



## AN APPRAISAL OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM FOR LEATHER START-UPS IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The Nigerian leather sector, with its rich historical legacy and bright future, has seen a surge in the number of start-ups looking to make an impression. Driven by their innovative spirit and entrepreneurial fervour, these start-ups represent an essential sector of the country's economy. However, the complex entrepreneurial environment in which they work has a huge impact on their journey. This study delves deeply into the rich field of leather start-ups in Nigeria, examining the elements of the entrepreneurial environment that support or sometimes obstruct their development and success. I explore the diverse universe of these start-ups in this investigation, with an emphasis on comprehending the intricate interactions between variables that influence their path. Our goal is to deconstruct the different components of the ecosystem that supports entrepreneurship and identify the dynamics that can either serve as impetus for success or pose significant barriers to their expansion and eventual success. This research offers important insights into the potential and difficulties these start-ups encounter by illuminating the complex interaction between them and the larger entrepreneurial scene.*

### KEYWORDS

Entrepreneurial ecosystem, entrepreneurship, leather, start-ups

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### INTRODUCTION

With a population of over 200 million, over 75% of whom are between the ages of 15 and 65, Nigeria is commonly referred to as the “Giant of Africa” (Chiazor & Udume, 2017; Olurinola & Fadayomi, 2016). Since the majority of government initiatives have met with poor success,

entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant alternative for boosting employment and economic development in Nigeria. The structural adjustment programme (SAP) of the 1980s was one of the worst policy errors (Okoye *et al.*, 2016). The leather industry in Nigeria has a rich history and exciting prospects for the future. It has developed into a haven for numerous start-ups, all of them trying to leave their own imprint on its history. These young businesses are essential actors in the country's economic stage because of their strong dedication to innovation and entrepreneurial zeal. But their path is not simple; rather, it is deeply entwined with a complicated web of the business ecosystem that envelops them (Egere *et al.*, 2022).

This paper offers a thorough examination of the vibrant and varied world of Nigerian leather start-ups. In an effort to comprehend the subtleties that either help these start-ups succeed or pose significant obstacles in their path, a thorough examination of the many components of this ecosystem is being made. In order to understand how the entrepreneurial environment can both help and hinder their growth and achievements, it is important to understand the complex dynamics that determine their route. The phrase "entrepreneurial ecosystem" refers to the network of interrelated components that shapes and affects these start-ups. It includes a broad range of elements, such as culture, market dynamics, and financial support systems and government policies. Every one of these components has the capacity to either act as a boost to development or a barrier to achievement (Ejo-Orusa, 2019).

Conclusively, this article aims at providing an understanding of the factors that influence the course of leather start-ups in Nigeria. We offer a greater grasp of the opportunities and problems they face by disentangling the complex network of their entrepreneurial ecosystem. It also serves as motivation for would-be business owners and a showcase for the tenacity and inventiveness that characterise Nigerian entrepreneurship.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This paper essentially aims to highlight the complex relationship that exists between Nigeria's growing leather start-ups and the country's larger entrepreneurial scene. The secondary research methodology was adopted to extract information from prior studies, books, magazines, and

publications relevant sources of information, and the descriptive approach was employed, drawing data from those secondary sources.

## **ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM FOR LEATHER START-UPS IN NIGERIA**

### **The Nigerian Leather Industry**

Leather is created by chemically altering animal hide to create a robust, pliable substance that is resistant to deterioration. Cattle hides and calfskins, goatskins and kidskins, and sheepskins and lambskins are used to make almost all of the leather produced worldwide. The skins and hides of other animals, including walruses, horses, pigs, kangaroos, deer, and reptiles, are also utilised (Felsner & Schmel, 2002). The history of the leather business in Nigeria is extensive and broad, spanning several centuries. Nigerian leather artistry has historically been typified by the creation of superior leather items like belts, purses, shoes, and traditional clothing. Generation after generation, indigenous methods of working leather have been integral to the development of the nation's culture and economy (Akinola & Oyeboode 2014).

The pre-colonial and colonial era saw leather production as a vital component of the local economy. Indigenous communities crafted leather products for personal use, trade, and cultural ceremonies. With the arrival of colonial powers, there was a shift in the industry. Leather goods were produced primarily for export, leading to a specialisation in large-scale tanning and production facilities. The Nigerian leather industry has a complex and dynamic modern structure. It includes a number of segments, as discussed in the following section.

