EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP INNOVATIVE ECOSYSTEMS ON START-UP BUSINESSES; A STUDY OF FCT-ABUJA

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Abstract
This study investigates the effect of entrepreneurship innovative ecosystems on start-up businesses in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria, with a focus on access to finance, mentorship, and talent management as key factors influencing business start-ups. The study aims to examine the impact of these factors on the likelihood of establishing new businesses in the region. A survey research design was employed, targeting 37,163 SMEs in FCT-Abuja, with a sample size of 514 respondents selected through stratified random sampling. Data was analyzed using multiple regression, ANOVA, and correlation techniques. The findings reveal that while access to finance does not significantly affect business start-ups, mentorship and talent management both have a significant positive impact on the likelihood of success. The study concludes that, in FCT-Abuja, mentorship and talent management play crucial roles in fostering entrepreneurial success, while access to finance and the regulatory framework have limited influence. Based on these findings, the study recommends improving financial mechanisms, expanding mentorship networks, and investing in talent development programs to enhance the growth and sustainability of start-ups in FCT-Abuja. Policymakers, business incubators, and the private sector are encouraged to collaborate in creating an environment that supports innovation and entrepreneurship through targeted initiatives.
Keywords: Entrepreneurship Ecosystem, Innovation, Business Start-Up, Mentorship and Talent Management.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid changes in the external environment have necessitated innovation for organizations to maintain their competitive edge, with new products and knowledge-sharing opportunities being critical to success (Ozdemir et al., 2022; Talwar et al., 2021a,b). Innovation thrives through shared resources, networks, and institutional support, where external factors play a key role in value creation and appropriation (Cavallo et al., 2019; Chaudhary et al., 2022). A supportive ecosystem, which connects various actors such as startups, established institutions, and research organizations, is essential for sustaining innovation and fostering entrepreneurship (Cao & Shi, 2020; Stam, 2015). Synergies between startups and institutions, leveraging technological advancements and creative solutions, enhance regional competitiveness and accelerate the commercialization of new technologies (Audretsch & Belitski, 2017; Rong et al., 2021). The continuous interaction among entrepreneurs, investors, and support organizations fuels a cycle of innovation that drives economic growth and societal progress (Mason & Brown, 2014).

The entrepreneurship ecosystems in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Africa exhibit diverse characteristics shaped by regional resources and support structures. In the U.S., innovation thrives through venture capital, accelerators, and a strong network of universities, with Silicon Valley leading as a global hub for technological advancement (Feld, 2012; Chen et al., 2020). Europe's innovation landscape varies, with Western Europe, particularly Germany and the UK, benefiting from mature ecosystems, while Eastern Europe is catching up with increasing investments and government support (Guerrero et al., 2021; Kuckertz, 2019). Asia, led by China and India, has rapidly developing ecosystems fueled by government backing and growing digital infrastructures (Jha, 2018; Khattab & Al-Magli, 2017), while Southeast Asia is emerging as a key player (Purbasari et al., 2019). Africa's innovation is driven by a young population and mobile technology, though it faces challenges like limited funding and infrastructure, despite growing international investment (Fal, 2013; Cao & Shi, 2021).

In Nigeria, the entrepreneurial ecosystem is rapidly evolving, especially in technology and fintech sectors, with Lagos at the center of innovation. The Nigerian ecosystem is bolstered by accelerators, venture capital, and tech hubs, though challenges like regulatory hurdles and limited access to early-stage funding persist (Ejo-Orusa, 2019; Sheriff & Moreno, 2019). Globally, entrepreneurial ecosystems rely on a network of financial investors, educational institutions, and support networks to foster innovation, driving economic growth and technological advancement (Isenberg, 2010; Stam, 2015). Key elements of a thriving ecosystem include access to finance, mentorship, talent management, regulatory frameworks, and a strong entrepreneurial culture, all of which play a crucial role in venture formation and success (Audretsch & Belitski, 2017; Guzman & Stern, 2020).

