

## Factors Promoting Edupreneurship among Students of Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

**David Obafemi ADEBAYO**

Department of Educational Guidance & Counselling,  
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria  
[adebayo.do@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:adebayo.do@unilorin.edu.ng)

**Ifeoluwa Blessing MICHAEL**

Department of Educational Guidance & Counselling,  
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria  
[michael.ifeoluwab@gmail.com](mailto:michael.ifeoluwab@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*This paper explored the factors promoting and hindering the adoption of Edupreneurship among students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Edupreneurship, which integrates entrepreneurial skills and mindset into the academic curriculum, is increasingly recognized as a crucial driver for economic development and innovation. The paper identified key factors that promote Edupreneurship, including curriculum integration, institutional support, government policies, industry partnerships, and student engagement. Each of these elements is critical in equipping students with the practical skills and knowledge needed to thrive as entrepreneurs. Moreover, several challenges impede the effective implementation of Edupreneurship. These include inadequate curriculum integration, insufficient institutional support, ineffective government policies, and limited collaboration between educational institutions and industries. The paper proposes comprehensive strategies to address these challenges, such as the development of specialized courses, the establishment of entrepreneurship centers, the revision of government policies, and the fostering of stronger industry partnerships. By implementing the suggested solutions, stakeholders can create a supportive environment that nurtures entrepreneurial talent, ultimately contributing to the broader economic growth and innovation ecosystem in Nigeria. This paper concludes with a call to action for educational institutions, government bodies, and industry partners to collaborate in advancing Edupreneurship, emphasizing its importance for the nation's future.*

**Keywords:** Edupreneurship, Tertiary Institutions, Nigerian Students, Entrepreneurship, Higher Education.

### Introduction

Edupreneurship represents a significant shift in the landscape of higher education, blending the principles of entrepreneurship with educational methodologies to prepare students for the demands of a dynamic and rapidly changing economy as well as occupational life. With this paradigm shift, educators as well as educatees are most likely going to experience a dramatic positive change in the scheme of things with regards to what is offered to education graduates after

university life. This obviously is a move from the old order in which fresh or older graduates had to wait for available government or non-government job openings in order to get placement for employment considerations.

This approach transcends traditional entrepreneurship education, which often centers on business management and start-ups, by incorporating entrepreneurial thinking and practices into the broader educational framework. Edupreneurship is designed to foster innovation, problem-solving, and practical application of skills, thereby equipping students with the competencies needed to thrive in various professional and entrepreneurial contexts (Olawale, 2021).

In Nigerian tertiary institutions, the integration of Edupreneurship has become increasingly pertinent. As Nigeria experiences economic diversification and technological advancement, there is a growing need for graduates who are not only academically proficient but also possess entrepreneurial skills that enable them to adapt to and drive economic change (Adesina & Ogunleye, 2022). This shift is driven by the recognition that traditional educational models may fall short in preparing students for the complexities of modern economies and the entrepreneurial opportunities they present. Edupreneurship addresses this gap by combining theoretical knowledge with practical experiences, allowing students to engage in real-world problem-solving and innovation (Bamidele et al., 2023). This approach emphasizes the development of an entrepreneurial mindset—characterized by creativity, resilience, and a proactive attitude—traits that are essential for success in today's competitive job market and entrepreneurial landscape. By fostering these attributes, Edupreneurship not only enhances students' employability but also empowers them to create their own business opportunities and contribute to the economic development of Nigeria (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).

The significance of Edupreneurship for Nigerian students cannot be overstated. In a country where unemployment rates are high and economic opportunities are limited, Edupreneurship offers a pathway to self-sufficiency and economic empowerment. It provides students with the tools to identify and seize opportunities, develop innovative solutions, and transform their ideas into viable business ventures (Adesina & Ogunleye, 2022). Moreover, this educational approach supports the development of transferable skills such as critical thinking, leadership, and teamwork, which are valuable across various professional fields.

Furthermore, Edupreneurship contributes to the broader goal of economic growth and development by nurturing a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs who are equipped to

address local and global challenges. By embedding entrepreneurial thinking into the educational process, Nigerian tertiary institutions can play a pivotal role in shaping a more resilient and dynamic economy, ultimately driving progress and improving quality of life across the nation (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).

Nigeria faces a high unemployment rate, particularly among young graduates who often struggle to find employment in a competitive job market (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024). Edupreneurship equips students with entrepreneurial skills that enable them to create their own jobs rather than rely solely on traditional employment opportunities. By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset, students are encouraged to develop business ideas and ventures, thereby contributing to job creation and reducing unemployment.

