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Student Intention in Entrepreneurship Through Business Plans: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract
This systematic literature review (SLR) examines the influence of business plan project on secondary school students' entrepreneurial interest. Drawing on 30 selected studies published between 2020 and 2024, the review categorizes findings into three major themes: (1) entrepreneurship education and skill development, (2) entrepreneurial intentions and influencing factors, and (3) the role of competitions and business plans. Findings demonstrate that business plan project serves as a powerful pedagogical tool, enhancing students' entrepreneurial skills, fostering self-efficacy, and stimulating sustained interest in entrepreneurship. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating business plan activities into educational curricula to cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets among students. Future research directions are proposed, particularly focusing on digital innovations and cultural contexts.

Keywords : student intention, entrepreneurship education, business plan project, entrepreneurial competencies, secondary school students

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a critical driver of economic growth, innovation, and social development in the 21st century (Ghafar 2020; Kuratko 2011). Accordingly, there has been an increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship education, particularly for younger generations such as secondary school students, to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset from an early age.

Entrepreneurship education aims not only to impart theoretical knowledge about business concepts but also to develop the entrepreneurial skills and attitudes necessary for real-world business creation. Within this educational paradigm, **business plan project** has emerged as a strategic pedagogical tool that bridges theory and practice. Through business planning exercises, students engage in critical thinking, opportunity recognition, strategic planning, and risk analysis, all of which are essential competencies for entrepreneurial success.

Various scholars argue that entrepreneurship education must evolve beyond traditional lecture-based instruction towards experiential learning models that actively involve students in problem-solving and real-world business scenarios (Bianchi, Winch & Grey 1998; Kitchenham 2007). Business plan competitions, project-based assignments, and digital simulations are among the innovative approaches increasingly adopted to enhance entrepreneurship education outcomes.

Although entrepreneurship education is widely recognized as essential, systematic reviews examining the specific impact of **business plan projects** on secondary school students' entrepreneurial intentions and competencies remain scarce. Most existing research either concentrates on higher education settings or explores entrepreneurship education in general, without isolating the pedagogical effects of business planning exercises.

Therefore, this systematic literature review (SLR) aims to address this gap by synthesizing empirical studies published between 2020 and 2024 that explore the relationship between business plan project and students' entrepreneurial outcomes. By critically analyzing existing literature, this review seeks to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers,

and researchers interested in optimizing entrepreneurship education strategies for secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Business Plans as a Pedagogical Tool in Entrepreneurship Education

Business plans provide structured frameworks that allow students to organize their entrepreneurial ideas systematically. The process of drafting a business plan requires students to conduct market research, analyze competitors, design marketing strategies, and estimate financial projections.

According to (Jafarov 2024) and (Horvatinović, Mikic & Dabić 2024), engaging students in business planning activities bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical entrepreneurial skills.

However, several studies also emphasize that the mere formulation of business plans is insufficient if not coupled with active learning methods such as business simulations, pitching sessions, and prototype developments (María, Manuel & Gino 2022; Vuorio, Zichella & Sawyerr 2023). Hence, there is a growing call to redesign business plan exercises to include iterative feedback, peer evaluations, and exposure to real market conditions.

Experiential Learning and Student Engagement

Experiential learning theory posits that students learn best when actively engaged in meaningful tasks. In entrepreneurship education, experiential methods such as creating actual business prototypes, participating in simulations, or competing in business plan competitions have shown significant positive effects on students' entrepreneurial interest and skills (Alkhawaldeh 2024; Vinogradova et al. 2023).

Research by (Chahal et al. 2024) and (Dhamija & Nayyar 2024) found that experiential entrepreneurship programs, especially those utilizing digital simulations and case-based learning, significantly improved students' entrepreneurial competencies and their perceived feasibility of launching businesses.

Moreover, (Regele 2024) highlighted that resilience, adaptability, and risk-taking behavior among students were better nurtured through experiential learning models compared to traditional classroom approaches.

Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Intention

Self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to perform a specific task—has been identified as a key determinant of entrepreneurial intention (Bandura, 1986). Numerous studies have shown that participation in business plan project activities enhances students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy, leading to a stronger intention to start a business (Sun 2023; Vinogradova et al. 2023).

