



Strengthening Africa's Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Through Kingdom Business Approaches: Building a Collaborative Ecosystem Model That Works

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Abstract

Africa's youthful population presents both opportunities and challenges for the continent's economic development. With a median age of 19 and 10-12 million youth entering the workforce annually, the gap between available jobs and new entrants is substantial, with only 3.1 million formal positions accessible each year (African Development Bank, 2020). Compounding this issue, approximately 72 million African youth are categorized as NEET (not in employment, education, or training), creating significant obstacles to economic stability and growth (International Labour Organization, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires innovative approaches that integrate ethical and values-driven frameworks into entrepreneurial ecosystems in African contexts, especially to inspire and mentor the development of ethical business practices incorporating Kingdom Business values. The researchers explored how Kingdom Business approaches – rooted in ethical values, stewardship, and holistic development – can enhance Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem based on a Global Skills Factory collaborative ecosystem model embedding Kingdom Business principles at every stage to foster a more supportive environment for ethical business practices among young entrepreneurs. Our methodology involves a thorough analysis of existing ecosystem components, including entrepreneur training, coaching, and mentorship in addition to access to finance and market linkages, while integrating Kingdom Business

values training to address these issues (with focused case studies of Regent Center for Entrepreneurship's Business Development Center and Global Skills Factory Oy).

Keywords: Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem, collaborative entrepreneurship ecosystem model, ecosystem support organizations (ESO), entrepreneurial support frameworks, Kingdom Business approaches

Introduction

Background

Africa's entrepreneurship landscape is shaped by a dynamic combination of challenges and opportunities, driven primarily by its youthful population. With a median age of just 19, Africa has one of the world's youngest populations, making it a potential powerhouse for economic growth. Every year, an estimated 10 to 12 million young people enter the labor market with only 3.1 million formal jobs available to meet this demand, creating a significant employment gap (African Development Bank [AfDB], 2020). This imbalance has contributed to a growing number of youth being categorized as NEET (not in employment, education, or training), which now stands at over 72 million young adults across the continent (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020). This situation represents both a challenge and a unique opportunity for fostering entrepreneurship as a viable path to economic empowerment and job creation.

Entrepreneurship, particularly among young adults, is seen as a critical solution to the unemployment crisis in Africa. Many African state governments, private-sector organizations, and development agencies have recognized the potential of entrepreneurship to drive economic diversification and innovation. However, significant obstacles persist, including limited access to finance, lack of mentorship and training, and fragmented market linkages (Dawa, 2019). These challenges often prevent young entrepreneurs from scaling up their businesses and contributing meaningfully to the economy.

In response to these challenges, the integration of ethical and values-driven frameworks, such as Kingdom Business principles, in Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem presents a promising pathway forward. Kingdom Business approaches are grounded in biblical principles of ethical stewardship, integrity, and holistic community development. By fostering an entrepreneurial mindset that prioritizes not only profit but also societal well-being, Kingdom Business models can address systemic issues that hinder sustainable business development in Africa.

Kingdom Business principles, which emphasize values such as integrity, excellence, and spirit-led innovation, offer a framework for ethical entrepreneurship. These principles not only help entrepreneurs build sustainable businesses but also contribute to the broader community by addressing social and economic issues through values-based leadership (Brantley, 2021). The integration of these approaches in Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem can lead to a more collaborative, supportive, and ethical environment, fostering long-term economic growth and stability.

This paper explores the potential of Kingdom Business approaches to strengthen Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem by addressing the current gaps and offering a values-driven model. Through a case study analysis of initiatives that have successfully incorporated Kingdom Business principles, this study presents a collaborative model designed to create a thriving entrepreneurial environment for young entrepreneurs in Africa.

Problem Statement – Gaps in the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

Despite Africa's vast potential for economic development through entrepreneurship, the continent's entrepreneurship ecosystem remains underdeveloped and faces numerous challenges. The mismatch between the high number of young adults entering the workforce annually and the limited availability of formal employment opportunities creates a significant burden on the economy. With over 72 million young adults categorized as NEET in Africa, the traditional approaches to job creation and entrepreneurship support have proven insufficient in bridging this gap (ILO, 2020). This employment deficit not only stifles individual prosperity but also hampers broader economic growth and social stability across the continent.

Existing entrepreneurship ecosystems in Africa are plagued by various barriers, including limited access to finance, inadequate mentorship, fragmented markets, and insufficient support from government and private-sector actors (Dawa, 2019). Moreover, while many entrepreneurship development initiatives have emerged in recent years, they often lack a coherent ethical framework to guide sustainable and socially responsible business growth. Without a values-driven approach, many entrepreneurial ventures struggle to balance profit making with societal impact, leading to unsustainable growth and missed opportunities for long-term development.

The integration of Kingdom Business approaches, such as those suggested by Brantley (2021), are anchored in ethical principles such as integrity, stewardship, and positive community impact and present a promising solution to these challenges. However, there is limited research on how these values-driven principles can be systematically incorporated into Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem to foster holistic growth. This gap in the literature suggests the need for a model that combines ethical business

practices with collaborative support structures, aimed at nurturing young entrepreneurs who prioritize both economic success and societal well-being. The current research sought to address this gap by examining how Kingdom Business principles can be embedded in Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem to create a more supportive, ethical, and collaborative environment for young entrepreneur enterprises. Specifically, it aims to develop a model that aligns entrepreneurship support frameworks with Kingdom Business values, fostering not only business success but also community development and economic sustainability.

Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research questions guided the researchers' exploration of how Kingdom Business principles can enhance Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem:

RQ1: What are the key challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in Africa's current entrepreneurial ecosystem? This question aims to identify the systemic barriers and limitations that hinder the growth and sustainability of young entrepreneur enterprises in Africa.

RQ2: How can Kingdom Business principles be effectively integrated into existing entrepreneurial support frameworks in Africa? This question seeks to explore the methods and strategies for embedding ethical values, stewardship, and positive community impact into the entrepreneurship ecosystem to create a more supportive environment for young entrepreneurs.

RQ3: What successful case studies exist that demonstrate the application of Kingdom Business principles in enhancing entrepreneurship in African contexts? This question aims to analyze specific initiatives that have successfully implemented Kingdom Business approaches, drawing lessons and best practices that can be replicated across the continent.

RQ4: What collaborative ecosystem model can be developed that incorporates Kingdom Business principles at every stage of entrepreneur development? This question focuses on designing a comprehensive model that integrates ethical business practices, mentorship, financing, and market linkages to support entrepreneurship holistically.

