful, entrepreneurs must apply appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes for competencies. Entrepreneurs need to engage in a rapid and proactive approach to bridge the inadequacy of entrepreneurship education and capacity building. The strategies for adequate entrepreneurship knowledge include self-development to be bold and aggressive in addressing business issues. Professional development and training can help increase the ability to initiate innovative and structured business processes that could enhance business growth and sustainability.

Moreover, EDP agencies must overhaul their curriculum to harness executive-managers and owner-managers business acuity to implement efficient and effective entrepreneurship processes for business growth and sustainability. Designing sustainable business strategies in the curriculum of entrepreneurial development programs, supporting management decision-making on how to set goals for themselves, and teaching how to manage a business will help achieve sustainable organizations in Nigeria. The view is that adequate teaching methods and techniques, such as an interactive learning model, will lead to critical thinking for problem-solving and decision-making. Entrepreneurs must apply appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitude for competencies. The Nigerian government should pay more attention to the quality of the EDP curriculum to avoid the continued shortfall in the capacity development of entrepreneurs so they can be productive, create jobs, and contribute to the economy.

The inadequacy and shortcomings in training hurt entrepreneurs’ ability to develop sustainable businesses. SME executive managers and owner-managers should proactively prevent challenges in the new competitive landscape for entrepreneurial growth and sustainability. Entrepreneurs need re-orientation for developing entrepreneurship to confront the challenges that limit the ability to create a sustainable business. Executive managers and owner-managers must establish tactical management approaches to support corporate social responsibility activities to achieve broad socio-economic goals, such as job creation and employment. Entrepreneurs must continue developing individual orientation practices through seminars and workshops to gain insight into complex social and human factors on actual practices in how business works in real life (Bennis and O’Toole, 2005).

Adopting strategic management for competitive advantage can help solve the problem of lack of adequate entrepreneurship and business sustainability education. Entrepreneurs need to recognize that entrepreneurial value contributes to the success of establishing and maintaining an enterprise. There is a need to ensure that the essence of strategic leadership is to make choices and changes that are determinants of firm performance. Entrepreneurs should look out for opportunities to change and be able to respond to changes. Similarly, entrepreneurs are innovative thinkers whose value for opportunities in the marketplace to structure and grow their businesses requires flexibility to adapt to the environment, adopt a new market niche, and improve operational processes and capabilities (Conway, 2014; Lee and Hsieh, 2010). Entrepreneurs must be able to engage sustainable abilities for business growth and long-term survival.

The views and perspectives of ten SME entrepreneurs affirm that adding value to theoretical knowledge is significant to entrepreneurship education programs. The creativity in the resource acquisition process extends to their passion for creating a driving force of expansion through value proposition, diversifications, and quick response to market needs for competitive advantage. Entrepreneurs’ resource capacities must involve knowledge management as a strategic resource and source of sustainable competitive advantage in RBV (Louis Lim Vui Han et al., 2019). Entrepreneurs’ conative skills allow harnessing business resources to be more productive. P8 stated, “I drive business passion through excellent work. I seek to give people products they want so that I can stay relevant in

my business.” Entrepreneurship is represented in personal characteristics and individual innovation, risk-taking, and proactivity (Lee and Hsieh, 2010).

Entrepreneurs must channel their passion to create a driving force of expansion through value proposition and quick response to market needs for a competitive advantage. Engaging sustainability for business growth presents new opportunities for higher sales, cost reduction, risk reduction, increased resource productivity, improved reputation/brand value, greater attractiveness as a “good” employer, and enhanced opportunities for innovation. Entrepreneurs need to demonstrate business leadership through knowledge orientation and knowledge acquired from experience. Lubem et al. (2018) posited that the environment in which an individual grew up determines their predisposition to entrepreneurship, indicating that firm-level behavior is a reflection of the underlying business posture of the owner/manager. Engaging a successful entrepreneurial mindset through business ethics must involve a primary reference encompassing cognitive, conative, and emotional components for implementing policies and practices.

Entrepreneurs’ ability to demonstrate business leadership should consider financial management in strategic planning, organizing, directing, and controlling for efficient entrepreneurship. Also, SME leaders need occupational culture in emerging practice areas to develop essential life skills to support a tough employment market and demonstrate entrepreneurial orientation for humanness for social needs and survival. Entrepreneurs must be able to take risks and demonstrate skills that act, think, and behave enterprising and innovatively. The results indicate a need for SMEs to deploy an operational business strategy for sustainability and growth. Entrepreneurs must learn to reflect on decision-making for strategic choices and changes that determine firm performance.

Overhauling the EDP agencies and institutions’ teaching approaches is paramount to adopting an experience-based teaching method to help business growth. The government should ensure that the inefficiency in the institution of learning is revised to incorporate teaching for sustainability within three broad categories of entrepreneurship: (a) the occupational aspect of entrepreneurship, (b) the behavioral day-to-day practices, and (c) entrepreneurship based on transmitting its functional ability for capacity development of new venture creation through innovation. We recommend that action-oriented and practice-oriented learning be included in agencies and institutional curricula to unlock entrepreneurs’ undeveloped potential and stimulate an entrepreneurial spirit. Solving the increasing problem of the unemployment crisis and persistent poverty by engaging sustainability skills depends on Nigeria's entrepreneurial development approach. Entrepreneurs are leaders who must focus on the social consequences of their vision. The entrepreneurs’ productive capacity can influence the expansion of business and the ability to create sufficient jobs. Taking bold steps toward entrepreneurial, industrial, and economic liberation should be encouraged.

