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DEVELOPING EXPERIENTIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING AND ENTREPRENEURIAL READINESS AMONG BUSINESS STUDENT IMPLEMENTERS IN A BUSINESS SCHOOL-BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP HUB

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Abstract: This study critically discussed the effects of developing experiential entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial readiness among business student implementers in a business school based entrepreneurship hub with the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Hub, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos, Nigeria, as the institutional context. The study had two objectives, to examine the effect of EEFL practices on entrepreneurial readiness and to analyse the role of the ecosystem of entrepreneurship hubs in improving entrepreneurial competence and implementation capacity among student entrepreneurs. A mixed methods approach with quantitative and qualitative methods was used to design the study. The number of samples in this study was 210 business implementers who were students and had been determined using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Multiple regression analysis for quantitative analysis, and thematic qualitative analysis as the analysis technique. Results indicated that experiential entrepreneurial learning had a significant positive effect on entrepreneurial confidence, innovation capability, opportunity recognition competence, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial venture implementation preparedness of the participants. It also explained that entrepreneurship hubs were strategic experiential ecosystems that had the capability of enhancing entrepreneurship readiness through entrepreneurship experience, mentorship, co-learning, and engaging in innovation. The study concluded that experiential entrepreneurial learning was an important mechanism in addressing this conundrum of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial employability outcomes in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Experiential Entrepreneurial Learning, Entrepreneurial Readiness, Entrepreneurship Hub, Student Business Implementers, Entrepreneurship Education.

Introduction

The heightened uncertainty of today's labor markets, the high unemployment rate of graduates, and the growing disconnect between theory based business education and the actual needs of the job market have stimulated global discussions about whether higher education institutions could prepare entrepreneurially competent graduates for their function in an economy that is volatile and dependent on innovation. In developed and developing societies, employers increasingly sought to hire graduates with adaptive entrepreneurial competencies, opportunity recognition abilities, experiential problems solving capacities, collaborative intelligence and practical business implementation skills in addition to the knowledge acquired in the classroom (Rodriguez & Lieber, 2020; Ojule & Oliobi, 2024). This shift had brought entrepreneurship education to the heart of educational reform, as the traditional pedagogies that focused on classroom centred teaching were criticized for being too abstract and not providing entrepreneurship engagement and implementation capacities (Penaluna et al., 2020; Crișan et al., 2024). Experiential entrepreneurial learning is a significant paradigm change in entrepreneurship education. Experiential approaches, on the other hand, emphasized the entrepreneurial competence as a socially constructed and praxis-based capability that can be developed through active engagement in entrepreneurial processes, venture experimentation, market interaction, innovation projects, mentorship systems, and business incubator experiences (Brahmankar et al., 2022; Omole, 2026). As a result, business school-based entrepreneurship hubs emerged as significant institutional tools for students to gain entrepreneurial readiness not only by being exposed to a pedagogy but also by being immersed in a true entrepreneurship environment. In many African Higher Education systems, including Nigeria, policymakers have been engaged in the continuous expansion of entrepreneurship education policies over the past decade due to the surge in youth unemployment and graduate underemployment, and poor school-to-work transitions (Raza, 2021; Ojule & Oliobi, 2024). Yet, despite this policy expansion, there were still continuous criticisms of the poor practical orientation of entrepreneurship programs in tertiary institutions. Often, existing entrepreneurship curricula were redundant, lacking incubation facilities, industry linkages, mentorship, and commercialization opportunities for student innovators (Sanusi & Abdullahi, 2025; Kolajo et al., 2026). Thus, despite the exposure to entrepreneurship courses, many of the

