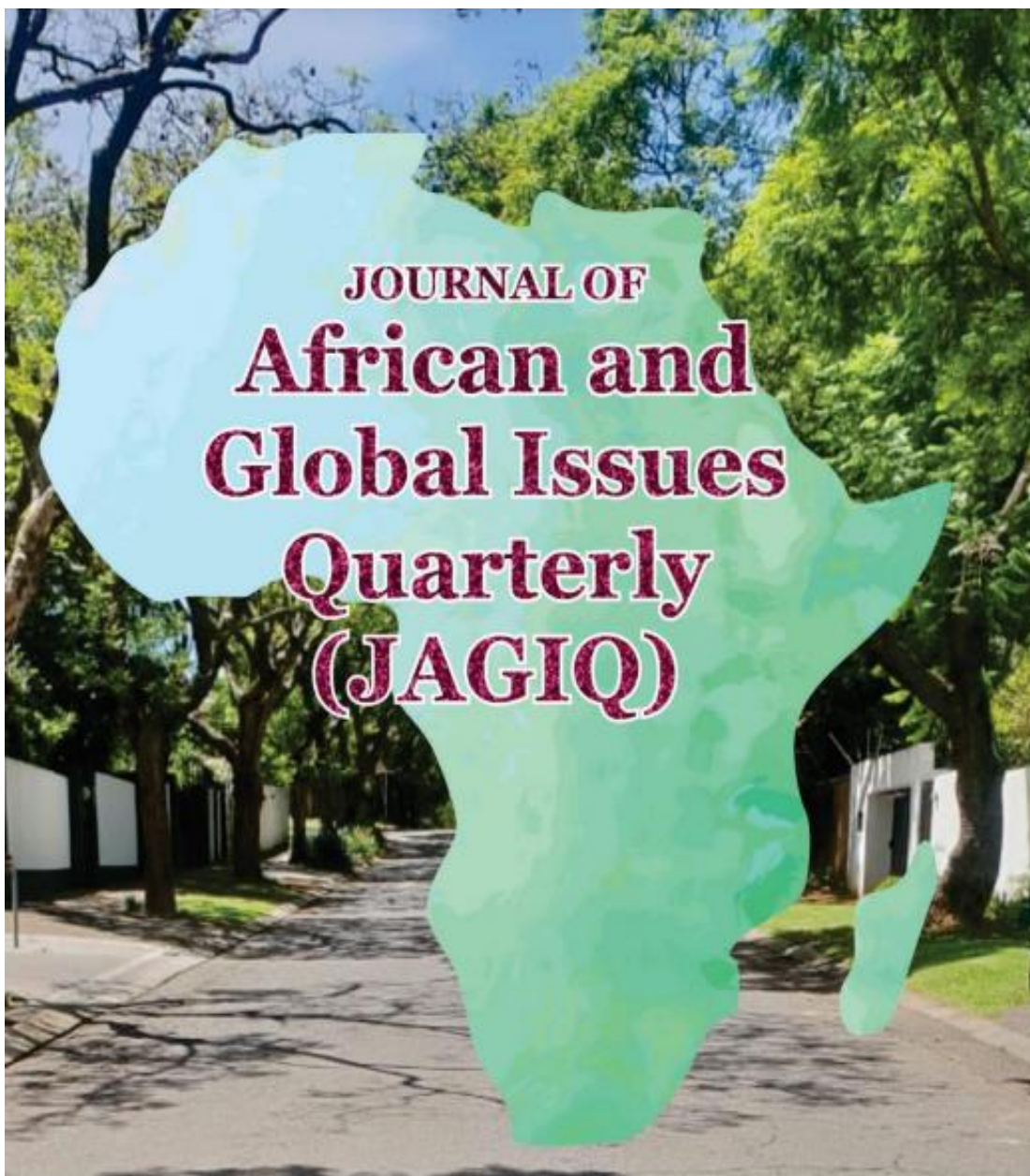




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Editorial Note

Indigenous Knowledge, Institutional Capacity, And Africa's Quest For Self-Determination

Welcome to the October 2026 issue of the African and Global Issues Quarterly. The collection of articles assembled here reflects the journal's enduring commitment to interrogating the multifaceted challenges and opportunities confronting the African continent and its place in the global order. The contributions in this volume share a common thread: a determination to look inward for solutions while engaging critically with external frameworks and legacies.

Several articles in this issue foreground the imperative of harnessing indigenous knowledge and frameworks as vehicles for progress. Nkemakolam and Amaechi propose "Igbozealotism" as an indigenous framework for socio-political and economic advancement, challenging scholars and policymakers to centre African philosophical traditions in contemporary governance discourse. Similarly, Mthethwa, Kolanisi, and Singh explore the repositioning of indigenous knowledge in fostering "studentpreneurship," while Mahlala and colleagues examine indigenous governance systems through a public administration lens. Kilonzo and her co-authors contribute a profile of indigenous banana cultivars, reminding us that agricultural biodiversity and traditional knowledge are integral to food security and rural livelihoods. These contributions collectively affirm that sustainable development in Africa must be rooted in, rather than detached from, local epistemologies and practices.

The issue also engages critically with questions of institutional effectiveness and the delivery of public goods. Lamidi and Hofisi examine the implementation gap in South African public service delivery, highlighting the centrality of bureaucratic capacity. Malope's study of community health worker programmes illuminates the intersection of recruitment, governance, and the democratisation of public administration. These articles underscore that institutional strengthening is not merely a technical exercise but a deeply political one, requiring accountability, inclusivity, and responsiveness to community needs.

On the continental and global stage, Odaudu's analysis of post-Françafrique dynamics in the Sahel offers a penetrating account of shifting dependencies and external realignments in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, a region of immense strategic significance. Taleat, Lukamba, and Diedericks examine the localisation of the

Sustainable Development Goals, arguing that global agendas must be adapted to local realities if they are to deliver meaningful prosperity. Maeresera's study of strategic communication and nation branding during Zimbabwe's COMESA chairmanship illustrates the role of media in projecting regional leadership.

Finally, the issue addresses pressing social and demographic concerns. Omopo and Pillay investigate the psychological distress associated with food insecurity and housing conditions among school-going children and adolescents, while Ifanayajo, Palamuleni, and Adebowale provide a decomposition analysis of fertility rates among women of reproductive age in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Taken together, these thirteen articles offer a rich and diverse body of scholarship. They challenge us to think deeply about the relationship between indigenous agency and institutional effectiveness, between local realities and global agendas. We trust that this issue will stimulate further research and debate and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge on African and global affairs.

We thank our authors, reviewers, and readers for their continued support.

