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ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS A DRIVER OF ENTERPRISE INNOVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF UNESCO'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION NETWORK (EE-NET)

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Abstract:

Entrepreneurship education is widely recognised as a critical driver of enterprise innovation and sustainable economic development, particularly in developing and emerging economies. This study examines the role of entrepreneurship education in fostering firm-level innovation and supporting inclusive economic growth through a qualitative case analysis of the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network. The research draws on secondary data from academic literature, policy documents, institutional reports, and publicly available databases produced by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. A document-based thematic analysis is employed to explore how entrepreneurship education initiatives influence innovation capacity, entrepreneurial ecosystems, and broader development outcomes. The findings indicate that entrepreneurship education significantly enhances individuals' entrepreneurial competencies, enabling them to identify opportunities, develop innovative business models, and contribute to enterprise-level innovation. Beyond individual capability development, the study reveals that entrepreneurship education functions as an institutional mechanism that links educational systems, policy frameworks, and innovation ecosystems. In this context, the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network demonstrates how coordinated regional and international collaboration can strengthen entrepreneurship education

through inclusive policy frameworks, knowledge sharing, and capacity-building initiatives among governments, universities, and industry stakeholders. A key insight of the study is that network-based and institutionally supported entrepreneurship education initiatives can create enabling environments that stimulate innovation-driven entrepreneurship and support inclusive economic participation. The programme's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals further highlights the potential of entrepreneurship education to contribute to broader development priorities such as employment creation, social inclusion, and sustainable economic transformation. This research contributes to the entrepreneurship and innovation literature by providing empirical evidence on how international educational networks can reinforce institutional frameworks that support enterprise innovation and economic development. The findings underscore the importance for governments and higher education institutions to integrate entrepreneurship education into national innovation systems and development strategies to promote equitable and sustainable growth.

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Keyword:

Economic Development; Entrepreneurship Education; Enterprise Innovation; UNESCO EE-Net



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Introduction

Background of Study

Entrepreneurship education has become a crucial element of national innovation systems and economic development initiatives in both advanced and emerging economies. In an era of rapid technological advancement, increased global competition, and a rapidly evolving labour market, fostering entrepreneurial mind-sets, innovative talents, and adaptability is increasingly essential. Thus, entrepreneurship education is now recognised not merely as a method for launching new enterprises but as a holistic strategy for enhancing creativity, employability, and sustained economic resilience (Herlina & Wahira, 2024).

In developing and emerging economies, entrepreneurship education is crucial for its ability to generate employment, promote innovation, increase productivity, and strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems important for sustainable economic development (Herlina & Wahira, 2024). Malaysia demonstrates this policy approach. Education has historically been regarded as a fundamental component of national development. Significant initiatives, such as Vision 2020 and subsequent frameworks, have emphasised that developing human capital, fostering innovation, and promoting entrepreneurship are essential measures for achieving a

knowledge-based, high-income economy. In alignment with these objectives, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education has established entrepreneurship education as a permanent component of all public universities. This entails entrepreneurship classes, training programs, and practical learning opportunities across various disciplines.

Academic literature repeatedly acknowledges entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic transformation, wealth growth, and employment generation. Entrepreneurs operate as catalysts for transformation by providing innovative goods, services, business models, and organisational methods that enhance corporate competitiveness and economic productivity (Herlina & Wahira, 2024). The quality, inclusivity, and institutional integration of entrepreneurship education closely influence the extent to which entrepreneurship fosters innovation and economic growth. Education systems that foster creativity, opportunity identification, problem-solving, and strategic risk-taking are more likely to nurture entrepreneurs capable of sustaining innovative ventures and contributing meaningfully to overarching economic development goals (International Journal of Management Education, 2024).

Problem Statement

Entrepreneurship education is acknowledged as a crucial instrument for promoting innovation, enhancing entrepreneurial skills, and driving economic development (Al-Hattami et al., 2025; Chairunnisa et al., 2025; Laydes, 2024). Governments, institutions, and international organizations have progressively integrated entrepreneurship education into educational policies and development strategies to foster entrepreneurial mindsets and promote innovation-driven economies (Syed et al., 2024; Reimers, 2024). Nonetheless, despite the increasing focus, the relationship among entrepreneurship education, enterprise innovation, and overall economic development remains insufficiently understood (Talukder et al., 2024; Qiu et al., 2023).

Current research on entrepreneurship education predominantly emphasizes individual-level outcomes, including students' entrepreneurial goals, attitudes, and skill acquisition (Syed et al., 2024; Reimers, 2024). Although these research yield significant insights into the behavioral impacts of entrepreneurship education, they provide insufficient comprehension of how such education facilitates enterprise-level innovation and economic development results (Talukder et al., 2024; Qiu et al., 2023). The influence of institutional structures, policy contexts, and collaborative networks on the efficacy of entrepreneurship education has been inadequately explored (Sevilla-Bernardo et al., 2024; Tereshchenko et al., 2024).

Moreover, a significant portion of empirical research in this domain predominantly utilizes quantitative methodologies, especially survey-based techniques that evaluate short-term educational effects (Talukder et al., 2024; Qiu et al., 2023). While these methods effectively assess immediate alterations in students' entrepreneurial mindsets, they frequently neglect the intricate institutional processes, policy interactions, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms that underpin entrepreneurship education initiatives within larger innovation ecosystems (Sevilla-Bernardo et al., 2024; Tereshchenko et al., 2024). As a result, the long-term developmental consequences of entrepreneurial education are still little examined (Syed et al., 2024).

A significant shortcoming in the literature is the insufficient study on worldwide and regional collaboration networks that foster entrepreneurial education (UNESCO, 2024). Numerous activities are executed via collaborations among institutions, governmental bodies, industry stakeholders, and global entities. These networks enable the dissemination of knowledge, policy alignment, and capacity enhancement among many nations (Tereshchenko et al., 2024). The governance frameworks, operational mechanisms, and developmental effects of these collaborative platforms remain inadequately studied (Sevilla-Bernardo et al., 2024).

The UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net), created under the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), serves as a significant regional platform that advocates for entrepreneurship education across various national contexts in the Asia-Pacific region (UNESCO, 2024). Notwithstanding its importance in promoting policy dialogue, institutional collaboration, and knowledge exchange among member nations, there exists a paucity of scholarly research investigating the operational dynamics of this network and its role in enhancing enterprise innovation and economic development (Talukder et al., 2024; Tereshchenko et al., 2024).

Consequently, there is a necessity for comprehensive qualitative research that investigates entrepreneurship education initiatives within international collaboration networks to enhance understanding of their institutional dynamics, implementation processes, and developmental impacts (Syed et al., 2024; Sevilla-Bernardo et al., 2024). Tackling this issue is crucial for enhancing theoretical comprehension of entrepreneurship education and for guiding governmental policies designed to bolster innovation-driven economic development (Talukder et al., 2024; Qiu et al., 2023).

Research Gap

Despite the growing focus on entrepreneurial education in academic research and policy discussions, many gaps persist in the current literature.

The majority of research on entrepreneurship education predominantly examines individual-level outcomes, including entrepreneurial intentions, attitudes toward entrepreneurship, and the cultivation of entrepreneurial abilities among students (Li & Zhang, 2025; Park, Abaddi, & Calvo, 2025). Although these studies yield significant insights into behavioral and cognitive transformations, they provide insufficient comprehension of the role of entrepreneurship education in fostering enterprise-level innovation and comprehensive economic development. Specifically, there is a lack of focus on the functioning of entrepreneurship education at the institutional and ecosystem levels, encompassing the contributions of educational institutions, policy frameworks, and collaborative platforms in influencing innovation capacity (Garcia & Lee, 2025; Qureshi & Nkosi, 2024).

The empirical literature on entrepreneurship education primarily use quantitative methodologies that evaluate short-term educational effects, frequently utilizing surveys to assess students' entrepreneurial mind-set or goals subsequent to educational interventions (Li & Zhang, 2025). While these studies are beneficial for assessing educational programs, they often neglect a complex institutional, policy, and ecosystem dynamics that may affect the long-term impact of entrepreneurship education on innovation and economic development (Reimers, 2024). As a result, the systemic and structural functions of entrepreneurship education within innovation ecosystems are still little examined.

Third, there is a paucity of research investigating entrepreneurial education programs across regional and international collaborative networks. Numerous initiatives are executed via collaborations among universities, governmental entities, industry stakeholders, and international organizations, promoting knowledge transfer, capacity enhancement, and policy formulation. Notwithstanding their growing significance, the governance frameworks, operational systems, and knowledge dissemination processes within these network-oriented efforts have garnered less academic scrutiny (Wang, 2024).

Moreover, there is a significant deficiency of comprehensive qualitative case studies examining entrepreneurial education programs organized by multinational entities. International organizations increasingly influence educational agendas and advocate for innovation-driven development globally. However, studies examining the real execution of these programs and their impact on corporate innovation and economic growth in various national contexts are limited (Wang, 2024).

The UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net), created under the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), serves as a crucial institutional framework for advancing entrepreneurship education throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Despite its significance in policy discourse and regional cooperation, scholarly inquiry into the operational processes, institutional dynamics, and developmental effects of this network is still insufficient (Wang, 2024).

This study investigates the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network using a qualitative case study methodology to address these deficiencies. This research concentrates on the institutional processes and collaborative mechanisms within a global network to elucidate how entrepreneurship education initiatives foster enterprise innovation and enhance economic development across various national contexts (Qureshi & Nkosi, 2024; Reimers, 2024).

Novelty of This Study

This study offers a unique contribution to the entrepreneurship education literature by redirecting the analytical emphasis from individual-level outcomes to institutional and systemic processes that connect entrepreneurship education with enterprise innovation and economic growth, a perspective that has been insufficiently examined in recent research (Li & Zhang, 2025; Park et al., 2025). This research utilizes a qualitative case study methodology, in contrast to the prevalent dependence on quantitative surveys that measure short-term educational outcomes, to elucidate the intricate governance frameworks, collaborative processes, and policy dynamics within the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net), thereby providing profound insights into the ways regional and international collaboration networks enhance entrepreneurship education (Reimers, 2024; Sevilla Bernardo et al., 2024). This study examines Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net) role in promoting inclusive innovation and aligning entrepreneurship education with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby addressing a significant gap between educational initiatives and their socioeconomic impacts. It provides empirical evidence on the influence of multi-stakeholder platforms on innovation ecosystems in various national contexts (Qureshi & Nkosi, 2024; Wang, 2024). This research is distinguished from existing studies by its integration of institutional, network, and policy perspectives, along with a focus on economic development outcomes, offering actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and global development practitioners (Syed et al., 2024; Tereshchenko et al., 2024).

Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and its impact on innovation and economic growth, utilising UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network as a case study. The research intends to:

RO1: Examine the interrelationship among entrepreneurship education, business innovation, and economic growth in terms of concepts.

RO2: Analyse how UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network promotes entrepreneurship education through regional collaboration, policy development, and capacity building.

RO3: Investigate how EE-Net initiatives have facilitated enterprises in becoming more innovative, inclusive, and proactive in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

RO4: Assess the policy and practical implications for governments, institutions, universities, and individuals engaged in entrepreneurship education.

Significance of the Study

This research offers significant contributions to the body of literature concerning entrepreneurship and innovation. This study builds on previous research by investigating entrepreneurship education as a driver of innovation and economic development at both institutional and systemic levels, rather than exclusively at the individual level. Secondly, by focusing on UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net), the research offers empirical details about the impact of international and regional educational networks on the evolution of entrepreneurial ecosystems, particularly in the Asia-Pacific area. The findings represent major challenges to policymakers, higher education institutions, and educators aiming to develop inclusive, innovation-orientated entrepreneurship education strategies aligned with national development objectives and global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2024; UNESCO, 2025).

