

# **Entrepreneurship Education Research in Nigeria: Current foci and future research agendas**

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## **Abstract**

### **Purpose**

Entrepreneurship education plays a crucial role in the development of entrepreneurs and the enhancement of entrepreneurial activities in every economy. This article presents the findings of a review of Nigerian entrepreneurship education literature published in 20 journals over a 16-year period. The purpose of the study was to examine research contributions in the field of entrepreneurship education within the Nigerian context, with the aim of understanding the focus and the different research areas covered by researchers in this area, and to make suggestions that can guide scholars in their future research contributions.

### **Design/methodology/approach**

Systematic literature reviews are recognized methods for conducting evidence based research. The study adopted a systematic literature review approach, drawing from a computerized search of five selected databases, using predetermined key words by the researchers.

### **Findings**

The main finding of this paper is that related concepts like skills, intention, drive and attitude have been used in expounding discussions on the outcome of entrepreneurship education, but very little has been written on entrepreneurial mindset, which other studies have suggested is a crucial point in the journey of an entrepreneur (Reed and Stoltz, 2011; Neneh, 2012). Furthermore, learning and teaching of entrepreneurship in the Nigerian higher education institutions seem to be more focused on creating awareness about entrepreneurship, as against the experiential approach that scholars have argued to be a prerequisite for developing the next generation of entrepreneurs (Bell, 2015). The

study also found that over 80% of the reviewed articles are published in journals not ranked or indexed in the ABS journal rankings or the Scopus database.

### **Research limitations/implications**

The paper is limited since it is based on a review of literature from a selected range of databases, covering a specific time span. This potentially excludes other studies outside this time span. Scholarship in this area and context will benefit greatly when researchers target, choose and engage the higher ranked and more impactful journals as the outlet for their research outputs.

### **Practical Implication**

At a time when efforts are being made to address socioeconomic issues like poverty and unemployment through mainstream training in entrepreneurship education, this paper provides a better understanding of the state of research in this context, by highlighting the potential gaps as to where research investigation is needed for better policy formulation and guiding future research.

### **Originality/value**

There are limited studies that focus on the issue of entrepreneurial mindset in entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. Overall, this paper identifies an important gap in the literature that warrants future research.

### **Keywords**

Entrepreneurship Education; Entrepreneurial Learning; Entrepreneurial Intention; Entrepreneurial Mindset; Nigeria; Africa

## Introduction

Entrepreneurs play a crucial role in any economy, not only in creating jobs but also in driving innovation (Ayatse, 2013). This is perhaps especially important in developing economies such as Nigeria, where entrepreneurs' resourcefulness, savviness and resilience allows them to successfully operate in a business environment that is unpredictable and volatile. The development of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs are areas that have attracted sustained interest over the years from a variety of actors, e.g., government, private organizations and educational institutions. Indeed, the paper recognises the development and teaching of entrepreneurship courses in most universities in Nigeria as aimed at producing entrepreneurial graduates who will potentially make an immense contribution to the economic development of the nation, not just as self-employed individuals but also as future job creators.

The literature suggests that the context (e.g. national/regional, cultural, institutional) of entrepreneurship education plays an influential role in shaping entrepreneurship (Nabi and Liñán, 2011; Whetten, 2009). Nigeria is selected as the focus due mainly to its status as one of the most important economies on the African continent. The country is an important case, given its vast resources, population and degree of modernity (Musa, 2008). It has experienced the typical phases of economic development, leveraging its natural resources to establish industries in other non-oil sectors (e.g. World Economic Forum, 2012). The country now faces the next stage of development, that is, innovation, which can be spurred not only by investment in research and development, but also by entrepreneurship. Because of its economy's developmental trajectory, Nigeria is a timely and appropriate focus for this literature review on entrepreneurship development in higher education institutions.

As a step to advancing entrepreneurship education research in Nigeria, the study sought to understand the different research areas and foci covered by researchers in the field of entrepreneurship education in the Nigerian context, as it will give direction to scholars looking to undertake further research in entrepreneurship education in this context. There is no scarcity of research contributions in entrepreneurship education in other parts of the world, particularly the developed world. However, within the Nigerian context, it is less prominent. Similarly, there is a mixed focus in research work within this area with regards to research direction in entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. This paper reports a systematic literature review (SLR) that synthesises the focus of research conducted in this area. The outcome gives a comprehensive review of current knowledge and consequently helps in shaping and directing the focus of future research in this area and context.