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REPOSITIONING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE UTILISATION IN "STUDENTREPRENEURSHIP"

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Abstract

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is widely recognized as a pivotal factor in cultural preservation, innovation, and inclusive entrepreneurship. In South Africa, practices such as beadwork illustrate how IK facilitates community empowerment and local economic development. However, integrating IK into entrepreneurship education remains constrained by a predominantly Eurocentric curriculum. This study investigates the factors influencing student participation in IK-based entrepreneurship programs, emphasizing how IK can enhance inclusive innovation, job creation, and socio-economic development. It is premised on the notion that entrepreneurship education should incorporate cultural relevance and sustainability alongside economic objectives. A mixed-methods research design was employed, using a quantitative approach that involved a cross-sectional survey of 215 students and qualitative that included key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Data was gathered through a structured questionnaire covering awareness of IK, perceived value, curriculum exposure, and experiential learning. Descriptive statistics were

used for demographic analysis, and binary logistic regression was used to identify determinants of participation. The dependent variable was participation (1 = Yes, 0 = No), and independent variables included IK familiarity, perceived importance, institutional support, and entrepreneurial benefits. The model was estimated using maximum-likelihood estimation, and goodness-of-fit was evaluated using the Hosmer–Lemeshow test. Reliability and validity were verified using Cronbach's alpha and expert review. The findings revealed that the model was statistically significant, explaining 32% of the variance and correctly classifying 72% of cases. Notably, IK familiarity, perceived importance, and institutional support significantly enhanced participation. Students with greater IK familiarity were more than twice as likely to engage in these programs (OR = 2. 2.27). Overall, while attitudes toward IK were positive, limited practical exposure underscores the need for stronger curriculum integration and enhanced experiential learning opportunities. Repositioning Indigenous Knowledge Utilisation in "Studentpreneurship" requires curricula and institutional transformation, however, for effective and optimized utilization.

Keywords: *Afrocentrism, Entrepreneurship Education, Eurocentrism, Indigenous Knowledge, and Student Entrepreneurship*

Introduction and Background

Globally, a significant yet subtle transformation is redefining how entrepreneurship is conceptualized. It is increasingly recognized not merely as a means of wealth accumulation and market competition, but as a conduit for human agency, cultural expression, community resilience, and sustainable development. In Indigenous communities worldwide, entrepreneurial activities have historically transcended economic participation, serving as a means of sustaining life, preserving identity, and fostering harmony among people, culture, and nature. These communities' collective ways of life, grounded in kinship, reciprocity, spirituality, and ecological stewardship, offer valuable insights for contemporary sustainable entrepreneurship (Altman, 2001;

Schaper, 1999). Consequently, Indigenous entrepreneurship is framed not solely in terms of profit maximization, but rather in relation to collective well-being, cultural continuity, and intergenerational responsibility.

The rising global demand for authentic, ethical, and sustainable products and experiences has further amplified the prominence of Indigenous entrepreneurship in sectors such as tourism, traditional foods, arts and crafts, medicinal practices, and Indigenous technologies (FosterCapital, 2025). As a result, Indigenous entrepreneurship is increasingly recognised as a vital mechanism for economic inclusion, cultural revitalisation, environmental stewardship, and social transformation (Dana, 2015; Clara Margaça, 2025). Complementary, emerging

international policy interventions illustrate the transformative potential inherent in Indigenous enterprise development. For instance, the Indigenous procurement policy in Australia has significantly enhanced opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, contributing to over a 50% increase in Indigenous business ownership between 2016 and 2021 (Business Australia, 2024). Despite this growing recognition, research on Indigenous entrepreneurship and the associated support systems remains unevenly distributed globally, with a predominant concentration of literature in the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand, while numerous regions in Africa and Southeast Asia remain underexplored (Croce, 2017; Eijdenberg et al., 2024).

Whereas, within the African and South African context, indigenous entrepreneurship signifies not merely an economic activity but also a continuation of deeply embedded communal and cultural systems. African indigenous entrepreneurial systems are fundamentally rooted in principles of communalism, social solidarity, collective ownership, Ubuntu, and resource stewardship, thereby reflecting entrepreneurial models that prioritize both economic survival and social cohesion (Agu, 2021; Ifeanyichukwu et al., 2023). In South Africa, the utilisation of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is prominently illustrated through

the African and South African context, indigenous entrepreneurship signifies not merely an economic activity but also a continuation of deeply embedded communal and cultural systems. African indigenous entrepreneurial systems are fundamentally rooted in principles of communalism, social solidarity, collective ownership, Ubuntu, and resource stewardship, reflecting entrepreneurial models that prioritize both economic survival and social cohesion (Agu, 2021; Ifeanyichukwu et al., 2023). In South Africa, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is prominently illustrated through cultural industries such as beadwork. These enterprises exemplify the potential for culture and innovation to coexist, fostering creativity, economic independence, and sustainable local development. In provinces such as KwaZulu-Natal, entrepreneurship frequently emerges as both a survival strategy and a mechanism for cultural expression and community resilience, especially among youth and rural populations (Mulibana & Tshikovhi, 2024). In districts such as King Cetshwayo in KwaZulu-Natal, numerous individuals depend on entrepreneurial activities grounded in local knowledge systems and cultural practices to navigate socio-economic challenges, unemployment, and poverty (Mulibana & Tshikovhi, 2024). Moreover, studies indicate that Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) provide a valuable framework for environmentally sensitive and socially

inclusive enterprise development, particularly in the domains of agro-processing, food innovation, and community-based enterprises (Kom et al., 2023). However, despite the increasing policy discourse surrounding decolonisation, afrocentrism, and inclusive innovation, South Africa's higher education and entrepreneurship ecosystems remain predominantly influenced by Eurocentric paradigms, which often marginalize Indigenous ways of knowing and entrepreneurial practices (Abubakre, Faik & Mkansi, 2021; Ayandibu, 2025). In KwaZulu-Natal, where youth unemployment, inequality, and rural underdevelopment represent critical socio-economic challenges, the repositioning of IK utilisation within student entrepreneurship may offer a vital pathway toward inclusive innovation, sustainable livelihoods, and community-centred enterprise development. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the growing discourse on decolonised entrepreneurship education by examining the repositioning of IK utilisation in student entrepreneurship and its implications for sustainable entrepreneurship, cultural preservation, and socio-economic transformation.

Literature Review

IK constitutes the foundation of numerous Indigenous entrepreneurial systems globally. Rather than being

perceived as static folklore or outdated traditions, IK embodies a dynamic, adaptive, and lived body of knowledge that informs social organisation, innovation, trade, environmental stewardship, and community survival. Historically, Indigenous communities have harnessed this knowledge to sustain livelihoods, bolster local economies, and preserve cultural identity across generations. Consequently, IK supports forms of entrepreneurship that are socially embedded, culturally grounded, and collectively oriented toward community well-being rather than solely focused on individual profit accumulation (Dana, 2015). Indigenous entrepreneurial systems are increasingly acknowledged as significant contributors to sustainable development, particularly due to their integration of ecological consciousness, cultural continuity, and economic resilience (Agu, 2021). Their collective ways of life, rooted in kinship, reciprocity, Ubuntu, and stewardship of natural resources, provide critical insights into alternative models of entrepreneurship that challenge dominant Eurocentric systems.

Indigenous entrepreneurship has attracted growing scholarly and policy attention globally, owing to its significant contributions to inclusive economic participation, cultural revitalization, and sustainable development. Research in countries such as Australia, Canada, New

Zealand, and the United States shows that Indigenous enterprises serve not only as vehicles for economic empowerment but also as instruments of self-determination and decolonization (Croce, 2017). Rising international demand for authentic, ethical, and sustainable products and experiences has further elevated the profile of Indigenous entrepreneurship across sectors such as Indigenous tourism, arts and crafts, traditional foods, medicine, and cultural industries (FosterCapital, 2025). For instance, in Australia, the Indigenous procurement policy has markedly increased opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, resulting in significant growth in Indigenous business ownership and participation in national supply chains (Business Australia, 2024). However, despite these advancements, research on Indigenous entrepreneurship remains unevenly distributed globally. A considerable portion of the existing literature is concentrated in Western and settler-colonial contexts, while regions such as Africa and Southeast Asia are underrepresented despite their rich Indigenous entrepreneurial traditions and cultural diversity (Eijdenberg et al., 2024).