#### 1. Tanning and processing

Tanneries are essential to the industry, where raw hides and skins are transformed into leather. The tanning process involves treating hides with chemicals to improve their durability and quality. The leather tanning sector in Nigeria exhibits a dualistic structure, with a sizable artisanal or peasant component coexisting with a tiny mechanised sector. Using traditional tanning methods, which include tanning pits and indigenous vegetable tanning material called *bagaruwa*, the artisanal sector has been run on a rural cottage basis, largely along family lines, for centuries.

[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]

The goal has been to produce leather that is primarily crust aged. The northern Nigerian regions that produce livestock are home to the majority of these artisanal tanneries. According to estimates, there were roughly 1000 of them in 1971 (FAO & WHO, 1972 and 924 in 1981 (Adewoye, 1985). The many traditional leather products companies use the leather that is produced by the old tanneries. The tanneries' output has continued to grow rapidly over time (Ihuoma, 1992). This demonstrates unequivocally the promising future of the Nigerian leather sector.

## 2. Manufacturing

Producing leather goods such as purses, wallets, belts, shoes, and other accessories is the responsibility of the manufacturing sector. Production of leather goods is an important subsector for Nigeria's industrial and economic development. The sub-sector is labour-intensive, has a strong base of resources, and provides good employment opportunities. It directly supports 91,200 jobs in eight of the nine countries that produced leather; this amounts to 4% to 5% of all industrial employment.

## 3. Retail and distribution

Retailers and wholesalers play a crucial role in distributing leather products both within Nigeria and for international markets. This includes local markets, boutiques, and e-commerce platforms. Domestic tanneries export high-quality industrial grade leather most of the time. The ones that are not exported which are typically of inferior quality are sold locally to middlemen, who frequently give the tanneries working capital in exchange for finished leather at a predetermined grade and price. A network similar to this is also used to distribute imported leather.

## 4. Exports

The Nigerian leather industry seeks to tap into international markets, exporting leather products globally. Export is a vital part of the industry, with products being shipped to countries in Africa, Europe, and other parts of the world. The demand for premium leather goods is rising worldwide, and Nigeria's leather sector has enormous export potential. Nigerian leather items are highly regarded globally due to their exceptional quality, unique designs, and fine craftsmanship.

*[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]*

Nigerian manufacturers can engage in global markets by utilising this competitive edge, which creates opportunities for foreign direct investments and significant foreign exchange revenues.

#### 5. Local artisans

Indigenous craftsmanship continues to be a cornerstone of the industry. Artisans in various regions of Nigeria preserve traditional techniques, creating unique, culturally significant leather products. Nigeria has a long history of artisanal production. Along with this, the country is home to a large number of talented artists who turn raw materials into amazing final leather goods, showcasing the power of their craft. These craftsmen know their craft well. Their skill has been refined over many generations, fusing age-old methods with cutting-edge design trends that are in high demand both domestically and internationally.

### **Entrepreneurial Ecosystem**

The terms “ecosystem” and “start-up” are almost often used together, and there’s a good reason for this close association. The literature has offered numerous definitions of entrepreneurial ecosystems. For example, Audretsch and Belitski (2017) refer to “systems of entrepreneurship [which are] institutional and organisational as well as other systemic factors that interact and influence identification and commercialisation of entrepreneurial opportunities,” while Stam (2015) defines an entrepreneurial ecosystem as a collection of interdependent actors and factors coordinated in such a way that they enable productive entrepreneurship.

The entrepreneurship ecosystem has been described in other noteworthy ways by Roundy *et al.* (2017) as “communities of agents, social structures, institutions, and cultural values that produce entrepreneurial activity,” and by Spigel (2017) as “the union of localised cultural outlooks, social networks, investment capital, universities, and active economic policies that create environments supportive of innovation-based ventures.” An ecosystem is necessary for all start-ups to survive and grow. A clear vision and mission statement are essential for successful start-up ecosystems to move the organization’s goals forward. In an atmosphere where they receive community support, start-ups flourish. An ecosystem for start-ups is made up of strong communities (Singh *et al.*, 2022).

A thriving start-up ecosystem is the result of a number of internal and external forces coming together. They are helpful not merely for assisting a start-up in expanding, but also because they serve as centres of innovation, generating chances that benefit not just the start-up's founders but also other consumers of the good or service. There is not a perfect formula that outlines all the steps we must take to create a start-up ecosystem. In spite of this, each local ecosystem depends on a few elements to exist. The dynamic nature of national boundaries characterises the landscape of entrepreneurial ecosystems.