Access to finance is essential for startups, providing the capital needed for product development, marketing, and growth, though barriers such as stringent loan conditions and limited venture capital can hinder success (Acs et al., 2017b). Mentorship is also critical, offering guidance, insights, and networking opportunities that enhance entrepreneurs' decision-making and increase their chances of success (Cox & Ensor, 2017). Talent management, which involves attracting and retaining skilled individuals, plays a significant role in fostering innovation and efficiency within startups (Collings & Mellahi, 2009). A supportive regulatory framework is necessary to simplify business formation and protect intellectual property, though overly complex regulations can stifle innovation (Klapper et al., 2006). Lastly, a strong entrepreneurial culture, which encourages risk-taking and creativity, is vital for fostering innovation and driving economic growth (Shane, 2010; Zahra, et al., 2006).

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed by the study titled "effect of entrepreneurship innovative ecosystems on start-up businesses in FCT-Abuja" stems from the limited understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within Abuja's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Despite its status as Nigeria's capital and a growing urban center, FCT-Abuja lags behind other major start-up hubs in Africa, such as Lagos, Nairobi, and Cape Town, in fostering innovation and supporting thriving start-up ventures. The lack of sufficient research on Abuja's ecosystem makes it difficult to identify the barriers that hinder entrepreneurs and prevent them from fully realizing their potential. Furthermore, the absence of a structured framework and coordinated support systems poses significant challenges to start-ups in FCT-Abuja. Entrepreneurs often face difficulties in accessing necessary resources such as funding, mentorship, technology, and networks that are essential for scaling their businesses. This weak ecosystem potentially stifles innovation, hinders economic diversification, and limits the city's ability to attract both local and international investment. The comparative aspect of the study highlights another layer of the problem: Abuja's entrepreneurial innovative ecosystem has not been adequately benchmarked against other successful start-up hubs. Without comparative insights, stakeholders in FCT-Abuja are left without a clear understanding of what strategies and best practices could be adapted to improve the ecosystem. This knowledge gap hampers efforts to create an enabling environment that fosters sustainable growth and innovation.

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of entrepreneurship innovative ecosystems on start-up hubs; a study of FCT-Abuja. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the effect of access to finance on business start-up in FCT-Abuja.
2. evaluate the effect of mentorship on business start-up in FCT-Abuja.
3. assess the effect of talents management on business start-up in FCT-Abuja.

Based on the study objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated.:

$H_0$1: there is no significant relationship between access to finance on business start-up in FCT-Abuja.
$H_0$2: there is no significant relationship between mentorship and business start-up in FCT-Abuja.
H03: there is no significant relationship between talents management and business start-up in FCT-Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

An ecosystem entails an evolutionary approach in which individual and collective learning occurs over a period, resulting in innovation at a collective level (Acs et al., 2017a; Mack & Mayer, 2016). A functioning ecosystem may result in the rise of innovation commercialization at academic institutions via joint ventures with private and public bodies and start-up creation (Torres & Godinho, 2022). The success of the ecosystem exemplifies the invention of new products and services, resulting in successful start-ups being scaled up globally, which in turn creates an impact in the form of regional innovation and productive entrepreneurship (Cavallo et al., 2019; Thompson et al., 2018). The ecosystem provides a fast and reliable flow of information, resources and talent to help entrepreneurs make the right decisions in their growth phase. A guarantee of success is the inclusiveness of the company, the symbiosis between people and the established corporate culture of trust and co-operation. Entrepreneurial ecosystems are proving their importance and contributing to developing businesses from different economic sectors (Snezhinka & Jordanka, 2024).

Spigel's (2018) description of an ecosystem, such as the material, social, and cultural attributes have a regional focus. For example, worker talent and universities are going to be key drivers in an ecosystem of the level of human capital. The ecosystem consists of a set of cultural perspectives, social networks, financial supports, universities and active economic policies which shape a supportive environment for the activity. Strong entrepreneurship ecosystem according to Isenberg (2010, 2011), cited in Intan, et al. (2021) are: public leader, governments, culture at large, success stories, enough knowledgeable people, capital sources, nonprofits and industry associations, educational institutions, infrastructure, geographic locations, formal and informal groups, venture oriented professionals, and potential customers. Davari and Najmabadi (2018) opined that entrepreneurial ecosystem may empower individuals, businesses and communities through a combination of factors that increase the economic performance and welfare. It provides a diverse of interdependent factors in a geographic region that make profit and shape the economic performance. Entrepreneurship ecosystems refer to the conditions that make ecosystems more or less favorable for entrepreneurship activity (Liguori et al. 2019).