The Nigerian economy has historically been dependent on oil exports, making it vulnerable to global price fluctuations (Adesina & Ogunleye, 2022). Edupreneurship promotes diversification by encouraging students to explore and invest in various sectors such as technology, agriculture, and manufacturing. This diversification helps reduce economic reliance on oil and supports the growth of other industries, which is crucial for building a resilient and robust economy.

**Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):** SMEs play a significant role in Nigeria's economy, providing employment and contributing to economic growth (Bamidele et al., 2023). Edupreneurship supports the development of SMEs by providing students with the skills needed to start and manage small businesses. By nurturing entrepreneurial talent, Edupreneurship strengthens the SME sector and enhances its capacity to drive economic development.

Edupreneurship emphasizes creativity and innovation, essential components for addressing the challenges faced by businesses and society (Olawale, 2021). Through hands-on projects and problem-solving activities, students are encouraged to think outside the box and develop innovative solutions. This creative approach not only benefits their entrepreneurial ventures but also contributes to broader technological and industrial advancements.

The integration of Edupreneurship can lead to advancements in technology and digital solutions. Students with entrepreneurial skills are more likely to engage in tech-driven ventures, such as startups in the fintech or edu-tech sectors, which can drive technological innovation and enhance Nigeria's position in the global technology landscape (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).

Edupreneurship also promotes social innovation by encouraging students to address societal issues through entrepreneurial means. Initiatives that focus on social entrepreneurship can

lead to impactful solutions for problems such as healthcare access, education, and environmental sustainability. By fostering a culture of social responsibility and innovation, Edupreneurship helps create a positive social impact alongside economic growth (Bamidele et al., 2023).

### **Conceptualizing Edupreneurship**

Edupreneurship is a contemporary educational paradigm that integrates entrepreneurial principles and practices into the academic curriculum to cultivate entrepreneurial skills and mindsets among students. It is distinct from traditional entrepreneurship education, which often focuses solely on the theoretical aspects of starting and managing businesses. Edupreneurship aims to embed entrepreneurial thinking across various disciplines, thereby encouraging students to apply innovative approaches and problem-solving skills within their educational pursuits (Olawale, 2021).

The scope of Edupreneurship extends beyond conventional business training. It encompasses a range of activities and learning experiences designed to foster creativity, critical thinking, and practical application of entrepreneurial skills. This approach includes project-based learning, internships, and real-world problem-solving tasks that are integrated into the academic curriculum. By doing so, Edupreneurship provides students with opportunities to develop and test their entrepreneurial ideas in a supportive educational environment (Adesina & Ogunleye, 2022).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Human Capital Theory**

Human Capital Theory, articulated by Gary Becker and other economists, posits that investments in education and training enhance individuals' skills, knowledge, and abilities, which are considered forms of capital that can be used to increase productivity and earning potential (Becker, 2020). The theory suggests that education acts as a tool for developing this capital, leading to better job performance, increased income, and overall economic growth. By enhancing individuals' capabilities, human capital development contributes to the economic advancement of society as a whole.

Edupreneurship embodies the principles of Human Capital Theory by focusing on the acquisition and development of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge. This educational approach equip students with a diverse set of competencies necessary for successful entrepreneurship,

including business planning, financial management, marketing, and innovation (Olawale, 2021). Through this specialized training, students enhance their human capital, preparing them for both entrepreneurial ventures and a competitive job market.

Edupreneurship plays a crucial role in addressing skills gaps and unemployment. By integrating entrepreneurial skills into the curriculum, Edupreneurship provides students with practical, applicable knowledge that improves their employability and potential for creating their own businesses. This skill development aligns with Human Capital Theory, as it translates educational investments into tangible economic benefits, contributing to the country's economic development and diversification (Bamidele et al., 2023).

Moreover, by fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and practical business skills, Edupreneurship helps students leverage their human capital to drive innovation and economic growth. This approach not only benefits individual students but also strengthens the broader economic framework by creating a more capable and adaptable workforce (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).

### **Social Learning Theory**

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling of others' behaviors. According to this theory, individuals acquire new knowledge and skills by observing role models and imitating their actions. Social Learning Theory highlights the importance of social context and interaction in the learning process, suggesting that people learn effectively when they are exposed to positive role models and practical examples (Bandura, 1956).