These ecosystems provide support for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) through cooperative and fruitful interactions among the various stakeholders, including businesses, government, and private and public entities, within the international, domestic, and regional business environment. These interactions are crucial for the systemic development of leather start-ups (Egere *et al.*, 2022). When analysing the factors that influence the course of start-ups, particularly those in the Nigerian leather sector, the entrepreneurial ecosystem is a key idea. Examining this idea in this context is crucial, utilising both international and local viewpoints. This investigation offers insightful information on the intricate environment that Nigerian leather start-ups work in.

### ***International perspective***

The idea of an entrepreneurial ecosystem, as it is known internationally, highlights how many components that encourage entrepreneurship are interconnected (Malecki, 2018). It touches on more than just one-person start-ups; rather, it highlights the connections and cooperation that exist between investors, government agencies, support groups, and entrepreneurs. From an international viewpoint, Nigerian leather start-ups can gain valuable insights in multiple areas.

#### **1. Interconnectedness**

Recognising the interconnected nature of ecosystems highlights the importance of forging partnerships and networks with local and global stakeholders. Collaborations with international leather associations, trade organizations, and global distribution networks can enhance market access for Nigerian leather start-ups seeking international expansion.

*[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. www.nijostam.org]*

## 2. Access to global markets

Understanding how international entrepreneurial ecosystems facilitate access to global markets is particularly relevant for Nigerian leather start-ups aiming to broaden their reach. This insight underscores the significance of international trade agreements, export promotion agencies, and industry associations in promoting global market entry and establishing brand presence.

## 3. Global investment and funding trends

Nigerian leather start-ups can draw inspiration from global investment trends and funding sources prevalent in international ecosystems. Insights into venture capital, angel investors, and impact investment can guide Nigerian start-ups in attracting the necessary capital for growth and innovation.

### *Local perspective (Nigeria)*

The local perspective delves into the unique cultural and historical factors that shape the Nigerian entrepreneurial ecosystem. In the case of leather start-ups, this includes the rich heritage of leather craftsmanship and traditional techniques. The local perspective comprising the cultural and historical context, government policies, access to market, and context-specific challenges contribute crucial insights for Nigerian leather start-ups (Oladeji & Adetola 2019).

### 1. Cultural and historical context

Nigeria's rich history of leather craftsmanship is integral to the local entrepreneurial ecosystem. Understanding the cultural significance of leather products and traditional techniques provides a foundation for innovation and brand identity in the local and international market.

### 2. Government policies

An exploration of local perspectives sheds light on the role of government policies and regulatory frameworks in supporting entrepreneurship. For Nigerian leather start-ups, this perspective is vital, as government policies can significantly impact local production, export, and industry standards.

*[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]*

### 3. Access to local markets

An understanding of the local market dynamics, consumer preferences, and distribution networks is essential for Nigerian leather start-ups before pursuing global expansion. Local markets often serve as a valuable testing ground for products and brand development.

### 4. Challenges specific to Nigeria

Nigerian leather start-ups face unique challenges related to infrastructure, access to quality materials, and the informal nature of many leather businesses. Recognising these local challenges is critical for devising effective strategies to overcome them.

### *Synergy between international and local perspectives*

The synthesis of international and local perspectives on entrepreneurial ecosystems allows for the identification of global best practices that can be adapted to the Nigerian context, taking into account the country's unique strengths, challenges, and opportunities. This holistic approach informs policy recommendations, strategies, and best practices for empowering leather start-ups in Nigeria's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The above exploration of entrepreneurial ecosystem concepts, drawing from both international and local perspectives, is a vital component of this study that provides a comprehensive view of the ecosystem that shapes the growth and success of leather start-ups in Nigeria, enabling a more nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities these start-ups face in their entrepreneurial journey.

### **Components of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem**

A key factor in the development and prosperity of start-ups and small enterprises in Nigeria is the vibrant and diverse entrepreneurial ecosystem. It is crucial to investigate the several components that comprise this ecosystem in order to comprehend its components:



## 1. Government initiatives

The entrepreneurial ecosystem is greatly influenced by laws, rules, and other government initiatives. A beneficial climate for start-ups can be produced by initiatives like tax breaks, changes to business registration laws, and start-up financing programmes. Recognising the leather industry's potential, the Nigerian government has launched a number of efforts to modernise and revitalise it. Aside from using legislative tools, one of the most important things the Nigerian government can do to encourage entrepreneurship is to build or improve the infrastructure that supports it (Jegede, 2020).