RQ5: What practical recommendations can be made for governments, private-sector actors, and ecosystem support organizations to promote Kingdom Business values in their entrepreneurial support initiatives? This question aims to provide actionable insights for various stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of their efforts in supporting young entrepreneurs and promoting sustainable economic growth.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant importance for multiple stakeholders within Africa's entrepreneurial landscape, including policymakers, business leaders, educational institutions, and organizations that provide training and support for entrepreneurs, as well as the aspiring young entrepreneurs themselves in Africa. By focusing on the integration of Kingdom Business principles into the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the research contributes to several key areas:

- **Addressing youth unemployment:** By exploring innovative solutions to the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs, this study sought to provide actionable insights that can help reduce youth unemployment rates across the continent. The findings could guide the development of more effective support frameworks that empower young entrepreneurs to create sustainable businesses, ultimately, contributing to economic stability.
- **Promoting ethical entrepreneurship:** The study emphasizes the need for a values-driven approach to entrepreneurship, advocating for ethical business practices that align profit making with ethical, values-driven social responsibility. By highlighting the importance of Kingdom Business principles, this research encourages the emergence of businesses that prioritize integrity, stewardship, and positive community impact, fostering a more ethically grounded business culture in African states where these principles are adopted and practiced to strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- **Enhancing collaborative networks:** The research aims to develop a collaborative ecosystem model that facilitates partnerships among various stakeholders, including governments, private-sector actors, and ecosystem support organizations (ESO). By promoting collaboration, the study sought to create a more interconnected and supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem, enhancing resource sharing, mentorship opportunities, and market access for young entrepreneur enterprises.
- **Informing policy and practice:** It is hoped that the findings of this study can provide valuable recommendations for policymakers and practitioners focused on enhancing the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Integrating Kingdom Business principles into policy frameworks and support initiatives based on the model proposed in this study can help shape strategies that align economic development with ethical standards, promoting sustainable growth in African economies.
- **Contributing to academic discourse:** This study adds to the existing body of literature on entrepreneurship in Africa by exploring the intersection of ethical values and business practices. It serves as a foundation for further research on Kingdom Business approaches and their potential to transform the

entrepreneurial landscape, encouraging more scholars to examine the impact of values-driven entrepreneurship.

Literature Review

Africa's Entrepreneurial Landscape

Africa's entrepreneurial landscape is characterized by a unique blend of opportunities and challenges that shape the experiences of entrepreneurs across the continent. With a rapidly growing youthful population, Africa presents significant potential for economic development through entrepreneurship. However, this potential is often hampered by systemic barriers that hinder the growth of entrepreneurial ventures.

Youth Demographics and Economic Potential. As previously mentioned, Africa has one of the youngest populations globally, with a median age of 19 years (AfDB, 2020). This demographic trend provides an unprecedented opportunity for economic growth, as approximately 10 to 12 million young people enter the workforce each year. However, the existing job market can only absorb about 3.1 million of these individuals, resulting in a substantial employment gap that fuels the crisis of young adults categorized as NEET (ILO, 2020). This mismatch between job seekers and available positions underscores the urgent need for innovative solutions that leverage entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic empowerment.

Challenges Facing Entrepreneurs. Despite the apparent opportunities, several challenges plague the entrepreneurial landscape in Africa:

- **Access to finances:** Limited access to financing remains one of the most significant barriers for entrepreneurs in Africa. Traditional banking systems often impose stringent requirements that many young entrepreneurs cannot meet, leading to a reliance on informal lending sources or personal savings (Osei & Ofori, 2020). This lack of access inhibits the ability to start or scale businesses effectively.
- **Inadequate support structures:** The entrepreneurial ecosystem in many African countries lacks the necessary support structures, such as mentorship programs and training initiatives, which can nurture aspiring entrepreneurs (Dawa, 2019). Without proper guidance, many young entrepreneurs struggle to navigate the complexities of starting and running a business.
- **Fragmented market linkages:** Many African markets are characterized by fragmentation, with limited access to broader markets for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This fragmentation can lead to reduced competitiveness and profitability for young entrepreneur ventures (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], 2019).

- **Regulatory challenges:** The regulatory environment in many African countries can be cumbersome with bureaucratic hurdles that complicate business registration and operation (World Bank, 2020). These regulatory challenges can deter potential entrepreneurs from formalizing their ventures, perpetuating the cycle of informal entrepreneurship.

The Role of Entrepreneurship in Economic Development. Despite the challenges elaborated previously, entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a vital component of economic development in Africa. As affirmed by researchers, entrepreneurs contribute to job creation, innovation, and economic diversification, which are essential for sustainable growth (Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2017). Entrepreneurial ventures can address social issues by providing goods and services that meet local needs, thereby enhancing community resilience. The growing recognition of the potential for entrepreneurship in Africa has led to various initiatives aimed at fostering a supportive ecosystem. These initiatives often focus on enhancing access to finance, providing training and mentorship, and creating platforms for networking and collaboration (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). However, for these efforts to be truly effective, they must also incorporate ethical, values-driven frameworks that guide entrepreneurs toward sustainable and responsible practices.

Challenges in Africa's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem faces several critical challenges that hinder the potential of emerging entrepreneurs, particularly the youth. These challenges include job scarcity, limited access to finance, insufficient mentorship opportunities, and fragmented market access. Additionally, the socioeconomic context, marked by a significant NEET population, exacerbates these issues.

- **Job scarcity and economic constraints:** The high rate of unemployment among young adults in Africa is one of the most pressing challenges confronting the continent. With millions entering the job market annually and only a fraction finding formal employment, many young people are left without viable career options. The lack of job opportunities not only leads to economic instability but also contributes to social unrest and disenfranchisement (ILO, 2020). As young people increasingly seek alternatives to traditional employment, entrepreneurship emerges as a promising solution. However, the structural barriers within the entrepreneurial ecosystem can stifle this potential.
- **Limited access to finances:** Access to finances is a significant hurdle for young entrepreneurs in Africa who lack the credit history or collateral required to secure loans from traditional financial institutions (Osei & Ofori, 2020). As a result, aspiring entrepreneurs often rely on informal lending sources, which can

impose high interest rates and unfavorable terms. This lack of financing options limits entrepreneurs' ability to start or expand their ventures, leading to a reliance on personal savings that may not be sufficient to sustain growth. A World Bank report (Choi et al., 2020) also pointed to the lack of access to formal credit as one of the key barriers for entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Insufficient mentorship and support structures:** Inadequate mentorship and support systems further complicate the entrepreneurial landscape. Many young entrepreneurs enter the market without the necessary guidance or training to navigate the complexities of business ownership. Without access to mentorship programs or training initiatives, aspiring entrepreneurs struggle to develop the essential skills and knowledge required for success (Dawa, 2019). The lack of structured support can lead to high failure rates among new ventures, discouraging potential entrepreneurs from pursuing their business aspirations.
- **Fragmented market access:** The fragmented nature of African markets presents additional challenges for youth entrepreneurs. Many SMEs face difficulties accessing broader markets due to poor infrastructure, regulatory barriers, and lack of networking opportunities (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], 2019). This fragmentation reduces the competitiveness of young entrepreneurs and limits their ability to scale their businesses effectively. Additionally, the challenges of navigating complex supply chains and market dynamics can deter young adults from pursuing entrepreneurship altogether.
- **Socioeconomic challenges and the NEET population:** The socioeconomic context in Africa further complicates the entrepreneurial landscape. With over 72 million young people classified in the NEET population who are not participating in the workforce or education, often due to socioeconomic barriers such as poverty, lack of access to quality education, and social exclusion, the continent faces a significant challenge in engaging this demographic (ILO, 2020). This demographic is at a heightened risk of being marginalized, and entrepreneurship could serve as a viable pathway to reintegrating these young individuals into productive economic activities and livelihoods.