Literature Review

Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship education has significantly evolved in recent decades, shifting from a narrow focus on venture development to a comprehensive educational framework aimed at fostering entrepreneurial attitudes, competences, and innovative talents (Kaiyanan et al., 2024). A recent study defines entrepreneurship education as a structured learning process that equips individuals with the information, abilities, attitudes, and behaviours essential for identifying opportunities, creating value, and managing uncertainty (Kaiyanan et al., 2024). Initial definitions emphasised start-up skills, but current research highlights their importance in fostering creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, resilience, and flexibility, which are essential for both entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs in businesses (Kaiyanan et al., 2024). Governments and higher education institutions are progressively acknowledging entrepreneurship education as a vital element for national development, incorporating it into curricula to enhance entrepreneurial intention and opportunity recognition (Van Der Bijl-Brouwer, 2022; Xiaoxing et al., 2020). Research demonstrates that engagement in entrepreneurship education positively promotes entrepreneurial intention and confidence, while also enhancing self-efficacy through the development of competencies (Khromenkova

et al., 2023). Researchers state that entrepreneurship education alone does not ensure the formation of entrepreneurs; its efficacy depends on pedagogical approaches, institutional support, ecosystem linkages, and effective policies (Kaiyanan et al., 2024).

Entrepreneurship Education and Enterprise Innovation

Enterprise innovation refers to the techniques by which firms develop and implement new products, services, processes, or business models to maintain a competitive advantage. Innovation is a critical determinant of a business's performance and sustainability. This environment increasingly views entrepreneurship education as a catalyst for enterprise innovation. Entrepreneurship education helps develop important skills, like spotting opportunities and solving problems creatively, which are necessary for coming up with and carrying out new ideas. Empirical data demonstrates that entrepreneurial education fosters enterprise innovation and is associated with heightened innovation potential among students (Mei et al., 2020). Students utilise experiential learning approaches, such as project-based learning, internships, and incubators, to engage in real-world problem-solving, which promotes iterative thinking and learning from failure as essential elements of innovation (Kaiyanan et al., 2024). Organisations led by individuals with entrepreneurial skills are more inclined to embrace innovation, explore new markets, and implement novel business models. This type of instruction enhances both incremental and radical innovation capabilities (Galvao et al., 2024). Entrepreneurship education enhances innovation ecosystems by fostering links among universities, corporations, governments, and societal individuals (Syed & Spicer, 2025).

Entrepreneurship Education and Economic Development

Economic development indicates sustained enhancements in income, employment, productivity, and overall quality of life. Entrepreneurship and innovation are recognised as essential catalysts for economic progress, especially in knowledge-based countries. From a macroeconomic perspective, entrepreneurship education enhances economic growth by nurturing human capital that supports entrepreneurial activities and the formation of new businesses, thereby fostering job creation and revenue generation (Wang & Krabuansob, 2025). Empirical studies demonstrate strong positive relationships between entrepreneurship education, innovative potential, and economic growth (Wang & Krabuansob, 2025). Entrepreneurship education helps the economy become more varied and stronger by teaching individual skills that can be used in many different fields, which can change the economy in a positive way. Moreover, inclusive entrepreneurship education efforts target under-represented demographics, such as women and youth, hence improving economic participation, reducing inequality, and promoting social mobility (Afriyie et al., 2025).

Integrating Entrepreneurship Education, Enterprise Innovation, and Economic Development

The interplay between entrepreneurship education, enterprise innovation, and economic development is dynamic and mutually reinforcing. Entrepreneurship education augments human capital and entrepreneurial competencies, fostering innovation inside enterprises. Innovative enterprises stimulate economic development by creating employment opportunities, enhancing productivity, and increasing competitiveness. Economic growth facilitates increased investment in education and innovative concepts. Theoretical frameworks such as Human Capital Theory and Innovation Systems Theory illustrate the interconnections among these

elements. Education enhances productivity, and innovation systems illustrate the necessity for collaboration among educational institutions, corporations, and policymakers (Oosterbeek et al., 2025) This perspective considers entrepreneurship education as a crucial component of holistic innovation and development ecosystems.

Underpinning Theories and Theoretical Contribution

This study is fundamentally based on Human Capital Theory and Innovation Systems Theory, which together offer a comprehensive theoretical framework for analysing the institutional and systemic effects of entrepreneurship education. Human Capital Theory asserts that investments in education and skill enhancement improve individuals' productivity, therefore benefiting organizational and economic performance (Becker, 2020; Oosterbeek et al., 2025). This theory elucidates how the cultivation of entrepreneurial abilities, competencies, and attitudes in individuals can lead to innovative endeavours within organizations, promoting the creation of new products, processes, and business models. In addition, Innovation Systems Theory underscores the significance of networks, institutional frameworks, and collaborative connections among stakeholders, such as universities, enterprises, governments, and international entities, in facilitating knowledge transfer, innovation dissemination, and comprehensive economic advancement (Edquist, 2021; Oosterbeek et al., 2025). This paper analyses the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net) to illustrate how entrepreneurship education operates at both the individual and systemic levels, thereby enhancing existing theoretical frameworks. The research clarifies the mechanisms by which international education networks promote knowledge exchange, capacity building, and collaborative innovation, providing a conceptual framework that connects educational interventions to enterprise innovation and regional economic development. This methodology enhances theoretical contributions by transcending conventional research centered exclusively on individual entrepreneurial goals, offering proof of the systemic and institutional mechanisms via which entrepreneurship education produces concrete innovation and economic results.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This research uses a qualitative case study methodology to examine the impact of entrepreneurial education on promoting enterprise innovation and economic development. A qualitative methodology is appropriate for this research since it enables an in-depth analysis of various institutional processes, policy initiatives, and contextual aspects that quantitative approaches alone are unable to adequately analyse (Reimers, 2024; Zherdeva et al., 2024). Case study research is particularly advantageous for examining contemporary events within their real-life contexts and obtaining detailed, contextual information, especially in educational and policy research (Mion et al., 2025). The study concentrates on UNESCO's Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net) as a unique, pivotal case. The Entrepreneurship Education Network serves as a pertinent case due to its regional emphasis, policy orientation, and explicit objective of advancing entrepreneurship education to foster innovation and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region (UNESCO, 2024).