Accordingly, the main question that the study seeks to answer is:

What have been the key areas that researchers have focused on in the field of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria, from 1999 to 2015?

Although the review focuses primarily on extrapolating recurrent themes within research areas in entrepreneurship education, the study also shows the prevalent methodological constructs adopted by researchers in their investigations in this area.

The paper presents the literature along its main lines of focus and then advances potential suggestions for future research. The paper presents the systematic review of the literature, which is the methodology used in the research. This is then followed by a discussion of the data collection and the analysis. A discussion of the results is then undertaken, and after this the conclusions, practical implications and the limitations of the research are discussed.

## **Methodology**

Systematic Review is argued to be a replicable and transparent methodological option for reviewing literature. It has been criticized for being laborious and time-consuming compared to the traditional narrative method. Despite this, it still finds relevance among researchers, especially within the social sciences and particularly business research (Rojon et al., 2011). The approach requires the selection of conceptually guided keywords. These keywords are then used to search appropriate databases in order to identify all the relevant literature related to a particular topic. It is thus possible to select the relevant studies based on clearly defined criteria (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009).

For the literature review presented in this paper, we started by selecting the databases to be considered as the potential publication outlets in the field of entrepreneurship education. We considered the size of the database, its comprehensiveness, and the range of journal articles. The following five online publication outlets were selected because of their broad selection of peer reviewed literature:

- Emerald Insight
- ProQuest Direct Database
- Science Direct (Elsevier) Database
- Summon
- A UK University library search

The researchers identified the search parameters and carried out an initial search in the databases, generating many articles. An exclusion criteria or benchmark was determined and applied to the results. Only articles that had been published within the specified period and related to entrepreneurship were included. The search resulted in 213 relevant studies from 20 journals.

Only peer-reviewed journal articles were considered for the review as this helps to ensure the standard of the research and scholarly practice. In addition, peer-reviewed journals are often considered and termed validated knowledge (Podsakoff et al., 2005). The article search was undertaken during a period of 10 days during December 2015, and the search included all articles published between 1999 and 2015. Articles that have been published in entrepreneurship, business and management, and economics journals were included, as they reflected the focus of the search and were also the most appropriate publication outlets for entrepreneurship education. The literature was searched and reviewed and then synthesized after adhering to all the set criteria.

### **Sample and procedure**

The key search terms used for collecting the research samples included entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention and Nigeria. The first step involved the collection of meta-information of the identified population of articles. After applying the search descriptors, the search produced 1,276 results (Emerald Insight: 290; ProQuest: 278; Science Direct: 225; Summon: 324; UK University library search: 159). In the second step, we merged the search results across the databases, thereafter removing 640 multiple entries in the process, leaving a total number of 636 articles. In the third step, we scanned all the titles and abstracts, removing 423 irrelevant papers, for example studies unrelated or irrelevant to the objective of the study. This left a total sample of 213 articles.

Each of the 213 articles was reviewed carefully and classified according to the research areas, methodologies, data collection methods, and publication outlet and year of publication. When studies were topically similar, the researchers assessed the studies' core contributions to assign it a category.

**Table 1:** Distribution of results from data bases

Database	Search results returned	Articles included in the analysis
Emerald Insight	290	25
ProQuest	278	67
Science Direct (Elsevier)	225	21
Summon	324	53
Library search at a UK University	159	47
Total	1276	213

## **Results of the systematic review**

Following on from the systematic search of the literature, the results of the review were broken down into the key research areas as shown in Table 2. This part of the article will explore the general evidence relating to those areas.

Table 2 shows that there is a prevalence of research contributions related to entrepreneurial skill development in the entrepreneurship education literature in Nigeria. This finding corroborates the assertion and position of Ojeifor (2013) that the emphasis of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria has always been centred on skills acquisition. Similarly, the perception of policy makers and higher education institutions with regards to entrepreneurship education has always been around the idea of equipping students with the necessary skills with which to be self-reliant. This is assumed to be the key to human capacity development and subsequent economic improvement, as observed by (Tende, 2014). It is not a surprise that this topic was most prevalent among the reviewed articles (54 articles or 25.4%). There is an increasing recognition among scholars that entrepreneurial behaviour, especially in the new economy, is not only a function of relevant skills, as observed by Neneh (2012), but also includes an entrepreneurial mindset. Even though Neneh (2012) and other contributors like Dweck (2006) suggested that the entrepreneurial mindset is a crucial aspect for consideration in entrepreneurship education, our study shows that entrepreneurial mindset is only a focus in 4% of the reviewed literature, highlighting the dearth of research in this area.