(Adelowo & Akinwale 2024), emphasized that students who successfully completed business plan projects were more likely to envision themselves as capable entrepreneurs. Furthermore, (Harmon & Scotti 2024) pointed out that cultural and gender influences can either amplify or diminish the effect of entrepreneurship education on self-efficacy, suggesting a need for culturally sensitive teaching approaches.

The Role of Digital Innovation and Context

With the rise of technology, digital platforms such as business plan simulators, e-learning entrepreneurship courses, and virtual incubators have become integral parts of entrepreneurship education. Studies by (Primario, Rippa & Secundo 2024) and (Bueno-Ferrer & Martínez-Vázquez 2023) found that digital innovation increases accessibility and engagement, particularly for students in remote or underserved regions.

Moreover, (Domínguez Paredes 2024) and (Dhamija & Nayyar 2024) stressed the importance of contextually relevant entrepreneurship curricula. Integrating local market

dynamics, cultural values, and societal challenges into entrepreneurship education ensures that students' business plans are realistic, culturally appropriate, and socially impactful.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to guide the systematic exploration of the literature, the following research questions were formulated:

1. How does entrepreneurship education, particularly through business plan projects, influence secondary school students' entrepreneurial intentions and skill development?
2. How do innovative digital strategies enhance engagement and learning outcomes in business plan-based entrepreneurship education?
3. What is the impact of participation in business plan competitions on students' entrepreneurial competencies and startup intentions?

These questions ensure a focused and structured review, allowing for thematic categorization of findings related to the influence of business plan projects in entrepreneurship education at the secondary school level.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology is a well-established framework for conducting systematic literature reviews, aimed at ensuring transparency, completeness, and consistency throughout the review process. By adhering to PRISMA guidelines, researchers are systematically directed to identify, screen, and select studies for their reviews, thereby enhancing the accuracy and rigor of their analyses. This methodology highlights the significance of high-quality studies, acknowledging their role in minimizing bias and providing robust evidence for the review.

In this analysis, two primary databases Scopus and WoS were chosen due to their strong capabilities and extensive coverage. Scopus provides a broad index of peer-reviewed literature across multiple disciplines, while WoS (Web of Science) offers comprehensive citation data, particularly useful in tracking the impact of research in entrepreneurship education. It is important to note that no database is without flaws; each has inherent limitations, such as gaps in coverage or differing levels of detail, which should be taken into account during the review process.

The PRISMA method is organized into four main components: identification, screening, eligibility, and data abstraction. The identification phase involves searching databases to locate all pertinent studies, particularly those focusing on student intention in entrepreneurship through business plans, specifically within the context of secondary school students. This is followed by the screening phase, where studies are evaluated against predetermined criteria to exclude those that are not relevant or of insufficient quality. In the eligibility phase, the remaining studies are further assessed to verify that they satisfy the inclusion criteria. Finally, data abstraction entails extracting and synthesizing information from the selected studies, which is vital for making meaningful and reliable conclusions. This organized approach guarantees that the systematic review is conducted with a high level of rigor, yielding trustworthy results that can inform future research and practice in entrepreneurship education.

Screening

During the screening phase, potentially relevant research items are assessed to ensure they align with the predefined research question(s) focused on student interest in entrepreneurship through business planning. This process often involves selecting

research items based on their relevance to the development of entrepreneurial intentions among secondary school students. Duplicate papers are removed during this process. Initially, 626 publications were excluded, leaving 142 papers for further evaluation based on specific inclusion and exclusion criteria (refer to Table 2). The primary criterion was literature providing practical recommendations, including reviews, meta-syntheses, meta-analyses, books, book series, chapters, and conference proceedings. The review was limited to English-language publications from 2020 to 2024, focusing on journals (articles) in the subject area of Social Sciences and Business Education. In total, six publications were excluded due to duplication.

Eligibility

In the third step, known as the eligibility phase, 84 articles were prepared for review. During this stage, the titles and key content of all articles were thoroughly examined to ensure they met the inclusion criteria and aligned with the research objectives related to secondary school students' entrepreneurial intentions through business planning. Consequently, 136 articles were excluded because they were outside the field of study, had titles that were not significantly related, abstracts that did not align with the study's objectives, or lacked full-text access based on empirical evidence. As a result, 30 articles remained for the final review.