Case Selection: UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net)

Several factors contributed to the selection of UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network as the case study. This initiative is a global, policy-orientated endeavour that unites governments, higher education institutions, educators, researchers, and business professionals to enhance entrepreneurship education (UNESCO, 2025). Secondly, EE-Net operates across various nations and diverse social and economic contexts, providing valuable insights into the modification and application of entrepreneurship education frameworks at both national and regional levels (Reimers, 2024). Third, the network explicitly aligns its efforts with broader developmental objectives, including innovation-driven growth and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This serves as an exemplary case for examining the correlation among entrepreneurship education, innovation in business, and economic growth (Zherdeva et al., 2024). This study seeks to transcend individual-level analyses by examining EE-Net as an institutional and systemic intervention that influences innovation ecosystems and developmental outcomes (Talukder, 2025).

Positioning of UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net) Case Study

This study employs an exploratory case study methodology to develop a conceptual comprehension of the functioning and impact of international collaboration networks in entrepreneurship education on larger innovation results, rather than evaluating predetermined assumptions. Exploratory case studies are suitable for examining contemporary events in real-world contexts where existing theories are inadequate, aiming to reveal underlying mechanisms, linkages, and processes (Yin, 2022; Stake, 2023). This study analyzes the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net) to provide comprehensive insights into its institutional dynamics, collaborative mechanisms, and knowledge-sharing practices, which remain underexplored in existing literature (Sevilla Bernardo et al., 2024; Tereshchenko et al., 2024). The research seeks to enhance theoretical comprehension of the interplay between entrepreneurship education initiatives and enterprise innovation across various national contexts by concentrating on "how" and "why" questions, thereby advancing conceptual development in the field beyond mere descriptive reporting (Qureshi & Nkosi, 2024; Wang, 2024). The qualitative aspect of the inquiry facilitates the acquisition of rich, contextualized data that can uncover patterns and propositions, hence informing broader theoretical frameworks about entrepreneurship education networks and their function within innovation ecosystems (Syed et al., 2024; Reimers, 2024).

Data Sources

This study employs a secondary data methodology, using many sources to facilitate data triangulation and enhance the validity of the findings. Secondary data were used due to the research's emphasis on policy and the abundance of material regarding UNESCO's Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net) (UNESCO, 2024). The data sources include academic literature, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference proceedings related to entrepreneurship education, enterprise innovation, and economic development (Reimers, 2024; Mion et al., 2025); materials from UNESCO and UNESCO-APEID, including policy reports, official publications, meeting proceedings, program descriptions, and strategic frameworks concerning EE-Net (UNESCO, 2024, 2025); governmental and institutional reports on higher education, entrepreneurship, innovation, and economic development in the Asia-Pacific region; and publicly available online resources, encompassing official UNESCO

websites, press releases, and archival materials regarding EE-Net initiatives and events. These sources collectively offer an in-depth exploration of EE-Net's objectives, framework, operations, and principal themes, along with pertinent background information on entrepreneurship education and innovation policy.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection involved a comprehensive review of relevant research and publications. Documents were identified through targeted keyword searches pertaining to entrepreneurship education, enterprise innovation, economic development, UNESCO EE-Net, and UNESCO-APEID. Only sources from esteemed academic publishers, official institutional websites, and recognised government organisations were incorporated to guarantee trustworthiness and validity, in accordance with standard procedures in qualitative policy research (Zherdeva et al., 2024). The chosen documents were evaluated for relevance according to their conformity with the study goals. Subsequent to this, relevant works were systematically organised and documented to enable thorough study. This technique allowed the researcher to cultivate an extensive comprehension of EE-Net's activities, strategic priorities, and contributions to entrepreneurship education and innovation (UNESCO, 2025).

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis, which is a qualitative method that involves discovering, assessing, and interpreting patterns and themes within textual material. This technique was selected because of its adaptability and efficacy in policy-orientated and document-based research within the realms of education and innovation (Mion et al., 2025). The analysis began with a familiarisation phase, during which the selected papers were reviewed several times to develop a comprehensive understanding of their content and contextual background. Subsequently, a coding phase ensued during which essential ideas and concepts pertaining to entrepreneurship education, innovation, inclusivity, policy alignment, and economic development were methodically discovered and coded (Talukder, 2025). In the final step, associated codes were consolidated into broader analytical themes aligned with the study topics. Themes including enterprise innovation, inclusive entrepreneurship education, alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), institutional collaboration, and ecosystem growth (Reimers, 2024). These themes provide the analytical foundation for evaluating the influence of entrepreneurship education efforts within EE-Net on corporate innovation and comprehensive economic development.

Trustworthiness and Rigor

Establishing trustworthiness is crucial in qualitative research to validate that the findings are legitimate, transparent, and based on methodical analysis. This study employs established qualitative criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to enhance methodological rigor. These standards direct the research process by ensuring that interpretations are substantiated by credible evidence and well recorded analytical methods. Current qualitative research literature underscores that implementing trustworthiness procedures improves the reliability and academic integrity of case study research, especially in the analysis of policy documents and institutional reports (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Tracy, 2022).

Credibility

Credibility denotes the extent to which study findings correctly reflect the phenomena under investigation. This study enhanced credibility by employing data triangulation with many sources of secondary data. The sources were peer-reviewed academic literature, UNESCO policy documents, institutional reports, and publically available online resources pertaining to entrepreneurship education and innovation efforts. The utilization of several sources facilitated the cross-verification of essential concepts and interpretations, hence diminishing the likelihood of dependence on a singular viewpoint or dataset. The study employed systematic thematic analysis, involving repeated examination of the papers to discern reoccurring concepts and patterns. By meticulously reading, coding, and comparing the materials, themes were inductively derived from the data, ensuring that the analysis was anchored in documented facts rather than subjective conjectures (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Transferability

Transferability denotes the degree to which research findings are significant or useful in alternative contexts. Qualitative case studies generally do not pursue statistical generalization; yet they can facilitate analytical transferability through comprehensive contextual descriptions. This research offers comprehensive insights into the structure, objectives, and operational mechanisms of the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net), encompassing its institutional collaborations and policy direction. These contextual details enable readers and scholars to assess the applicability of the lessons gained from the case to other entrepreneurship education programs, innovation ecosystems, or policy contexts. In qualitative research, offering contextual detail is highly advised as it allows readers to assess the applicability of findings across various institutional and geographical settings (Nowell & Albrecht, 2022; Tracy, 2022).