Innovation

Innovation is a process and/or development result of the utilization of a product/resource that has been there before so that it has more meaningful value. The innovation process is greatly influenced by advances in technology and science because these two things can make it easier to produce something new and different (Edi, et al., 2020). Innovation is a way to continue to build and develop an organization that can be achieved through the introduction of new technologies, new applications in products and services, developing new markets, and introducing new forms of organization (Widodo, 2012). Innovation can relate to goods, services, or ideas that are new to someone. Innovation can take the form of a company mechanism to adapt to a dynamic environment. Innovation is the process of converting knowledge into value through the application of new or improved products, processes, and systems. Innovation is an application of something creative that has a significant impact on an organization or society. Innovation is the process of bringing the best ideas into reality, being innovative. Innovation is the creation of new values, and Innovation is a process that combines ideas and knowledge into new values (Joko, et al., 2021). Anh, et al. (2019) declared that innovation refers to the generation of a new idea and its implementation into a new product, process or service, leading to the dynamic growth of the national economy and the increase in employment as well as creation of pure profit for the innovative business enterprise.

Access to Finance

Access to finance is necessary to create an economic environment that enables firm to grow and prosper. According to Adomako et al. (2016), financial access is the ability to obtain finance to support SME business operations. Access to finance is the ability to obtain financial assistance from financial institutions to support business operations and the satisfaction derived from the service that was

rendered (Addo & Asante, 2022). The attainment of financial support is crucial for business startups as access to credit remains a major restraint for businesses over the world. Access to finance the availability of supply of quality financial services at reasonable costs (Stijen & Konstantinos, 2016). Financing refers to the approach in which enterprises fund the ventures that form their business (Macneil, 2005, cited in Ikobi-Anyali, 2016). Access to finance is the ability to know how and where to raise funds for a business enterprise which is determined by the nature, size and the goal of the business (Ikobi-Anyali, 2016).

Mentorship

Mentors help mentees to develop self-efficacy by providing vicarious experiences as positive examples, allowing them to evaluate and enhance their entrepreneurial and business competencies through social comparison and imitation (van Esch et al., 2021). Aaron, et al. (2015) cited in Dennen (2004) described a mentor as one who mediates expert knowledge for novices and helps that which is tacit become more explicit. The two most common uses of the word mentoring are to (a) describe a professional development relationship in which a more experienced participant assists a less experienced one in developing a career and (b) a guiding relationship between an adult and a young person focused on helping the youth realise his or her potential and perhaps overcome some barriers or challenges. In both cases it is the mentor who provides advice and support and may serve as a role model. Whereas these examples generally imply long-term relationships, mentoring can be used as an instructional strategy on a smaller scale (Aaron, et al., 2015).

Talent Management

Talent has been perceived as the capacity to create ingenious works and not only being able to successfully accomplish a task; it is the permanence and development of competences (Thunnissen, et al., 2013). Talent is considered as an outstanding mastery of systematically developed abilities (or competences) and knowledge, in at least one domain of human activity, to a place or a degree that sets the individual at the top 10% of peers who are said to be active in the same field (Gallardo-Gallardo, et al., 2015). Talent can be perceived as the sum of an employee's abilities, constituting their intrinsic gifts, competences, knowledge, intelligence, experience, personality, and behavior, which confirms that the concept of talent constitutes the ability of an individual to learn and develop (Dries, 2013). Talent management can mean on-boarding, identifying, evaluating, and/or developing the organization's internal talent (Al Ariss, et al., 2016).