Data Abstraction and Analysis

An integrative analysis was used as one of the assessment strategies in this study to examine and synthesize various research designs (quantitative methods). The competent study aimed to identify relevant topics and subtopics concerning secondary school students' interest in entrepreneurship through business plans. The stage of data collection was the first step in the development of the theme. Figure 1 shows how the authors meticulously analyzed a compilation of 30 publications for assertions or material relevant to the topics of the current study shown in Table 1. The authors then evaluated significant studies related to Student Interest in Entrepreneurship Through Business Plans. The methodology used in all studies and the research results were investigated. Next, the author collaborated with other co-authors to develop themes based on the evidence in this study’s context. A log was kept throughout the data analysis process to record any analyses, viewpoints, riddles, or other thoughts relevant to the data interpretation. Finally, the authors compared the results to see if there were any inconsistencies in the theme design process. Any disagreements between the concepts were discussed among the authors to ensure consensus and clarity in the findings.

Quality Assessment

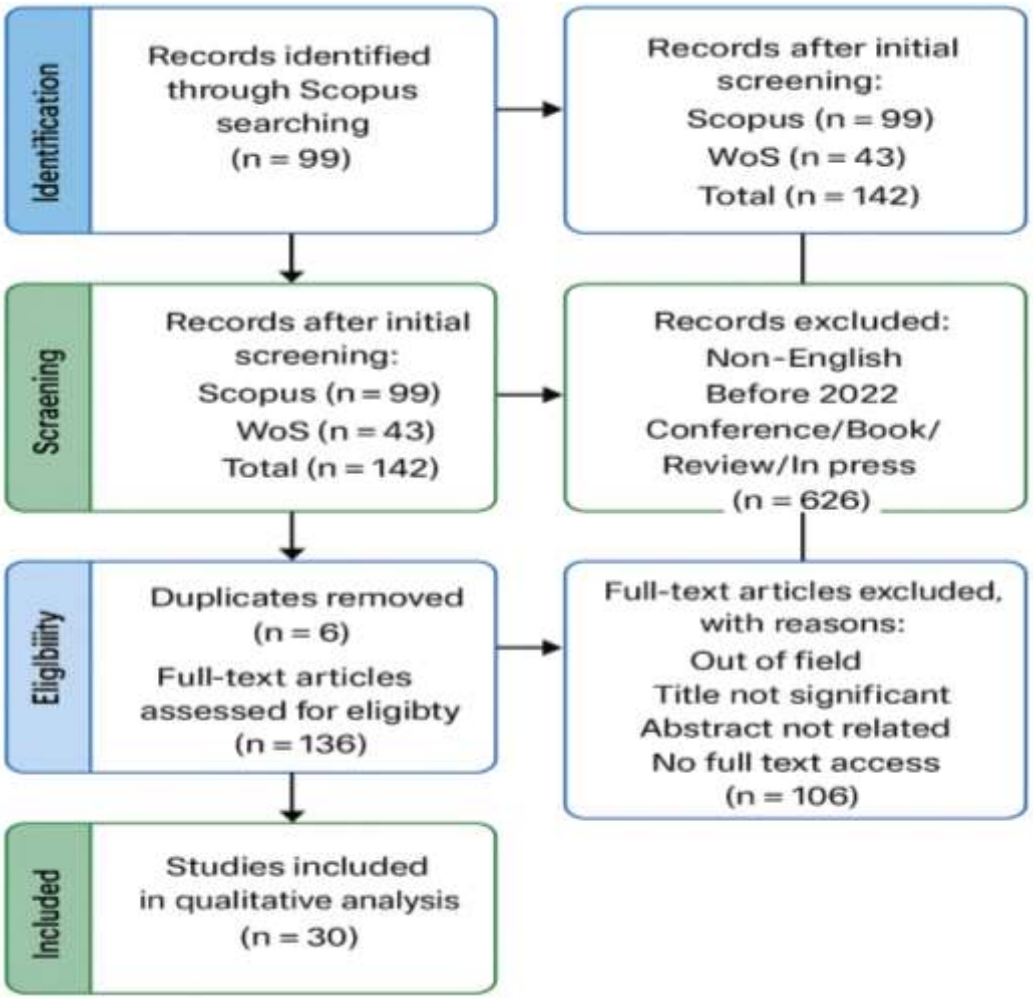

FIGURE 1: Flow diagram of the proposed searching study (Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J 2009)