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graduates still displayed low entrepreneurial readiness. Entrepreneurial readiness has become a multi-dimensional construct with entrepreneurial mindset, self efficacy, innovation capability, venture preparedness, resilience, opportunity exploitation competence, and market adaptability (Muawiyah et al., 2025). In the context of entrepreneurial readiness, contemporary scholarship started to denounce the notion that this could only be accomplished through cognitive input, as entrepreneurial behaviour requires hands-on involvement that can influence entrepreneurial identity formation and confidence in action (Rodriguez & Lieber, 2020; Haikali & Hasholo, 2026). The argument thus questioned the notion that education for entrepreneurship was synonymous with the entrepreneurial competencies. Business school based entrepreneurship hubs were thus increasingly becoming the focus of the academic world as they combined experience based learning infrastructures and institutional entrepreneurial ecosystems. On the whole, these hubs were usually designed to be multifaceted innovation hubs, with students engaging in business incubation, venture acceleration, product development, entrepreneurial networking, digital enterprise activities, and industry linked innovation projects (Barliana et al., 2025). Entrepreneurial learning was integrated into these environments in processes aimed at action, which could bridge the conceptual learning of entrepreneurship with the implementation of an entrepreneurial venture. New research indicated that experiential entrepreneurial ecosystems improved the academic students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy, employability, innovation behaviour, and entrepreneurial persistence (Brahmankar et al., 2022; Yeboah, 2025). However, there were still significant controversies about the effectiveness of the impact of entrepreneurship hubs on the entrepreneurial readiness of student entrepreneurs in higher education. A key scholarly discussion was whether experiential entrepreneurial learning environments primarily strengthened entrepreneurial intention or if they actually resulted in measurable entrepreneurial readiness and entrepreneurial implementation capability. Some researchers found that experiential entrepreneurship ecosystems contributed to the confidence of entrepreneurs and their innovation orientation (Muawiyah et al., 2025; Omole, 2026), while others noted that many institutional entrepreneurship hubs lacked sustainable integration in the industry, investment support, and measurable venture development outcomes (Crișan et al., 2024). Likewise, there were arguments on whether entrepreneurial readiness was a result of curriculum changes or there was more to entrepreneurial readiness as an outcome of entrepreneurial ecosystem relations involving mentorship, peer learning, industry collaborations, and exposure to innovation (Barliana et al., 2025; Yeboah, 2025). Another unresolved issue was the inadequate empirical investigation of the student business implementers in the University Business School-based entrepreneurship hubs in Sub-Saharan Africa. Previous research mostly examined entrepreneurial intention, awareness of entrepreneurship, curriculum development, or employability outcomes for the general student population (Rodriguez & Lieber, 2020; Ojule & Oliobi, 2024). Fewer studies focused critically on the impact of experiential entrepreneurial learning on the entrepreneurial readiness of the students who were involved in entrepreneurship implementation in the entrepreneurship hubs. This constraint resulted in a substantial contextual and conceptual gap as student business implementers constituted a group of learners directly engaged with the realities of venture creation, the innovation management processes, and the entrepreneurial decision making environments. In addition, much of the literature remained focused on secondary school or on the vocational education system, or on a more generalised entrepreneurship education system, outside of the context of the university business school (Penaluna et al., 2020; Haikali & Hasholo, 2026). As a result, little scholarly research focus had been given to understanding the role played by universities' entrepreneurship hubs as experiential ecosystems that can boost entrepreneurial readiness among emerging student entrepreneurs in developing economies. This gap was especially critical in Nigeria, where entrepreneurship education policies have been steadily growing even as the issue of employability among graduates remained unresolved, and the sustainability of enterprises remained low. With this in mind, this study targeted the student business implementers of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Hub of the Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria. This decision was guided by the growing entrepreneurship innovation ecosystem at the University of Lagos, excellent proximity to industries in Nigeria's commercial hub, increasing focus on enterprise incubation by the institution, and active student entrepreneurship engagement programs. The Lagos State context was also appropriate as it is Nigeria's entrepreneurial and innovation hub.

The aim of this study was to critically review the impact of experiential entrepreneurial learning on the entrepreneurial readiness of student business implementers in a business school based entrepreneurship hub. In particular, the study aimed to:

1. Examine the influence of experiential entrepreneurial learning practices on entrepreneurial readiness among student business implementers within the entrepreneurship hub; and
2. Analyse the role of the business school based entrepreneurship hub ecosystem in strengthening entrepreneurial competence, venture confidence, and practical business implementation capacity among student entrepreneurs.

To achieve these objectives, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. How did experiential entrepreneurial learning practices influence entrepreneurial readiness among student business implementers within the entrepreneurship hub?
2. In what ways did the business school based entrepreneurship hub ecosystem strengthen entrepreneurial competence and implementation capacity among student entrepreneurs?

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Experiential Entrepreneurial Learning

Experiential entrepreneurial learning was developed from the more general experiential education traditions that posited that learning was more meaningful when participants were involved in learning to solve real-world problems instead of passively receiving instructions in theoretical learning. In the world of entrepreneurship education, the experiential learning approach has already been regarded as a transformative approach to teaching and learning that has the potential to close the long-standing entrepreneurial theory-practice gap (Penaluna et al., 2020). The focus was on active entrepreneurial activities by fostering venture creation, experimentation and innovation, exposure to markets, product development, mentoring, business simulations, incubation activities, and collaborative enterprise activities. As the

entrepreneurial learning concept was gaining momentum, there was an increased discontent with traditional entrepreneur education programs that were often accused of focusing too much on cognitive awareness and insufficiently on entrepreneurial competence and implementation capacity (Crișan et al., 2024). Traditional models of entrepreneurship education have often been characterized as mainly classroom-based, only addressing aspects of business planning, and do not involve students in the uncertainty and the ambiguity of the real world of entrepreneurship, nor in the iterative decision-making process characteristic of the field. Thus, it was very common to see graduates who were aware of entrepreneurship but were not ready for it or could not implement a venture. Brahmankar et al. (2022) contended that experiential entrepreneurial learning shifted the paradigm of entrepreneurial education from passive knowledge acquisition to active involvement in entrepreneurship. They showed that student entrepreneurs who had practical exposure in entrepreneurial ecosystems had better development of innovation orientation, collaborative skills, and entrepreneurial adaptability in times of economic uncertainty. This argument further strengthened the idea that entrepreneurial abilities are socially formed through practice based interaction and not just formally delivered instruction. Again, Omole (2026) argued that experiential entrepreneurship training was one of the strategic pathways to sustainable employment of youths as it would make the learners creative, resilient, and competent in innovation skills. The study highlighted that experiential learning settings provided students with opportunities to internalize entrepreneurial behaviour through repeated learning experiences with authentic entrepreneurial tasks. These arguments were in line with Rodriguez and Lieber (2020), who argued that experiential entrepreneurial activities would strengthen the formation of an entrepreneurial mindset and enhance career readiness outcomes among learners. Collaborative and ecosystem aspects were also included in experiential entrepreneurial learning. Entrepreneurship education has increasingly transitioned from being a standalone classroom learning experience to inclusive innovation ecosystems with participation from industry actors, mentorship networks, peer collaboration, and digital platforms for entrepreneurship (Barliana et al., 2025). In these ecosystems, students learned about the entrepreneurial competency through the process of observing, experimenting, failure management, engaging with the market, and commercializing innovations. This ecosystem view significantly broadened the idea of entrepreneurial learning, going beyond a mere cognitive acquisition of entrepreneurship. Yet there was a considerable amount of criticism about how experiential entrepreneurial learning can be put into practice in many educational institutions. Crișan et al. (2024) contended that many universities were employing superficial experiential models without forming sustainable partnerships with industry, venture incubation facilities, and/or long-term mentorship systems for entrepreneurship. Consequently, a number of entrepreneurship programmes remained in symbolic experiential settings that did not involve real-life opportunities to engage in entrepreneurship. This criticism indicated that meaningful results for entrepreneurial readiness could only be derived from experiential entrepreneurial learning if supported by functional institutional entrepreneurial ecosystems. Another important concern was that students were not all exposed to the same amount of experiential entrepreneurial opportunities. One of the main findings was that the effectiveness of experiential entrepreneurial initiatives in many developing economies was hindered by institutional resource constraints, insufficient funding, lack of innovation infrastructure, and poor entrepreneurial policy implementation (Raza, 2021). Thus, while experiential entrepreneurship education was conceptually embraced in the international context, its effectiveness in implementation was still extremely heterogeneous across institutional and national contexts. In the context of Nigeria's Higher Education System, the focus on entrepreneurship education reforms is growing to emphasize practical entrepreneurial activities, stemming from the awareness of the Nigerian government and other stakeholders on the rising rate of graduate unemployment and the lack of stability in the labour market (Kolajo et al., 2026). But the theoretical teaching methodology that is still being practiced in universities remains a challenge for the entrepreneurial readiness outcome of the graduates. This situation further emphasized the need to critically reflect on the experience entrepreneurial learning in institutional entrepreneurship hubs where students engage in entrepreneurial implementation activities.