A mono-sectoral economy such as Nigeria, which depends solely on the oil sector, requires a multisector economic policy to shift from economic stagnancy to sustaining the national economy. Nigerian government leaders need to capitalize on the demographic strength of the country and the increasing number of SMEs to ease the problem of unemployment and poverty. As the engine of economic growth, SMEs have significant opportunities to put the nation on the path to economic recovery and national development. Entrepreneurship education and understanding of the key players are critical to actualizing the goals.

9.1. Government Education and Training

Nigerian government training should consider a robust entrepreneurship curriculum encompassing the requisite skills and knowledge-based activities to help develop entrepreneurs with the capacity to nurture SMEs for sustainability to contribute to the economic growth of Nigeria. The knowledge-based training will provide entrepreneurs with valuable information on business growth for long-term viability and the opportunity to leverage specific business structures and accountability to achieve a successful enterprise. In addition, Nigerian leaders

should stimulate ways to bridge the gap created by inadequate investment in human capital that hinders SME growth because of the scarcity of skilled workers, managers, and entrepreneurs.

9.2. Access to Capital

The gross inadequacy in access to startup capital and the high-interest rate for loans has hindered promising entrepreneurs' ability to operate SMEs. Increasing access to the sources of capital for SMEs will boost the economic sector. The government needs to create more awareness of alternative funding.

9.3. Infrastructural Development

One of the significant challenges affecting the survival of SMEs in Nigeria is the decrepit infrastructure in the Nigerian system. In some cases, gross deficiency and lack of basic infrastructure instrumental to SMEs' operations impinge on nurturing small businesses into sustainable enterprises. The Nigerian government must address the depletion of infrastructure issues affecting SMEs.

9.4. Business-Friendly Policies and Laws

A simplified and transparent legal system will lay the foundation of a friendly business environment. Government policy and law inconsistencies greatly hinder SMEs' growth and sustainability. The business-friendly environment increases the capacity for enterprises to thrive.

9.5. Technology and Innovation

The digital revolution commands a great deal of influence in the current dispensation. Among the range of factors in developing a globalized economy, entrepreneurs are critical to building prosperous communities. The Nigerian government needs to integrate the local SMEs with the global platform for growth and sustainability. Likewise, for visibility, relevance, and viability, adopting technology for entrepreneurial activities can help develop more intelligent individuals, offering a more rapid approach to knowledge shift from consumption to production ideas and harnessing innovation to increase business productivity.

9.6. Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship begins with executives' and owner-managers' acuity, which may have omitted developing creative capabilities and created a gap of inadequate management skills and underdeveloped entrepreneurial orientation (Fatunla, 1989; Osemeke, 2012). Knowledge precondition for conducting business forms a mindset and a basis for entrepreneurs' behavior, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and the ability to respond to market changes appropriately. Entrepreneurs' capacity to turn ideas into profitable actions can enhance the Nigerian goal of wealth creation to reduce poverty (Ajayi and Ademokun, 2012; Osemeke, 2012).

Executives and owner-managers engaging in sustainability practices and resourceful decision-making must tailor the EDP curriculum to focus on setting goals and achieving sustainable organizations. Building Nigerian entrepreneurs for strategic business implementation for growth and sustainability needs immediate improvement in vocational and technical education quality. Developing innovative and creative mindsets, business leadership charisma, the zeal to succeed, and the passion to nurture a business to sustain itself are essential for a successful entrepreneurial story in Nigeria. For Nigeria to recover economically, business growth and sustainability are crucial to economic diversification through reliance on skilled entrepreneurial firms.

10. Recommendations for Future Research

The recommendations for further study relate to enhancing economic growth through entrepreneurship education and address the study's identified limitations stated earlier. In response to current realities and their attendant

impacts on the national economy, exploring entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education within the context of the digital revolution and the COVID-19 pandemic will be novel.

Recommendations for future research efforts to address the limitations of this study include:

1. Technical interfacing with new opportunities that require relevant conceptualization in the following areas:
 - Integrating the digital revolution in entrepreneurship education and business sustainability
 - Enhancing entrepreneurial capabilities through technology
 - The global interface of local enterprises through digital platforms
2. Post-COVID-19: the disruptions in the conventional existence and the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic open up a plethora of economic concerns in the following areas:
 - the new normal in business enterprise in post-COVID-19
 - impact of the Pandemic on SMEs and the national economy
 - government protecting local manufacturers with cheaper rates by institutionalizing SMEs to be the building blocks of industrial and economic growth

11. Conclusions

The data analysis and interpretation concluded that entrepreneurship education, capacity building inadequacy, a lack of a strategic management approach for competitive advantage, lack of business leadership, orientation, and experience, and unsustainable business strategy for sustainability and growth. The research findings provided management strategies for government leaders and entrepreneurs to achieve efficient business development for business growth and sustainability in Nigeria. Entrepreneurial education in Nigeria needs a resource-based training model that can help entrepreneurs use resources through a knowledge-based lens for entrepreneurial activities to improve Nigerian society.

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