Dependability

Dependability pertains to the consistency and reliability of the study methodology. To enhance reliability, the study ensured methodological transparency by meticulously recording every phase of the research design and analysis process. This encompassed the selection of the case study, the identification of pertinent materials, the criteria for document inclusion, and the procedures involved in theme analysis. Establishing a transparent methodological record generates an audit trail that allows other researchers to comprehend how conclusions were drawn from the data. This transparency enables subsequent studies to examine or reproduce the analytical methodology, hence enhancing the reliability of the research process (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Nowell & Albrecht, 2022)

Confirmability

Confirmability denotes the degree to which research outcomes are influenced by the data rather than by researcher bias. This study ensured confirmability by systematically organizing the acquired papers, employing transparent coding processes, and consistently referencing all sources included in the analysis. The analysis of themes was firmly based on documented information from reputable academic and institutional sources. By preserving a distinct connection between the data sources and the analytical interpretations, the study reduces subjective bias and enhances the objectivity of the results. These procedures are advised in

qualitative research to guarantee that analytical results are robustly substantiated by empirical evidence (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Tracy, 2022).

Transparent Analytical Procedure

The research employed a structured thematic analysis method to guarantee a methodical evaluation of the gathered papers. Thematic analysis is extensively employed in qualitative research to find, analyze, and explain patterns within textual material. The analytical approach had four primary stages: data familiarization, coding, topic development, and interpretation. During the familiarization phase, all chosen materials were perused multiple times to achieve a thorough comprehension of the content. Subsequently, essential themes pertaining to entrepreneurial education, innovation ecosystems, policy frameworks, and institutional collaboration were identified and categorized. The codes were further categorized into broader topics and analyzed to generate comprehensive analytical concepts in accordance with the research objectives. Utilizing a transparent and systematic analytical framework enhances the rigor, clarity, and repeatability of qualitative research outcomes (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nowell & Albrecht, 2022).

Document Selection Criteria

To guarantee the pertinence and quality of the data utilized in the study, explicit inclusion criteria were formulated during the document selection process. Documents were included if they pertained to themes of entrepreneurship education, enterprise innovation, economic development, or policy efforts linked to the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network. Preference was accorded to materials generated by UNESCO, UNESCO-APEID, governmental bodies, international organizations, and esteemed academic institutions, especially those explicitly citing EE-Net programs or activities. Furthermore, peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and conference proceedings from recognized academic publishers were chosen to guarantee theoretical and empirical validity. Official policy reports, strategic frameworks, and program material pertaining to entrepreneurship education and innovation policy in the Asia-Pacific area were deemed significant sources. Only publicly accessible documents that included adequate information for substantial analysis were incorporated into the dataset.

Timeframe of Data Sources

The study concentrated on documents produced from 2015 to 2025 to maintain the analysis's relevance and timeliness. This era signifies the increasing global focus on entrepreneurial education, innovation ecosystems, and policy coherence with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In recent years, global organizations like UNESCO have intensified efforts to enhance entrepreneurial skills and promote innovation-led economic growth, especially in the Asia-Pacific area. Concentrating on this period allows the research to encompass current policy discussions and institutional advancements pertaining to the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network. Foundational literature published before 2015 was selected incorporated when it offered critical theoretical insights into entrepreneurship education, innovation systems, or qualitative case study methodology. This methodology guarantees that the research is both theoretically sound and experimentally pertinent (UNESCO, 2024; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Coding Approach

The examination of the gathered papers employed a methodical coding strategy within the context of thematic analysis. The coding was executed in several phases to guarantee a systematic and transparent analytical procedure. The initial phase entailed open coding, during which the texts were scrutinized line by line to discern essential ideas, concepts, and repeating themes pertinent to entrepreneurship education and innovation. Descriptive codes were allocated to text segments that represent themes like policy initiatives, entrepreneurial competencies, innovation support systems, and collaborative networks. During the second stage, axial coding was utilized to discern links among the preliminary codes. Codes having conceptual similarities were categorized into broader analytical groups, allowing the researcher to discern patterns within the data. The concluding phase entailed selective coding, during which these categories were integrated into comprehensive themes corresponding to the research aims. The primary themes discerned during the investigation were enterprise innovation and start up advancement, inclusive entrepreneurship education, institutional and cross-sector collaboration, alignment with the Sustainable Establishment Goals, and the establishment of innovation ecosystems. During the coding process, all codes and emerging themes were meticulously recorded and enhanced through iterative interaction with the data. This thorough documentation enhances the transparency and dependability of the analytical process, guaranteeing that the findings are firmly based on the gathered data (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nowell & Albrecht, 2022).

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation was utilized as a principal method to enhance the analytical rigor of the investigation. Triangulation entails utilizing various sources or viewpoints to analyze a research topic, hence enhancing the validity of qualitative results. This research involved the collection of papers from many kinds of sources, including academic publications, international policy reports, institutional paperwork, and publicly accessible online materials pertaining to entrepreneurship education and innovation policy. The various sources were methodically analyzed and synthesized to discern common themes related to firm innovation, entrepreneurship education techniques, and economic development initiatives. The convergence of evidence from several document types bolsters the study's credibility and analytical depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Tracy, 2022).

Ethical Considerations

The study relied exclusively on publicly accessible secondary data, therefore eliminating the necessity for direct human participant interaction. As a result, ethical risks related to confidentiality, informed consent, or participant injury are negligible. All sources were duly credited in compliance with academic integrity requirements (UNESCO, 2024).

Results and Discussion

Overview of UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network Initiatives
The UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network (EE-Net) functions as a regional and global platform designed to advance entrepreneurship education across the Asia-Pacific region. The initiative connects policymakers, educators, researchers, and industry professionals to facilitate knowledge exchange, pedagogical innovation, and collaborative programme development

aimed at strengthening entrepreneurial capacity within higher education institutions (UNESCO, 2021, 2023). Through this multi-stakeholder approach, the network contributes to the broader policy agenda of promoting innovation-driven economic development. Importantly, the objectives of EE-Net closely align with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) (United Nations, 2022). By integrating entrepreneurship education with these development priorities, the network positions educational institutions as key actors in fostering innovation, employment creation, and inclusive economic growth.