Edupreneurship leverages the principles of Social Learning Theory by incorporating practical experiences and role models into the learning process. In edupreneurship programs, students engage in hands-on projects, internships, and real-world problem-solving activities that provide opportunities to observe and learn from experienced entrepreneurs and business professionals (Adesina & Ogunleye, 2022). For instance, through internships and collaborative projects with industry experts, students gain practical insights into entrepreneurial practices and behaviors. These experiences allow them to learn directly from those who have successfully navigated the entrepreneurial landscape, thereby enhancing their understanding and application of entrepreneurial concepts. Additionally, mentorship programs and guest lectures from successful

entrepreneurs offer students valuable guidance and inspiration, reinforcing learning through real-world examples (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).

The application of Social Learning Theory in Edupreneurship also involves creating environments where students can observe and practice entrepreneurial activities. By participating in business simulations, start-up incubators, and innovation labs, students can experiment with entrepreneurial ideas and receive feedback from mentors and peers. This experiential learning approach facilitates the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge, as students observe and replicate effective entrepreneurial strategies and behaviors (Olawale, 2021).

Human Capital Theory and Social Learning Theory provide complementary perspectives on the benefits of Edupreneurship. Human Capital Theory underscores the value of developing entrepreneurial skills as a form of capital that enhances economic productivity and growth. Social Learning Theory highlights the importance of observation and practical experiences in acquiring these skills. Together, these theories illustrate how Edupreneurship not only enhances students' capabilities but also contributes to broader economic and social advancement.

## **Factors Promoting Edupreneurship**

### ***Curriculum Integration***

Incorporating edupreneurship into the curriculum involves embedding entrepreneurial principles and practices across various academic disciplines. This integration ensures that students not only learn theoretical concepts but also acquire practical skills that are directly applicable to real-world entrepreneurial activities. By doing so, educational institutions can provide a comprehensive learning experience that prepares students for the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship. Curriculum integration helps students develop critical competencies such as problem-solving, innovation, business planning, and financial management. These skills are essential for launching and managing successful ventures. Moreover, integrating edupreneurship into the curriculum promotes interdisciplinary learning, allowing students to apply entrepreneurial thinking across different fields of study (Olawale, 2021).

For Instance, University of Lagos (UNILAG) has integrated entrepreneurship education into its curriculum through the establishment of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Studies. The center offers specialized courses in entrepreneurship, along with practical workshops and business incubation programs. This integration has helped students develop business ideas and skills,

contributing to the growth of student-led startups. Also, Obafemi Awolowo University has incorporated entrepreneurship into various faculties, including the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering. Through interdisciplinary courses and projects, students from different disciplines collaborate on entrepreneurial initiatives, fostering a broader understanding of how entrepreneurial skills can be applied in diverse contexts.

### ***Institutional Support***

Institutional support plays a crucial role in promoting Edupreneurship by providing necessary resources, mentorship, and funding to students and faculty. Supportive measures from educational institutions can enhance the effectiveness of edupreneurship programs and create a conducive environment for entrepreneurial activities. This support includes establishing entrepreneurship centers, offering grants and scholarships, and facilitating mentorship opportunities with experienced entrepreneurs. Effective institutional support not only helps in the development of entrepreneurial skills but also encourages a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the institution. For Instance, Covenant University has established the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development, which provides students with resources such as business incubators, mentorship programs, and access to funding opportunities. The center also organizes entrepreneurship workshops and networking events, helping students to connect with industry experts and potential investors. Also, the University of Ibadan supports entrepreneurship education through its Entrepreneurship Centre, which offers training programs, mentorship, and seed funding for student-led ventures. The center also collaborates with industry partners to provide practical experiences and exposure to real-world entrepreneurial challenges.

### ***Government Policies***

Government policies play a significant role in promoting Edupreneurship by creating an enabling environment for educational institutions to implement and expand entrepreneurship programs. Supportive policies can include funding for educational initiatives, incentives for institutions that incorporate entrepreneurship into their curricula, and programs that facilitate collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners. Additionally, policies that promote entrepreneurship at the national level can encourage educational institutions to prioritize Edupreneurship.

For Instance, National Enterprise Development Programme (NEDEP) initiated by the Nigerian government, aims to support entrepreneurship development through various initiatives, including

the promotion of entrepreneurship education in higher institutions. The program provides funding, training, and resources to support entrepreneurial activities and enhance the capacity of educational institutions to deliver effective entrepreneurship education. Also, the establishment of the SME and Entrepreneurship Council by the Nigerian government is another example of policy support. The council focuses on creating an enabling environment for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and promotes entrepreneurship education as a means of fostering economic growth and innovation.