Similarly, it has also been argued that enterprise development and entrepreneurship education presents challenges (Iro-Idoro et al., 2015), and it is not surprising that over 22.1% percent (second most dominant research area in the study) of the literature reviewed focused on challenges. Despite the challenges of entrepreneurship education (see table 2), the review found no research evidence on policy frameworks aimed at tackling some of these challenges.

Of the 213 studies reviewed, only 7% contained gender-related topics in entrepreneurship. Within this 7%, the articles discussed high levels of involvement of women in entrepreneurial activities, particularly within the informal industry. Scholars of gender-themed studies in entrepreneurship education will find this area worth exploring and open for further research, as the results suggest that there is limited research in this area, including the entrepreneurial attitude of female students towards entrepreneurial venturing.

**Table 2:** Distribution of published studies according to the research areas

Research area	Number of studies	%
Entrepreneurial intention	41	19.2
Entrepreneurship and gender related issues	15	7.0
Entrepreneurial skills	54	25.4
Entrepreneurial mindset	9	4.2
Entrepreneurial attitude	28	13.2
Entrepreneurship education and challenges	47	22.1
Entrepreneurial venturing	19	8.9
Total	213	100

The literature reviewed shows that most researchers in the field of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria adopted quantitative and qualitative methodologies, representing 42% and 21% respectively. Other methodologies adopted included conceptual research (12%), mixed-methods (9%) and reviews of the literature (16%).

With regards to the data collection methods adopted by the researchers in the articles exploring the field of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria from 1999 to 2015, it was found that most the articles utilised questionnaires (54% of the total articles). Whilst 28% of the articles used interviews, 11% used focus groups and 7% used observation.

Distribution of the articles published from 1999 to 2015 is shown in table 3. The table shows that the research output in entrepreneurship education increased significantly from 1999 to 2015. This observation may be related to the country's move towards democracy and adoption of a free market economy. The number of articles published increased to about 39 in 2011, which is 18.8% of the total number of the study sample. This increase could be attributed to government policy shift towards entrepreneurship, drawing more attention by researchers (Akhueomonkhan and Sofoluwe, 2013). Table 3 shows a drop in the percentage of the research conducted between 2012 and 2013, perhaps due to the cooling effect of the government policy intervention on entrepreneurship education (Udefuna et al., 2013). The percentage of the research contribution, however still increased above what was obtainable in the period before the policy intervention. While government policies in Nigeria have promoted and targeted entrepreneurship development, they may not have a significant effect on the anticipated outcomes (Tende, 2014). Nevertheless, this research observed that government policy initiative could direct researchers and research agenda towards a certain area.

**Table 3:** Distribution of entrepreneurship education articles published from 1999 to 2015 by year

Year	Number of articles published	%
1999	2	0.94
2000	4	1.88
2001	5	2.35
2002	3	1.41
2003	8	3.76
2004	15	7.04
2005	7	3.29
2006	4	1.88
2007	12	5.63
2008	21	9.86
2009	12	5.63
2010	22	10.33
2011	39	18.31
2012	12	5.63
2013	11	5.16
2014	21	9.86
2015	15	7.04
Total	213	100

The reviewed articles came from across 20 different academic journals. Table 4 shows the distribution of the published articles in these journals and the percentage of this distribution of articles. Most of these articles were published in journals not ranked in the ABS journal rankings or included on the Scopus database. The ABS is often used as a standard for quality and ranking of journals (Morris et al., 2009). Journals included in the ABS journal rankings are given a quality rating of between 1 and 4, with 4 being the highest. The African Journal of Business Management had the highest number of studies conducted in the period of the literature studies (29 articles) with a percentage of 13.62 % of the total. This journal is not included in either the ABS or SCImago (Scopus) journal rankings. Nearly 17 percent of the total articles are indexed in the Scopus database. Very few studies (8%) were found in journals included in the ABS journal rankings such as the Journal of Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice. Whilst there is a significant research output by scholars in this area, it may be beneficial for researchers to target and engage the higher-ranked and more impactful journals, as the results indicated that over 80% of the journals within which these studies were published are non-ranked or indexed in any of these data bases (see Table 4).