After years of neglect, successive governments in Nigeria have undertaken a number of measures to support the expansion and development of the MSME sector. The suggestion for a coordinating agency for the MSMEs subsector dates back to a World Bank study that was conducted in 1987. The National Assembly's 2003 passage of the Small and Medium Scale Industry Development Agency (Establishment) Act established the Small and Medium Industry Development Agency (SMIDA), ending the government's failed attempts to make it a reality. The SMIDA amendment bill was approved by the National Assembly in December 2004. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) replaced SMIDA as a result of the Act (Ilori *et al.*, 2019)

## 2. Educational and research institutions

Universities and research institutions are crucial components. They foster innovation and entrepreneurship by providing education, research, and support services. Entrepreneurial training and collaboration with academia are vital for start-ups. Nigerian Institute of Leather and Science Technology, Zaria, is one of the research institutes that significantly contributes to the advancement and fulfilment of the needs of the leather and related industries. Established in 1964, the institution was the result of a request made to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources by the Northern Regional Government at the time. At that time, it was known as the Demonstration and Training Project for Hides and Skin (Zubairu, 2016).

To address the needs of the leather and related industries, this institution's principal goals involve a diverse approach. One of these is the training of technologists and technicians who can work in the industrial sector as valuable assets by producing leather, leather products, and other scientific items and their related technologies. The development of a knowledgeable labour force with expertise in leather goods, scientific analysis, quality control, and industrial settings at both the high and medium management levels is another essential objective. The organisation also works to create and share environmentally friendly, internationally competitive technologies that are essential to the manufacturing of leather and leather goods. In addition, it wants to become known for its top-notch technical expertise and to become a centre for science-based consulting services, specialising in production, marketing, and quality control related to leather and leather products (Roberts, 1991).

### 3. Access to finance

Access to funding sources, including venture capital, angel investors, grants, and microloans, is a key element. Start-ups need financial support to develop their products, scale their businesses, and navigate challenging economic times. Access to finance is often cited by business owners as one of the key determinants of growth and expansion of entrepreneurship. Since the 2004 banking reforms, Nigeria's financial sector has expanded dramatically (CBN, 2009).

Access to entrepreneurship finance for the establishment or expansion of firms remains restricted, even with the robust capital base and fortification of the banking system (Somoye, 2013). Compared to larger companies, start-ups continue to face stricter financing requirements and higher interest rates. They also have a harder time luring in new funding sources (OECD, 2017). Banks often charge interest rates of up to 24% annually and demand security in the form of real estate. Microfinance organisations charge high interest rates and have short repayment cycles, but they typically do not provide the necessary levels of capital.

According to a recent collaborative survey conducted by SMEDAN and NBS (2013), the majority of micro-business entities sourced their funding from private or personal sources. Of the 42,781,754 business entities studied, approximately 67.5% of these entities derived their initial capital in the form of loans from other organisations, whilst just 3.14% of these entities did so  
*[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. www.nijostam.org]*

from personal sources. According to SMEDAN and NBS (2013), 20.4% of the examined organisations received their first capital from family sources, 7.3% from cooperatives, and 1.7% from grants. These results validate the notion that financial accessibility is still a problem in Nigeria.

#### 4. Infrastructure and support services

According to Akinyele *et al.* (2016), infrastructure support refers to the services and facilities required for an economy to function, or it can represent the fundamental organisational and physical structures that are essential to improving the operation of a community or industry. According to Wiley (2015), it is commonly understood to be the collection of interrelated structural elements that constitute the framework for a whole development structure. It is a crucial concept for assessing the level of development in a nation or area. The definition of the term is “the physical components of interrelated systems providing commodities and services essential to enable, sustain, or enhance societal living conditions (Akinyele *et al.*, 2016) t is commonly used to refer to the technical structures that support a society, such as roads, bridges, water supplies, sewers, electrical grids, telecommunications, and so on.

An alternative perspective posits that infrastructure serves to bolster and reinforce other production factors by elevating overall factor productivity and decreasing production costs, thus elevating investment profitability. Infrastructure facilities are thought to be able to quickly create business prospects, and efficient and dependable electricity would lower production costs and inspire entrepreneurial aspirations in start-ups (Adenipekun, 2013)

#### 5. Market and demand

A robust market with consumer demand is essential for the success of start-ups. Understanding market needs and trends is crucial for creating products or services that address real problems. Nigeria boasts over 200 million consumers, making it the largest consumer market in Africa and a very desirable market for potential businesses (ITA, 2017).