Entrepreneurial Readiness

Entrepreneurial readiness was a multi-dimensional construct that focused on an individual's readiness to see entrepreneurial opportunities, to act on them to start businesses, to deal with the uncertainty of the entrepreneurial environment, and to continue their innovative economic activities. In contrast to entrepreneurial intention, which is mainly concerned with the motivational predisposition toward entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial readiness includes more general aspects of entrepreneurial capacities in behavior, psychology, cognition, and practice, which are essential for successful entrepreneurial participation (Muawiyah et al., 2025). A shift in the conceptualization of entrepreneurship scholarship is that entrepreneurial readiness is seen as the result of integrated entrepreneurial experiences, which include the development of entrepreneurial mindset, entrepreneurial opportunity recognition competence, entrepreneurial self efficacy, innovation orientation, resilience, risk management capacity and market adaptability (Rodriguez & Lieber, 2020). This multidimensional nature challenged previous reductionist studies that considered entrepreneurial readiness just entrepreneurial intention or a business ownership desire. Muawiyah et al. (2025) claimed that entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset formation, peer learning systems, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy had a significant impact on entrepreneurial readiness. The results indicated that entrepreneurial readiness is a continuous process, with a series of interactions between exposure to education and building entrepreneurial confidence. This role confirmed the behavioral assumption that becoming entrepreneurially prepared is not only about acquiring knowledge but also about becoming an entrepreneur. In the same vein, Haikali and Hasholo (2026) stressed the importance of exposing students to entrepreneurial thinking and basic business concepts early on to cultivate their entrepreneurial preparedness. Entrepreneurial competence was found to grow better when students were actively involved in entrepreneurial activities that elicit innovative behavior and problem-solving orientation. This argument resonated with Yinka and Chidinma (2025), who posited that the entrepreneurial readiness of the students was significantly dependent on innovation experimentation opportunities, collaborative enterprise participation opportunities, and actual entrepreneurial experiences. In the higher education system, entrepreneurial readiness is increasingly linked to the employability and economic adaptability of graduates. Ojule and Oliobi (2024) stated that the purpose of entrepreneurship education must not only be to raise awareness and

knowledge of entrepreneurship among its graduates, but it must also enhance the ability of graduates to compete in varying economic atmosphere. This view was echoed by other concerns about the employment prospects of graduates from exclusively academic education that lacked any grounding in the realities of enterprise. Changing labour market conditions also saw an increasing emphasis on entrepreneurial readiness. In the 21st century, economies required more adaptable people who could produce innovative entrepreneurial opportunities and not only relied on the formal wage labour (Raza, 2021). As a result, entrepreneurship education was strategically connected to other developmental objectives such as youth empowerment and economic resilience, the growth of innovation and the creation of sustainable employment. However, entrepreneurship readiness was still a disputed phenomenon in the field of entrepreneurship. A major debate was whether it was possible to measure entrepreneurial readiness by only using educational interventions. Several researchers suggested that "Entrepreneurial readiness" was a complex behavioral phenomenon, which was determined by other socioeconomic, cultural, institutional and market factors rather than the educational exposure. Thus, entrepreneurship education per se could not ensure entrepreneurial readiness without the enabling entrepreneurial ecosystems that would ensure the sustainability of the ventures. A second major criticism was the lack of attention of some entrepreneurship programmes to entrepreneurial competence development when they focus on entrepreneurship rhetoric. However, critics argued that some of the entrepreneurship programs were too much motivational in nature and lacked technical entrepreneurial skills – financial planning, innovation commercialization, strategic networking, digital enterprise management, and operational decision making (Sanusi & Abdullahi, 2025). These criticisms gave strength to the need of institutional entrepreneurship hubs that would enable students to get hands-on experience in implementing entrepreneurship.