Overview of Kingdom Business Approaches

Kingdom Business approaches represent a transformative framework for entrepreneurship that integrates ethical principles and values into business practices. These approaches are rooted in the belief that businesses can be conduits for positive societal change while also achieving financial success. The Kingdom Business framework can be categorized into three stages: 1) values-centered, 2) excellence-minded, and 3) Spirit-led. Each of these stages, as described in this section, builds upon the previous one, contributing to a holistic approach to ethical business practices that fosters entrepreneurial growth (Brantley, 2021).

Exploration of Kingdom Business Principles.

1. *Values-Centered Business:* The foundation of the Kingdom Business approach begins with the values-centered stage, which emphasizes the importance of integrating biblical values – such as integrity, honesty, and compassion – into business operations. Businesses that define themselves by these values are more likely to create a culture of trust and ethical behavior among employees, customers, and stakeholders (Brantley, 2021). However, merely having values is not sufficient for a business to thrive; it requires the practical application of these values in everyday operations.
2. *Excellence-Minded Business:* Building on the values-centered business foundation, the excellence-minded stage focuses on operational excellence and high-quality execution. In this stage, businesses prioritize delivering exceptional products and services that meet market demands while maintaining ethical standards. Excellence-minded businesses are adept at understanding customer needs and creating innovative solutions (Brantley, 2021). This focus on excellence not only enhances customer satisfaction but also helps to differentiate the business in a competitive marketplace.
3. *Spirit-Led Business:* The pinnacle of the Kingdom Business approach is the Spirit-led stage, where entrepreneurs actively seek Divine guidance in their business decisions. This stage encourages leaders to engage with their faith actively and to be open to inspiration that can lead to innovative solutions to pressing societal problems (Brantley, 2021). Spirit-led entrepreneurs view their businesses as a form of ministry, striving to make a positive impact in their communities while achieving sustainable financial success. This stage emphasizes creativity and responsiveness to the changing needs of the market, allowing businesses to adapt and grow in dynamic environments.

Impact on Entrepreneurial Growth.

The Kingdom Business framework has significant implications for entrepreneurial growth. By integrating ethical principles and values at every stage of business development, entrepreneurs can foster a more supportive and sustainable ecosystem. Following are some key impacts:

- **Enhanced reputation and trust:** Businesses that adhere to Kingdom Business principles often enjoy higher levels of trust and loyalty from customers and stakeholders. This enhanced reputation can lead to increased customer retention, positive word-of-mouth referrals, and, ultimately, greater profitability (Brantley, 2021).
- **Holistic development:** The focus on ethical practices and community impact encourages entrepreneurs to consider the broader implications of their business

decisions. This holistic approach not only benefits the entrepreneurs but also contributes to the overall well-being of the communities they serve, leading to sustainable growth.

- **Innovation and adaptability:** The spirit-led stage fosters an environment of creativity and adaptability, empowering entrepreneurs to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. This innovation can drive new business models, products, and services that meet the evolving needs of the market, positioning these entrepreneurs for long-term success.
- **Collaboration and networking:** Kingdom Business approaches promote collaboration among entrepreneurs, which can lead to the establishment of supportive networks and partnerships. These networks facilitate knowledge sharing, resource access, and mentorship opportunities, which are crucial for the growth of young entrepreneurs in Africa.

Ethical Business Practices and Entrepreneurship

Ethical business practices are essential for fostering sustainable business models and ensuring long-term success in entrepreneurship. The principles of stewardship, integrity, and positive community impact play a crucial role in shaping these practices. By integrating Kingdom Business values into their operations, entrepreneurs can create businesses that are not only profitable but also socially responsible.

Significance of Stewardship, Integrity, and Community Impact

Stewardship refers to the responsible management of resources, both human and financial, for the benefit of stakeholders and the community at large. In the context of Kingdom Business, stewardship involves recognizing that business owners are caretakers of their resources and must use them wisely to create value for others (Brantley, 2021). This mindset encourages entrepreneurs to make decisions that prioritize sustainability and ethical considerations, fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. By practicing stewardship, businesses can enhance their reputation and build trust with customers, employees, and investors.

Integrity is a foundational element of ethical business practices. Businesses that operate with integrity demonstrate honesty and consistency in their dealings with stakeholders, which fosters trust and loyalty. For entrepreneurs, maintaining integrity can lead to better relationships with customers, suppliers, and partners, ultimately, contributing to the business's long-term success (Osei & Ofori, 2020). Integrity not only enhances a company's reputation but also attracts talent and customers who value ethical practices, creating a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Community impact extends beyond a business's immediate economic contributions; it also encompasses the broader effects on the community and environment.

Entrepreneurs who prioritize community impact are more likely to engage in corporate social responsibility initiatives, which can improve their business's social license to operate. By investing in community development and addressing social issues, businesses can create a positive feedback loop that enhances their brand image and builds customer loyalty (Dawa, 2019). Moreover, community-oriented practices can lead to innovative solutions that address local challenges, further strengthening the business's role within the ecosystem.

Theoretical Framework

Kingdom Business Model as a Theoretical Lens

The Kingdom Business model serves as a robust theoretical framework for understanding and analyzing the interplay between ethical principles and entrepreneurial practices. This essence of our theoretical framework is anchored in three key dimensions: values-driven approaches, stewardship, and spirit-led innovation. An exploration by researchers (Brantley, 2021; Osei & Ofori, 2020) illustrates how these elements contribute to building sustainable business practices:

1. At the core of the Kingdom Business Model lies the emphasis on **values-driven approaches**. This dimension asserts that successful businesses must operate on a foundation of ethical values derived from both biblical teachings and culturally relevant principles. These values – such as integrity, honesty, and respect – guide decision-making processes and shape organizational culture. Businesses that prioritize values not only enhance their internal cohesion but also foster trust with stakeholders, which is critical for long-term success (Brantley, 2021). This values-centric approach encourages entrepreneurs to reflect on their motivations and align their business objectives with ethical considerations, creating a framework for responsible entrepreneurship.
2. **Stewardship** is another critical aspect of the Kingdom Business model. It embodies the principle that entrepreneurs are not merely owners of their businesses but also caretakers of resources entrusted to them by their communities and stakeholders. This perspective encourages responsible and ethical management of financial, human, and environmental resources (Osei & Ofori, 2020). Entrepreneurs who practice stewardship are more likely to engage in sustainable practices, considering the broader implications of their business decisions. This commitment to stewardship fosters accountability and encourages businesses to invest in their communities, further enhancing their social impact.

3. The third dimension of the Kingdom Business model is **Spirit-led innovation**, which emphasizes the role of divine guidance and inspiration in entrepreneurship. This aspect of the framework posits that entrepreneurs can achieve greater success by seeking spiritual insight into the challenges and opportunities they face. By being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, entrepreneurs are encouraged to innovate and create solutions that address real societal needs (Brantley, 2021). This spirit-led approach not only facilitates the development of unique business models but also aligns entrepreneurial efforts with a higher purpose, thus fostering a sense of fulfillment and commitment among business leaders.