Additionally, it offers chances for company expansion and growth across value chain sectors and industries. Several entities from the entrepreneurial ecosystem will step in to help [NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]

new businesses enter more competitive markets and integrate into expansive networks of product distribution. The economy is currently being driven ahead by increasing earnings from urbanisation and consumer expenditure, which accounts for 70% of GDP. This is encouraging news for prospective business owners (ITA, 2017).

## 6. Skilled workforce

Access to a talented and skilled workforce is crucial. Having individuals with the necessary skills and expertise to contribute to start-ups and innovative enterprises is vital for growth. In Nigeria, human capital often plays a productive and facilitative function that fosters growth opportunities (OECD, 2009; OECD, 2010). Diverse efforts to increase the skilled workforce in Nigeria are being made by public (such as the government), private (such as financial institutions), and not-for-profit (such as NGOs/foundations) organisations. These efforts are centred on start-up education, training, research, and business development programmes (FATE Foundation, 2016).

Arogundade (2011), states that the ideology of self-reliance included in start-up education and training includes fostering new attitudes and a new, productive environment in order to meet future difficulties. As an illustration, the Education Partnerships in Africa project sought to establish a framework for research and curriculum development in Nigerian higher education institutions, with the ultimate goal of creating a sustainable academic infrastructure for the study and exploration of employability and entrepreneurship).

## 7. Culture and social norms

Cultural factors can impact entrepreneurship. An ecosystem that values risk-taking, innovation, and resilience is more likely to foster entrepreneurship. Culture has emerged as an important concept within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The impact of Nigerian national culture on entrepreneurship varies according to locations, industries, and cultural groups.

Literature evidence suggests that people are motivated to engage in activities by their culture that might not be evident in other groups (Hayton *et al.*, 2002). Nigerians are perceived as generally forceful and competitive, and their entrepreneurial spirit drives them to pursue a variety of careers in an effort to become financially independent (FATE Foundation, 2016).

[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]

## 8. Access to technology and innovation

Access to modern technology and innovation, including digital infrastructure and research and development centres, plays a significant role in enhancing start-up productivity and competitiveness. There are numerous Nigerian organisations that support the commercialization of discoveries resulting from engineering and scientific research. The Nigerian Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI), the Federal Institute of Industrial Research (FIIR), the Sheda Science and Technology Complex (SHESTCO), the Project Development Institute (PRODI), the National Board for Technology Incubation (NBTI), the Nigerian Institute of Leather and Science Technology (NILEST), and the Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC) are a few of these (Abdulmalik, 2020)

The government provides funding for all of these organisations, and their job is to make sure that scientific concepts become inventions by creating prototypes. In order to develop and commercialise research outputs and prototypes, this is accomplished through partnerships with pertinent knowledge institutions and business sector groups (Thurston, 2021).

### **Challenges Faced by Leather Start-ups in Nigeria**

The leather business in Nigeria is a well-established sector with enormous potential, but entrepreneurs entering this market face numerous difficulties and roadblocks. To develop plans and solutions that will support the expansion and prosperity of leather start-ups in Nigeria, it is imperative to comprehend these obstacles. Both the government and entrepreneurs are ignoring a plethora of valuable business prospects. These companies include, among others, organised trans-Saharan trade; solid minerals; solar energy; disposal and recycling of waste; tourism; apparel exports; mechanised agriculture; food and material processing; industrial chemicals; and supplies.

As the primary pursuits of the average Nigerian, the majority of these activities directly relate to trade, agriculture, and local knowledge and skills (Sagagi, 2005). A multitude of issues are impeding the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Nigeria. These include inadequate funding and assistance; insufficient infrastructure, security concerns, and a dearth of

*[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]*

training and vocational resources are thought to be the main causes of the slow rate of business establishment and expansion in the nation. Nigerian small companies suffered greatly from a lack of basic security and infrastructure.

Consequently, Nigeria's high cost of doing business was further exacerbated by the country's inadequate transportation systems and inconsistent supplies of water and power. Businesses suffer from the insecurity of people's lives and property as well. In Nigeria, there are numerous examples of governments using their authority to lock the doors on well-known business owners or to enact laws intended to destroy their enterprise.

