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Underlining factors of women and youths' immersion in digital entrepreneurship and innovation for the growth of the economy in Nigeria

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Abstract: Nigeria plays important roles in the overall socio-economic development of the entire African continent, including entrepreneurial activities. There is a less focus on the immersion of women and youths in playing participatory roles in digital entrepreneurship and digital technology innovation in order to boost the economic growth of the country. The primary objective of this study is to explore women and youths' immersion, specifically in connection with digital entrepreneurship and digital technology innovation, for the purpose of fostering the growth of the economy. The methodology employed in this study is Critical Content Analysis (CCA) of cursory literature as an integral part of the qualitative method. The literature was sourced through different databases, such as library sources, journals, and the core collection of Web of Science (WOS), and the collections of studies used for analysis were between 2018 and 2023. The results demonstrated that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play significant roles in digital entrepreneurship activities in the country. In addition, there are various entrepreneurship programmes in the country, such as the Youth Entrepreneurship Development Programme (YEDP), and there is awareness of the effectiveness and efficiency of digital entrepreneurship. In addition, the result further established that the use of digital technology is an important innovation for the success of digital entrepreneurship in the country. The study further indicated that five factors of women and youths' immersion in entrepreneurship (perception and opportunities, business performance, digital adoption, skill acquisition, and enabling environment) can boost the growth of the economy in the country. In conclusion, the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs are major drivers of wealth and job creations, with women and youths playing an active role in the overall entrepreneurship programmes. It is suggested that the stakeholders and actors in entrepreneurship should collaborate to foster the participation of women and youths in entrepreneurship programmes in the country.

Keywords: women and youths' immersion; digital entrepreneurship; innovation; growth of economy; business performance; digital adoption; enabling environment

1. Introduction

At the global level, in most advanced and developing countries, digital entrepreneurship has been flourishing by contributing to the transformation and innovation of entrepreneurial activities for the growth of the economy (Fukugawa, 2018; Shen et al., 2018; Skog, 2019). In the entire world, Nigeria is rated with a high level of poverty, despite the fact that the country is blessed with many human and natural resources. Overwhelming studies have been conducted on the reshaping of the entrepreneurship process, emphasizing poverty alleviation and efficient entrepreneurial policies and programmes in expanding its contributions to the growth of the economy in different parts of the world, including Nigeria (Beltagui et al., 2020).

It is, however, noteworthy to posit that the motivation for this study is due to the fact that digital entrepreneurship has been gaining momentum and adding value, as the existing literature contends (Elia et al., 2020), with an emphasis on the use of digital technology innovation. More specifically, according to a report by the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), 133 million citizens, or 63%, are considered to be poor in the country. This inferably means that many cannot afford their basic daily needs. Reiteratively, one of the fundamental factors contributing to the high level of poverty in the country is unemployment. It is noted that an approximate 90 million youths are unemployed in the country.

Onwards, the unemployable graduates emanate from deficient educational experience, which made it difficult for most of the graduates to get jobs. Hence, employment is an essential driver of a means of livelihood that would enable everyone to fulfill his daily basic needs. Literature contends that currently, there are almost 221 universities and 159 polytechnics in the country, which together graduate almost 500,000 students annually. Yet, most of these graduates do not get jobs in the labour market, despite the fact that they obtain educational certificates. As a result of the fact that there are fewer employment opportunities in the country, there is a need to further explore the potential of digital entrepreneurship as a means of reducing the high rate of unemployment in the country. It is not deniable to posit that digital entrepreneurship is a growing economic concept that has a great potential for exploration of the online market at the global marketing company, which provides dynamism and simulation for business model innovation, as the literature says (Yuana et al., 2021). Nigeria is a potential market through which the economic potentiality of digital entrepreneurship and its innovation can be deeply and meticulously explored in connection with the roles of women and youths in entrepreneurial activities as a model for entrepreneurship performance in a developing economy (Gerdoci et al., 2018) like Nigeria. Thus, the literature asserts that the business or entrepreneurial innovation model can be considered a market strategy by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as an integral part of the digital transformation process in order to motivate customers to patronize the digital entrepreneurship platforms (Ulas, 2019).

Moreso, it has been established that business transactions via e-commerce in the context of Africa have demonstrated a great potential, which accounts for \$20 billion in global trade. Reiteratively, it is projected that in the next five years, the contribution of e-commerce is going to be manifold. This is to indicate that the continent has a lot of potential for exploration with respect to digital entrepreneurship meant for business transactions of various goods. In other words, there are tremendous opportunities for entrepreneurs as well as for buyers through the e-platforms meant for selling different products as part of social media analytics (Suseno et al., 2018). In addition, most flourishing entrepreneurships in Nigeria are thus not more than 10 years old, and literature contends that 49% of the entrepreneurships are led mostly by youths (Fate Foundation, 2022). Most of the previous studies explored the generic discourse of entrepreneurship in the context of Nigeria. Literature contends that entrepreneurship is an important aspect that shows that it significantly contributes to the economic development of a country.