In the African context, indigenous entrepreneurship is profoundly linked to communal economic systems, social solidarity, and Indigenous ways of life that predate colonial economic structures. Indigenous entrepreneurial practices in Africa are often rooted in

collective ownership, mutual support systems, cultural values, and informal trade networks that continue to sustain communities today (Ifeanyichukwu et al., 2023). The higher education sector in South Africa continues to be predominantly influenced by Eurocentric epistemologies, which frequently marginalise Afrocentric and indigenous perspectives within. In the African context, indigenous entrepreneurship is deeply connected to communal economic systems, social solidarity, and Indigenous ways of life that predate colonial economic structures. Indigenous entrepreneurial practices in Africa are often rooted in collective ownership, mutual support systems, cultural values, and informal trade networks that continue to sustain communities today (Ifeanyichukwu et al., 2023).

The higher education sector in South Africa remains largely shaped by Eurocentric epistemologies, which frequently marginalize Afrocentric and Indigenous perspectives across curricula, research, and innovation systems (Ayandibu, 2025). Consequently, entrepreneurship education often prioritizes Western business models and market-oriented approaches while neglecting Indigenous entrepreneurial philosophies, practices, and knowledge systems. Abubakre, Faik, and Mkansi (2021) contend that Western epistemologies continue to dominate the conceptualization, teaching, and practice of entrepreneurship, thereby

constraining epistemic diversity within innovation ecosystems. The limited integration of Indigenous entrepreneurship education within higher education institutions has significant implications for students, particularly those from rural and historically marginalized communities. Students are often inadequately exposed to Indigenous entrepreneurial models and applications of IK that are directly relevant to their lived experiences and socioeconomic realities. Consequently, many graduates struggle to contextualize entrepreneurship within their own communities and cultural environments. Mack and Mayer (2016) argue that entrepreneurship ecosystems are shaped by social and cultural contexts, suggesting that entrepreneurship education cannot achieve its full effectiveness when divorced from local realities and Indigenous worldviews. Thus, integrating IK into academic curricula is a crucial step toward decolonizing entrepreneurship education and fostering a more inclusive and culturally relevant entrepreneurial culture. Such reforms could bolster Indigenous-led economies, enhance sustainable entrepreneurship, increase trade opportunities, and promote economic independence within rural communities (Mulibana & Tshikovhi, 2024).

Thus, the growing discourse on decolonization in higher education reinforces the imperative to reposition

IK within entrepreneurship education. Decolonization aims not merely to superficially diversify curricula but to fundamentally transform the knowledge that is legitimized, taught, and institutionalized within universities. Recognizing and institutionalizing IK within entrepreneurship curricula would therefore advance epistemic justice by ensuring the coexistence of multiple knowledge systems that inform innovation processes. This integration is particularly critical within African universities, where many students possess Indigenous cultural knowledge and entrepreneurial potential that remain largely untapped within formal educational environments. In this context, the concept of "studentpreneurship" emerges as a significant area for scholarly inquiry and policy intervention. Studentpreneurship denotes the incorporation of entrepreneurial activities into student learning experiences, enabling students to devise innovative solutions, establish enterprises, and apply entrepreneurial thinking while engaging in their academic studies.

This study specifically investigates the extent to which the philosophy and practice of Indigenous Knowledge can be integrated into entrepreneurship education. Furthermore, it explores how the incorporation of IK in entrepreneurship may empower students, particularly those from rural communities, to harness their

entrepreneurial potential and contribute to social transformation, economic inclusion, and sustainable development. By analysing existing educational frameworks and entrepreneurship support systems, the study seeks to identify gaps, opportunities, and practical strategies for embedding IK within entrepreneurship education and innovation ecosystems.

Theoretical framework models

To provide a theoretical foundation for this inquiry, the study adopts a framework wherein universities function as knowledge incubators that integrate IK into teaching, research, and innovation initiatives. The Triple Helix Model emphasises the significance of collaborative institutional partnerships in fostering innovation and supporting the integration of IK into entrepreneurship education and practice. Complementing this structural perspective, the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model proposed by Isenberg (2011) offers a meso- and micro-level understanding of the operational mechanisms that sustain entrepreneurial activity. The Triple Helix Model elucidates the institutional collaboration necessary for the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge into higher education and innovation systems, while the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model operationalises these relationships through practical support mechanisms

that enable student entrepreneurs to innovate sustainably and responsibly. Within the context of student entrepreneurship, the models underscore the necessity of supportive ecosystems that nurture the transformation of IK into innovative and sustainable enterprises. Cultural and social capital are central components of this ecosystem, influencing how IK is valued, transmitted, and commercialised within entrepreneurial practice. The integration of the Triple Helix Model and the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model provides a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the repositioning of Indigenous Knowledge within the context of student entrepreneurship. Collectively, these frameworks illuminate how systemic collaboration, culturally responsive ecosystems, and contextual support structures can empower students to leverage Indigenous Knowledge for entrepreneurial innovation and sustainable socio-economic transformation.

Research Methodology

This section delineates the methodology employed in the present study.

Research Philosophy and Paradigm

The study adopted a transformative and interpretivist research paradigm to ensure that Indigenous knowledge

systems, cultural experiences, and students' lived realities were meaningfully acknowledged within the research process. The interpretivist paradigm facilitated the exploration of participants' subjective experiences, meanings, values, and perceptions regarding Indigenous entrepreneurship, while the transformative perspective underscored inclusivity, participation, social relevance, and the recognition of Indigenous voices and knowledge systems within higher education contexts (Mertens, 2015; Chilisa, 2012). This paradigm was particularly pertinent as the study aimed not only to generate empirical findings but also to contribute to the recognition and integration of Indigenous entrepreneurial knowledge within higher education and entrepreneurship development.

Research Design and Method

The study employed a mixed-methods research approach to attain a comprehensive understanding of Indigenous entrepreneurship among students by integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Mixed methods research is widely acknowledged for its capacity to provide a deeper and more holistic understanding of complex social phenomena through the integration of numerical trends and participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This approach was deemed

appropriate given that Indigenous entrepreneurship is multidimensional and intricately linked to culture, identity, Indigenous knowledge systems, innovation, and lived experiences.

Quantitative data enabled researchers to identify patterns, trends, and levels of awareness or perceptions regarding indigenous entrepreneurship among students, while qualitative data provided deeper insights into students' experiences, interpretations, and understanding of indigenous entrepreneurial practices. Complementarily, the study was further underpinned by an integrated theoretical framework that combined the Triple Helix Model and the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model. The integration of these frameworks strengthened the study by providing both structural and contextual perspectives on indigenous entrepreneurship among students. Concurrently, the Triple Helix Model offered an institutional lens through which the collaborative roles of universities, government, and industry could be understood, whereas the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model illuminated the broader socio-economic, cultural, and environmental conditions influencing the development of indigenous entrepreneurship. The synthesis of these approaches facilitated triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility, validity, and richness of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Furthermore, mixed methods research is regarded by scholars such as Hesse-Biber (2010) and Mertens (2015) as particularly valuable when exploring socially and culturally embedded issues, as it combines empirical evidence with contextual meaning.