Business Start-up

Every business at its initial stage is a start-up. Business ventures graduate to small-scale business after 3 to 5 years. The owner considers his location and targeted customers. Startups are financed by the owners. It is usually an online business that easily gets fast to intended customers. The cost of starting a start-up venture is usually considered a smaller amount. Startups adopt efficient ways of reaching their customers since their targeted customers are few. They may adopt better technology in their advertising and marketing approaches. However, small scale business may be a corporation, company with fewer employees (Brown, et al., 2018). According to Emenike (2021), in business start-ups, there are several categories of start-up in both small and medium enterprises both at manufacturing and industry categories or level. These categories are not limited to the following; i) buyable startup which are companies built not to operate for a long period but with high growth potential; ii) Scalable Start-ups which is a typical targeted at generating possible highest Return on Investment (ROI). It involves good market research to identify areas to be exploited and targeted opportunities; iii) Social Entrepreneurship Start-ups which is a type of start-up developed for not wealth purposes. They created for social and environmental impacts; iv) Offshoot Start-ups which are businesses not built from the scratch rather they are branch off out of a bigger business. They may be established in order to expand a business outfit or to enter a new line of business; v) Social Start-ups which is known to be a charitable, non-profit and Philanthropic organization set up to do good; vi) Large Company Start-ups which are companies backed by the support and capital of the already successful company, these offshoot startups aim at product diversification to meet targeted potential customers and can easily adapt to ever changing markets; and

vii) Small Business Start-ups which businesses leverage on ever evolving market opportunities to grow but not without hard work. Their projection is longevity and not scalability as they do not have financial backings of any parent company. Their satisfaction of the market is their profit base as they gain more customers in the market. This type of start-up is found among family-owned businesses (Emenike, 2021).

Empirical Reviews

Chairul, et al. (2024) study investigated the impact of business mentoring, business model innovation, and social media use on the entrepreneurial performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Bogor. Utilizing a quantitative approach, data were collected through surveys administered to 200 SMEs operating in various sectors. The study employed multiple regression analysis to assess the relationships between the independent variables (business mentoring, business model innovation, and social media use) and the dependent variable (entrepreneurial performance). The findings revealed that all three factors significantly and positively influence entrepreneurial performance. Business mentoring provides essential guidance and support, fostering skill development and strategic planning. Business model innovation encourages adaptability and competitiveness, leading to enhanced business outcomes. Social media use offers effective marketing channels and customer engagement, further driving business success. The study suggested that comprehensive support systems that include mentorship, innovation, and robust digital strategies can provide substantial benefits to entrepreneurs. Policymakers and business leaders in Bogor are encouraged to foster environments that promote these aspects, enhancing the potential for SME success in the region.

Jiraporn, et al. (2023) study examined the effect of dynamic talent management capabilities on the competitive performance of startup companies. The study considered the importance of dynamic marketing capability as a mediating variable in the relationship between dynamic talent management capability and competitive performance. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey. The study's sample comprised of 170 startups registered with the National Innovation Agency (a public agency) of Thailand's Ministry of Science and Technology. The findings revealed that dynamic talent management capability had a positive impact on performance. Startup firms with talent management strategies could enhance their competitive performance. Furthermore, dynamic marketing capability mediated the relationship between dynamic talent management capability and performance. These results suggested that human capital with dynamic talent management capabilities in combination with dynamic marketing capabilities can support startup firms to improve competitive finance, market, and innovation performance to meet the needs of talented employees, customers, and investors. This study contributes to the knowledge management, marketing, competitiveness, and innovation literature and supports existing findings.

Qurratu'aini and Fahriani (2022) conducted study on talent management and organizational sustainability: role of engagement and satisfaction. The study aimed to determine the role of talent management in achieving organizational sustainability. The study also examines the role of engagement and satisfaction in achieving organizational sustainability goals (i.e. social, economic, and environmental). Quantitative methods are used in the study. The research focused on the internal organization and the student activity unit at Nahdlatul Ulama University, Sidoarjo with a total sample of 97 respondents. Data collection was carried out through a closed questionnaire with a purposive sampling technique. Data be analyzed using PLS (Partial Least Squares) program with outer and inner models. Results indicate a significant direct impact of talent management on achieving organizational sustainability. The study found that talent management has a positive influence on engagement and satisfaction, which ultimately leads to the realization of organizational sustainability. The study concluded that talented people need special attention and appreciation, for that companies need to make a comprehensive policy on talent management or develop a series of talent management practices to meet sustainability goals because talented people with their different skills will be able to creates enormous value in organizational performance and supports companies in achieving competitive advantage and sustainability.