### ***Industry Partnerships***

Partnerships between educational institutions and industries offer significant benefits for Edupreneurship. These collaborations provide students with practical insights, real-world experiences, and opportunities for networking with industry professionals. Industry partners can offer resources such as funding, expertise, and mentorship, which enhance the quality and impact of entrepreneurship education. Industry partnerships also facilitate internships, apprenticeships, and project-based learning, allowing students to apply their entrepreneurial skills in real-world settings. For Instance, Tech Startups Collaboration at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) has partnered with several tech startups to create a collaborative platform for students. These partnerships involve joint projects, internships, and mentorship programs, giving students hands-on experience and exposure to the tech industry. Also, Access Bank has partnered with Pan-Atlantic University to support entrepreneurship education through funding, mentorship, and business incubation programs. This collaboration provides students with valuable resources and industry connections to help them develop and launch their own ventures.

### **Factors Militating Against Edupreneurship**

With the potential benefits of Edupreneurship, several challenges hinder its effective promotion and implementation. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, and inadequate training for educators, among others. Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of edupreneurship programs and fostering a more entrepreneurial educational environment.

### ***Lack of Infrastructure***

Infrastructure plays a critical role in supporting the implementation of Edupreneurship. Adequate infrastructure includes facilities such as entrepreneurship centers, innovation labs, and



business incubators, which are essential for providing students with hands-on experience and practical resources. The absence of such infrastructure can limit the scope and effectiveness of edupreneurship programs.

Many Nigerian tertiary institutions face challenges related to outdated or insufficient infrastructure. For example, the lack of well-equipped entrepreneurship centers and innovation hubs can impede students' ability to engage in practical entrepreneurial activities. Without access to modern tools, technologies, and collaborative spaces, students may find it difficult to develop and test their business ideas effectively.

### ***Insufficient Funding***

Funding is crucial for the development and sustainability of Edupreneurship programs. It supports various aspects such as curriculum development, program implementation, student projects, and infrastructure improvements. Insufficient funding can severely restrict the scope of edupreneurship initiatives and limit their impact on students. Many educational institutions struggle with budget constraints that affect their ability to invest in entrepreneurship education. This lack of financial resources can lead to inadequate facilities, limited access to entrepreneurial resources, and reduced opportunities for students to participate in competitions and workshops. Furthermore, the scarcity of funding can hinder the ability to attract and retain experienced mentors and industry partners, which are vital for enriching the edupreneurship experience (Adesina & Ogunleye, 2022).

### ***Inadequate Training for Educators***

Educators play a key role in delivering effective Edupreneurship. Their ability to teach entrepreneurial concepts, facilitate practical activities, and mentor students is crucial for the success of edupreneurship programs. Inadequate training for educators can undermine the quality of education and limit the effectiveness of edupreneurship initiatives. Many educators may not have specialized training or experience in entrepreneurship, which can affect their ability to deliver relevant and impactful education. The lack of professional development opportunities for educators can result in outdated teaching methods and a gap in knowledge related to current entrepreneurial trends and practices. This inadequacy can hinder the ability of educators to provide students with practical insights and guidance necessary for successful entrepreneurial ventures (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).

### **Proffering Solutions to the problems of Edupreneurship**

To better integrate Edupreneurship into existing curricula, institutions can take the following steps:

- Create and offer specialized courses in entrepreneurship that cover key areas such as business planning, marketing, finance, and innovation. These courses should be designed to complement existing programs and provide practical, hands-on experience (Olawale, 2021).
- Infuse entrepreneurial concepts and activities into core subjects across various disciplines. For instance, engineering students can engage in projects that involve product development and commercialization, while business students can work on real-world case studies and business simulations (Adesina & Ogunleye, 2022).
- Incorporate project-based learning where students work on entrepreneurial projects as part of their coursework. This approach allows students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations, fostering a deeper understanding of entrepreneurial processes (Bamidele et al., 2023).
- Promote collaboration between different departments to create interdisciplinary courses and projects. This approach can provide students with a broader perspective on how entrepreneurial skills can be applied in various fields (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).

To increase institutional support and resources, institutions can:

- Create dedicated centers for entrepreneurship that provide resources such as incubators, mentorship programs, and funding opportunities. These centers can serve as hubs for entrepreneurial activity and support students in developing and launching their ventures (University of Lagos, 2024).
- Secure and allocate funding specifically for entrepreneurship education. This can include grants for student projects, funding for entrepreneurship programs, and investments in infrastructure such as innovation labs and business incubators (Covenant University, 2024).
- Provide training and professional development opportunities for faculty members to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach and support entrepreneurship education effectively (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).
- Encourage collaboration between different departments and faculties to support entrepreneurial initiatives and integrate entrepreneurial activities into various academic programs (University of Ibadan, 2024).