It is not deniable to posit that the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and Digital Economy, as well as the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs,

have been making tremendous efforts to foster digital startups for the purpose of improving small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in particular and entrepreneurship in general (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023). Nonetheless, the startups need to show a positive result, which is yet to have a clear direction and meaningful synergy among the stakeholders and actors of entrepreneurship in the country. Furthermore, there are explicit explanations concerning the relevance of digital innovation in adding value to entrepreneurship programmes in different parts of the world. Nevertheless, there are a lot of problems, such as inadequate exploration of positive perceptions about entrepreneurial opportunities, ineffective business performance, limited digital innovation and digital adoption, inadequate digital skill acquisition, unconducive environment and inadequate funds necessary for the cultivation of entrepreneurship skills, which are regarded as barriers and consequences for a sustainable entrepreneurial business model, as the literature suggests (Bashir and Verma, 2019; Bocken and Geradts, 2020). However, a specific attention to the roles of women and youths has not been given a prime concern in digital entrepreneurship, despite the fact that overwhelming studies have emphatically stressed the dynamism of digital technology, the innovation ecosystem, and value co-creation (Beliaeva et al., 2020; Benitez et al., 2020). Similarly, given the current scenario of digital entrepreneurship in Nigeria, there are complexities and dynamism in general entrepreneurship. There is a need for a study that would critically explore the roles of women and youths in expanding entrepreneurship for the growth of the economy using digital technology.

It is against the aforementioned problems that this study attempts to explicitly address these issues as part of an effort to enhance women and youths' participation in digital entrepreneurship in the country. In other words, this study provides a direction for the efficient involvement of women and youths in digital entrepreneurship by utilizing digital innovation within the purview of available policies and programmes on entrepreneurial activities. However, there is a gap in the existing body of study concerning the specific aspects of women and youths' involvement in digital entrepreneurship as an innovation for promoting the growth of the overall economy. In spite of the development of entrepreneurship programmes in different parts of the world, the current studies in the Nigerian context have not critically explored the roles of women and youths in expanding the discourse on digital innovation and fostering entrepreneurial activities in a developing economy like Nigeria. The novelty of the study is that digital entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and specific factors (i.e., perception and opportunities, business performance, digital adoption, skill acquisition, and enabling environment) in enhancing women and youths' immersion in digital entrepreneurship and digital innovation are critically explored in this study as against the general framework for entrepreneurship and the digital innovation ecosystem (Chae, 2019; Broekhuizen et al., 2021).

This study therefore explores the trends and extent of manifestation of the five factors in connection with women and youths' involvement in digital entrepreneurship, specifically by enhancing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in order to improve the growth of the economy in the country. In other words, this study is conducted to explore digital technology among women and youths' entrepreneurs in the context of Nigeria as an integral part of an effort to create awareness concerning digital

entrepreneurship based on the utilization of digital platforms in fostering the digital economy in the country.

2. Literature review

Nigeria has tremendously improved its entrepreneurial activities in recent times. The significant contributions have been manifested in the report on the entrepreneurship programme in the country. It is essential to note that in order to explore women and youth entrepreneurship in Nigeria, the literature review will be centrally focused on the overview of entrepreneurship, digital technology innovation, and the prime factors of women and youths' immersion in digital entrepreneurship, which are as follows: Perception and opportunities, business performance, digital adoption, skill acquisition, and the enabling environment. Each of these is explained in the subsequent sub-headings.

3. An overview of entrepreneurship in Nigeria

Literature specifically notes that early researchers such as Schumpeter (1934) provided a direction for an explicit understanding concerning entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are regarded as individuals who carry out various means of production in an economic setting with the prime target of improving the overall economic system. However, most of the earlier studies did not clearly distinguish among different actors in entrepreneurship, such as business owners, investors, managers, and capitalists, among others. Contemporary researchers have extensively explored the roles of entrepreneurs based on pertinent perspectives such as business, finance, and economics, as well as social and environmental dimensions. Similarly, a number of studies have advocated that there is a need for expansion of understanding and activities of entrepreneurship, especially charging academic institutions towards encouraging women and youths' immersion in entrepreneurship as academic qualifications remain an important referral key point for the success of entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023).

Undoubtedly, entrepreneurship has been proliferating in enhancing the economic sectors in various countries of the world, whereby transformation of business activities through the integration of digitization of entrepreneurship infrastructure has preoccupied the recent studies (Kraus et al., 2019). It thus reiterated that many countries have given priority to the development of policies that would encourage the participation of women and youths in entrepreneurship. The study on the engagements and activities of Nigerian entrepreneurs as important human capital involvement in digital entrepreneurship is in line with the international entrepreneurial activities in advanced countries and developing economies like Japan, China, Indonesia, etc. (Fukugawa, 2018; Muafi et al., 2021). It is not deniable to say that Nigerian entrepreneurs have been painstakingly engaging themselves with the government's policies and programmes relating to entrepreneurship. With the participation of women and youths in entrepreneurship in the country, there is a need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of entrepreneurship, which can consequently facilitate the growth of overall economic development.

Furthermore, with the forgoing explanation, it has been indicated that the roles and impacts of entrepreneurship on the growth of the economy cannot be underrated through the introduction of new products into the market. In so doing, the successful introduction of the new products, productivity and competitiveness are essential to be taken into consideration among the producers. It is not disputable to say that the government has played a paramount role in creating awareness and giving support concerning the paramountcy and contributory role of entrepreneurship to the overall economic progress of the country (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023). Through this awareness, many women and youths would be able to acquire entrepreneurial skills, which propel the mindset of productivity and competitiveness in the market. Moreso, tertiary institutions, through the policy of the government, have been able to succeed in including entrepreneurial studies into the academic programmes of the higher institutions. In so doing, students are introduced to skill acquisition with the support of the university authorities. More specifically, it should be reiterated that there are four major programmes identified in the extant literature (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023; Fate Foundation, 2022a; Fate Foundation, 2022b) that significantly promote the sense of entrepreneurship in the country. The importance and impact of the aforementioned four programmes of entrepreneurship are highlighted in the subsequent subheading.