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods research design, whereby qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently, analysed independently, and subsequently integrated during the interpretation stage to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This design was deemed appropriate for the study as it facilitated the exploration of indigenous entrepreneurship among students from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The quantitative component contributed to examining students' levels of awareness, perceptions, and understanding of indigenous entrepreneurship, while the qualitative component offered deeper insights into indigenous knowledge systems, and entrepreneurial realities within the higher education context.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection process was executed in multiple phases to ensure a systematic, inclusive, and participatory approach. The first phase involved the identification and selection of stakeholders, based on a pre-data

collection stakeholder analysis that mapped primary and secondary actors according to their influence, interest, and relevance to the integration of indigenous knowledge in student entrepreneurship. This phase established a clear foundation for engaging participants who could provide diverse and meaningful perspectives. The second phase comprised a stakeholder seminar, which convened representatives from key groups, including students, traditional entrepreneurs, academic staff, and institutions supporting entrepreneurship. This seminar created a structured forum for dialogue and reflective engagement, allowing participants to share experiences, explore challenges, and discuss opportunities for embedding indigenous knowledge within student entrepreneurship initiatives. During this seminar, cluster discussions were conducted, enabling focused engagement within and across stakeholder groups. These discussions fostered collaborative reflection and the co-generation of insights, consistent with Participatory Action Research (PAR) principles (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005), which emphasise dialogue, collective inquiry, and transformative learning.

The third phase involved the utilisation of secondary data through the application of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model and the Triple Helix Model, as developed by Henry Etzkowitz and Loet Leydesdorff.

These frameworks provided a macro-level understanding of the dynamic relationships among universities, industry, and government in fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and knowledge exchange (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). In the context of this study, the frameworks facilitated an examination of the contributions of higher education institutions, policy structures, and external stakeholders to the promotion and development of indigenous entrepreneurship among students. Universities were identified as crucial environments for entrepreneurial learning, innovation, and the preservation and integration of indigenous knowledge systems. Concurrently, government and industry structures were acknowledged for their roles in delivering enabling policies, support systems, resources, mentorship, and market opportunities. Lastly, a quantitative research design was employed, which was well-suited for investigating measurable relationships between IK variables and student participation in entrepreneurship programs. Through these phases, the study captured a comprehensive view of the institutional, cultural, and stakeholder dynamics that influence the integration of IK into student entrepreneurship, ensuring that both experiential and formal dimensions of the university's entrepreneurship ecosystem were considered.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, descriptive statistics were utilised to generate frequencies and percentages for demographic data, while thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke (2006), was applied to transcribed cluster discussions and reflection notes. Codes were developed inductively, allowing themes to emerge organically from participant narratives. The findings were subsequently interpreted through the Triple Helix–Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Nexus, which elucidated the interactions among stakeholders, institutional structures, and ecosystem enablers. Document analysis complemented this process by revealing how policies and curricula align with or diverge from practical implementation. A cross-sectional survey approach was employed to collect data at a single point in time from respondents across various academic disciplines. Furthermore, to examine the factors influencing student participation in IK-based entrepreneurship programs, binary logistic regression analysis was utilised due to the dichotomous nature of the dependent variable (Hosmer, D. W., Lemeshow, S., & Sturdivant, R. X., Hosmer, Lemeshow, & Sturdivant, 2013). In this analysis, the dependent variable represented participation in IK programs (1 = Yes, 0 = No), while the independent variables included IK familiarity, curriculum exposure to IK, the perceived importance of IK, institutional support, and perceived entrepreneurial benefits (e.g.,

innovation, sustainability). The model was estimated using maximum likelihood estimation, and goodness-of-fit was assessed with the Hosmer-Lemeshow test.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

Ethical approval for this study was granted by the research ethics committee of the participating rural-based university. Participants were fully informed of the study's purpose and procedures, provided written informed consent, and were assured of confidentiality. The research design emphasised relational accountability and cultural sensitivity, ensuring that IK was engaged with respect and ethical consideration. Reflexivity was maintained through researcher journaling and member-checking to

ensure that interpretations were accurate, contextually grounded, and responsive to stakeholder input. Additionally, triangulation was employed to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings by integrating multiple sources of data and perspectives, thereby allowing for cross-validation and a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of participants involved in the study. In terms of gender distribution, 47% of respondents identified as male, while 53% identified as female. Notably, 82.3% of the participants were undergraduate students.

Table 1: Demographics of the Respondents

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	101	46.98
	Female	114	53.02
	Total	215	100.0
Academic Level	Undergraduate	177	82.32
	Honours	16	7.44
	Master's	17	7.90
	PhD	5	2.33
	Total	215	100.0
Ethnic Group	African	215	100
	Total	215	100.0

The findings elucidate the emerging trend of gender representation and

involvement in entrepreneurship. The higher representation of female

participants is particularly advantageous for this study, as women increasingly assume significant roles in entrepreneurship and economic participation in South Africa. According to Cape Argus (2025), 57% of South African women identified as business owners in 2025, exceeding the regional average of 51% across Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. This indicates substantial growth compared to earlier reports, which revealed that only 34% of SMEs were led by women, thereby underscoring the expanding contributions of women entrepreneurs to the South African economy.

Moreover, the predominance of undergraduate participants holds particular significance within the context of an increasingly volatile labour market, characterised by uncertainty, instability, and heightened competition in the transition from education to employment. As Huang et

al. (2022) note, such conditions may exacerbate psychological pressures among students, resulting in elevated levels of anxiety concerning future employment prospects. Similarly, Wan et al. (2024) argue that the uncertainty surrounding job opportunities in contemporary labour markets can induce considerable stress among university students navigating post-graduation transitions. Consequently, undergraduate students may experience greater anxiety compared to their postgraduate counterparts, who have often made deliberate decisions to pursue a more defined academic trajectory. In this context, postgraduate study can serve as a stabilising pathway that provides clearer direction and reduces ambiguity concerning career identity formation, while undergraduates are still actively negotiating their choices within a turbulent employment landscape. Secondly, the study presents the four (4) themes identified, see table 2.

Table 2: Themes towards IKS studentpreneurship and positioning

Themes
Relational attributes
Awareness of IKS-based entrepreneurship
Practices and principles of entrepreneurship linked to IKS
Entrepreneurship education biasness

Stakeholder Perspective on Indigenous Entrepreneurship

The findings suggest that entrepreneurial activities are sustained through ongoing interactions, shared responsibilities, and interdependencies

among actors, whose influence is situated within broader social and power dynamics (see Table 2).