The Kingdom Business model provides a comprehensive theoretical lens through which to analyze ethical entrepreneurship in the African context. The previously highlighted research findings have proven it true that entrepreneurs who embrace these principles are positioned to create sustainable, impactful enterprises that resonate with the ethical expectations of their communities and stakeholders. This theoretical framework is particularly relevant within the African entrepreneurial ecosystem context that does not include the aforementioned Kingdom Business values in the way it operates, thus resulting in unethical, self-serving entrepreneurs unable to drive holistic national transformation.

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Theory

Entrepreneurial ecosystem theory provides a framework for understanding the interconnected components that foster entrepreneurial activity within a specific environment. This theory emphasizes the importance of relationships, resources, and support systems that influence the growth and sustainability of startups and small businesses. In the context of Kingdom Business, the integration of ethical, values-driven practices enhances the robustness of the entrepreneurial ecosystem by aligning economic activities with moral and social responsibilities. The key components of entrepreneurial ecosystem theory are as follow:

- **Interconnected actors:** At the heart of the entrepreneurial ecosystem are various actors, including entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, educational institutions, and government agencies. Each of these stakeholders plays a vital role in facilitating or hindering entrepreneurial success. The Kingdom Business approach encourages these actors to operate based on ethical principles, fostering collaboration and mutual support. When all participants prioritize values-driven practices, the ecosystem becomes more resilient and supportive, enabling entrepreneurs to thrive (Isenberg, 2010).
- **Resources and support systems:** The availability of resources – such as access to finance, mentorship, and market opportunities – is crucial for entrepreneurial

success. Kingdom Business principles advocate for the responsible management of these resources, emphasizing stewardship and community impact. For example, investors who adopt Kingdom Business values may prioritize funding for ventures that not only promise financial returns but also demonstrate social responsibility and ethical practices (Osei & Ofori, 2020). This shift in focus can lead to a more equitable distribution of resources and support, fostering an environment where ethical entrepreneurship flourishes.

- **Cultural norms and values:** The cultural context of an entrepreneurial ecosystem significantly influences the behaviors and attitudes of its participants. In ecosystems that embrace Kingdom Business principles, there is a strong emphasis on ethical conduct, integrity, and community engagement. These cultural norms encourage entrepreneurs to adopt practices that align with their values, thereby creating a more cohesive and supportive ecosystem (Stam, 2015). A culture rooted in ethical practices not only enhances trust among stakeholders but also attracts talent and customers who share similar values, further strengthening the ecosystem.
- **Innovation and adaptability:** Kingdom Business approaches encourage innovation that is both ethically sound and socially responsible. In an entrepreneurial ecosystem, this innovation manifests as solutions to pressing societal challenges, aligning business goals with community needs. Entrepreneurs who are guided by ethical principles are more likely to identify opportunities that lead to sustainable development, which is essential for the long-term viability of the ecosystem (Brantley, 2021). This adaptability to changing circumstances, grounded in values-driven practices, ensures that the ecosystem can respond effectively to emerging challenges.

The entrepreneurial ecosystem theory, when viewed through the lens of Kingdom Business, emphasizes the importance of ethical, values-driven practices in nurturing a vibrant entrepreneurial environment. In the African context, researchers recognize that several actions are to be taken into consideration to shape a better collaborative model that addresses the highlighted gaps necessitating the embedment of kingdom principles, including connecting interconnected actors, optimizing accountability in resource allocation and use, nurturing supportive cultural norms, and encouraging responsible innovation. This integrated approach can significantly enhance the sustainability and impact of entrepreneurship in Africa.

Synthesis of Theories

The integration of Kingdom Business principles with entrepreneurial ecosystem theory provides a comprehensive framework for developing an ethical, collaborative ecosystem model tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities in African settings. This synthesis not only addresses the immediate needs of entrepreneurs but

also promotes long-term sustainability and social responsibility within the entrepreneurial landscape.

- **Bridging values and ecosystem dynamics:** At the core of this synthesis is the recognition that the values-driven nature of Kingdom Business principles can significantly enhance the dynamics of entrepreneurial ecosystems. By embedding ethical considerations into every facet of the ecosystem – ranging from funding mechanisms to mentorship programs – stakeholders can cultivate an environment that prioritizes moral integrity alongside economic growth. This alignment fosters trust among participants, encouraging collaboration and collective problem solving (Brantley, 2021).
- **Promoting ethical stewardship:** Incorporating stewardship into the entrepreneurial ecosystem emphasizes the importance of responsible resource management. Kingdom Business advocates for entrepreneurs to act as stewards of their communities, focusing on the broader social impact of their businesses. This principle aligns with ecosystem theory, which highlights the interconnectedness of various actors and the need for sustainable practices. By prioritizing ethical stewardship, entrepreneurs can create businesses that not only thrive economically but also contribute positively to their communities, thereby enhancing overall ecosystem resilience (Osei & Ofori, 2020).
- **Encouraging spirit-led innovation:** The synthesis of Kingdom Business and entrepreneurial ecosystem theory also promotes the concept of spirit-led innovation. This approach encourages entrepreneurs to seek divine guidance in their business ventures, fostering creativity and adaptability. In African contexts, where traditional practices and cultural values play a significant role, this aspect of the synthesis can lead to innovative solutions that resonate deeply with local communities. By integrating spiritual insights into their entrepreneurial strategies, business leaders can identify opportunities that address pressing societal issues, ensuring their relevance and sustainability (Isenberg, 2010).
- **Collaborative networks and community engagement:** A key outcome of synthesizing these theories is the establishment of collaborative networks that support ethical business practices. Kingdom Business principles emphasize community engagement, urging entrepreneurs to actively involve their communities in decision-making processes. This engagement not only strengthens the social fabric of the ecosystem but also ensures that business practices align with local needs and values. By fostering collaboration among various ecosystem actors – such as government entities, educational institutions, and civil society organizations – this model enhances the support available to entrepreneurs, facilitating their growth and impact (Stam, 2015).

Methodology

This research employed a comprehensive methodology that combined a literature-based approach, focused case study analysis, and conceptual model development to examine how Kingdom Business principles can enhance Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem through a collaborative ecosystem framework. The literature-based approach provided an in-depth review of existing scholarship on entrepreneurial ecosystems, ethical business models, and Kingdom Business principles. This desk research involved systematically gathering and analyzing insights from academic journals, books, and credible sources that address the intersection of ethics, entrepreneurship, and Kingdom principles. Through this process, the study identified core theoretical frameworks, common challenges, and best practices relevant to the African entrepreneurship ecosystem (Osei & Ofori, 2020; Teece, 2018).