**Table 4:** Distribution of entrepreneurship education articles published from 1999 to 2015 and journal ranking

Journal	Indexed in Scopus	ABS Journal Guide 2015 ranking	Number of articles published	%
African Journal of Business Management	No	N/A	29	13.62
European Journal of Education Studies	No	N/A	21	9.86
Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review	No	N/A	21	9.86
Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies	No	N/A	16	7.51
Journal of Education and Practice	No	N/A	15	7.04
Journal of Business Administration and Education	No	N/A	13	6.10
African Journal of Economic and Management Studies	Yes	N/A	12	5.63
International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business	Yes	N/A	12	5.63
Journal of Economic Development, Management, IT, Finance and Marketing	No	N/A	11	5.16
International Journal of Information, Business and Management	No	N/A	11	5.16
The International Business and Economics Research Journal	No	N/A	10	4.69
American Journal Of Business Education	No	N/A	9	4.23
International Journal of Business and Management Review	No	N/A	8	3.76
Global Journal of Business Research	No	N/A	5	2.35
Industry and Higher Education	No	1	5	2.35
Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development	Yes	2	4	1.88
International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation	Yes	2	4	1.88
International Review of Management and Business Research	No	N/A	3	1.41
Education + Training	Yes	1	2	0.94
Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice	Yes	4	2	0.94

The distribution of research across the 6 geopolitical regions of Nigeria shows that there is more research done in the southwest of the country, with 41 studies of the total research sample. Just 5.16% of the research comes from the north-east region. Overall, the review shows the regions in the

northern part to be under-researched with 24.9% percent of total studies. The southern part of the country accounts for over 75% of the total studies. The geographical disparity in research could easily be related to the prevalence of higher education institutions in one region (south-west) over the north. Aluede (2006) opined that most debates on regional inequalities are best understood by referring to earlier processes of educational diffusion, which have their roots in the south-west region. Further research in regions with fewer existing studies will give a more holistic picture of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria.

**Table 5:** Distribution of entrepreneurship education articles published from 1999 to 2015 by region

Region	No. of studies	%
North-central	25	11.74
North-east	11	5.16
North-west	17	7.98
South-west	87	40.85
South-east	41	19.25
South-south	32	15.02

### Discussion and research gaps

Considerable research has been undertaken in entrepreneurship education from various perspectives (e.g., government/policy, education, and training) (Udefuna et al., 2013). Research has nonetheless indicated that the individual plays a primary role in the entrepreneurial process, i.e. the primary drive to be an entrepreneur comes from the individual. Current research illustrates the different attitudes and traits of individuals that are believed to contribute to an individual's entrepreneurial undertakings. Findings from some studies reveal the different types of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for entrepreneurship (Bird, 2009; Lee et al., 2006). Nonetheless, the evidence is not conclusive. Contemporary research indicates that the mindset of individuals play a crucial role in the making or journey of an entrepreneur, although the result of this research (See Table 2) shows that existing research in this area is less well developed in Nigeria. A mindset is a confluence between cognition and conation. It is a default mode of thinking (Haynie et al., 2010; Fayolle and Moriano, 2014). Whilst commercial acumen, business knowledge and skills, and a positive attitude are necessary, more may be necessary for successful entrepreneurship (Inyang and Enuoh, 2009), an entrepreneurial mindset is equally a crucial complementary construct that warrents further study (Neneh, 2012).

A mindset can be seen as the internal lens through which an individual sees and navigates through life. It influences everything that an individual sees and does (Reed and Stoltz, 2011). An entrepreneurial mindset is a critical entrepreneurial resource that allows an individual to rapidly sense, act, and mobilize, and adapt in the face of dynamic uncertain conditions or environment. This resource in part is cognitive in nature, which taps into the thinking process of the individual (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000). Many different perspectives have been explored by researchers describing entrepreneurial mindsets (See Table 6). Ireland et al. (2003) argued that “the successful future strategists will exploit an entrepreneurial mindset...the ability to rapidly sense, act, and mobilize, even under uncertain conditions” (Ireland et al., 2003: p.963). In other words, a mindset that is adaptable in the face of uncertainties is a critical entrepreneurial resource.

The theory of planned behaviour from Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) is a major theoretical contribution that fits well with entrepreneurial mindset development and provides a good underpinning theory in entrepreneurial mindset research (e.g., Kolvereid and Isaksen, 2006) which is expanding (Francisco and Fayolle, 2015). Some researchers use entrepreneurial skills, motivation, and self-efficacy as variables that fuel or impact entrepreneurial intention and action (Ibrahim and Mas’ud, 2016; Fayolle and Moriano, 2014). The entrepreneurial mindset is studied and encapsulated as a cognitive variable pivotal to any form of intention and subsequent entrepreneurial action.