Table 2: Stakeholder Roles and Relevance

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder	Role / Relevance to Study
Primary	Academic Staff	Shape curriculum, policies, and programs; bridge formal education and IK; central to program implementation.
	University Entrepreneurship Office	Facilitate student entrepreneurship programs; provide resources and mentorship; champion IK integration.
	Students	Direct beneficiaries, co-implementers of entrepreneurship initiatives, translating knowledge into practice
Secondary	Traditional Entrepreneurs / Community Knowledge Holders	Custodians of IK: provide legitimacy and practical insights; guide culturally aligned ventures
	Local Government Departments	Provide regulatory oversight, funding, and policy alignment; may not be intrinsically motivated.
	Municipal Development Agencies	Support local entrepreneurship initiatives; ensure alignment with community development goals.
	University Administrative Offices (e.g., R&D, Academic Affairs)	Provide institutional support, approvals, and resources; facilitate program integration
	Partner Organizations / NGOs	Provide mentorship, facilitate networking opportunities, and offer access to markets; support community engagement.
	Community leaders	Foster acceptance, participation, and validation of student-led IK initiatives.
	Incubators	Deliver technical and business support; connect students to entrepreneurial ecosystems.

As illustrated above, while stakeholders occupy distinct roles within the entrepreneurial ecosystem,

these roles are inherently complementary. However, the absence of appropriate systems that integrate

both the shared and complementary aspects of these roles may compromise the overall purpose of collaboration. In particular, social entrepreneurship relies on stakeholders who contribute unique yet interdependent resources, including knowledge, legitimacy, and material support, in pursuit of both social and economic objectives. As highlighted in the literature, the lack of structured mechanisms that promote social cohesion through trust, communication, and coordinated governance can hinder the effective mobilisation of these complementarities, thereby diminishing the overall impact of collaborative efforts (Springer, 2021).

This study acknowledges that although actors within business ecosystems are expected to manage interdependencies, the effectiveness of collaboration is significantly enhanced when supported by intentional coordination mechanisms such as resource pooling, alignment of shared goals, and strategic optimisation. A key insight emerging from the data is that entrepreneurship is guided by principles closely aligned with Ubuntu, where success is defined not solely by profit but also by relational well-being,

mutual support, and collective benefit. As argued by Khumalo and Mapotse (2023), IKS possess distinct characteristics that reflect the wisdom and traditions of indigenous communities. Their comprehensive approach not only provides practical solutions but also instils a profound sense of purpose and meaning, fostering a healthy and peaceful lifestyle. As posited by Manyaga, Goldman, and Thomas (2024), indigenous communities have spent decades refining sustainable solutions grounded in lived experiences, resulting in a holistic understanding of local ecosystems, environmental conditions, and natural cycles. This accumulated Indigenous Knowledge offers valuable insights for sustainable entrepreneurship, environmental management, and community-centred development.

Subsequently, participants emphasised that this relational orientation distinguishes indigenous entrepreneurship from predominant Western paradigms, which are often perceived as prioritising individual achievement and profit maximisation, occasionally at the expense of ethical and moral considerations.

Theme	Verbatim
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Relational attributes	<i>“There is a distinct difference within the perspective between entrepreneurship based on western and indigenous systems”</i> <i>‘For me western is profit based while with indigenous profit is not primary, and time is not a fundamental factor either.</i> <i>“I could say respect, power and creating generational wealth are the basics for the conversation and steps towards indigenous entrepreneurship”</i>
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Within this context, stakeholders further underscored that enterprise functioning is shaped through negotiated relationships, shared values, and community accountability, reinforcing the understanding of entrepreneurship as a socially embedded and relational process where ethical responsibility and communal well-being are central to decision-making, sustainability, and long-term impact.

Stakeholder Power and Influence: Perspectives and Relations to Indigenous Entrepreneurship

Stakeholder power and influence have been identified as crucial determinants

in shaping development and transformation within entrepreneurial ecosystems. In this context, the power and influence matrix illustrates the dynamic relationships among stakeholders who play a central role in both traditional and contemporary entrepreneurship. The matrix demonstrates how institutional, community, and entrepreneurial actors interact in ways that either facilitate or inhibit the integration of IK into student entrepreneurship. These interactions emphasise that stakeholder relationships are fundamental to culturally grounded and contextually relevant entrepreneurial development, as depicted in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Stakeholder Power and Influence Matrix

As evidenced through the discussions, Figure 1, and document analysis, the observations derived from stakeholder narratives, including those of students, reinforce recurring patterns that provide a comparative perspective resembling elements of traditional leadership operations. Collectively, these insights suggest that entrepreneurial ecosystems operate similarly to traditional leadership systems, wherein hierarchical yet interdependent relationships organise collective action and sustain enterprise development. Stakeholder power and influence have been identified as pivotal determinants shaping development and transformation within entrepreneurial ecosystems. In this regard, the power and influence matrix illustrates the dynamic relationships among stakeholders

central to both traditional and contemporary entrepreneurship. The matrix demonstrates how institutional, community, and entrepreneurial actors interact in ways that either enable or constrain the integration of IK into student entrepreneurship. These interactions underscore that stakeholder relationships are essential to culturally grounded and contextually relevant entrepreneurial development, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that these power and influence dynamics are closely aligned with traditional leadership models, where stakeholders occupy differentiated yet interdependent positions within the entrepreneurial system. Participants described a structured yet relational arrangement in which certain actors

assume leadership roles, while others function as supporters, followers, beneficiaries, and active implementers, or "doers." This distribution of roles reflects a culturally embedded understanding of organisation and coordination, where authority, responsibility, and participation are shaped by function, expertise, and relational positioning rather than being evenly distributed.

Level of Indigenous Awareness

The findings indicate varying levels of familiarity with the concept of

Indigenous entrepreneurship among respondents. Figure 1 illustrates that, out of the 215 participants, 35% reported being very familiar with the concept, while 25% indicated that they were somewhat familiar. A further 28% of respondents selected a neutral position, suggesting uncertainty or limited engagement with the concept. In contrast, a small proportion reported low levels of familiarity, with 7% indicating that they were somewhat unfamiliar and 5% stating that they were very unfamiliar with Indigenous entrepreneurship.