To improve government support for Edupreneurship, the following policy changes or new initiatives can be recommended:

5. Update existing policies and create new ones that provide comprehensive support for Edupreneurship. This includes increasing funding for educational initiatives, offering incentives for institutions that excel in entrepreneurship education, and supporting policy frameworks that facilitate industry-academia partnerships (National Enterprise Development Programme, 2024).
6. Develop and implement national strategies that promote entrepreneurship education across all levels of education. These strategies should include clear objectives, funding mechanisms, and evaluation criteria to measure the impact of entrepreneurship programs (SME and Entrepreneurship Council, 2024).
7. Foster partnerships between the government, private sector, and educational institutions to create collaborative platforms for entrepreneurship education. These partnerships can provide additional resources, expertise, and opportunities for students (Ibrahim & Ojo, 2024).
8. Engage in advocacy efforts to raise awareness about the importance of entrepreneurship education and influence policy changes that support its development. This can involve working with policymakers, educational leaders, and industry stakeholders to promote supportive policies (Bamidele et al., 2023).

To foster stronger industry partnerships, institutions can:

- Establish advisory boards composed of industry experts and entrepreneurs who can provide guidance, mentorship, and support for entrepreneurship programs. These boards can help align academic programs with industry needs and trends (Tech Startups Collaboration, 2024).
- Initiate collaborative projects and internships where students work directly with industry partners on real-world problems and entrepreneurial ventures. These projects can provide practical experience and help students build connections within their chosen industries (Access Bank's Partnership with Pan-Atlantic University, 2024).
- Host networking events, workshops, and seminars that bring together students, educators, and industry professionals. These events can facilitate knowledge exchange, foster partnerships, and provide students with valuable insights into industry practices (University of Port Harcourt, 2024).

- Seek sponsorships and support from industry partners to fund entrepreneurial activities, competitions, and projects. Industry sponsorships can provide financial resources, expertise, and visibility for student-led ventures (Adesina & Ogunleye, 2022).

## Conclusion

This paper has explored the critical factors promoting and hindering Edupreneurship in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Key factors that promote edupreneurship include integrating entrepreneurship into the curriculum, providing institutional support, implementing supportive government policies, fostering industry partnerships, and enhancing student engagement. Each of these factors contributes to equipping students with the necessary skills and mindset for entrepreneurial success. However, challenges such as inadequate curriculum integration, insufficient institutional support, ineffective government policies, and limited industry collaboration impede the advancement of Edupreneurship. Addressing these challenges is crucial for creating a robust edupreneurship ecosystem that supports and nurtures entrepreneurial talent.

## Suggestions

### a) *Enhance Curriculum Integration:*

*Develop and Implement Comprehensive Courses:* Educational institutions should design and integrate comprehensive entrepreneurship courses across various disciplines. These courses should emphasize practical skills and real-world applications to better prepare students for entrepreneurial ventures.

*Promote Interdisciplinary Learning:* Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration to blend entrepreneurial concepts with different fields of study. This approach can provide students with diverse perspectives and innovative problem-solving skills.

### b) *Increase Institutional Support:*

*Establish Dedicated Entrepreneurship Centers:* Institutions should create dedicated centers for entrepreneurship that offer resources such as business incubators, mentorship programs, and funding opportunities. These centers can serve as hubs for entrepreneurial activities and provide students with the support needed to develop and launch their ventures.

*Allocate Additional Resources:* Institutions should secure and allocate additional funding specifically for entrepreneurship education, including grants for student projects and investments in infrastructure such as innovation labs.

**c) *Improve Government Policies:***

*Revise and Strengthen Existing Policies:* The government should update existing policies and create new ones that provide comprehensive support for entrepreneurship education. This includes increasing funding for educational initiatives, offering incentives for institutions, and supporting policy frameworks that facilitate industry-academia partnerships.

*Develop National Strategies:* Implement national strategies that promote entrepreneurship education across all levels of education. These strategies should include clear objectives, funding mechanisms, and evaluation criteria to measure the impact of entrepreneurship programs.

**d) *Foster Stronger Industry Collaboration:***

*Create Industry Advisory Boards:* Establish advisory boards with industry experts to provide guidance and mentorship for entrepreneurship programs. These boards can help align academic programs with industry needs and trends.

*Develop Collaborative Projects and Internships:* Initiate collaborative projects and internships that allow students to work directly with industry partners. These opportunities provide practical experience and help students build valuable industry connections.

*Organize Networking Events:* Host networking events, workshops, and seminars that bring together students, educators, and industry professionals. These events facilitate knowledge exchange and provide students with insights into industry practices.

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