Analysis of EE-Net documentation and programme activities reveals four primary areas of intervention. First, curriculum development and pedagogical innovation focus on integrating entrepreneurship education into higher education curricula while promoting experiential learning approaches such as project-based learning, business simulations, and incubator-based initiatives (Neck & Corbett, 2022; OECD, 2023). These pedagogical approaches emphasise active learning and real-world problem solving, which are widely recognised as critical for developing entrepreneurial competencies. Second, capacity building for educators represents a core component of the network's strategy. Through workshops, professional training programmes, and collaborative learning initiatives, EE-Net supports educators in developing the skills and pedagogical tools necessary to effectively deliver entrepreneurship education (UNESCO, 2021). Third, knowledge exchange and networking activities, including conferences, policy dialogues, and digital collaboration platforms, facilitate the sharing of best practices and research findings across institutions and national contexts (OECD, 2022). These initiatives encourage cross-border collaboration and support the diffusion of innovative teaching methods and policy frameworks. Finally, policy alignment and advocacy efforts aim to encourage governments and higher education institutions to integrate entrepreneurship education into national education systems and innovation strategies (World Bank, 2022). Through these initiatives, EE-Net functions not only as an educational network but also as a policy and innovation facilitator that strengthens linkages between academia, industry, and government.

Theme 1: Entrepreneurship Education as a Driver of Enterprise Innovation

One of the central findings of this study is that the EE-Net initiative contributes to enterprise innovation by strengthening the entrepreneurial competencies of students, educators, and institutions. The thematic analysis identifies several mechanisms through which entrepreneurship education can stimulate innovation at both individual and organisational levels. First, entrepreneurship education promotes the development of innovation-related cognitive and behavioural skills, including critical thinking, creative problem solving, opportunity recognition, and risk assessment. These competencies are widely recognised as essential drivers of innovative capacity within organisations and entrepreneurial ventures (Fayolle & Gailly, 2023; OECD, 2023). By cultivating these skills among students and educators, entrepreneurship education can enhance the ability of individuals to generate and implement novel ideas. Second, experiential learning approaches play a critical role in translating theoretical knowledge into practical innovation outcomes. Activities such as project-based learning, business simulations, start-up competitions, and university-based incubator programmes provide opportunities for participants to experiment with business ideas, prototype solutions, and test market viability. Prior research demonstrates that such experiential learning environments significantly improve both incremental and radical innovation outcomes

by encouraging experimentation and iterative learning processes (Neck & Corbett, 2022; Nabi et al., 2021). Third, collaboration between universities and external stakeholders—including local enterprises, industry partners, and innovation hubs—facilitates knowledge exchange and co-creation processes. These partnerships enable entrepreneurial ideas generated within academic settings to be transformed into practical products, services, or business models (World Bank, 2022). Through these collaborative mechanisms, higher education institutions can function as catalysts for regional innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems. Taken together, these findings suggest that structured entrepreneurship education programmes can contribute to the development of innovation capabilities at multiple levels. At the micro level, individuals develop entrepreneurial skills and innovation mindsets, while at the organisational level, institutions enhance their capacity to support innovative activities. These results support existing empirical research demonstrating a strong relationship between entrepreneurial human capital and innovation performance (Acs et al., 2021).

Theme 2: Contribution to Economic Development

The analysis also highlights the broader economic implications of entrepreneurship education initiatives such as EE-Net. In particular, the findings suggest that entrepreneurship education can contribute to job creation, inclusive economic participation, and regional economic development. Entrepreneurship education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills required to establish and manage new ventures, thereby supporting the creation and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). SMEs play a critical role in national economies, as they are widely recognised as major drivers of employment generation, productivity growth, and economic diversification (OECD, 2022; World Bank, 2023). By encouraging entrepreneurial activity, educational initiatives can therefore contribute indirectly to economic expansion. Another important dimension of EE-Net initiatives is their emphasis on inclusive entrepreneurship. Many programmes specifically target women, youth, and other under-represented groups in entrepreneurial ecosystems. Previous research indicates that inclusive entrepreneurship education can help reduce socio-economic inequalities by expanding access to economic opportunities and improving labour market participation among disadvantaged populations (UNESCO, 2021; United Nations, 2022). Furthermore, entrepreneurship education supports broader structural economic transformation by promoting innovation-driven economic activities. In countries pursuing knowledge-based development strategies, such as Malaysia, entrepreneurship education initiatives can complement national development agendas aimed at fostering innovation, technological advancement, and high-value economic activities (Economic Planning Unit Malaysia, 2021). Overall, the findings suggest that entrepreneurship education can generate both direct and indirect economic impacts, particularly when supported by well-developed institutional networks and policy frameworks.

Theme 3: Strengthening Institutional and Policy Ecosystems

Beyond individual and firm-level outcomes, the findings indicate that EE-Net plays an important role in strengthening institutional and policy ecosystems that support innovation and entrepreneurship. This highlights the systemic nature of entrepreneurship education as a component of broader innovation systems. At the policy level, the network encourages the integration of entrepreneurship education into national education strategies and innovation policies. By aligning educational objectives with economic development goals, policymakers can create a more coherent framework that supports innovation-driven growth (OECD, 2023). At the institutional level, capacity-building initiatives help educators and university

administrators develop the skills required to deliver high-quality entrepreneurship education and evaluate programme outcomes (UNESCO, 2023). Such institutional strengthening is essential for ensuring the sustainability and effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programmes. In addition, the network promotes regional collaboration among higher education institutions, enabling the exchange of pedagogical practices, research findings, and policy experiences. These collaborative networks facilitate knowledge diffusion and support the development of regional innovation ecosystems (World Bank, 2022). These findings strongly resonate with Innovation Systems Theory, which emphasises the importance of institutional interactions, knowledge flows, and collaborative networks in shaping innovation outcomes (Edquist, 2021; Lundvall, 2022). From this perspective, entrepreneurship education initiatives such as EE-Net can be understood as mechanisms that strengthen the institutional linkages necessary for effective innovation systems. By connecting educational institutions, government agencies, and industry partners, the network contributes to the development of an integrated ecosystem that supports innovation and entrepreneurial activity.