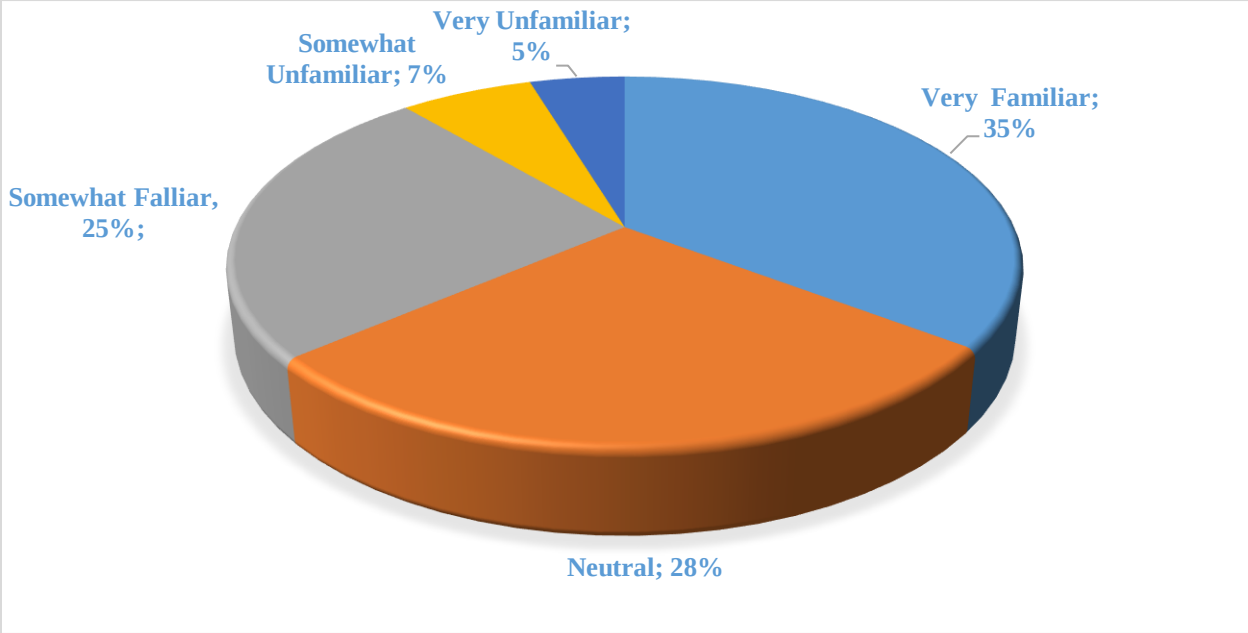


Figure 2: Concept of Indigenous Knowledge

The findings indicate that, while a segment of the respondents demonstrated familiarity with IKS, a

significant number exhibited uncertainty or limited comprehension of the concept.

Theme	Verbatim
Awareness of IKS-based entrepreneurship	<i>“I would not say I am clear much, for me at university entrepreneurship is taught, and with theory you learn to assume that the entrepreneurship of our communities is sort of different from what is deemed to be the right way”</i> <i>I have examples I have seen which are based on indigenous entrepreneurship which I think are worth recognition, for example the cattle farming, crop farming arts and craft</i> <i>“Our way of doing entrepreneurship, maybe has not been given close attention, I believe there is value, but at times it might not show dividends timeously, hence we will believe it is in not profitable”</i> <i>“I have not been fortunate to come across our own case studies in entrepreneurship, so this is a challenge on its own, according to my understanding”</i>

This observation mirrors a broader trend within South Africa, where IK and its associated frameworks have yet to attain adequate recognition and value among many young individuals. The relatively low levels of robust awareness, coupled with the proportion of respondents who remained neutral or unfamiliar, underscore the necessity for enhanced educational initiatives and the meaningful integration of IKS within youth development and educational programs.

This challenge is further exacerbated by the modern generation's growing exposure to modern entrepreneurial systems, which are predominantly influenced by Eurocentric values, assumptions, and operational

paradigms. In line with this perspective, Ayandibu and Chasaya (2026) contend that globalization has profoundly transformed societies, reshaping identities, cultural practices, and traditional lifestyles. Indigenous cultural activities, celebrations, and local systems have increasingly been affected by Western global models, thereby transforming the social landscape of previously indigenous cultures. However, the authors also observe that certain local industries have thrived within globalized contexts by incorporating IKS into globally relevant products and designs, thereby achieving broader recognition and acclaim. This suggests that IKS ought to be regarded not as obsolete or incompatible with modernity, but

rather as adaptive systems capable of making substantial contributions to innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable development in contemporary contexts (Cleveland, 2022). Moreover, as Ayandibu and Chasaya (2026) caution, an overreliance on Eurocentric content, insufficient contextual relevance to South Africa's socio-economic challenges, and the exclusion of indigenous and community-driven approaches may lead to a disconnect among many young individuals from indigenous entrepreneurial philosophies and practices rooted in communalism, relational accountability, and cultural identity. Consequently, the process of decolonization becomes crucial, as it challenges dominant Western norms and seeks to establish space for diverse

epistemologies, operational methodologies, and engagement strategies in entrepreneurship.

Perceptions and Value of Indigenous Knowledge in Entrepreneurship

Table 3 illustrates respondents' perceptions regarding the value of IK in contemporary entrepreneurship. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents viewed IK positively within the entrepreneurial context. Over half of the respondents (54.21%) agreed that IK is valuable for contemporary entrepreneurship, while an additional 28.97% strongly agreed. Collectively, this represents 83.18% of the total responses, indicating a strong positive perception and broad support for the integration and utilisation of IK in entrepreneurial activities.

Table 3: Perceived Economic Value of IK in Entrepreneurship

Do you believe indigenous knowledge is valuable for contemporary entrepreneurship?	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	116	54.21
Strongly Agree	62	28.97
Neutral	36	16.82
Total	215	100

The findings demonstrate a favourable attitude among students, reinforcing the potential for the integration of IKS into entrepreneurial initiatives within higher education institutions. However, the findings also reveal a growing recognition among students

that IKS exists as legitimate systems of knowledge and should be acknowledged and valued equally alongside dominant Eurocentric systems.

Theme	Verbatim
Practices and principles of entrepreneurship linked to IKS	<i>“In my mind, I think of credit, which is linked to our Ubuntu, because you will even see this practice more around rural communities or even in urban where there are more African people.”</i> <i>“I also think of the street vendors, I have been observing that it could be a neighbor who is also selling next to the other – because for them it is about giving each other opportunities to also survive or make it”</i> <i>“The stokvel example, with the fundamental principle of pooling together to push us up, and for all of us to benefit”</i> <i>“One example is of borrowing each other a cow, perhaps the household does not have anything, then it is given the cow to look after and to feed the household. Once the cow gives birth, then they can return it back.</i>

This recognition reflects an emerging understanding of the significance of culturally relevant and contextually grounded approaches to entrepreneurship and education. The adoption and transplantation of Western educational models within African contexts have frequently failed to adequately incorporate IKS and the cultural realities essential for meaningful and contextually relevant development on the continent (Ayandibu, 2025; Eijdenberg et al., 2024). Similarly, Abdi (2013) emphasises the necessity of advancing an educational paradigm that transcends colonial frameworks and instead fosters an entrepreneurial orientation rooted in African lived experiences, values, and socio-cultural realities. Supporting this perspective,

Omodan, Manquma, and Mafunda (2024) argue that the recognition and integration of IK, coupled with the promotion of practical and contextually responsive learning approaches, are pivotal to transforming entrepreneurial education. The authors further assert that challenging colonial structures within education is imperative for the development of entrepreneurial systems that are culturally relevant, empowering, and conducive to sustainable development. Consequently, there is an increasing call for educational institutions to adopt decolonial approaches that reposition African knowledge systems at the centre of teaching and learning, thereby empowering future generations of African entrepreneurs to engage in entrepreneurship that is socially

grounded, culturally meaningful, and economically sustainable.

Furthermore, respondents valued IK entrepreneurship as a significant driver of innovation, creativity, and livelihood optimisation. The findings revealed positive perceptions, with the majority of respondents either strongly agreeing (52.80%) or agreeing (40.19%) that IK contributes meaningfully to entrepreneurial innovation and sustainable livelihood development. Collectively, these responses account for 93% of the total responses, indicating robust support for the role of IK within contemporary entrepreneurial practices. The relatively smaller proportion of neutral responses (7%) suggests that only a limited number of students were uncertain or indifferent regarding the contribution of IK to entrepreneurship. These findings, therefore, underscore a growing recognition among students that IKS are not merely cultural artefacts, but also valuable sources of innovation, creativity, resilience, and socio-economic empowerment. As illustrated in Figure 2, respondents largely perceive IK entrepreneurship as having the potential to enhance sustainable livelihoods while

simultaneously promoting culturally grounded entrepreneurial development.