Business School Based Entrepreneurship Hubs

An institutionally organized entrepreneurial ecosystem is a business school based entrepreneurship hub that encourages entrepreneurial learning, innovation development, venture incubation, industry interaction, mentorship interaction, and hands-on enterprise interaction among students. These hubs served as a place of structured entrepreneurship and where entrepreneurial learning will further expand to entrepreneurial experimentation and business implementation activities. The rise in the number of entrepreneurship hubs globally was an indicator of the general changes made by higher education institutions to entrepreneurship learning. The leverage of the universities' role in innovation and their direct impact on economic development, technological innovation, and entrepreneurial ecosystem expansion (Yeboah, 2025) has gained a footing in the educational sector. As a result, business schools started to create entrepreneurship hubs as strategic platforms to foster the entrepreneurship of students and enhance the employment outcomes of graduates. Barliana et al. (2025) suggested that entrepreneurship ecosystems in educational institutions were found to enhance entrepreneurial learning by focusing on the integration of digital innovations in entrepreneurship, collaborative entrepreneurship development, and hands-on entrepreneurial involvement. Their study showed that institutional entrepreneurial ecosystems helped students develop their entrepreneurial competence continuously by engaging in innovation processes and entrepreneurial networks. Likewise, Brahmankar et al. (2022) noted that more attention and efforts are needed to make entrepreneurship hubs vital during times of economic uncertainty, as they can create adaptive entrepreneurial learning environments that help sustain innovation and collaboration. University-industry collaboration was also supported by the business school based entrepreneurship hubs. Yeboah (2025) found that robust university–business relationships enabled the development of entrepreneurship through industry mentorship, investment networks, innovation markets, and commercialization opportunities. Those interactions enhanced entrepreneurial realism amongst students by introducing them to the dynamics of business implementation and real world business challenges faced by entrepreneurs. But there were key concerns about the effectiveness of some institutional entrepreneurship hubs. Crișan et al. (2024) pointed out that many universities are creating entrepreneurship centres which are not for the purpose of building the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the long term, but for the goodwill of the university. As a result, many entrepreneurship hubs did not have funding, qualified entrepreneurship mentors, commercialization support structures, technological infrastructure, and integration mechanisms with industry needed to enable meaningful entrepreneurship development. One of the difficulties encountered was the sustainability of students' business ideas born from entrepreneurship hubs. Entrepreneurship hotspot created enthusiasm among students towards entrepreneurship, but the limited access to financing, challenges in market penetration, and weak post incubation support system resulted in failure of many student-led businesses after the end of the incubation period, as per several studies (Raza, 2021). In this regard, this criticism stated that, besides entrepreneurial participation in hubs, it is necessary to look at the quality and sustainability of entrepreneurial readiness outcomes as a result of entrepreneurial ecosystems. With the government spurred by entrepreneurship education reforms and the growing concern about the unemployment rate of graduates, entrepreneurship hubs started to emerge in Nigeria, with an increasing trend in universities. However, there were some marked differences between the effectiveness of these hubs in institutions. Some universities established more viable innovation ecosystems, while others kept on running entrepreneurship centres with few opportunities for practical engagement with entrepreneurship (Kolajo et al., 2026). This irregularity further highlighted the need to study entrepreneurship hubs in a certain institutional context.

Theoretical Review

Experiential Learning Theory

The Experiential Learning Theory proposed by David Kolb was the main theory underpinning this study. In this theory, learning is argued to be a process of ongoing transformation of experiences, with concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation making up the four stages. In the field of entrepreneurial education, the theory was proposed that entrepreneurial competence would be created more effectively when students were exposed to entrepreneurial activities in addition to theory. Experiential Learning Theory's focus on practical engagement was the foundation of meaningful learning, which influenced the relevance of the theory in this study. Entrepreneurship meant uncertainty management, innovation experimentation, opportunity recognition, and strategic adaptation that could not be passively transferred to the entrepreneurs through instructional methods alone. Business school based entrepreneurship hubs thus constituted practical settings for students to be prepared for entrepreneurship by actively engaging

in entrepreneurship. The theoretical stance was corroborated by Rodriguez and Lieber (2020), who showed the importance of experiential entrepreneurial activities in enhancing the development of entrepreneurial mindset and career readiness outcomes among students. Likewise, the study of Brahmankar et al. (2022) reveals that entrepreneurial involvement in a collaborative entrepreneurial ecosystem increased the innovation competence and entrepreneurial adaptability of learners. The applicability of Experiential Learning Theory was, however, called into question because it does not fully explain issues of structural and institutional inequalities that influence the participation of entrepreneurs. There is significant debate that access to entrepreneurial experiences often relies on institutional resources, social capital, economic inequality, and ecosystem support systems. Thus, it is possible that the effects of experiential learning could not be consistent in all educational settings and may not lead to consistent results of entrepreneurship.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory also offered valuable explanatory bases for this study. The theory assumed that education improved the productive ability of individuals by increasing their knowledge, skills, and competence. In the field of entrepreneurship education, it was hoped that entrepreneurial learning would enhance entrepreneurial competencies that may have a positive impact on economic productivity and employment. The theory was still applicable because the business readiness of entrepreneurs was significantly affected by the entrepreneurial competencies they acquired, which, among others, are entrepreneurial management competency, problem solving competency, innovation skills, and opportunity recognition ability. Thus, entrepreneurship hubs served as the institutional processes of entrepreneurial human capital development. Ojule and Oliobi (2024) endorsed this view by positing that entrepreneurship education boosted the employment of graduates in competitive labor markets. In the same vein, Omole (2026) reiterated the fact that experiential entrepreneurship education enhanced the innovation competence of the youth and their sustainable employment potential. But Human Capital Theory has been criticized for treating individual competence as a key determinant of entrepreneurial success while neglecting the structural barriers that impact entrepreneurial success. Researchers started to contend that the success of entrepreneurship was not just a matter of personal attributes but also of access to finance, institutional infrastructure, market conditions, and policy environments (Ncanywa et al., 2025). So, only investing in education was insufficient to describe entrepreneurial readiness.