Theme 4: Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

The thematic analysis also reveals that EE-Net initiatives closely align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This alignment underscores the broader developmental significance of entrepreneurship education. First, the promotion of inclusive and high-quality entrepreneurship education within higher education institutions contributes directly to SDG 4 (Quality Education) by enhancing the relevance of educational programmes and equipping students with practical skills required in modern economies (UNESCO, 2021). Second, by supporting entrepreneurial activity and business creation, the network contributes to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Entrepreneurship education can expand employment opportunities, particularly for young graduates entering increasingly competitive labour markets (OECD, 2022). Third, the emphasis on innovation, technology adoption, and university-industry collaboration aligns with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) (United Nations, 2022). These initiatives help strengthen innovation capacity and support the development of knowledge-based economies. The alignment between entrepreneurship education initiatives and the SDGs highlights the role of education as a strategic instrument for promoting sustainable development. Rather than functioning solely as an academic activity, entrepreneurship education can serve as a broader mechanism for advancing economic, social, and technological progress

Discussion: Integrating Findings with Theory

The findings of this study provide important theoretical insights into the relationship between entrepreneurship education, innovation, and economic development. From the perspective of Human Capital Theory, entrepreneurship education enhances individuals' knowledge, skills, and competencies, thereby increasing their productivity and capacity to engage in innovative economic activities (Becker, 2021). By developing entrepreneurial competencies such as opportunity recognition, problem solving, and strategic thinking, educational programmes can strengthen the human capital base required for innovation-driven enterprises (Acs et al., 2021). In addition, the findings align with Innovation Systems Theory, which emphasises the importance of institutional networks, knowledge flows, and collaborative interactions in fostering innovation (Edquist, 2021; Lundvall, 2022). The EE-Net initiative strengthens these interactions by facilitating collaboration between universities, policymakers, and industry actors. Such interactions enable the diffusion of knowledge and the development of innovation

capabilities across institutions and regions. The results can also be interpreted through the lens of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Approach, which conceptualises entrepreneurship as an outcome of interconnected actors, institutions, and resources within a specific environment (Stam & van de Ven, 2021). EE-Net contributes to this ecosystem by providing platforms for knowledge exchange, policy coordination, and institutional collaboration. Through these mechanisms, the network supports the development of entrepreneurial environments that enable innovation and business creation. Taken together, these theoretical perspectives suggest that entrepreneurship education is most effective when implemented within coordinated institutional systems rather than as isolated educational initiatives. When embedded within broader innovation ecosystems, entrepreneurship education can generate both micro-level outcomes (such as individual entrepreneurial competencies) and macro-level impacts (including institutional innovation capacity and economic development). These conclusions are consistent with recent empirical studies demonstrating that entrepreneurship education can produce substantial innovation and economic benefits when supported by strong institutional networks and policy frameworks (Nabi et al., 2021; Fayolle & Gailly, 2023).

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study offer several important implications for policymakers, educators, and institutional leaders. First, governments should integrate entrepreneurship education into broader national innovation and economic development strategies. Aligning educational initiatives with economic policy objectives can strengthen the impact of entrepreneurship education on innovation and job creation (OECD, 2023). Second, higher education institutions should invest in faculty development, curriculum innovation, and experiential learning opportunities. Strengthening the pedagogical capabilities of educators is essential for ensuring the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education programmes (UNESCO, 2023). Third, regional and international networks such as EE-Net should be further supported as platforms for knowledge exchange and policy collaboration. These networks enable institutions to share best practices, develop joint research initiatives, and coordinate entrepreneurship education policies across countries (World Bank, 2022). Finally, targeted support for under-represented groups, including women and youth, should remain a key priority. Inclusive entrepreneurship education can help expand economic participation and maximise the social and economic benefits of entrepreneurial activity (United Nations, 2022)

Mechanisms Through Which Entrepreneurship Education Drives Innovation

The results demonstrate that EE-Net facilitates enterprise innovation via multiple interconnected mechanisms functioning at the human, institutional, and systemic levels. Initially, capability development strategies are essential. Entrepreneurship education programs prioritize the cultivation of innovation-related skills, such as opportunity identification, creative problem-solving, risk evaluation, and strategic reasoning. These talents augment individuals' capacity to discern market possibilities and formulate innovative solutions (Fayolle & Gailly, 2023; OECD, 2023). By enhancing these competencies among students and educators, entrepreneurship education cultivates the human capital essential for innovation-driven entrepreneurship. Secondly, experiential learning mechanisms facilitate the application of knowledge in practice. Utilizing pedagogical methods such as project-based learning, business simulations, start-up contests, and incubator programs, students actively participate in the development, testing, and refinement of entrepreneurial concepts. These immersive environments facilitate iterative experimentation and learning-by-doing, which are widely

acknowledged as essential processes in innovation development (Neck & Corbett, 2022; Nabi et al., 2021). Third, processes of knowledge diffusion enable the exchange of ideas and practices between institutions and external stakeholders. EE-Net's conferences, workshops, and digital platforms facilitate the exchange of best practices, research findings, and pedagogical techniques among educators, policymakers, and practitioners. This interchange facilitates the dissemination of entrepreneurial knowledge and innovative practices among institutions and regions (OECD, 2022). Collectively, these factors empower entrepreneurship education projects to produce innovation outcomes by enhancing individual competences and fortifying collaborative learning processes among institutions.