Importance of Including IK in Entrepreneurship Education

The data indicate that the inclusion of IK in entrepreneurship education is imperative, with 52.8% (n=113) of respondents strongly agreeing and 40.2% (n=86) agreeing, resulting in a combined positive response rate of 93% out of 214 participants. This finding suggests that most respondents perceive IK as a critical component of entrepreneurship education, underscoring its relevance in fostering contextually grounded and culturally responsive entrepreneurial skills. The minimal neutral responses (7%) may indicate limited exposure to IK within the current curriculum, highlighting existing gaps in curriculum design and implementation. Consequently, these results emphasise a significant need for curriculum transformation, wherein IK is more systematically and meaningfully integrated into entrepreneurship programs to enhance their relevance, inclusivity, and effectiveness in addressing local socio-economic challenges.

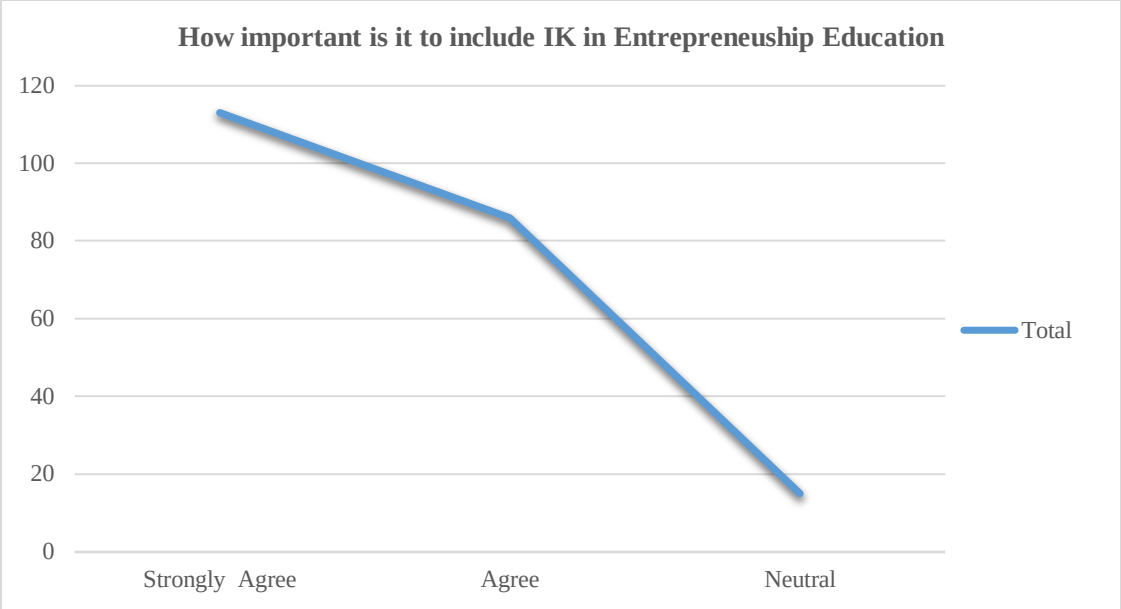


Figure 3: Interest in the Inclusion of IK in Entrepreneurship Education

The findings presented in Figure 3 indicate that participants exhibited a pronounced interest and enthusiasm for the formal introduction and integration of IK and entrepreneurship into the curriculum. This observation reflects an increasing awareness among students regarding the significance and utility of IKS in shaping entrepreneurial thought, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainable development within African contexts. Supporting this perspective, Onwuegbuzie, Mafimisebi, and Orighoyegha (2024) contend that indigenous knowledge, entrepreneurship, and grassroots innovation stemming from indigenous entrepreneurial activities remain underutilised yet distinctive resources for sustainable development and economic growth in Africa. Their argument underscores the necessity of

repositioning IK as a strategic asset capable of facilitating locally grounded and culturally responsive entrepreneurial development.

Furthermore, Hari (2020) posits that IKS practices often adopt holistic perspectives that acknowledge the interconnectedness of individuals, communities, and the natural environment. Such a comprehensive orientation is deemed essential for cultivating organisational cultures that encourage sustainable practices and responsible entrepreneurship. In alignment with this view, Mkhonza and Sifolo (2022) stress the significance of sustainability planning within small and medium enterprises (SMEs), cautioning against the underestimation of its role in strategic planning processes. The authors further emphasise that the incorporation of

IKS into business operations, ranging from strategic planning to daily activities, can furnish enterprises with valuable insights essential for survival and adaptation amid challenging environmental and socio-economic conditions.

Similarly, Senanayake (2006) highlights the role of IKS in advancing environmental sustainability while also emphasising the importance of balancing social responsibility with profitability. This aligns with the argument presented by Quarshie et al. (2016), who assert that businesses are increasingly recognising the imperative to address not only environmental concerns but also the

social and economic dimensions of sustainability. Consequently, the foundational insights provided by IKS offer a critical framework for integrating holistic sustainability approaches into entrepreneurship and business practices. Moreover, the binary logistic regression model examining the repositioning of IK within student entrepreneurship yielded statistically significant results and demonstrated a good fit to the data, as indicated by the Hosmer–Lemeshow test ($p > 0.05$). The model accounted for approximately 32% of the variance in student participation ($R^2 = 0.32$) and accurately classified 72% of the cases, suggesting a reasonably strong predictive capability.

Table 4: Binary Logistic Regression Model: Repositioning IK in Student Entrepreneurship

Variable	Coef	StdErr	Z	p> z	OR
Const	-3.12	0.85	13.45	0.000	-
IK Familiarity	0.82***	0.21	15.24	0.000	2.27
Importance of IK	0.65***	0.19	11.68	0.001	1.91
Innovation	0.40**	0.17	5.53	0.019	1.49
Sustainability	0.28*	0.16	3.06	0.080	1.32
Institutional Support	0.73***	0.22	10.90	0.001	2.08

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The analysis revealed that IK familiarity ($p < 0.001$) and perceived importance of Indigenous Knowledge ($p < 0.01$) were significant predictors of student participation in IK-based entrepreneurship initiatives. Specifically, students with elevated

levels of familiarity with IK were more than twice as likely to engage in IK entrepreneurship programs ($B = 2.27$). This finding suggests that awareness and comprehension of IKS play a critical role in influencing student engagement and participation.

Institutional support demonstrated a strong positive effect on participation ($B = 2.08$), indicating that supportive educational environments, policies, and program structures significantly enhance student involvement in IK-based entrepreneurial initiatives. This finding underscores the critical role of higher education institutions in fostering enabling conditions for the integration and promotion of IK within entrepreneurship education.

Furthermore, innovation and sustainability were positively associated with participation in IK entrepreneurship programs, although sustainability exhibited weaker statistical significance. These results suggest that students are more likely to engage in IK entrepreneurship when they perceive it as contributing to innovation, creativity, and sustainable development. Overall, the regression analysis reinforces the importance of familiarity, institutional support, and

perceived entrepreneurial value in strengthening the repositioning of IK within student entrepreneurship ecosystems.