Emenike (2021) study investigated the entrepreneurial finance on business start-ups in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study hinged on "Agency Theory." The study was a survey design. Data and information were generated through disseminated questionnaires and using face-to-face hang delivery, e-mails and social media (WhatsApp). Answers to research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies, tables, mean, while Chi-Square was adopted in analyzing the hypotheses. The finding from the study showed that there no significant relationship between new start-ups and level of initial funding capital of venture start-ups in Rivers State. More funding source of start-ups is through credit card borrowing. Lifestyles of managers of new start-ups are responsible for the non-expansion of the sector. The study recommended that there is the need for government through financial institutions to improve the quality of start-ups' for small and medium scale investment projects, especially the riskier start-ups. And financial institutions should assist by stepping into due diligence by investors to ensure that funded start-ups are properly managed and reduce investors' reckless lifestyles.

Michael (2021) study examined the effect of business mentoring on entrepreneurial development in Calabar metropolis of Cross River State. Specifically, the study examined the effect of business internship, business seminar, which is the sub-constructs of business mentoring, on innovation and creativity, which are the sub-constructs of entrepreneurial development. The study anchored on the theories of social cognitive career, and adopted the survey design which relied on survey tools in data collection. A survey was conducted among the management staff, trainers and trainees of the CrossRiver Garment Factory, University of Calabar Entrepreneurial Development Centre and Eyo Ita House Entrepreneurial Development Centre in Calabar. A sample size of 383 respondents was randomly selected from a population of 9049 using Taro-Yamane formula, with 302 respondents completing and returning questionnaire administered. The data collected through structured questionnaire, were presented in tables, analyzed using simple percentages, validated by experts, and tested for reliability using Cronbach Alpha criterion. Multiple regressions were employed in testing the hypotheses. The study found out that, there is a significant relationship between business internship, business seminar and creativity and innovation among entrepreneurs. The findings suggested that business mentoring is critical for the development of entrepreneurial skills, competences, capacity and aptitudes, which result in growth of entrepreneurial ventures. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government of Cross River Sate should organize entrepreneurial programmes that allow young entrepreneurs to acquire valuable skills that make them self-reliance, developed pro-activeness to take advantage of opening in our environment. Also, government of Cross River Sate should make policies that guide business mentoring and practice to expand entrepreneurs' familiarity in their chosen area of work, enable young entrepreneurs to develop professional network links, expose and create a smoother transition for entrepreneurs from the classroom to implementation thus develop ideas that boost their innovativeness. Muli and Kevin (2019) study investigated the effect of access to finance on financial performance of processing SMEs in Kitui County. Descriptive research design was applied to conduct the study. The target population was the 25 processing SMEs in Kitui County where for each firm; the Chief Executive Officer, the finance manager and the Chief accountant were considered as respondents giving rise to a total of 75 respondents. An interview and Semi- structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data from the respondents. The data was inspected for completeness, accuracy, reliability and consistency then analysed using SPSS Version 20 Software. Descriptive statistics such as mean, and the standard deviation were computed to describe the data collected. Moreover, inferential statistics at 95% confidence level were used. The findings of the study indicated that financial performance positively correlated with the access to finance. The findings were supported by the literature reviewed by the study. The study recommended amongst others that banks to create favourable policies to enable processing SMEs to access finance through loans easily as it is likely to boost the financial performance of the SMEs since they will have enough financial resources to invest.

Theoretical Framework

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory, introduced by Daniel Isenberg in 2010, describes an entrepreneurial ecosystem as a network of interconnected actors, institutions, and processes that work together to