Following the theoretical review, a case study analysis was conducted to explore practical applications of Kingdom Business principles within the African entrepreneurship landscape. The Business Development Center (BDC) with Regent Center for Entrepreneurship and Global Skills Factory Oy were selected as focal cases for their demonstrated success in integrating values-based entrepreneurship practices. This analysis provided concrete examples of how Kingdom Business principles can be applied to promote ethical, community-focused entrepreneurship, offering valuable insights into the specific methods and outcomes associated with this approach (Global Skills Factory, 2024; Habinshuti, 2024). Building upon the theoretical and case study findings, this research culminated in the development of a collaborative ecosystem model, designed to integrate Kingdom Business principles into African entrepreneurial support system. This model emphasized a holistic approach to entrepreneurship support, including values-based training, mentorship, access to finance, and market linkages, with the aim of fostering a sustainable and ethically grounded entrepreneurship ecosystem. Through this structured approach, the study presents a replicable framework that may serve as a foundation for future initiatives seeking to incorporate Kingdom Business values within diverse African entrepreneurial settings.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings from the literature review and case studies, focusing on the gaps identified within the current African entrepreneurial ecosystem. These identified gaps presented in this section highlight the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and the opportunities for integrating Kingdom Business principles to foster a more supportive environment.

Review of Ecosystem Gaps

RQ1: What are the key challenges faced by youth entrepreneurs in Africa’s current entrepreneurial ecosystem?

The analysis of the African entrepreneurial ecosystem reveals several significant gaps that hinder the growth and sustainability of youth-led enterprises. These gaps were identified through a comprehensive review of literature and case studies, illustrating the complex landscape in which African entrepreneurs operate. The findings from this research reveal several key challenges in Africa’s entrepreneurial landscape, notably inadequate entrepreneur support, limited access to finance, market fragmentation, and regulatory barriers. The underlying reasons for these issues can often be traced to broader systemic shortcomings within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, including a lack of values-based, structured support systems, an unfavorable financing landscape, and complex regulatory processes. These issues hinder the growth and potential of young entrepreneurs, particularly those lacking access to ethical mentorship, financial support, or inclusive market opportunities (see Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Key Challenges in the African Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Key gaps	Findings
Inadequate entrepreneur support	One critical challenge lies in the limited availability of structured training and mentorship programs rooted in values-based principles. Studies indicate that effective entrepreneurial development requires mentorship and training programs that emphasize not only technical skills but also ethical principles and community impact. However, most programs are focused on profit maximization and lack an emphasis on ethical business conduct, creating a gap in fostering entrepreneurs who can contribute positively to social transformation. This gap often results in entrepreneurs who prioritize self-interest over broader societal impact, inhibiting sustainable economic development and ethical business growth (Osei & Ofori, 2020).
Access to finance	Access to finance remains a persistent challenge, as few financial institutions prioritize young entrepreneurs, especially those operating in sectors where ethical or socially responsible business practices might result in lower immediate profitability. Researchers have highlighted that conventional financing models, largely focused on profit, often overlook the social impact potential of entrepreneurship, which discourages the development of values-based ventures (Halverson, 2021). Consequently, many aspiring entrepreneurs, especially those committed to ethical or

Key gaps	Findings
Fragmented market linkages	<p>community-centered business models, struggle to secure funding, which limits the reach and potential impact of their ventures (Teece, 2018).</p> <p>The lack of effective market linkages is another critical gap in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Entrepreneurs often struggle to connect with potential customers, suppliers, and distribution networks, which limits their ability to grow and sustain their businesses. The fragmented nature of market linkages in many African countries results in missed opportunities for collaboration and resource sharing. This fragmentation can be attributed to a combination of infrastructural challenges, regulatory barriers, and insufficient networking platforms (Acs, 2019). As a result, entrepreneurs find it difficult to penetrate markets and scale their operations, further exacerbating the challenges they face.</p>
Regulatory barriers	<p>The complex and often time-consuming processes for business formalization create significant regulatory barriers that deter many young entrepreneurs from entering the formal market. Studies have suggested that overly bureaucratic regulatory frameworks can discourage entrepreneurs, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, from legitimizing their businesses (Klapper et al., 2006). Furthermore, research has noted that business environments lacking ethical and values-based regulatory practices are prone to corruption, making it more challenging for entrepreneurs to operate transparently and fairly (Klapper & Love, 2011). As a result, the system often inadvertently promotes unethical, self-serving business practices, as entrepreneurs navigate through processes that prioritize profit over positive societal impact.</p>
Corrupt entrepreneurial ecosystem	<p>There is a generalized corrupt entrepreneurial ecosystem that lacks godly values, negatively impacting the quality and ethics of products and services. This environment fosters a culture where unethical practices are normalized, creating a cycle where new entrepreneurs adopt similar self-serving practices to succeed. Research indicates that without integrating ethical frameworks such as Kingdom Business principles into the ecosystem, it becomes difficult to foster entrepreneurs who can drive holistic national transformation (Habinshuti, 2024).</p>

The Role of Kingdom Business Principles

RQ2: How can Kingdom Business principles be effectively integrated into existing entrepreneurial support frameworks in Africa?

The integration of Kingdom Business principles presents a transformative opportunity to address the identified gaps within Africa’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Emphasizing ethical stewardship, excellence, and community-focused development, these principles can provide a framework for creating a more supportive environment for young entrepreneurs (see Table 2).

Table 2: Kingdom Business Principles to be Integrated Within the African Contexts

Principles	Explaining findings
Ethical stewardship	Ethical stewardship is central to Kingdom Business principles and emphasizes responsible management of resources, relationships, and communities. This approach can significantly improve access to finance by encouraging a shift in how investors and financial institutions view entrepreneurship. By fostering a culture of trust and accountability, ethical stewardship can help mitigate perceived risks associated with funding young entrepreneur enterprises. As revealed by interviews with leaders of BDC and reemphasized by Global Skills Factory Oy as case studies, embedding ethical practices within business operations can attract support from stakeholders who value integrity and sustainability (Habinshuti, 2024). Furthermore, ethical stewardship can create an environment where collaborative funding initiatives thrive, enabling access to resources that might otherwise remain out of reach for emerging entrepreneurs.
Excellence in execution	The principle of excellence is pivotal in enhancing the operational capacity of entrepreneurs. Through adopting an excellence-minded approach, young entrepreneurs can improve their business execution and delivery, making their offerings more competitive in the marketplace. Kingdom Business principles encourage entrepreneurs to not only meet market demands but also to innovate and set new standards within their industries. This focus on excellence can help address the gap of limited mentorship opportunities by fostering a culture of peer support and knowledge sharing. Entrepreneurs who commit to excellence are more likely to seek mentors and collaborators who can guide them in refining their skills and expanding their networks. Moreover, educational programs that incorporate Kingdom Business values can equip

Principles	Explaining findings
Community-focused development	<p>aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools they need to excel, thereby bridging the gap between education and practical application (Teece, 2018).</p> <p>Kingdom Business principles emphasize the importance of community impact, which can play a crucial role in addressing the fragmented market linkages currently experienced in Africa. By focusing on community-oriented business models, entrepreneurs can create networks that foster collaboration and mutual support. Initiatives that prioritize local partnerships, such as sourcing materials from local suppliers and engaging with community stakeholders, can strengthen market linkages and enhance the sustainability of businesses. This approach not only benefits individual entrepreneurs but also contributes to the broader economic development of communities, aligning with the ethical imperatives of the Kingdom Business framework. Case studies reveal that businesses rooted in community engagement often achieve greater resilience and long-term success, as they are better positioned to adapt to local needs and market dynamics (Acs, 2019).</p>
Holistic support systems	<p>The holistic nature of Kingdom Business principles calls for a comprehensive support system that encompasses financial, educational, and emotional resources for youth entrepreneurs. By integrating ethical training, mentorship, and access to finance into a cohesive support framework, stakeholders can create a more conducive environment for entrepreneurial growth. This model encourages collaboration among ESOs, private-sector actors, and government agencies to align their efforts with Kingdom Business values, ultimately, leading to a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem (Habinshuti, 2024). The successful implementation of such support systems requires commitment and cooperation from various stakeholders, emphasizing the need for shared goals and collective action, which supports the need for a collaborative ecosystem model.</p>

Case Study Insights

RQ3: What successful case studies exist that demonstrate the application of Kingdom Business principles in enhancing entrepreneurship in African contexts?