Collectively, these perspectives reinforce the findings of this study, indicating that students increasingly regard IK and Indigenous entrepreneurship as essential components of entrepreneurial education, innovation, sustainability, and livelihood development.

Experiential Learning and Program Effectiveness of IK-Based Programs

The findings indicate limited exposure to IK-based experiential learning opportunities among respondents. Out of 214 participants, the majority (64%; $n=137$) reported not having participated in any entrepreneurship programs incorporating IK, while only 36% ($n=77$) indicated having such experience.

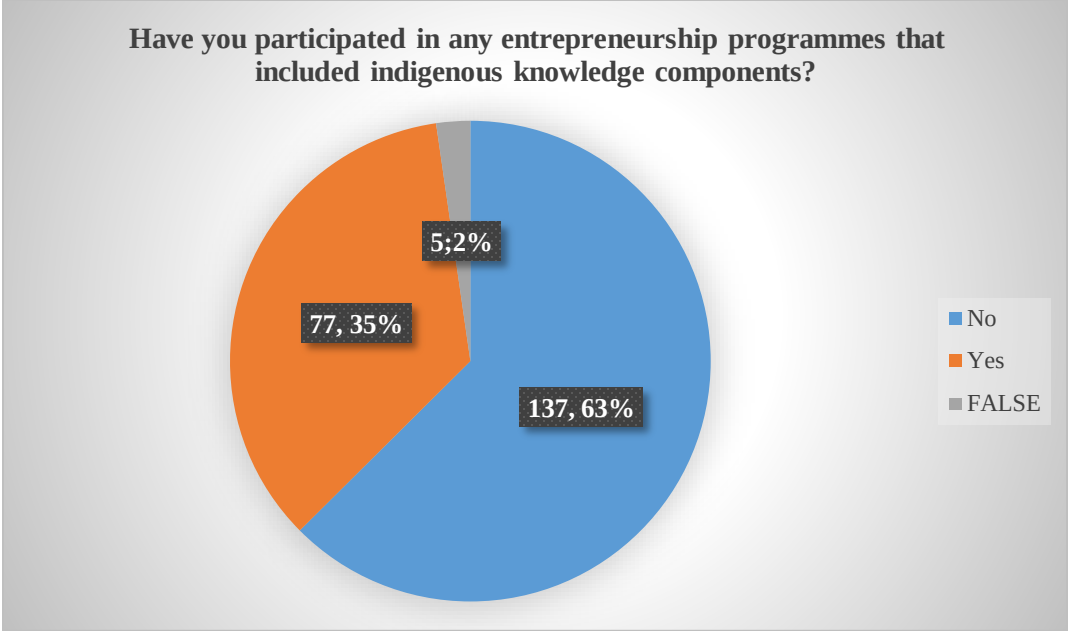


Figure 4: Attendance of IK-Based Programs

The limited exposure to IK-based programs may also reflect the continued dominance of Eurocentric educational and entrepreneurial models, which often marginalise Indigenous ways of knowing and practising entrepreneurship. These results suggest that, despite the growing recognition of the value and importance of IK within entrepreneurship education, a substantial gap remains in the availability, accessibility, and

implementation of practical IK-based entrepreneurial programs. Consequently, the findings highlight the necessity for higher education institutions to enhance experiential and practice-based learning opportunities that integrate Indigenous IKS into entrepreneurship education. This integration would thereby improve students' practical engagement, innovation capacity, and contextual understanding of entrepreneurship within African realities.

Theme	Verbatim
Entrepreneurship education biasness	“I only know trainings and discussions around Eurocentric systems “Imbizo’s and conferences I attended never really pose focus on IKS-based enterprises” “I have not seen any IKS - enterprise appraised, even funded, how do we see it as potential for learning?”

The low levels of participation further indicate deficiencies in the incorporation of experiential learning approaches within existing entrepreneurship curricula and program structures. This raises concerns regarding the effectiveness of current educational and entrepreneurial support systems in equipping students with contextually relevant, culturally grounded, and community-responsive entrepreneurial competencies. The findings therefore suggest that IK remains insufficiently embedded within practical entrepreneurship training, despite students expressing positive attitudes toward its relevance and contribution to innovation, sustainability, and livelihood development.

The Framework Towards Repositioning IK in Student Entrepreneurship

The integration of the Triple Helix Model and the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Model reinforces repositioning agenda. These frameworks bolster the argument that the repositioning of student entrepreneurship necessitates both institutional reform and epistemic transformation. Building on the preceding argument, this study positions the utilisation of IK as a strategic means toward the repositioning of student entrepreneurship within higher education: *the repositioning necessitates a deliberate and*

transformative shift in how entrepreneurship is conceptualised, taught, and practised, moving from predominantly Eurocentric, individualistic, and profit-driven paradigms to more inclusive, contextually grounded, and culturally responsive frameworks. In this regard, student entrepreneurship is not only an economic development tool but also a site of epistemic struggle where competing knowledge systems shape *meaning, value, and practice.*

Central to this discourse is the concept of decoloniality, which interrogates the dominance of Eurocentric educational and entrepreneurial paradigms that have historically marginalised IKS. These prevailing frameworks frequently privilege Western notions of individualism, competition, and capital accumulation, while underappreciating communal forms of enterprise that are anchored in principles such as Ubuntu, collective responsibility, and social solidarity. Thus, the empirical findings of this study indicate that the repositioning of student entrepreneurship necessitates the rectification of these epistemic imbalances through the integration of IKS as a foundational element of entrepreneurial learning and practice. This approach includes recognising the complementary roles of various stakeholders, where knowledge holders, students, institutional actors, and community members collaboratively contribute to entrepreneurial development. It also requires an acknowledgement of the

dynamics of power and influence, which are frequently shaped by both formal institutional hierarchies and traditional leadership structures that govern access to resources, legitimacy, and decision-making authority. Furthermore, *relational entrepreneurship, which is grounded in trust, Ubuntu, and social cohesion*, emerges as a significant alternative to Eurocentric models that prioritise individual gain. These relational principles underscore that entrepreneurial success within Indigenous contexts is not solely measured in financial terms but also through *social impact, cultural continuity, and community wellbeing*.

Conclusion

Although students exhibit strong positive attitudes toward IK, there exists a notable disconnect between awareness and practical engagement. Students who possess greater familiarity with IK and regard it as important are significantly more likely to engage in IK-based entrepreneurship programs. It is recognized by students as valuable for entrepreneurship, innovation, and socio-economic development. Complementary, the binary logistic regression results establish that familiarity with IK, the perceived importance of IK, and institutional support are significant predictors of student participation. But it should be noted that curriculum and institutional support plays a critical role in enhancing such participation.

Concern is that the actual participation in IK-based entrepreneurship programs remains limited due to deficiencies in curriculum integration and experiential learning opportunities.

Recommendations

The integration of IK into entrepreneurship education through dedicated curricula in aspects such as innovation, product development, opportunity recognition, and business management is required. Aligned should be transformation towards a more Afrocentric and inclusive education system that recognises IK as a core component of entrepreneurship education, ensuring relevance to African socio-economic and cultural realities. Complementary, stronger institutional support, including mentorship, funding, and partnerships with local communities and IK practitioners, to improve student engagement and entrepreneurial confidence.

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