support entrepreneurship in a specific region. Isenberg identified six key elements for a thriving ecosystem: culture, policies, financial resources, human capital, markets, and infrastructure. Empirical research, such as that by Stam (2015) and Mason and Brown (2014), supports the theory, emphasizing the importance of systemic conditions like networking, mentorship, access to finance, and policy interventions in driving startup success. The theory provides a structured approach to understanding how local factors like government policies, access to finance, talent, and infrastructure influence the growth of startups. In the case of FCT-Abuja, this framework can be used to analyze how well the entrepreneurial ecosystem fosters innovation and supports startup growth.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs a survey research design to investigate how the entrepreneurship innovative ecosystem affects business startups of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in FCT-Abuja, Nigeria. The target population comprises 37,163 SMEs across six area councils, and a stratified random sampling technique is used to select a sample of 514 respondents, adjusted for non-response. The study uses the Yamane sample formula to calculate the required sample size of 396, increased by 30% to ensure sufficient representation. Data analyzed using statistical tools such as multiple regression, mean, percentages, standard deviation, and Spearman correlation to examine the relationships between entrepreneurial ecosystem factors (access to finance, mentorship and talent management) and business startups. The study also uses normality tests and SPSS for data analysis, with models reflecting the relationships between the variables. The methods are justified as they will provide authentic data from SME owners, and the statistical tools will help uncover significant relationships and assess the model's goodness of fit.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the sample size as specified above, 514 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the SMEs owners/managers in FCT-Abuja. Of the 514 copies of questionnaire distributed, 413 copies of questionnaire were retrieved and used for further analysis representing an effective response rate of 80.4%. Also 28 copies of questionnaire were not properly filled but returned and that 73 copies of questionnaire were lost in the process.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BS	413	1.00	5.00	3.6891	.89084
AF	413	1.00	5.00	2.4697	1.15346
ME	413	1.00	5.00	3.7787	1.10723
TM	413	1.00	5.00	3.8058	.89701
Valid N (listwise)	413				

Source: SPSS version 27

Table 1 above summarizes the responses from 413 participants regarding various factors influencing business start-ups in FCT-Abuja, with values ranging from a minimum of 1.00 to a maximum of 5.00 for all variables. The average scores indicate that mentorship (ME) has the highest mean of 3.7787 and a standard deviation of 1.10723, suggesting strong positive perceptions of mentorship's role in business success. Talent management (TM) follows closely with a mean of 3.8058 and a lower standard deviation of 0.89701, indicating a consistent view of its importance. Business start-up (BS) has a mean of 3.6891 and a standard deviation of 0.89084, reflecting a generally favorable outlook on start-up viability. Conclusively, these statistics reveal a generally positive perception of mentorship and talent management, while emphasizing the ongoing struggles with access to finance in the entrepreneurial landscape.

Test of Hypotheses

This section provides avenue for hypotheses testing. The regression is used to determine the cause and effect of dependent variable on the independent variables.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.513[a]	.263	.254	.76946

a. Predictors: (Constant), AF, ME, TM

Table 2 provides an overview of the regression analysis conducted to assess the relationship between access to finance (AF), mentorship (ME) and talent management (TM), as predictors of business start-up outcomes. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.513 indicates a moderate positive relationship between the predictors and the outcome variable, while the R Square value of 0.263 suggests that approximately 26.3% of the variance in business start-up outcomes can be explained by these predictors. The adjusted R Square value of 0.254 accounts for the number of predictors in the model, further confirming that about 25.4% of the variance is reliably explained, indicating a satisfactory model fit. The standard error of the estimate (0.76946) indicates the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line, providing insight into the precision of the predictions. Conclusively, model demonstrates that the selected predictors contribute to understanding business start-up outcomes in FCT-Abuja, though a substantial portion of the variance remains unexplained.

Table 3: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	85.991	3	17.198	29.048	.000[b]
	Residual	240.970	408	.592		
	Total	326.961	412			

a. Dependent Variable: BS

b. Predictors: (Constant), AF, ME, TM

The ANOVA Table 3 above presents the analysis of variance for the regression model evaluating the effect of access to finance (AF), mentorship (ME) and talent management (TM) on business start-up outcomes (BS). The regression sum of squares (85.991) indicates the variation in business start-up outcomes explained by the model, with a mean square value of 17.198 calculated by dividing the sum of squares by the degrees of freedom (df = 5). The F-statistic of 29.048 signifies a strong overall model fit, indicating that the predictors collectively provide a significant explanation of variance in the dependent variable. The associated significance level (Sig. = .000) confirms that the model is statistically significant, meaning there is a less than 0.1% probability that the observed results are due to chance. In contrast, the residual sum of squares (240.970) reflects the variation not explained by the model, with a mean square of 0.592 calculated for the residuals (df = 407). Overall, the ANOVA results highlight that the predictors have a significant effect on the business start-up outcomes in FCT-Abuja.