Importance and Impact of Entrepreneurship programmes in Nigeria

National enterprise development programme (NEDP): The programme is regarded as a special intervention fund for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) established in 2015 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Hence, a subsidized loan is given to business owners, and an interest rate of 9% is attributed to it. The target groups for the programme are those that partake in manufacturing and agro-processing in order to enhance the contribution of SMEs as one of the contributing factors to the growth of the economy in the country. The aim of the programme is to further galvanize funds for the exploration of local raw materials necessary for the improvement of productivity and competitiveness among manufacturers. More importantly, with the initiative of the programmes, the owner of a business can have access up to 20 million Naira; however, the interest rate of 9% is attached to its repayment.

Nigeria youth entrepreneurship network (NYENET): Indeed, this programme was initiated in 2015 as part of a government move to strengthen the engagement between public and private partnerships concerning the vital importance of entrepreneurship. The initiative is meant to improve the proper coordination of various entrepreneurship programmes in the country. Hence, this programme is designed purposefully as a collaborative platform meant for the formulation and implementation of strategies for national entrepreneurship programmes through the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme.

Youth entrepreneurship development programme (YEDP): This programme was specifically introduced by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2016. The prime aim of the programme is to reduce the high rate of unemployment and promote an entrepreneurial mindset among women and youth. In order to concretize the programme, the government tries to provide capital to women and young

entrepreneurs as startups for the business initiatives. This is necessary because many youths with business ideas lack access to take-off capital. Reiteratively, the focus of the programme targets two categories of youths, namely: The graduates of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), whose majority become liabilities to society when there is a high rate of unemployment. It also includes artisans who possess technical school certificates from the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the First School Leaving Certificate (FSLC), among others.

The development bank of Nigeria entrepreneurship training programme (DBNETP): The programme started in 2019, and the prime focus of the programme is to drastically minimize the challenges faced by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the country through the provision of loans for the startups of businesses among women and youths. Nonetheless, one of the essential prerequisites is that, for a person to have access to the loan, he must be legally regarded as a citizen of Nigeria and must have attained the age of 18 years and above. Similarly, the programme also caters for the risk management tool pertaining to the business in the country. It provides a training programme for women and youths as the owners of SMEs with the necessary skills and knowledge that would contribute to the growth and success of business.

The foregoing has shown the paramount importance of the government's policies and programmes in fostering women and youths' participation in entrepreneurship in order to contribute to the growth of the economy.

4. An exploration of digital technology innovation

In Nigeria, just like in many other parts of the world like Japan, China, and Indonesia etc., digital technology has significantly influenced entrepreneurship by expanding various business opportunities (Fukugawa, 2018; Muafi et al., 2021). This significant trend has made experts and researchers emphatically stress the paramount role of digital innovation in propelling economic growth in different countries as the world experiences digital entrepreneurship (Sahut et al., 2019). Technological revolutions have brought innovations to all facets of human endeavours, and there are various indicators of technological innovations such as accessibility to the Internet, the World Wide Web, mobile or smartphones, digital media, cloud computing, big data, robotics, and many other information and communication technologies as an integral part of the emerging digital market (Saqib and Satar, 2021). The advanced technological innovations have made it easy to foster entrepreneurship through the use of digital, propelling the socio-economic growth of the country.

Literature acknowledges the paramount importance of entrepreneurship, and many researchers have taken up the research interest in digital entrepreneurship as an emerging area of research (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023). Studies have established that electronic entrepreneurship broadly means an attempt to create new ventures as well as to transform the business by maximizing profit through the use of digital technology. It is noteworthy to posit that digital entrepreneurship has been identified as an impetus for business innovations. Most entrepreneurs are concerned with the startup, which is the central climax and enables the new products to attract the attention of consumers in the market, as the literature explicates (Kuester et al., 2018). In addition, for an

entrepreneur to attain success, it is essential to effectively and efficiently manage external resources such as loans for startup businesses, which is an integral part of innovation relating to digital entrepreneurship, as the literature posits (Marcon and Ribeiro, 2021).

Onwards, digital technology plays a significant role in the success of startups among entrepreneurs in modern times, and it is that innovation that can enhance entrepreneurial startups, which will provide a significant benefit to the overall economy of the nation (Kuester et al., 2018). It is not disagreeable to posit that inadequate digital and technological resources that can adequately foster business startups can inhibit the effective and efficient values of a particular industry. As an integral part of entrepreneurial innovation, a networking-based approach can critically improve startups by business owners in the country. Strengthening social interaction between business owners and stakeholders can enhance the efficient use or application of digital technology.

Thus, it can be established that there is a connection between business startups and digital innovation for improving overall entrepreneurial activities (Marcon and Ribeiro, 2021). In recent years, several studies have extensively discussed the paramount importance of the digital economy as a fundamental innovation for reconfiguration of entrepreneurship with digital infrastructure (Ovrelid and Kempton, 2020). The application of digital innovation to entrepreneurship has a number of different actors in the field and in policy. On one hand, actors in the field, among others, are producers, customers, and suppliers, while actors in terms of entrepreneurial policy are the government, universities, banks, investors, the social community, and information media. The collaboration between the two categories of actors cannot be underestimated because their supportive role is significant for the proactiveness of women and youths in entrepreneurship programmes, which would prevent the risk associated with the performance of entrepreneurship (Li et al., 2022).