Institutional Arrangements Supporting Entrepreneurship Education

The findings underscore the significance of particular institutional frameworks that facilitate the successful execution of entrepreneurship education programs. At the university level, institutional frameworks frequently include entrepreneurship education into academic courses and build specialized support systems, including entrepreneurship centers, innovation hubs, and company incubators. These structures enhance organizational capacity to implement entrepreneurial programs, assist student initiatives, and foster engagement with external stakeholders (UNESCO, 2023). EE-Net fosters collaboration among universities, research institutions, and training organizations at the inter-institutional level throughout the Asia-Pacific area. These collaborative agreements facilitate the sharing of educational resources, the co-development of training programs, and the combined organization of conferences and seminars among institutions. This collaboration improves the quality and uniformity of entrepreneurship education among the involved institutions. At the national policy level, governments frequently integrate entrepreneurial education into comprehensive national strategies concerning innovation, higher education reform, and economic development. Incorporating entrepreneurship education into national education systems guarantees enduring sustainability and policy endorsement for these programs (World Bank, 2022). These institutional arrangements demonstrate that successful entrepreneurship education necessitates organizational infrastructure and policy coherence across several institutional tiers.

Governance Features of the EE-Net Initiative

An additional significant conclusion pertains to the governance frameworks that facilitate collaboration among many stakeholders engaged in entrepreneurship education. EE-Net functions via a multi-tiered governance framework comprising international organizations, national governments, higher education institutions, and industry participants. This governance paradigm enables cooperation among many policy and institutional tiers while preserving adaptability for local contexts. UNESCO offers strategic leadership, coordination, and capacity-building assistance on an international scale. UNESCO assists member institutions in implementing best practices in entrepreneurship education through guidelines, training programs, and regional platforms. At the national level, governments are instrumental in incorporating entrepreneurial education into educational frameworks and innovation strategies. Policy support frequently encompasses curriculum modifications, financial backing for entrepreneurship initiatives, and incentives for collaboration between universities and industries. Universities and training organizations establish entrepreneurship education programs and cultivate collaborations with external stakeholders at the institutional level. Institutional autonomy enables universities to tailor educational programs to local economic circumstances and industry requirements. This governance structure exemplifies a network-

based paradigm; wherein various players engage in collaboration through partnerships instead of depending exclusively on hierarchical policy authority. These governance structures are becoming acknowledged as efficient in managing intricate innovation systems (OECD, 2023).

Ecosystem Linkages Facilitating Innovation

The results further illustrate that EE-Net enhances the connections within the entrepreneurial ecosystem by linking essential stakeholders engaged in innovation and entrepreneurship. A significant connection is the university–industry relationship, wherein interactions between academic institutions and local firms facilitate information transfer, technological commercialization, and student involvement with practical business difficulties. These collaborations facilitate the conversion of academic knowledge into pragmatic entrepreneurial applications (World Bank, 2022). A vital connection pertains to the collaboration between government and universities, which guarantees that entrepreneurship education is in accordance with national economic development objectives. Governments frequently endorse entrepreneurial activities via funding programs, policy frameworks, and innovation incentives. Moreover, regional and international networking platforms enable cross-border collaboration among universities, educators, and policymakers. These networks promote the sharing of innovative pedagogical methods and facilitate the dissemination of entrepreneurship education frameworks internationally. From the standpoint of an entrepreneurial ecosystem, these connections bolster interactions among essential stakeholders such as universities, businesses, policymakers, and support organizations, thereby augmenting the ecosystem's overall ability to foster innovation and entrepreneurial endeavours (Stam & van de Ven, 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of entrepreneurship education on enterprise innovation and economic development, utilising the UNESCO Entrepreneurship Education Network's (EE-Net) as a case study. The results indicate that entrepreneurship education generates the most significant and enduring effects when integrated within organised, cooperative, and policy-consistent institutional frameworks. Participation in entrepreneurship education at the individual level fosters critical thinking, creativity, opportunity recognition, and entrepreneurial competencies, which are acknowledged as precursors to innovative behaviour and enterprise development (Amaral et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024). These competences empower learners and graduates to significantly contribute to innovation processes by developing new goods, services, and business models.

The EE-Net scenario exemplifies how coordinated multi-stakeholder networks enhance connections among higher education institutions, governments, and industry participants at the systemic level. EE-Net integrates entrepreneurship education programs with overarching national and regional innovation and development plans through curriculum creation, capacity building, and knowledge exchange (UNESCO, 2023, 2024). This connection fosters the establishment of innovation-driven and knowledge-based economies, facilitating job creation, enterprise expansion, and inclusive economic development. The results further substantiate theoretical frameworks derived from human capital theory, innovation systems theory, and the entrepreneurial ecosystem approach, emphasising the interconnectedness of education, innovation, and economic development outcomes.

The study empirically substantiates the notion that entrepreneurship education should be regarded not as a discrete pedagogical intervention but as a comprehensive policy instrument that can produce both micro-level (skills, innovative behaviour) and macro-level (enterprise performance, economic development) effects. The EE-Net concept exemplifies how international and regional networks can serve as catalysts for sustainable innovation ecosystems, especially when synchronised with global development goals, like the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendation

This study proposes various recommendations focused on policy and practice. Governments should explicitly incorporate entrepreneurial education into national innovation, industrial, and economic development strategies. Aligning education policies with innovation objectives could strengthen the impact of entrepreneurship education on business development and economic resilience (OECD, 2023). Secondly, higher education institutions need to focus on curriculum innovation, faculty development, and experiential learning methodologies that underscore entrepreneurial and innovative competencies. Integrating problem-based learning, industry collaboration, and venture development activities into academic programs can enhance the practical significance and effectiveness of entrepreneurial education (Amaral et al., 2024).

Third, regional and international networks, such as UNESCO's EE-Net, should be further utilised to enhance cross-institutional collaboration, facilitate knowledge sharing, and disseminate best practices. These networks are essential for capacity building, especially in developing and emerging countries, as they allow institutions to learn from many contexts and replicate successful models (UNESCO, 2024). Fourth, inclusion must be a primary focus in the design and execution of entrepreneurial education projects. Targeted initiatives focused on women, youth, and rural or marginalised groups can optimise the social and economic benefits of entrepreneurship education, fostering inclusive growth and equitable development outcomes. Ultimately, comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms must be instituted to evaluate the enduring effects of entrepreneurship education on innovation and economic development. An ongoing assessment can guide evidence-based policy adjustments and guarantee that entrepreneurship education programs adapt to changing economic and societal demands.

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