Table 4: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.542	.209		7.381	.000
	AF	-.035	.033	-.046	-1.066	.287
	ME	.081	.038	.101	2.108	.036
	TM	.116	.055	.117	2.097	.037

a. Dependent Variable: BS

Hypothesis One (H_0)1: There is no significant relationship between access to finance and business start-up in FCT-Abuja.

The first hypothesis (H01) suggests that there is no significant relationship between access to finance and business start-up in FCT-Abuja. The coefficient for access to finance (AF) is -0.035, with a p-value of 0.287, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold for statistical significance. As a result, H01 cannot be rejected, indicating that access to finance does not significantly affect the likelihood of starting a business in the region. While the negative coefficient hints at a possible inverse relationship, it is not statistically

significant enough to draw definitive conclusions. Thus, while finance-related challenges may exist for entrepreneurs in FCT-Abuja, they do not significantly influence their ability to start new businesses. This study is consistence with the study of work of Eminike (2021) whose study found that there is no significant relationship between new start-ups and level of initial funding capital of start-ups in River State.

Hypothesis Two ($H_0$2): There is no significant relationship between mentorship and business start-up in FCT-Abuja.

The second hypothesis (H02) investigates the relationship between mentorship and business start-up in FCT-Abuja, suggesting no significant relationship. The results show a coefficient of 0.081 for mentorship (ME) and a p-value of 0.036, which is below the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, H02 is rejected, indicating a significant positive relationship between mentorship and business start-up. This suggests that access to mentorship enhances individuals' ability to launch businesses in the region, with experienced mentors providing valuable guidance, resources, and networking opportunities that support new ventures. This study is consistence with the study of Chairul et al. (2024) and Michael (2021) whose studies concluded that business mentoring is critical for the development of entrepreneurial skills, competences, capacity and aptitudes, which result in growth of entrepreneurial ventures.

Hypothesis Three ($H_0$3): There is no significant relationship between talent management and business start-up in FCT-Abuja.

The third hypothesis (H03) examines the relationship between talent management and business start-up, asserting no significant relationship. The results reveal a coefficient of 0.116 and a p-value of 0.037 for talent management (TM), which is below the 0.05 significance level. As a result, H03 is rejected, indicating that effective talent management practices significantly contribute to the success of business start-ups in FCT-Abuja. This suggests that organizations that prioritize hiring, training, and retaining skilled employees are more likely to achieve better performance and sustainability, which is essential for new businesses competing in dynamic markets. This study is consistence with the work of Qurratu'aini and Fahriani (2022) who find that talent management has a positive influence on employee engagement and job satisfaction in the organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that access to finance does not significantly impact the likelihood of starting a business in FCT-Abuja, suggesting that entrepreneurs may need more than just financial resources, such as strategic support, mentorship, and talent. It highlights the importance of mentorship in providing guidance, networking, and resources, which are crucial for entrepreneurial success, and advocates for stronger mentorship programs in Abuja. The study also emphasizes the role of effective talent management in ensuring business sustainability and growth, indicating that businesses focusing on recruitment, training, and retention of skilled employees are more likely to succeed. Additionally, the regulatory framework was found not to significantly influence business start-ups, with mentorship and talent management playing more critical roles. The study underscores the importance of a supportive entrepreneurial culture, characterized by innovation, risk-taking, and community recognition, in enhancing business success. Overall, the findings suggest that while finance and regulations are important, mentorship, talent management, and a vibrant entrepreneurial culture are key drivers of innovation and business growth in FCT-Abuja's start-up ecosystem.

Based on the findings of the study, the recommends the following:

1. that policymakers and financial institutions are encouraged to create alternative financial mechanisms like microfinance, venture capital, and crowdfunding, while also promoting financial literacy programs to help entrepreneurs effectively utilize available funds.
2. the study emphasizes the importance of expanding mentorship networks in FCT-Abuja by advocating for collaboration between government agencies, business incubators, and the private

sector to establish mentorship programs that connect experienced entrepreneurs with aspiring ones, providing essential guidance, strategic advice, and networking opportunities for new business ventures.

3. that the public and private partnerships should focus on capacity-building programs to ensure that entrepreneurs have access to a pool of skilled professionals to support their ventures' growth.

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