5. Underlining factors of women and youths' immersion in digital entrepreneurship

There are several factors contributing to women and youths' involvement in digital entrepreneurship in Nigeria. Literature posits the vital importance of identifying the key themes that can promote and transform digital innovation while fostering entrepreneurship (Le Dinh et al., 2018; Nambisan et al., 2019). Thereby, this study significantly examined only the prime five factors, which are as follows: perception and opportunities, business performance, digital adoption, skill acquisition, and the enabling environment. Each of the factors is explained in the subsequent sub-headings.

5.1. Perception and opportunities

This is essentially related to entrepreneurship in the Nigerian context. According to a survey on the Entrepreneurial Index conducted by Fate Foundation in 2021, it was demonstrated that 66% of entrepreneurs strongly indicated that businesses established by them have been significantly successful, while just 34% were of the opinion that their businesses were unsuccessful. This inferably means that the sampled respondents have positive perceptions concerning the opportunities offered by entrepreneurship in

the country. The roles of women and youths in this regard have been acknowledged in different studies as boosting or expanding overall entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, it should be reiterated that online platforms create an opportunity for different participants to connect the drivers of business ideas and their customers, whereby literature advocates for collaboration among the entrepreneurial actors in order to achieve competitive advantage in the business ecosystem (Purbasari et al., 2018; Purbasari et al., 2020). Reiteratively, business platforms through the use of smartphones and the Internet, which create a dyadic two-sided market structure for the two parties (i.e., on-time delivery and purchasing via online platforms), are significant to the buyers. Hence, access to new opportunities is the prime factor that drives the growth of business among women and youths for the sustainable growth of businesses (Fate Foundation, 2022a; Fate Foundation, 2022b). However, access to finance in the economy is the major hinderance to the growth of entrepreneurial activities in the country. Thus, literature contends that since youths and women are actively engaging in online business as part of an effort to contribute to entrepreneurship, they should have a pre-conception of the notion and thinking of the customers in this regard (Fate Foundation, 2022a).

5.2. Business performance

This is another theme relating to the exploration of digital entrepreneurship. There has been significant improvement in business performance among entrepreneurs in the Nigerian context. More specifically, attempts have been made to create awareness by bridging the gap between male (57%) and female (43%) entrepreneurs in the country. More importantly, there are 36 states with the addition of Federal Capital Territory. Studies have demonstrated that Lagos, Abia, Bauchi, Edo, Gombe, Oyo, and Kwara states recorded significant numbers of women entrepreneurs compared to other states of the federation (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023). Most of the entrepreneurial activities that operate within a period of five years in the country are embedded with innovative models of leveraging technology, which are more attractive to many women entrepreneurs in the country. More importantly, it has been acknowledged by the Fate Foundation (2021) that women entrepreneurs constitute 43% while youth entrepreneurs comprise 67%, whose ages are between 18 and 35, respectively. Onwards, it has been demonstrated that women and youths are proactive in entrepreneurship activities, as demonstrated by the Entrepreneurship Index in Nigeria (EIN) (Fate Foundation, 2021). With the use of digital technology in entrepreneurship, literature identifies that it has efficiently improved the business activities of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Human capital is an important factor in the performance of business, and collaboration among the business actors cannot be underestimated in this regard (Muafi et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022).

5.3. Digital adoption

In the world over, the influence of the adoption of technologies has made changes in all spheres of human endeavours, such as education, social, economic, etc. More importantly, it has brought efficiency and effectiveness to industries and companies through competitive advantage as well as job creation. This inferably means that there

is an existence of digital transformation in all sectors of the economy. In addition, digital entrepreneurship has become the fastest-growing market for purchasing different goods, which has become a significant factor in promoting business ideas among entrepreneurs using digital platforms (Beliaeva et al., 2020). In business start-ups, using an online platform is an integral part of business innovation for marketing and distributing goods and services to potential customers. Literature contends that the advancement in digital technology, specifically the use of smartphones, has made significant changes in the lives of business owners as well as customers who patronize various goods and services, with an emphasis on the dynamic capabilities of business owners and the value proposition of innovation, which will bring about competitive advantage in the market (Schmidt and Scaringella, 2020; Saqib and Satar, 2021). There is a forecast that Nigeria will witness digital growth in the aspect of business transactions by the year 2030. However, the prevalence of online fraud has slowed many people's participation. It is noteworthy to say that in order to improve the efficiency of entrepreneurship programmes in Nigeria.

5.4. Skill acquisition

Startups for digital entrepreneurship require vital skills within a particular company that tends to promote digital innovation as part of the entrepreneurship innovation ecosystem model that overwhelming studies have emphatically stressed should be incorporated for reshaping the entrepreneurial process and success (Gerdocci et al., 2018; Elia et al., 2020). Most companies tend to develop software that will enhance productivity. There are essential skills that need to be acquired by contemporary entrepreneurs, specifically those that will enable them to add value to the entrepreneurial activities in the country. Effective acquisition of digital skills would enable support for productivity and competitiveness in business as part of the evolution of digital innovation (Chae, 2019). Literature contends that there are digital drivers that can support the creation or establishment of new ventures, production, marketing, and distribution of products. Furthermore, there are many vital technological skills, such as the use of social media interfaces, open-source software and hardware, online reputation management, 3D printing, digital imaging, and many others (Beltagui et al., 2020), that would be useful to women and youth entrepreneurs in the country. The aforementioned innovations are essential digital innovations that can foster the overall new business and digital economy in the country. It is vitally important for entrepreneurs, especially women and youth, to update themselves on international best practices relating to entrepreneurship. Knowledge, skill, and competence is fundamental aspects necessary for the success of entrepreneurship. It is thus noteworthy to posit that education is an impetus for driving the mindset of entrepreneurship in the country. It should be reiterated that 60% of entrepreneurs in the country possess a university degree or Higher National Diploma (HND), as the literature posits (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023).