Empirical Review

The connection between experiential entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial readiness was gaining more and more support from existing empirical research. The study by Rodriguez and Lieber (2020) revealed significant relationships between entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial mindset formation, and career readiness among secondary school students. They found that experiential entrepreneurial activities build up confidence and readiness of students for entrepreneurial engagement. Brahmankar et al. (2022) explored the nature of entrepreneurial involvement of business school students during the pandemic and concluded that practical entrepreneurial ecosystems enhanced innovation behaviour and adaptive entrepreneurial competence. In line with Muawiyah et al. (2025), the effect of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial self-efficacy on the entrepreneurial readiness of vocational students was significant. In an African education setting, Kolajo et al. (2026) posited that learners' employability and entrepreneurial adaptability were enhanced through transformative entrepreneurship curricula. Haikali and Hasholo (2026) also found that the incorporation of entrepreneurial elements in the school curriculum led to an increase in entrepreneurial thinking and the orientation towards entrepreneurship. However, there were significant gaps in the empirical evidence. Many studies have oriented mainly towards entrepreneurial intention as opposed to entrepreneurial readiness. Several studies were also focused on secondary or vocational education settings, and limited research focused on the university student business implementers and entrepreneurship hubs within higher education. Moreover, limited studies critically reviewed the role of the entrepreneurship hub ecosystem on the entrepreneurial practical implementation capacity of the student entrepreneurs in Nigerian universities.

This research has therefore filled important contextual, conceptual, and empirical gaps by critically studying experiential entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial readiness of student business implementers in a business school based entrepreneurship hub in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods research design with a pragmatic philosophical orientation in order to critically investigate the relationship between experiential entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial readiness of student business implementers in the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Hub of the Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria. The use of the mixed methods approach was found to be suitable as the object of study was behavioral patterns that could be measured, as well as the underlying realities of entrepreneurial experiences, entrepreneurial competence formation, and institutional entrepreneurial ecosystems that would require analysis. The quantitative dimension of the study allowed statistical identification of the influence of experiential entrepreneurial learning on entrepreneurial readiness, whereas the qualitative dimension allowed for critical insights into the experiences, perceptions, and entrepreneurial engagements of the student business implementers in the entrepreneurship hub environment. The study population comprised all the registered entrepreneurship and innovation hub student business implementers of the Faculty of Management Sciences for the 2025 academic session. The participants consisted of students engaged in various entrepreneurship activities such as venture incubation, innovation development programs, entrepreneurship competitions, business simulation exercises, mentorship programs, and enterprise commercialization programs through the entrepreneurship hub. The study was specifically targeting the student business implementers since they were students with first-hand exposure to entrepreneurship practice and not just to the exposure of students in entrepreneurship education. A multistage sampling method was used in the study. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, as the students who were involved in the entrepreneurship hub were found to be relevant to the objectives of the study. Following this, a stratified sampling technique was used to give equal representation to various categories of entrepreneurial activity such as product based ventures, service based ventures, digital enterprise initiatives and innovation development projects.

For the quantitative phase of the study, Cochran's Sample size determination formula for a finite population was used, and the Sample size of 210 respondents was selected. Qualitative data collection involved purposive sampling of 12 respondents who showed high levels of engagement in entrepreneurship, experience in participating in ventures, and involvement in innovation in the entrepreneurship hubs. Structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides were used for the collection of primary data. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: entrepreneurial readiness indicators, entrepreneurship hub ecosystem factors, experiential entrepreneurial learning dimensions, and demographic variables. A five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used to measure the items. The experiential entrepreneurial learning construct comprises four dimensions, namely, practical exposure to entrepreneurship, interaction with the mentor, participation in innovation, collaborative learning, and experimentation in the venture. Entrepreneurial readiness was assessed based on entrepreneurial self efficacy, entrepreneurial opportunity recognition competence, entrepreneurial implementation confidence, innovation orientation, and venture preparedness indicators.

The qualitative interview guide delved into the entrepreneurial experiences, perceptions of institutional support for entrepreneurship, innovation challenges faced, realities of venture implementation, and participants' perspectives on the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship hub for building entrepreneurial competencies. The qualitative part has been needed due to the complexities of behavioral and experiential aspects of entrepreneurial readiness, which cannot be solely measured in numbers. To ensure the validity of the research instruments, face and content validity of the instruments were established by experts in entrepreneurship education, educational management, and business innovation studies. Their observations informed changes to the instruments in terms of clarity, relevance, and the conceptual alignment of instruments to the objectives of the study. Cronbach's alpha reliability technique was used in establishing the reliability of the quantitative instrument. The overall reliability coefficient secured was 0.87, which indicated strong internal consistency and suitability of the instrument for collecting data. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, assisted by the use of a computer software package called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Frequency distribution, mean scores, and standard deviation were used to summarize the participants' responses. Multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used to investigate the impact of experiential entrepreneurial learning on the entrepreneurial readiness and the relationship between the entrepreneurial readiness ecosystem factors and the developmental status of entrepreneurial competence. Results were analyzed using 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data collected from the interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed thematically. The thematic analysis process helped in identifying the recurring patterns, divergent perspectives, entrepreneurial experiences, and realities of institutional support and challenges in the implementation of experiential entrepreneurial learning in the entrepreneurship hub. Ethical aspects were carefully considered during the research process. Participants were given information on the purpose of the study, voluntary participation was stressed, confidentiality was guaranteed, and informed consent was obtained before data was collected.