Insights From the Two Case Studies. This research considered case studies of the **BDC**, an entrepreneur training program certified by Regent University, and **Global Skills Factory Oy**, two innovative models that emphasize ethical, values-based entrepreneurship training, mentorship, and ecosystem support. Both organizations aim to drive sustainable economic development in emerging economies by fostering not only applied entrepreneurship but also emphasizing ethical values, integrity, and collaboration.

BDC. The BDC is an initiative of Regent University's Center for Entrepreneurship to transform people and nations through business. Grounded in a Kingdom Business approach, BDC operates under the principle that the ultimate solution to poverty is enterprise rather than charity, with entrepreneurship playing a pivotal role in uplifting disadvantaged communities. Through its unique licensing model, BDC has managed to expand its reach by training and supporting facilitators locally, who in turn deliver ethical entrepreneurship curricula. This approach not only spreads Christian values but also fills critical gaps in business infrastructure by providing training, mentorship, and access to professional networks.

BDC's model prioritizes ethical business conduct by embedding values in every aspect of its training and support services. For example, the BDC offers programs tailored to different stages of business development, from basic entrepreneurship for startups to advanced training for scaling enterprises. BDC resources and services for its graduates complement traditional business support by ensuring that entrepreneurs have access to necessary business support (e.g., legal, financial, and marketing) and networking opportunities. This integrated approach helps to address structural challenges in developing economies where business infrastructure is often lacking, making it challenging for SMEs to scale. Additionally, BDC's peer mentoring groups help foster community-based support systems, encouraging entrepreneurs to share resources and knowledge with each other, which promotes an environment of collaboration and mutual growth.

Global Skills Factory Oy. Global Skills Factory Oy is a Finland-based social enterprise that demonstrates a multifaceted approach to fostering sustainable entrepreneurship among young adults in the Global South and immigrant communities in developed countries. Unlike traditional educational programs, Global Skills Factory (2024) combines Nordic startup principles with the best international practices to create standardized and scalable frameworks tailored for developing countries. By blending values-based approaches with practical, technology-enabled training in entrepreneurship and job readiness, Global Skills Factory provides young entrepreneurs with both skills and ethical frameworks to succeed in the market. The collaborative model employed by Global Skills Factory emphasizes local partnerships with entrepreneurship support organizations, incubators, and accelerators across

Africa. This partnership approach is designed to empower local entities to develop products and services that align with the specific needs of their client entrepreneurs and communities.

By embedding Kingdom Business principles into its programs, Global Skills Factory (2024) supports the development of a transparent and collaborative ecosystem. This ecosystem encourages ethical business practices, minimizes corruption, and enables sustainable growth, benefiting both individual entrepreneurs and the larger community. Moreover, Global Skills Factory’s digital platform provides a space for ecosystem players to collaborate, share expertise, and streamline access to resources for entrepreneurs. This digital approach creates a sustainable pipeline for entrepreneurial development, removing barriers that have traditionally limited collaboration and scaling within African entrepreneurial ecosystems. The platform also aims to address systemic issues in the business landscape, such as corruption, by promoting a values-based culture and aligning all partners with ethical business practices.

Comparative Insights. Both the BDC and Global Skills Factory Oy share a commitment to values-based entrepreneurship, though their models differ in scope and implementation. BDC operates a localized licensing model that partners with educational institutions and missions, providing in-depth, face-to-face training and support. Both organizations use action-learning models. In contrast, while Global Skills Factory uses technology and international collaboration to deliver standardized entrepreneurial training and support across multiple regions, BDC had until recently relied on physical training but has launched an online program as well (see Table 3).

Table 3: Comparative Case Studies of Entrepreneur Training and Support Organizations’ (BDC and Global Skills Factory Oy) Solutions Addressing Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Challenges

Challenges in the entrepreneurial ecosystem	BDC	Global Skills Factory Oy
Inadequate entrepreneur support: <i>Limited values-based structured training and</i>	Solution: Offers targeted training at different business stages (startups, scaling, growth of companies) with a strong emphasis on ethical values. Provides ongoing mentorship, coaching, and access to resources, equipping entrepreneurs with both practical skills and ethical	Solution: Provides scalable, tech-enabled entrepreneurship training and practical programs focused on job readiness, entrepreneurship, and values-based certifications. Partners with local support organizations offer sustained

<p>Challenges in the entrepreneurial ecosystem</p>	<p>BDC</p>	<p>Global Skills Factory Oy</p>
<p><i>mentorship programs.</i></p>	<p>foundations to operate responsibly. Values impact: BDC’s ethical training instills integrity, ensuring entrepreneurs can build trustworthy and values-based businesses.</p>	<p>mentorship and resources for emerging entrepreneurs. Values impact: Focuses on developing entrepreneurs who prioritize ethical practices and community welfare, preparing them for holistic, sustainable success.</p>
<p>Access to finance <i>Few financial institutions cater to young entrepreneurs.</i></p>	<p>Solution: Facilitates connections to financial services, including networks of angel investors, bankers, and private equity, specifically for values-based business models. Values impact: By establishing trust and ethical conduct, BDC enables entrepreneurs to present themselves as reliable, reducing perceived risk for investors.</p>	<p>Solution: Builds partnerships with financial services and strategic investors, creating pathways for funding through collaboration. The values-driven framework appeals to <i>impact investors</i> seeking ethical businesses. Values impact: Cultivates entrepreneurs who understand the importance of financial transparency and accountability, thus enhancing investor confidence.</p>
<p>Market fragmentation <i>SMEs struggle to access broader markets.</i></p>	<p>Solution: BDC provides a network of connections to strategic partners and markets and offers specialized consulting for business expansion. Emphasis on ethical business conduct helps entrepreneurs gain trust and recognition in new markets. Values impact: Entrepreneurs are encouraged to collaborate and share resources, fostering a sense of community and enabling access to larger networks and markets.</p>	<p>Solution: Through a digitized collaborative platform, Global Skills Factory connects ecosystem players, streamlining access to markets and establishing a pipeline for products and services to reach a broader audience. Values impact: The platform’s Kingdom Business values create a trustworthy network where businesses and customers alike are confident</p>