5.5. Enabling environment

It is significant for businesses to flourish in any part of the country; enabling the environment for them to thrive is paramount. Literature acknowledges that SMEs have become an important contributor to overall socio-economic development due to the fact that they contribute immensely to gross domestic product (GDP) growth (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023). Literature explains that the business environment in the context of Nigeria is very complex. For instance, studies have shown that during the COVID-19 period, 73% of businesses in the country faced the challenge of liquidity, while 20% were laid off as a result of the negative consequences of COVID-19 on business enterprises. This scenario is not only experienced in Nigeria, but literature provides that digital entrepreneurship is an essential factor in cushioning the negative effect of COVID-19 (Purbasari et al., 2018; Soto-Acosta, 2020). This inferably means that by providing an enabling environment for the entrepreneurial activities of SMEs, new jobs would be created and the rate of unemployment would be drastically reduced. Further, the literature also posits that for the business to flourish, there is a need to explore new opportunities and innovative ideas, which are significantly related to the enhancement of the digital entrepreneurial mindset. Despite the fact that women and youths have been making tremendous efforts to foster entrepreneurship and business activities in the country, literature has identified a number of challenges, such as lack of adequate access to finance, insecurity, and inadequate infrastructure, which are barriers and challenges for sustainable business innovation (Bocken and Geradts, 2020). A conducive environment for the success and survival of business activities is a very vital factor for achieving social networking through collaboration among the stakeholders and actors of business by creating interaction in the setting of the environment (Fukuguwa, 2018; Passaro et al., 2020). Literature has identified biological, technological, and social systems as culminated systems for the success of the business, and human interaction is regarded as human capital in the business environment (Muafi et al., 2021). **Figure 1** shows conceptual interconnection of literature review explored in this study.

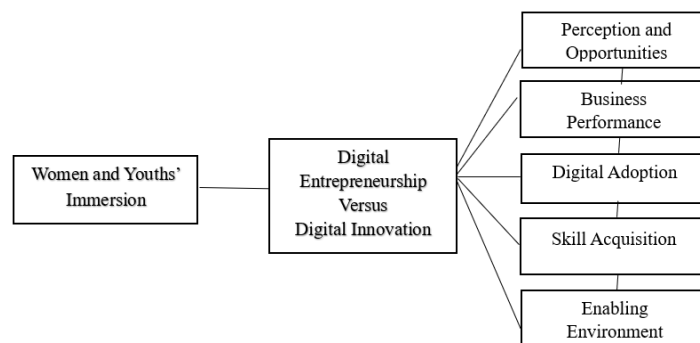


Figure 1. Conceptual interconnection of literature review (Wijaya and Rahayu, 2018; Fate Foundation, 2021; Purbasari et al., 2020; etc.).

6. Methodology

This part explains the methodological approach employed in this study. Contemporary digital entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that does not deal with

abstraction but relates to real-life daily activities. It is noteworthy to posit that critical content analysis (CCA) is an integral part of the qualitative method used in this study. Literature posits that content analysis can be employed on modern scenarios or phenomena, specifically those that are actually relating to real-life activities such as digital entrepreneurship. Indeed, digital entrepreneurship is regarded as a new and ongoing approach to business and trade activities in the context of Nigeria, which would enable researchers to link information systems with entrepreneurship, as the literature contends (Steiniger, 2019). Thus, it is paramount to utilize critical content analysis (CCA) to elaborate on the innovative model for business transactions. Moreso, the phenomenon of digital entrepreneurship in the context of Nigeria requires an in-depth explanation or analysis in order to enhance the business innovation introduced through the use of electronic means.

In so doing, the research would carefully explore secondary data relating to the central climax of the study in order to demonstrate the current practice of digital entrepreneurship innovation in the Nigerian context. Reiteratively, in order to have a better understanding of the digital entrepreneurship phenomenon in the context of Nigeria, the gap in the existing study requires filling the gap by thoroughly investigating the principles associated with the business model innovation process for an expansion of entrepreneurship, as the literature posits (Wagemans and Witchge, 2019). Similarly, enhancing digital or electronic entrepreneurship would improve the overall socio-economic development of the country. Cursory literature has emphatically noted that there is a need to link business model research with marketing as an integral part of analysis relating to the general overview of business models (Klimanov and Tretyak, 2019). Reiteratively, the study depends largely on secondary data via different databases, such as library sources, journals, and the core collection of the Web of Science (WOS).

Thus, visualization of similarities (VOS) was used to explore an overview of digital entrepreneurship in Nigeria and digital technology innovation, as well as five themes underscoring or featuring factors of women and youths' immersion in digital entrepreneurship, namely: perception and opportunities, business performance, digital adoption, skill acquisition, and the enabling environment. The investigation of the aforementioned factors is mainly to add value to entrepreneurial activities and programmes through business models and value propositions, as the literature contends (Yi et al., 2020).