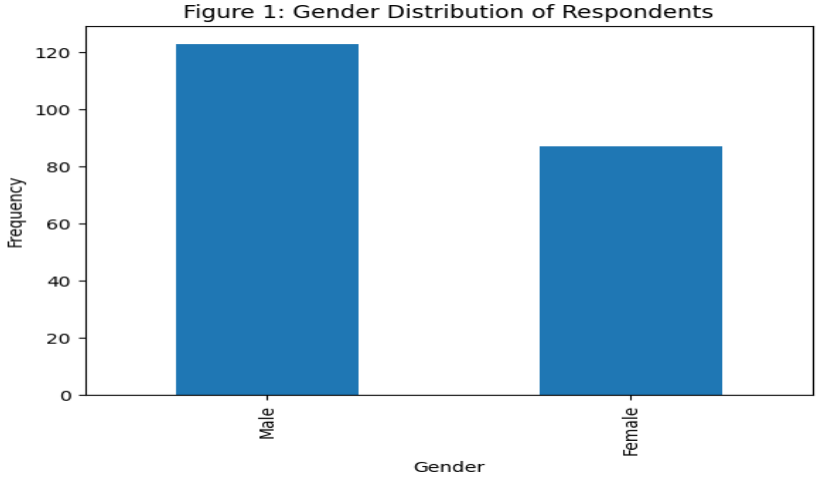
Results and Discussion

Quantitative Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 210)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	118	56.2
	Female	92	43.8
Age	18–22 Years	74	35.2
	23–27 Years	101	48.1
	28 Years and Above	35	16.7
Entrepreneurial Activity	Product Based Ventures	69	32.9
	Service Based Ventures	58	27.6
	Digital Enterprise Initiatives	47	22.4
	Innovation Development Projects	36	17.1
Duration in Entrepreneurship Hub	Less than 1 Year	62	29.5
	1–2 Years	94	44.8
	Above 2 Years	54	25.7

Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents



The demographic result showed that the majority of respondents were male (56.2%) and female (43.8%), which is a relatively equal share of the entrepreneurial population in the entrepreneurship hub with respect to gender. The majority of the respondents were in the age group 23-27 years (48.1%) which means that most of the students were active transitioners between higher education and labour market participation, showing a higher level of entrepreneurial activity. Among the various entrepreneurship categories, the highest was the product based ventures (32.9%) followed by service based ventures (27.6%). Moreover, 44.8% of respondents had been involved in the entrepreneurship hub for one to 2 years; that is to say, there was a significant amount of experience with hands-on entrepreneurship for participants. The demographic results indicated that the entrepreneurship hub had attracted students from various categories of entrepreneurial engagement, thus supporting the representativeness of the results of the study related to experiential entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial readiness.

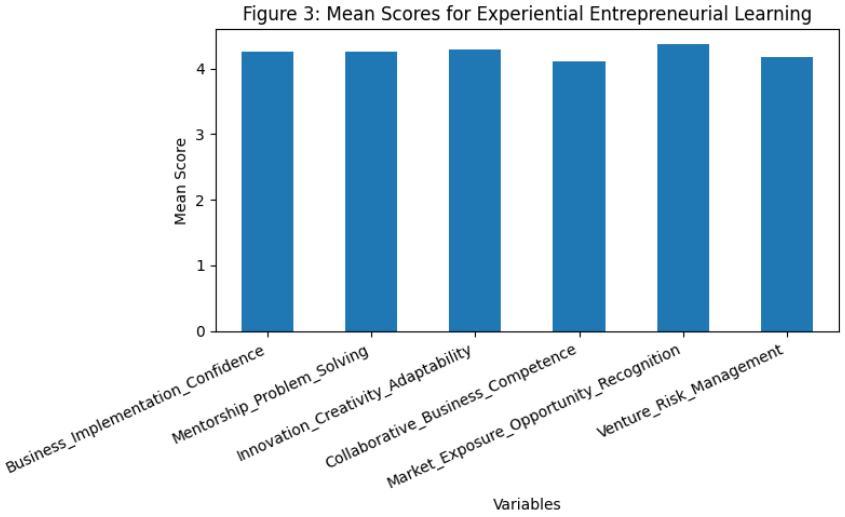
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Experiential Entrepreneurial Learning Practices

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Participation in practical business implementation activities enhanced entrepreneurial confidence	4.28	0.74
Mentorship interaction improved entrepreneurial problem-solving skills	4.16	0.81
Innovation projects strengthened entrepreneurial creativity and adaptability	4.31	0.69
Collaborative entrepreneurial activities enhanced business management competence	4.09	0.77
Market exposure activities improved opportunity recognition abilities	4.35	0.71
Venture experimentation enhanced entrepreneurial risk management skills	4.18	0.73

The results showed high values of the mean scores for all the indicators of the experiential entrepreneurial learning dimension, ranging between 4.09 and 4.35. The mean score of the market exposure activities was the highest, with 4.35, which showed that respondents strongly felt that the activities related to markets were influential in strengthening entrepreneurial opportunity recognition competence. Experiential innovation engagement had a significant impact on entrepreneurial creativity and adaptability among student business implementers, as its mean value was also high (4.31). The standard deviation scores, which ranged from 0.69 to 0.81, suggested that there was uniformity in the perceptions of the respondents about the impact of the experiential entrepreneurial learning practices in the entrepreneurship hub.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Entrepreneurial Readiness among Student Business Implementers