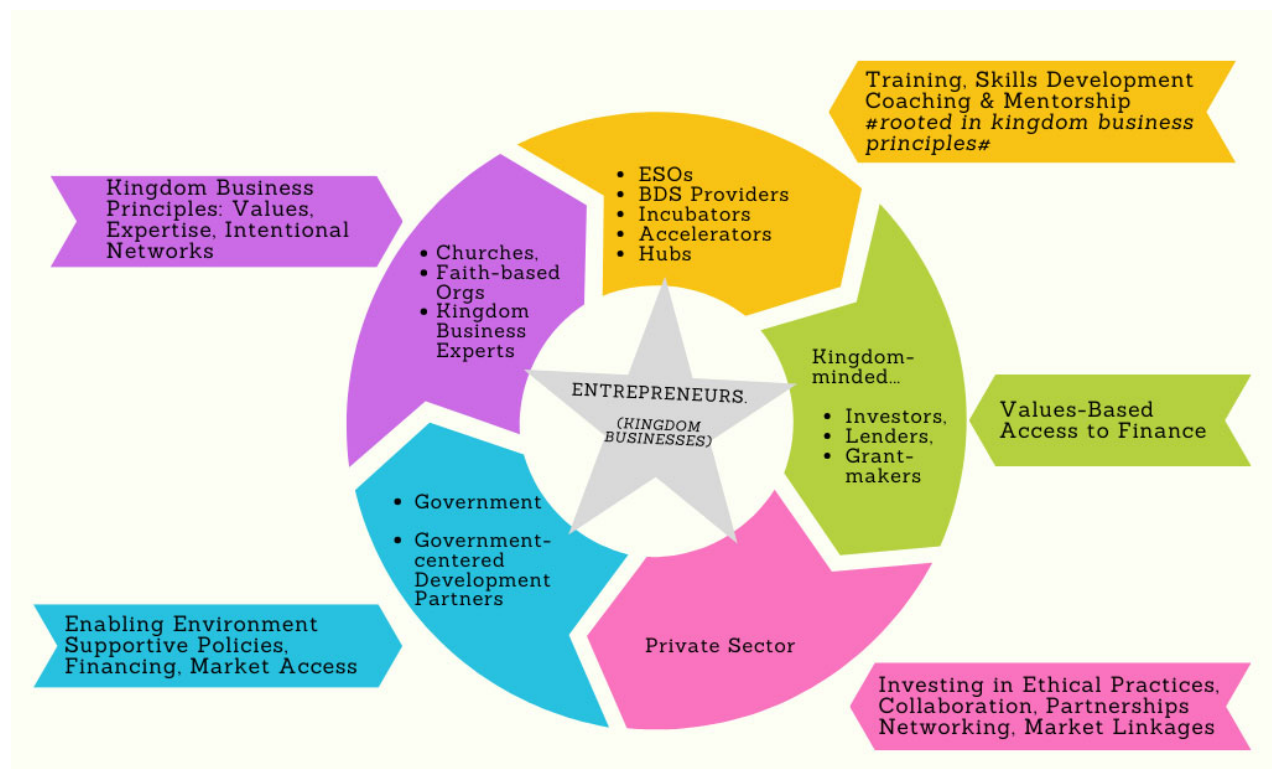
<p>Challenges in the entrepreneurial ecosystem</p>	<p>BDC</p>	<p>Global Skills Factory Oy</p>
<p>Regulatory barriers <i>Business formalization remains complex and time consuming.</i></p>	<p>Solution: BDC assists entrepreneurs with “doing business in” services, providing guidance for navigating local regulations and partnering with government offices to ease formalization. Values impact: Ethical grounding prepares entrepreneurs to operate transparently and responsibly, ensuring smoother relations with regulatory bodies.</p>	<p>in the integrity of services and products. Solution: Facilitates access to legal expertise and government offices, guiding entrepreneurs on ethical compliance and advocating for values-driven business conduct that aligns with regulatory expectations. Values impact: Encourages transparency and ethical compliance, helping entrepreneurs navigate regulations while building reputable businesses.</p>
<p>Corrupt entrepreneurial ecosystem <i>Lack of godly values results in unethical, self-serving entrepreneurs.</i></p>	<p>Solution: Integrates Kingdom Business principles into all training and mentorship, emphasizing integrity, honesty, and service to the community. Through peer mentoring and group support, BDC fosters accountability and ethical behavior. Values impact: Helps create an ecosystem where ethical values are the norm, reducing corruption and encouraging entrepreneurs to contribute positively to society.</p>	<p>Solution: Promotes a collaborative model grounded in ethical values, encouraging a culture of integrity across partnerships and the ecosystem. The digitized platform enforces transparency, discouraging corrupt practices and aligning all participants with a Kingdom-driven approach. Values impact: Instills ethical standards and discourages corruption, creating a trustworthy environment that supports holistic community and business growth.</p>

Kingdom Business Collaborative Ecosystem Model

RQ4: What collaborative ecosystem model can be developed that incorporates Kingdom Business principles at every stage of entrepreneur development?

As it is the aim of this research, the authors designed a collaborative ecosystem model that integrates Kingdom Business principles to create a supportive environment for young entrepreneurs in Africa. The model emphasizes the importance of the integration of ethical values and kingdom business principles at every step of the entrepreneur development process while having the supported entrepreneur at the center and engaging all the stakeholders within their respective responsibilities and activities along the collaborative pipeline-based support system (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Collaborative Ecosystem Model Visualization



Source for Figure 1: Authors, 2024.

Key Components of the Collaborative Ecosystem Model and Impact on Stakeholders

The successful implementation of the collaborative ecosystem model requires active engagement among various stakeholders to provide a unique role in fostering a supportive environment for young entrepreneurs. The model emphasizes the

importance of collaboration among stakeholders to create a thriving entrepreneurial support ecosystem. Through engaging entrepreneurs, ESOs, the private sector, investors, faith-based organizations, and governments in a manner that incorporates Kingdom Business principles, the model fosters a *holistic* approach to entrepreneurship development that prioritizes ethical practices and positive community impact. This collaborative effort is essential for addressing the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and promoting sustainable economic growth across the African continent. Through collective action, stakeholders can enhance the potential of Kingdom Business principles to transform the entrepreneurial landscape in Africa:

- **Entrepreneurs**
 - **Empowerment through support:** The collaborative model places the entrepreneur at the center of the model. This model provides young entrepreneurs with access to ethical training, mentorship, and financial resources, empowering them to build sustainable businesses grounded in ethical practices. By integrating Kingdom Business principles, entrepreneurs can cultivate a mindset that values integrity, stewardship, and community impact.
 - **Enhanced opportunities:** With better access to networks, funding, and market linkages, entrepreneurs can develop their ideas more effectively and scale their ventures. This collaboration increases their chances of success and allows them to contribute positively to their communities.
 - **Examples:** BDC graduates, Global Skills Factory alumni, etc.
- **ESOs, BDS providers, incubators, accelerators, etc.**
 - **Capacity building:** ESOs, BDS providers, incubators, accelerators, and hubs provide targeted training programs and resources that align with the collaborative ecosystem model. With guidance and expertise from kingdom business experts, they can focus on ethical entrepreneurship and Kingdom Business values and help equip young entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge necessary for success.
 - **Network facilitation:** ESOs, BDS providers, incubators, accelerators, and hubs act as connectors within the entrepreneurial ecosystem, facilitating entrepreneurs to access mentors, potential investors, networking opportunities, and other resources. This collaboration strengthens the support system available to young entrepreneurs.
 - **Examples:** Rwanda Business Development Center (BDC Rwanda), Global Skills Factory