It is noteworthy to posit that several studies provided methodological explanation and valuable guidance on conducting systematic literature reviews and crafting comprehensive literature review-based research (Kraus et al., 2022). Systematic literature review has several steps such as highlighting the critique is the arguments contained in the extant literature (Khan et al., 2022; Sauer and Seuring, 2023). Incorporating the insights and methodologies presented in the cursory literature relating to entrepreneurship, which provides significant explanation and enhances the rigor and clarity of methodology section of this study (Kraus et al., 2020). The recent study has explained the paramount importance of systematic literature review in small scale business as well as entrepreneurship which is explicitly relevant in this study, as literature contends (Kraus et al., 2023).

The analysis of this study is part of fulfilling the advocacy of previous studies for the reconstruction and redirection of research towards building business model innovation (Trischler and Li, 2022). Similarly, the challenges faced by entrepreneurship, such as lack of adequate access to finance, insecurity, and inadequate infrastructure, were highlighted. Entrepreneurship has certain skills for building up business ideas as a canvas for relevant research (Bougie and Sekaran, 2020). More importantly, the collations of the literature review were between 2018 and 2023, during which 61 articles were selected. The overall results of the study based on the generated themes are presented in the subsequent subheading.

7. Results and discussion

This part presents the overall results and discussion of findings based on the content analyses of secondary data from the literature review of the study. It is not deniable to posit that the extent of women and youths' participation in digital entrepreneurship cannot be underestimated. The discussion is centrally focused on digital entrepreneurship, digital technology innovation, and the underpinning factors of women and youths' immersion in digital entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The subsequent paramount explains each of the aforementioned aspects.

This study has emphatically stressed the paramount importance of digital entrepreneurship in addressing the current economic challenges in Nigeria in particular and in the world in general. Onwards, the engagement of entrepreneurs in the Nigerian context has focused specifically on the activities of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in contributing to national economic growth. Similarly, the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) has been playing various roles in the registration and coordination of different entrepreneurship programmes, which tend to boost the socio-economic development of the country. It is vital to note that buying and selling, either at micro or macro levels, are known among people of different settings, including Nigeria. However, meticulous attention is given to academic and intellectual discourse on entrepreneurship through the activities of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which has immensely contributed to the overall economy of the country. Literature affirmed that SMEs specifically contributed 48% to overall national gross domestic product (GDP) (Okoye and Adigwe, 2023). More importantly, SMEs contribute 96% to all business activities and they contribute 84% to employment opportunities.

An inference can be drawn that SMEs are an integral part of entrepreneurship, which contributes to the increase in job creation and poverty reduction in the country. This is in agreement with a number of studies that note the digitization of entrepreneurship significantly contributes to the success and sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Bocken and Geradts, 2020; Sahut et al., 2019). This analysis is also in consonance with previous studies that advocated for the digitization of entrepreneurial programmes in different parts of the world, including Nigeria, with significant roles for women and youths in achieving sustainable entrepreneurship programmes (Fate Foundation, 2022a; Fate Foundation, 2022b). One of the fundamental market innovations concerning digital entrepreneurship is that the platform tends to give a certain percentage, such as 30%, to the customers on whatever

they purchase in order to encourage them to patronize as well as to save a certain amount of money on whatever they purchase.

This study is also in line with a number of studies that regard entrepreneurship as a fundamental model through the application of the government’s economic policy. Hence, educational qualifications play an important role in the involvement of women and youths in entrepreneurship programmes in the country. It has been confirmed that most of the entrepreneurs (73%) in Nigeria possess bachelor’s degrees, 62% are self-employed, and just 20% are government workers. More specifically, there is a need to promote entrepreneurship among other holders of other qualifications (e.g., doctorate, masters, higher national diploma, national diploma) and government workers by adopting digital entrepreneurship in line with the relevant policies, which would be helpful in driving the growth of the economy in particular and other spheres of national development in general. **Figure 2** below shows the educational qualifications of entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

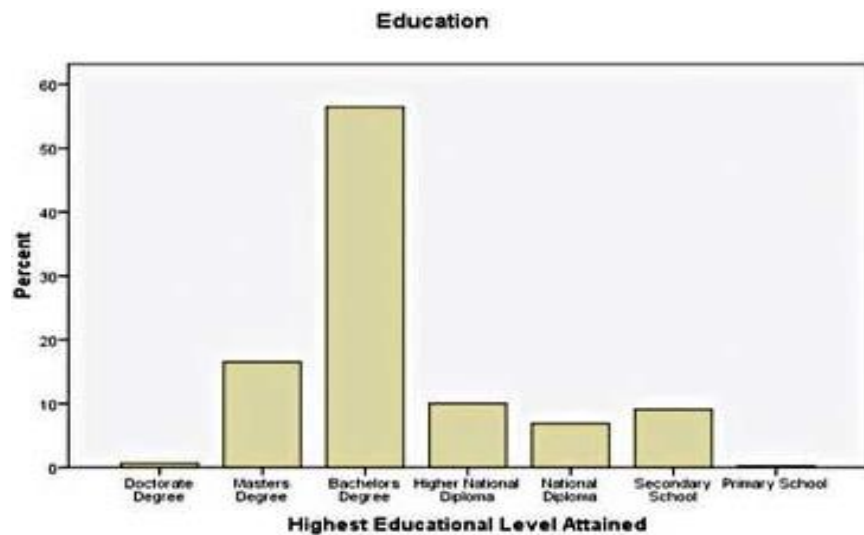


Figure 2. Educational qualifications of entrepreneurs in Nigeria. (Fate Foundation, 2022a).