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
I possessed the confidence to initiate entrepreneurial ventures	4.22	0.76
I demonstrated competence in identifying business opportunities	4.27	0.72
I developed stronger entrepreneurial decision-making abilities	4.11	0.79
I possessed improved innovation and creativity capabilities	4.30	0.68
I demonstrated preparedness for entrepreneurial risk management	4.05	0.82
I possessed practical entrepreneurial implementation competence	4.18	0.75



The results revealed that the entrepreneurial readiness score of respondents was high in all dimensions. The highest mean score was for Innovation and creativity capability (4.30), which shows that the participation in entrepreneurship hubs was a significant factor in improving the innovative entrepreneurial thinking among the respondents. Opportunity recognition competence also yielded a high mean of 4.27, indicating that students acquired enhanced competencies in their ability to recognize entrepreneurial opportunities in an economic landscape that is characterized by dynamism.

Table 4: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between Experiential Entrepreneurial Learning and Entrepreneurial Readiness

Variables	r	p value
Experiential Entrepreneurial Learning and Entrepreneurial Readiness	0.781	0.000

The results of the correlation analysis showed that experiential entrepreneurial learning had a strong positive correlation with entrepreneurial readiness of the student business implementers ($r = 0.781$, $p < 0.05$). The result showed that there was a strong relationship between the level of entrepreneurial readiness of the respondents and increased involvement in experiential entrepreneurial learning activities. The statistically significant relationship showed that practical exposure to entrepreneurship, innovation engagement, mentoring interaction, collaborative participation in entrepreneurship, and venture experimentation significantly helped the development of entrepreneurial competences and venture preparedness of the student entrepreneurs.

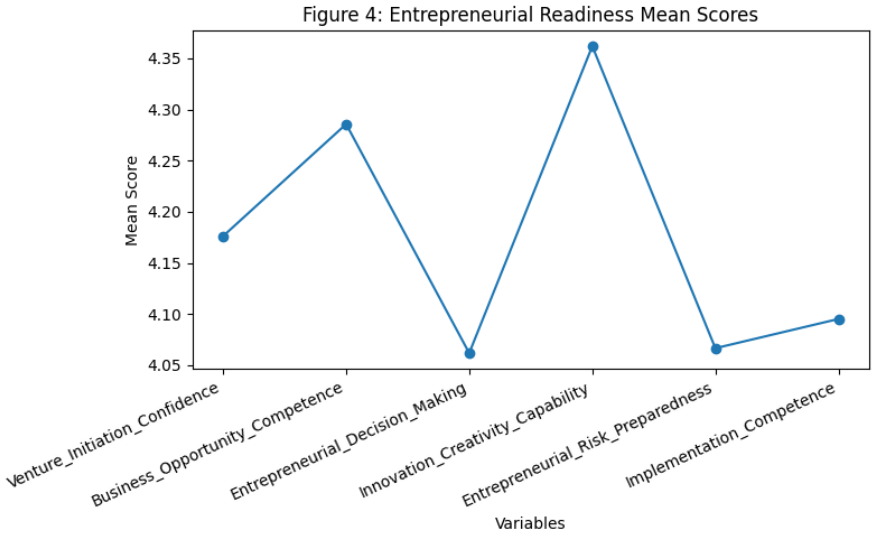


Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis on the Influence of Experiential Entrepreneurial Learning on Entrepreneurial Readiness

Variables	Beta	t value	p value
Practical Business Implementation Activities	0.336	5.912	0.000
Mentorship Interaction	0.241	4.384	0.001
Innovation Project Participation	0.372	6.118	0.000
Collaborative Entrepreneurial Activities	0.194	3.857	0.003
Market Exposure Activities	0.287	5.104	0.000

Model Summary	Value
R	0.824
R^2	0.679
Adjusted R^2	0.663
F value	84.531
Significance Level	0.000

The regression analysis concluded that the dimensions of experiential entrepreneurial learning had a significant effect on the entrepreneurial readiness of student business implementers. The most significant factors that emerged were innovation project participation ($\beta = 0.372$) and practical business implementation activities ($\beta = 0.336$). The study results in this section showed that, among the respondents, direct entrepreneurial involvement and experimentation with innovation had the highest impact on the formation of entrepreneurial competence. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.679$) showed that experiential entrepreneurial learning variables in the model accounted for 67.9% of the variance in entrepreneurial readiness. The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F = 84.531$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that the practices of experiential entrepreneurial learning did account for a large proportion of the variance in the entrepreneurial readiness outcomes.

Discussion of Findings

The results revealed that experiential entrepreneurial learning positively contributed to the entrepreneurial readiness of business implementers in the business school based entrepreneurship hub. The significant statistical correlation between experiential entrepreneurial learning and entrepreneurial readiness confirmed the argument that entrepreneurial competence was developed better from the process of being an entrepreneur instead of just being exposed to theory. The results were consistent with those of Rodriguez and Lieber (2020), who observed that entrepreneurial mindset development and career readiness among learners were improved with the integration of entrepreneurship education and hands-on entrepreneurial experiences. The current findings added another layer to this argument by showing that the practical entrepreneurial involvement in the IE ecosystems had a significant impact on the entrepreneurial implementation competence and