To sum up, Nigerian leather start-ups encounter a wide array of obstacles, including but not limited to the procurement of raw materials, restrictions in infrastructure, financial constraints, market accessibility, competition, and regulatory difficulties. Collaboration between the government, industry players, and start-ups themselves is necessary to overcome these obstacles. For leather start-ups to thrive sustainably and for Nigeria's entrepreneurial ecosystem to reach its full potential, these challenges must be overcome.

## **CONCLUSION**

Future studies could examine additional internal and external elements that are not part of entrepreneurial ecosystems, like the role that big businesses play in providing supply chain opportunities to start-ups that can help them grow. A targeted investigation into the performance, productivity, and innovation trends of start-ups should be part of this research. More research is required to determine the problems impeding the growth of start-ups in developing nations.

The authors suggest conducting additional quantitative and qualitative research so that important stakeholders may stay updated on obstacles facing start-ups and the elements that foster entrepreneurial ecosystems. Additionally, the authors recommend looking at the development paths of several start-up businesses. Furthermore, comprehending and assessing particular obstacles faced by start-ups in the Nigerian leather sector is crucial. Additional studies can look into other factors, like the entrepreneurial culture in emerging nations. These statistics will add to the body of information and literature while also shedding light on the lack of

*[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]*

assistance for regional leather start-ups. Further research in economies similar to this one can benefit from the nature of this study. An international comparison study ought to yield new perspectives on a field that needs more investigation. Researchers' access to entrepreneurial infrastructure must also be evaluated and enhanced as necessary.

## **Recommendations**

Developing supportive policies for start-ups and analysing the effectiveness of existing legislation is necessary to support them. In order to assist new businesses in the leather sector, the major actors should work to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems. These policies should be supportive of improving the accessibility of essential business resources, such as market data, and of providing adequate infrastructure, electricity, and transport systems in Nigeria, as well as lowering administrative barriers that prevent start-ups from obtaining financial resources and regulatory frameworks to promote market accessibility.

Currently, start-ups prioritise day-to-day operational concerns above creating a long-term plan for their company. In order to address these systemic issues, these obstacles necessitate a holistic approach that involves a shift in viewpoint and practise, as well as a different mind-set and an emphasis on developing and resolving these short-term efforts. One important issue causing start-ups to underperform is a lack of financing. However, there are not enough permanent assets like real estate, machinery, and buildings for start-ups in Nigeria to use as collateral when applying for loans from banks. To enhance start-up finance outcomes, appropriate regulatory policies including streamlined collateral loan simplification procedures should be taken into account.

Start-ups are disproportionately burdened by excessive bureaucracy and the fear of corruption, which hinders their progress. Extreme or unduly strict administrative practises, such as several agencies carrying out identical tasks, needless taxes and licence requirements, and drawn-out decision-making processes involving various authorities that obstruct commercial operations, are examples of how it appears in Nigeria. In order to alleviate administrative bottlenecks, supportive policies should be created to provide effective institutional frameworks for coordinating and overseeing regulatory actions.

*[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]*

With deep historical roots, Nigeria's leather industry is at a turning point. It has enormous potential for export, economic expansion, and the preservation of regional handicrafts. For it to develop sustainably, however, issues with raw resources, infrastructure, market competition, and quality must be resolved. Nigeria's leather sector may survive in the contemporary entrepreneurial ecosystem and revitalise its historical legacy with the help of government initiatives and creative tactics. There is a need to promote leather start-ups and support existing businesses to address the current high failure rate.

Legislators who are supportive, trade associations, and business support networks should encourage young people, students, and aspiring entrepreneurs to think about a career in entrepreneurship as a feasible and lucrative path after completing their education. Thus, in order to facilitate such revolutionary change, government agencies, educational institutions, and corporate sectors must work together successfully. Therefore, it is crucial that important organisations make sure the potential entrepreneurial community is aware of opportunities and niche sectors. Examples of these organisations include the Nigerian Bank of Industry (BoI), CBN, SMEDAN, and numerous MSME support programmes. Furthermore, enhancing the business investment environment for recent graduates and young people and bolstering their ability to seize trade and investment opportunities can have a favourable effect on Nigeria's economic growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation.

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[NIJOSTAM Vol. 2(1) March, 2024, pp. 73-91. [www.nijostam.org](http://www.nijostam.org)]



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