Moreover, this study has acknowledged that digital innovation is one of the sustainable strategies to enhance entrepreneurial activities. For instance, this study has established that the purchase of goods through online platforms is an integral part of carrying out entrepreneurial activities through various online platforms. This position is in consonance with a number of studies that affirm that digital innovation brings about fundamental changes and innovations in business transactions in order to enhance the performance of businesses (Pang et al., 2019; Okoye and Adigwe, 2023). In addition, innovation in entrepreneurship essentially significantly aims at adding value to different aspects of production, such as sources of funds, inventing new methods of production, exploration of new markets, and the process of introducing new products to the market, among others. A strategy for reducing production costs is another aspect of adding value for entrepreneurs, which is added to their overall entrepreneurial activities (Banitez et al., 2020). The application of digital technology is regarded as an innovative strategy for stimulating and sustaining the growth of the economy. More specifically, the electronic mail is considered the vital means of

communication among entrepreneurs themselves relating to entrepreneurial activities. Nonetheless, the use of social media such as WhatsApp and Facebook are instrumental in advertising various products via the internet. Despite the fact that a number of studies emphatically stress the vital importance of information technology in enhancing entrepreneurship, there is a need for further improvement in strengthening the policies and programmes of entrepreneurship with specific attention to women and youths' participation. It is reiterated that there is a need for the government to strengthen policies on unexploited areas of entrepreneurship, such as agricultural business, which has a great potential to foster the economic growth of the country.

Onwards, apart from the overview of digital entrepreneurship and innovation, the content analysis also explored the underlining dimensions of women and youths' immersion in entrepreneurship. This study has established that there is a positive perception and potential opportunities concerning entrepreneurial activities in the Nigerian context. It thus opens another vista for the expansion and growth of digital entrepreneurship. There are many motivators on various social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp that encourage women and youths to participate in online businesses in the country (Fate Foundation, 2021). In so doing, the number of users grows and consequently produces revenues for the entrepreneurs as the originators of the business ideas. Several studies have acknowledged the significance of entrepreneurship in boosting the socio-economic growth of the country through their participations in the SMEs activities (Purbasari et al., 2018; Purbasari et al., 2020; Fate Foundation, 2022a; etc.).

Moreover, concerning the business performance, undoubtedly, there is a swift change in the way businesses are being carried out nowadays, and such changes have changed human behaviours at the global level concerning effective management and efficient business enterprises. It is not arguable to say that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have become an important driving mechanism for the economy of every nation, whereby they play an active role in the overall development of the daily business enterprises, which improves the finances of various households. As a result of this change, customers too have adapted to the dynamism that occurs in trade activities using online platforms. Moreover, it is essential to note that digital innovation can improve the performance of a company. The company's value is the foundation for its business performance. For the successful performance of business, the interrelationships among customers, suppliers, and other actors are essential for the success of the company's activities. The use of social networking can enhance interaction among the stakeholders in order to achieve a shared value for the company (Fate Foundation, 2021; Okoye and Adigwe, 2023; Muafi et al., 2021; etc.).

Furtherstill, the study has reiterated that digital adoption and the use of technology have been instrumental in promoting business ideas. The use of the Internet and smartphones has made business activities easier and thus promoted electronic business ideas and mindsets in the country. In various online platforms established by women and youths in the Nigerian context, the majority of people might be skeptical of the operation and launch of a website or platform. It has been acknowledged that technology has a positive impact on entrepreneurial and business activities whereby the possessional of business website that make business activities to be borderless. In the context of Nigeria, there are various small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that

actively partake in digital entrepreneurship; however, they also need to improve in utilizing website in promoting or creating awareness about their products. Currently, there are different social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, etc. that are serving as digital entrepreneurship platforms to attract customers in the country. The current trend in the use of the aforementioned social media has demonstrated that they are effective and efficient in disseminating information to their potential customers concerning the availability of their products. This is to attract sales of their goods in order to actively increase their turnover from business transactions where the use of technology has improved all spheres of human endeavour. More importantly, owners of businesses, large or small, have been promoting and advertising their products online. In other words, business owners have been showcasing their products to a larger audience via an online platform. This study is in agreement with a number of studies that contend that the entire world in general and Nigeria in particular have witnessed growth in business and entrepreneurial activities through the adoption of digital technology (Beliaeva et al., 2020; Schmidt and Scaringella, 2020; Saqib and Satar, 2021).

Furthermore, regarding skill acquisition, this study has indicated that the acquisition of various skills that will help businesses achieve success, is important. For instance, computing skills are essential to promoting digital entrepreneurship in the country. However, there is a fundamental concern about how to attract customers to purchase the products online. Nonetheless, literature contends that new entrepreneurs among women and youths can learn from the steps, actions, and strategies of the foremost entrepreneurs in the online business industry (Muafi et al., 2021). However, it should be reiterated that women and youths that are willing to partake in the online business should have innovative ideas for drawing audiences online using social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, etc. While making giant or meaningful strides in reaching the audience, one's business website can be launched to attract more customers from various places.