- Financing institutions (Kingdom-minded investors, grant makers, banks, and others)
 - Value-based access to finance: The collaborative ecosystem model fosters a financial support structure that aligns with Kingdom values, reduces systemic barriers, and enhances trust between entrepreneurs and financiers. This results in a robust, ethically grounded ecosystem where financial institutions play an active role in promoting integrity-driven business practices.
 - Sustainable business growth: Value-based access to finance within the ecosystem model enhances trust and collaboration by aligning financial institutions and entrepreneurs around shared ethical principles. This approach fosters sustainable business growth, improves financial literacy, and expands funding access for underrepresented entrepreneurs. By attracting ethical investors and minimizing corruption, value-based finance supports an inclusive, resilient ecosystem focused on long-term impact and social good.
 - Examples: Vision Finance International (owned by World Vision), Urwego Bank in Rwanda (owned by Opportunity International), Paralex Bank in Nigeria (owned by Christ Embassy Church), Kingdom Bank (United Kingdom)
- Private sector
 - **Investment in ethical practices:** The private sector can contribute to the model by investing in startups that demonstrate adherence to Kingdom Business principles. This investment not only supports the growth of ethical businesses but also enhances corporate social responsibility initiatives.
 - **Collaboration, partnerships, and networking:** Established businesses can partner with emerging entrepreneurs to share resources, provide peer mentorship, and create market opportunities. Such collaboration can lead to innovation and mutual benefits for both parties.
 - **Examples:** International Chamber of Commerce, BDC Alumni Network (across Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Zambia, etc.), Christ Ambassadors in the Marketplace, etc.
 - Governments and government-centered development partners
 - Policy development: Governments play a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship. In the collaborative ecosystem model, they are responsible for adopting policies that promote ethical business practices and support the integration of ethical principles to foster a culture of innovation and responsible business behavior.
 - Infrastructure investment: Supporting policies and infrastructure development enhances the operational capabilities of entrepreneurs, making it easier for them to access markets and resources. Government initiatives to

- improve access to finance and reduce bureaucratic hurdles can also significantly impact entrepreneurial growth.
- Examples: Rwanda Development Board, development organizations (World Vision, Opportunity International, etc.)
- Churches and faith-based organizations
 - Promotion of ethical values: Faith-based organizations can play a pivotal role in promoting Kingdom Business principles and infusing kingdom values across the collaborative ecosystem. They also provide kingdom business experts who work to empower organizations that help cultivate a culture of ethical entrepreneurship training, skills development, coaching, and mentorship, including ESOs, business development service providers, accelerators, incubators, and hubs.
 - Intentional networks: Churches and faith-based groups can create intentional networks that provide support, resources, and collaboration opportunities for faith-driven entrepreneurs. These networks can facilitate knowledge sharing, mentorship, and access to funding.
 - Examples: churches, businesses as mission networks, Global Advance, etc.

Recommendations

RQ5: What practical recommendations can be made for governments, private-sector actors, and ecosystem support organizations?

To strengthen the integration of Kingdom Business principles into the entrepreneurial ecosystem, several recommendations can be made for different stakeholders. Actors within the entrepreneurial ecosystem should also foster collaboration with kingdom business experts, faith-based organizations, and local churches to promote ethical business practices among young entrepreneurs and in developing initiatives that encourage knowledge sharing and resource pooling. In this collaborative model, each player's role should be distinct, but the operationalization of the model is based on the interconnectedness of operations. For governments, it is crucial to create supportive policies that promote ethical business practices, such as implementing tax incentives for socially responsible businesses. Additionally, governments should invest in infrastructure to enhance access to finance and market linkages for young entrepreneurs, establishing incubators and innovation hubs focused on ethical practices.

ESOs should enhance capacity-building programs by designing training curricula that incorporate Kingdom Business principles. These programs should put an emphasis on ethical decision-making, stewardship, and community engagement. Furthermore, ESOs can facilitate networking opportunities, creating platforms for young entrepreneurs to connect with established business leaders, mentors, and investors who share a commitment to ethical entrepreneurship through conferences, workshops, and online

networks. Private-sector actors have a significant role to play by engaging in ethical investments, actively seeking opportunities to invest in startups that align with Kingdom Business values. Actionable steps for building a values-based, collaborative ecosystem include establishing a coalition of stakeholders dedicated to integrating Kingdom Business principles into the entrepreneurship ecosystem. This coalition can lead initiatives and raise awareness about the importance of ethical practices. Additionally, promoting community engagement is essential, encouraging businesses to actively engage with local populations to ensure that their operations address social issues through corporate social responsibility initiatives and partnerships with local organizations.

Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This research highlighted the importance of innovative approaches that integrate ethical frameworks into entrepreneurship. The findings emphasize the transformative potential of Kingdom Business principles and the critical role of a collaborative ecosystem model in fostering a more resilient and ethically grounded entrepreneurial landscape in Africa. The integration of Kingdom Business principles – values-centered, excellence-minded, and spirit-led – provides a powerful framework for strengthening Africa's entrepreneurial ecosystem. These principles encourage ethical stewardship, integrity, and a focus on community impact, all of which are vital for fostering sustainable business practices. By addressing the moral and ethical dimensions of entrepreneurship, Kingdom Business approaches can inspire young adults to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions with a sense of purpose and responsibility, thus contributing to the development of a more ethically driven entrepreneurial culture across Africa. The proposed collaborative ecosystem model illustrates how various stakeholders – entrepreneurs, governments, ESOs, the private sector, and faith-based organizations – can come together to create a supportive environment for young entrepreneurs. By emphasizing ethical training, mentorship, access to finance, and market linkages, the model seeks to provide young entrepreneurs with the necessary resources and knowledge to succeed. This collaborative approach not only addresses the immediate challenges faced by young persons, such as limited access to finance and fragmented market linkages, but also contributes to broader objectives of sustainable development and economic diversification in Africa. Through the alignment of efforts with Kingdom Business principles, stakeholders can work together to build a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem that uplifts communities and promotes long-term economic growth.

Future Research

Looking ahead, further research is needed to explore Kingdom Business approaches across different regions in Africa, conducting comparative studies to identify best practices and regional adaptations. Such research could examine how cultural contexts influence the integration of these principles in entrepreneurship. Moreover, investigating the practical challenges and successes associated with implementing the proposed collaborative ecosystem model in various African countries will provide insights into its effectiveness in supporting young entrepreneurship. Longitudinal studies could also be undertaken to track the impact of Kingdom Business approaches on the growth and sustainability of young adult-led enterprises over time, offering valuable insights into the long-term benefits of ethical practices in business. Finally, sector-specific research could explore the application of Kingdom Business principles within industries, such as technology, agriculture, or renewable energy. Understanding how these principles can be tailored to different sectors will enhance their relevance and effectiveness in fostering ethical entrepreneurship. Addressing the recommendations highlighted by researchers, stakeholders can better leverage Kingdom Business approaches to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Africa and create a sustainable future for young entrepreneurs.

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