venture preparedness of the university students. Likewise, the results validated the results of the studies by Brahmankar et al. (2022), where a collaborative entrepreneurial ecosystem boosted the innovation orientation and entrepreneurial adaptability among business school students. In the present study, in particular, it was found that participation in innovation projects was the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial readiness, which further emphasized the need for hands-on innovation exposure in developing entrepreneurial competence. The results also aligned with the study of Muawiyah et al. (2025), which stated that the engagement of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial self efficacy had a significant impact on entrepreneurship readiness outcomes. The high entrepreneurial confidence level of the respondents indicated that after multiple exposures to these experiences, entrepreneurship hub participation had a positive effect on the entrepreneurial self perception and implementation capability of students. Moreover, the findings were similar to the study of Omole (2026) and Sanusi and Abdullahi (2025), which reported that practical exposure to entrepreneurship improved innovation competence and sustainable employability of learners. The findings of the current study showed that the entrepreneurship hubs served as a significant experiential ecosystem that can reduce the one persistent problem of the disconnect between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship readiness. The results also confirmed the argument of Barliana et al. (2025) that entrepreneurial ecosystems and collaborative innovation environments positively influenced entrepreneurial learning outcomes by actively participating and engaging in the digital entrepreneurial environment. The entrepreneurship hub under study seemed to be a complete entrepreneurial hub where the students gained entrepreneurial skills by interacting with the market, getting exposure to mentors, taking part in collaborative entrepreneurship ventures, and conducting experiments with innovation. The results, however, highlighted wider concerns from Crișan et al. (2024) about the need to develop sustainable entrepreneurial ecosystem structures at higher education institutions. While the entrepreneurship hub had a strong impact on improving the entrepreneurial readiness of the participants, qualitative interactions during the study indicated that there were persistent issues of funding constraints, commercialization support constraints, and access to long-term venture sustainability resources. Based on these observations, it was concluded that entrepreneurship hubs alone could not create sustainable entrepreneurship outcomes without having support from other institutional and economic support networks.

Conclusion and Implications

This study critically reviewed the link between experiential entrepreneurship learning and entrepreneurial readiness of student business implementers in a business school based entrepreneurship hub with the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Hub, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos, Nigeria, as the institutional context. It was motivated by the perception of the need to address the limitations of current models of entrepreneurship education in developing entrepreneurially competent graduates able to operate in an increasingly uncertain and innovation-based economy. Entrepreneurship programs were already criticized as they often focused on the theoretical awareness and creation of entrepreneurship, while the more important aspects of entrepreneurial implementation, competence, innovation, adaptability, and entrepreneurial venture readiness capacities were ignored. The results of the study revealed that there was a significant influence of experiential entrepreneurial learning on strengthening the entrepreneurial readiness of the business implementers students. The quantitative results showed that there were positive relationships between practical entrepreneurial activity and entrepreneurial competence formation, and these relationships were strong. In particular, entrepreneurial self efficacy, implementation preparedness, entrepreneurial confidence, entrepreneurial opportunity recognition competence, and innovation capability of the participants were positively impacted by the participation in innovation projects, market exposure activities, mentorship interaction, collaboration in entrepreneurial participation and implementation of the entrepreneurial venture. The results thus found that the entrepreneurial readiness was better developed through the practical entrepreneurial immersion as compared to passive instructional exposure alone. The study also showed that the business school based entrepreneurship hubs acted as a significant entrepreneurial ecosystem, which linked entrepreneurial education to real entrepreneurial situations. The entrepreneurship hub studied in this research offered opportunities for entrepreneurial experimentation, interaction with the innovation process, collaborative learning, mentorship interaction, and involvement in the enterprise market. These ecosystem structures greatly reinforced the entrepreneurial identity formation and entrepreneurial adaptability of the participants. Therefore, the study suggested that entrepreneurship hubs were key institutional tools in overcoming the problem of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial employability within higher education institutions. The study also concluded that entrepreneurial readiness should not be limitedly conceived as entrepreneurial intention. Instead, entrepreneurship readiness encompassed a more comprehensive multidimensional entrepreneurial readiness that included practical entrepreneurial competence, innovation orientation, implementation confidence, strategic adaptability, and venture preparedness. This position questioned the reductionist models of entrepreneurship education that often defined entrepreneurial awareness with entrepreneurial skills. The study had both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study complemented and supported the Experiential Learning Theory by highlighting the fact that entrepreneurial competence was found to be more developed through active entrepreneurial activity and experience in entrepreneurial ecosystems. The study further contributed to entrepreneurship education literature by presenting empirical findings on the impact of institutional entrepreneurship hubs on the entrepreneurial preparedness of student entrepreneurs who are business implementers in a Nigerian University setting. From a practical perspective, the results suggested that universities and business schools need to shift from 'symbolic' entrepreneurship education policies to the creation of sustainable entrepreneurship ecosystems that enable entrepreneurship activities. Increased funding, industry engagement, venture incubation systems, mentorship programs, infrastructure for innovation commercialisation, and digital infrastructure for supporting entrepreneurship in higher education institutions should be encouraged. Policymakers should also better strategically embed entrepreneurship hubs in national employability and youth innovation policies and mechanisms to boost the entrepreneurial capacity of graduates and economic resilience. Finally, the study found that experiential entrepreneurial learning was a transformative mechanism for entrepreneurial readiness of students in current higher education systems. Entrepreneurship hubs located in the business school continued to be vital then, as a way to support entrepreneurially prepared graduates who can create

innovative ventures, implement them, and sustain their economic engagement in a fast-changing global economy.

Details of AI usage are given below:

Grammarly was used to enhance grammar, spelling, and clarity.

All content was reviewed and finalized by the authors, who accept full responsibility for the work.

Competing Interests Disclaimer:

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests, non-financial interests, or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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