Existing entrepreneurship literature enumerates different concepts that link entrepreneurship education with intention, for example entrepreneurial self-efficacy and skills, (Nabi & Liñán, 2011; Ibrahim & Mas’ud, 2016) but very few link entrepreneurial mindset and education with intention. Neneh (2012) asserts that entrepreneurs must have an entrepreneurial mindset in addition to the requisite entrepreneurial skills to be successful.

Despite the increasing attention to entrepreneurial mindset, little research in Nigeria has focused on this topic. The study shows that only 4% of the 213 literatures reviewed sample related to entrepreneurial mindset (table 2), which generally supports the notion of research paucity in this area. It could also be said that the literature is developing largely in silos, according to the phenomena of interest of the respective researchers. However, the authors also found emerging common themes among entrepreneurship education scholars in Nigeria. For example, table 2 shows the extant literature contributions in different areas; with skill development (25.4% of the total research sample) as the dominant focus of researchers in the Nigerian entrepreneurship education (see table 2). However, individuals may have great potential or skills without corresponding intentions. This could be attributed to the mindset not being inclined towards entrepreneurship; just like different contributors alluded when asserting that entrepreneurial venturing and success requires not just

unique skills, but also the right mindset (Neneh, 2012). As such, any form of training or human capacity development that is aimed at producing entrepreneurs should be patterned in such a way that developing the mindset will also be an integral part of the curriculum, not just focusing on skills.

**Table 6:** Selected Entrepreneurial Mindset Definitions

Author(s)	Definition
Dhliwayo and Vuuren (2007)	A way of thinking about business and its opportunities that capture the benefits of uncertainty
McGrath and MacMillan (2000)	Passionately seeking new opportunities; pursuing opportunities with enormous discipline; pursuing only the very best opportunities; focusing on execution; and engaging everyone's energy in their domain
Putta (2014)	A specific state of mind which orientates human conduct towards entrepreneurial activities and outcomes. Individuals with entrepreneurial mindsets are often drawn to opportunities, innovation and new value creation.
Haynie et al. (2010)	Cognitive adaptability; ability to be dynamic, flexible, and self-regulating in one's cognitions given dynamic and uncertain task environments.
Fayolle and Redford (2014)	A specific state of mind which orientates human conduct towards entrepreneurial activities and outcomes, as a result of the ability to take calculated risk, willingness to adapt and navigate through and realities of change and uncertainties.
Israel and Johnmark (2014)	An essential ingredient for influencing entrepreneurial behavior. However, it lacks a clear cut conceptual definition
Udu (2014)	A cognitive engagement that explores and stimulates the creative imagination of an individual, for the purpose of "thinking out of the box". (p. 192)

### ***Entrepreneurship education***

Entrepreneurship education has been argued to play a fundamental role in enhancing entrepreneurial skills and self-efficacy (Bell, 2015; Matlay, 2005; Pittaway and Cope, 2007) and it has been reported that since 1970 the number of universities offering entrepreneurship courses has increased rapidly, with Rasmussen and Sørheim (2006) maintaining that this increase continued into the 2000's. Støren (2014) put forth that entrepreneurship education is at the heart of supporting the development of entrepreneurship.

Gibb, (1994) sees entrepreneurship education as a process of "building knowledge and skills either "about" or "for the purpose of" entrepreneurship generally, as part of recognized education programs at primary, secondary or tertiary-level educational institutions."

There is evidence to suggest that entrepreneurship education impacts positively on an individual's propensity for self-employment, and also on the number and quality of graduate entrepreneurs

entering into an economy (Knight, 1960; Reynolds and White, 1997). Research has also highlighted that graduates with certain entrepreneurial attitudes have been shown to have greater success in securing employment in higher level jobs after graduation (Bell, 2016). On this basis, there is increasing political support for and commitment to promoting entrepreneurship education in both developed and developing economies (Støren, 2014; Akhuemonkhan and Sofoluwe, 2013; Matlay, 2005).

Akhuemonkhan et al. (2014) conducted a study on the tools needed for fast tracking entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. The study found that entrepreneurship centers have very weak socio-economic impact on job creation, wealth creation and industrial development in the country. Thus, there is a need for further research to better understand the gap between the policy objectives driving the creation of these centers and the outcomes (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2014). Similarly, Akhuemonkhan & Sofoluwe, (2013) opined that entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is not necessarily tailored at providing entrepreneurial graduates but rather graduates who consider entrepreneurial venturing as an alternative or a back-up plan if conventional employment is difficult to find.