Reiteratively, the success of many digital entrepreneurship platforms that promote business ideas and various products in society demonstrates that there is an enabling environment for promoting businesses online. This is in agreement with a number of studies that emphatically stressed the vital importance of the enabling environment in propelling business ideas (Fukuguwa, 2018; Bocken and Geradts, 2020; Passaro et al., 2020; etc.). For instance, Jumia Nigeria was established in 2012 and is considered the most visited online business platform in the country. Various products are sold via the Jumia platform in the country. In addition, Konga is another online platform, Megastore, that sells different products with the prime target of making the products or goods available to meet the needs of customers. One of the vital innovations of Konga is that owners of small businesses are encouraged to showcase their products to customers through its website.

Furthermore, Pay Porte was initiated in 2014 with the sole target of youth and young professionals. It is regarded by the initiator as the most preferred online store for retail trading or business platforms. As part of its effort to attract a larger audience, the platform also collaborates with local businesses in order to showcase their products through its platform. Moreso, Slot System Limited is another leading online store selling computers, phones, laptops, accessories, and many other electronics. Apart

from the website, there are social media platforms that serve as complementary platforms for advertising and promoting their products. However, it is not disputable to posit that most entrepreneurs in the country operate at the micro level, comprising between 0 and 9 employees. Thus, the level of interconnectedness among entrepreneurs, government agencies, investors, and members of higher education, among others, plays a significant role in creating the enabling environment for the triumph of business activities. Onwards, digital startups in relation to entrepreneurship have sprung up with the maximization of profit. This has brought about positive waves among the stakeholders and the academic community in recent times.

Literature identifies that the use of smartphone is an innovation for business behaviour as an integral part of entrepreneurship among women in Asia as part of emerging economy (Hossain et al., 2020). This study has established the significance of entrepreneurship in Nigeria with the use of smartphone for business activities. Nonetheless, enlightenment on the judicious use of smartphone for business purposes is paramount in the context of Nigeria due to the misuse of smartphone for fraudulent activities. This is in line with the previous studies that demonstrated that entrepreneurship education is an important element for future of workforce in developing countries like Nigeria (Yusuff, 2020). Reiteratively, digital platforms are considered as innovative performances of small and medium enterprises (SMES) as an integral part of entrepreneurship in boosting the economy of emerging economies like Nigeria, as literature contends (Khattak et al., 2022).

In a nutshell, the analysis of the paper has demonstrated that women and youths' participation in digital entrepreneurship cannot be underestimated as significant contributors to the growth of the economy. In other words, the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs have demonstrated that they are major drivers of wealth and job creations. It has been shown that the government, through various entrepreneurial programmes, has been able to promote and encourage a sense of entrepreneurship among the less privileged women and youths in the country. This is so because, without funds, it might be difficult to make meaningful progress with their business ideas. This has led to a significant impact of entrepreneurship on the overall economy of the country. The various online stores possess warehouses that are stocked with various goods or products, and they are located in various cities across the country, such as Abuja, Lagos, and Port Harcourt, in order to have a smooth and efficient delivery of products to the customers. Literature posits that communication and interaction possess certain processes and mechanisms used by the stakeholders or actors in a particular business setting in order to achieve specific outcomes.

8. Conclusion and suggestions

This study has investigated the immersion of women and youths in digital entrepreneurship as a strategy for boosting economic growth in Nigeria. Based on the content analysis of the existing literature, it has been confirmed that five factors contribute to digital entrepreneurship innovation: perception and opportunities, business performance, digital adoption, skill acquisition, and the enabling environment. Thus, harmonization of the aforementioned factors of digital innovation would foster the performance of business activities through the creation of productive

and competitive entrepreneurial startups. In so doing, it would enable women and youths to play active roles in expanding digital entrepreneurship in the country in order to enhance the growth of the overall economy. The study has provided insightful ideas to the stakeholders concerning the paramount importance of digital entrepreneurship in the community, whereby collaborations among the private, public, and academic arenas, among others can drastically promote economic growth. It has been further noted that the vibrancy of women and youth in entrepreneurial activities is so important for exploring the impact of technological adoption for maximizing the business landscape and wider networking for promoting business ideas in society. With the use of technology and accessibility to the Internet, it has been shown that younger entrepreneurs would be able to launch their new businesses via online platforms. However, the limitation of this study is that the roles of stakeholders such as customers, suppliers, government, startups, banks, investors, universities, communities, and information media experts, among others, have not been explicitly elaborated in this study. In addition, further analysis can explore the aforementioned factors that are not deeply investigated in this study as a way of filling the gap. Nonetheless, the study has further demonstrated that entrepreneurship has a bright future and has potential that will maximize the enabling environment for entrepreneurs to triumph. It is therefore suggested that:

- 1) There is a need to strengthen the small and medium enterprise development agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) through institutional or governmental support by providing an entrepreneurship framework for the operation of entrepreneurial programmes among women and youth entrepreneurs in the country.
- 2) Efficient provision of the Internet and easy support for accessing smartphones by the owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can be helpful in enhancing the growth and maximizing the significant impact of entrepreneurship by women and youths on the overall economy of the country.
- 3) There is a need to develop Industrial Digital Solutions (IDS) for startups of entrepreneurial activities by acquainting women and youth entrepreneurs with knowledge, skills, and competency for digital innovation.
- 4) There is a need to develop an effective and efficient framework for the operation of entrepreneurship by integrating digital innovation into it in order to maximize productivity and competitiveness among business owners and other stakeholders.
- 5) Stakeholders such as the government and digital experts should help investors and entrepreneurs have access to loans or capital to kick-start their innovative business ideas.
- 6) Future and further research should be empirically conducted to explore the variables and sub-components investigated in the study, with specific attention to the actors of digital entrepreneurship in the country.

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