Reform in the Nigerian education system has always been an issue when discussing capacity development. Equally, the education system has been criticised for its mismatch with expected or intended outcomes. Daini (p 23, 2006) observed that “A lot of what we have taken as Nigerian system of education is still bookish, examination ridden and somewhat of a mismatch with the social and economic situation of today. A lot of changes have come into society but the education system has not kept pace with it. The abstract and highly bookish curriculum needs to be modified to include other things that are needed in the world of work.”

Different studies on the nature of entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions in Nigeria revealed that the entrepreneurship education is more theoretically focused with insufficient experiential exposure (Ayatse, 2013; Iro-Idoro et al., 2015). An analysis of the journal articles focused on entrepreneurial skills revealed that HEI course and curriculum design is more centered on telling students “about entrepreneurship” rather than preparing them “for entrepreneurship” (Ayatse, 2013), for example by experiential methods, including active participation and mentoring (Bell and Bell, 2016). Although the number of entrepreneurship education programs offered by higher education institutions in Nigeria has grown considerably over the past decade, the actual contribution that such courses have on entrepreneurial activity remains unclear (Sofoluwe et al., 2013). Furthermore, it appears that entrepreneurship educators are still uncertain about the objective, impact and effectiveness of entrepreneurship education within the Nigerian context (Adejimola and Olufunmilayo, 2009).

Leveraging entrepreneurship education to develop entrepreneurs would require considerable changes in both the content and process of learning as suggested by Kirby (2004). There is need for a shift in the emphasis from educating “about” entrepreneurship to educating “for” entrepreneurship. This may require higher education institutions in Nigeria (as well as researchers) to begin to consider approaches or pedagogies that will not be limited to only skills development but those that will potentially influence and stimulate the mindset of students or their ‘entrepreneurial imagination’ in the words of (Chia, 1996). Furthermore, the policies focused on entrepreneurship education and activities in higher education institutions should not just be limited to new venture creation or small business management (Akhuemonkhan and Sofoluwe, 2013) but also on creativity and change. A robust entrepreneurship education programme would empower students, both at universities and in more vocational subsets (Bell and Bell, 2017) with a mindset that will enable them to operate as entrepreneurs in different contexts

In addition, the research findings have shown that challenges to entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is the second most common theme (see Table 2). Most recommendations from these studies suggested that entrepreneurship education requires attention because of the mismatch between entrepreneurship education objectives, expectations and outcomes. Furthermore, the study observed that policies aimed at supporting entrepreneurship did not consider many of the challenges mentioned in the reviewed articles. Research in these areas may help influence policy development aimed at these challenges.

## **Conclusion and practical implication for future research**

The literature review has shown that research into entrepreneurial behaviors remains limited in the Nigerian context. This study presented a review of literature in the field of entrepreneurship education in Nigeria within the period of 1999 to December 2015, as well as methodical classification for this review. The review highlights several areas in need of future research. The gaps in the literature concerns the areas that are currently under-researched or areas that warrant further study, shown in Table 2. The number of studies conducted in entrepreneurship education is limited in its exploration of the entrepreneurial mindset, with few articles focused on this area. This may be an area for future exploration by researchers, and may include developing entrepreneurial behaviours as well. The geographical divide where the studies took place also emerged as a theme in the review. Lastly, the research results show few articles in gender-related areas of entrepreneurship. This is an interesting aspect in entrepreneurship especially within this context as there is an increasing shift in the family

structure where we are witnessing a larger number of women becoming the bread winners in their families (Akanji, 2016; Madichie, 2011).

In seeking to help stimulate and develop the entrepreneurial mindset of students and potential entrepreneurs towards entrepreneurial venturing, the development and support of entrepreneurial activities ought to be a government priority, whether within or outside the education setting. Private sector engagement in entrepreneurship education is critical in terms of providing some form of mentoring, advisory or support service to entrepreneurship students while still in higher education. Government could develop policy incentives that can track and reward the contribution of entrepreneurs or the participating private sector stakeholders in the process of developing entrepreneurial graduates.

At a time when efforts are being made to address socio-economic issues like poverty and unemployment through main stream training in entrepreneurship education at all levels of education, this paper provides a review of the current state of entrepreneurship studies conducted in Nigeria. Additionally, the paper highlights important contextual and theoretical relationships that have the potential for significant future findings and contributions.

A study of this nature has limitations. First, the articles reviewed in this study are from five online databases, meaning the study has not captured all possible articles; however, these databases provided results that matched not only the topics of articles we sought, but also the level. The cap on the period covered (1999-2015) in the systematic review potentially excluded studies outside this time span.

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