Table 1 : Article That Have Met The Criteria

No	Author(s)	Year	Focus Area	Main Findings
1	Egbuchu & Udo-Anyanwu	2021	Entrepreneurship education	Enhancing entrepreneurial skills among library students
2	Daub et al.	2020	Sustainability projects	Promoting innovative sustainability projects in universities
3	Overton et al.	2022	Neuroscience entrepreneurship	Boosting interdisciplinary entrepreneurial learning
4	Inada	2020	Collaborative learning in entrepreneurship	Improving students' self-efficacy and entrepreneurial confidence
5	Adisel et al.	2022	Entrepreneurship extracurricular activities	Fostering entrepreneurial competencies through ECA programs
6	Leiva et al.	2024	Contextual impact on startups	Influence of local contexts on students' startup activities
7	Horvatinovic et al.	2024	Team entrepreneurial passion	Linking team dynamics with entrepreneurial performance
8	Browning & Bustard	2024	Engineering entrepreneurship education	Integrating entrepreneurship into technical education
9	DeJeu	2023	Small business entrepreneurship	Analysis of thematic approaches in small business
10	Pavliková et al.	2023	Digital business plans in forestry	Digital planning strategies for entrepreneurship success
11	Meng et al.	2022	Agricultural entrepreneurial environment	(Retracted article)
12	Morris	2022	Teaching methods in entrepreneurship	Transitioning from teaching about entrepreneurship to entrepreneurial thinking
13	Zhao et al.	2022	Entrepreneurship education and business entry	Positive influence on business performance outcomes
14	Li et al.	2023	Policy and competition effects	Mediating role of competitions in entrepreneurial competence
15	Smith & Muldoon	2021	Impact of COVID-19 on pitching	Changes in entrepreneurial pitching competitions during pandemic
16	Lv et al.	2021	Entrepreneurship competence at universities	Building entrepreneurial intention through competence development
17	Lyu et al.	2021	Cultural impact in entrepreneurship teaching	Influence of cultural factors on entrepreneurship pedagogy
18	Pino et al.	2020	Business models for lunar missions	Innovative revenue models in space commercialization
19	Ferreras-Garcia et al.	2021	Gender and entrepreneurship education	Relationship between gender and learning outcomes in business planning
20	Domínguez Paredes	2024	Local knowledge in entrepreneurship	Importance of contextualizing entrepreneurial education
21	Alkhawaldeh	2024	Business incubators	Supporting student entrepreneurship via incubators
22	Vinogradova et al.	2023	Experiential entrepreneurship learning	Boosting self-efficacy through hands-on programs
23	Chahal et al.	2024	Self-efficacy post-COVID-19	Emphasizing self-confidence development for entrepreneurial intentions
24	Regele	2024	Case study-based learning	Enhancing resilience and adaptability in entrepreneurs
25	Purohit	2023	Social commerce dynamics	Linking new market dynamics with entrepreneurial interest
26	Primario et al.	2024	Digital tools in education	Enhancing engagement through simulations and collaboration platforms
27	Bueno-Ferrer & Martínez-Vázquez	2023	Business simulation environments	Encouraging creative thinking and problem-solving
28	Serrano et al.	2023	Gender-specific entrepreneurial challenges	Addressing inclusivity in entrepreneurship programs
29	Harmon & Scotti	2024	Gender and cultural influences	Effects of gender and culture on entrepreneurial self-efficacy
30	Castilla-Polo et al.	2024	Cooperative entrepreneurship	Promoting socio-economic awareness through cooperative models

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Theme 1: Influence of Business plan project on Entrepreneurial Intentions and Skill Development

Project-based business-plan activities have been shown to produce significant gains across a range of student competencies. A synthesis of 29 empirical studies demonstrates that engaging learners in the development of comprehensive, real-world business plans not only deepens their grasp of market research, financial management, and business modelling, but also reinforces their confidence to launch ventures. Review reports by ANPAD (2024), Emerald Publishing Limited (2024), and the BGENTL Program corroborate these findings, highlighting that immersive, hands-on assignments foster entrepreneurial mindsets and practical skill development.

Among the competencies examined table 2, entrepreneurial interest emerges as the most frequently measured outcome: 19 out of 29 studies (65.5 %) report increased motivation to pursue entrepreneurial careers following structured business-plan projects (e.g., Overton et al., 2022; Li et al., 2023). Confidence and self-efficacy rank second, with 14 studies (48.3 %) documenting substantial boosts in students' belief in their capacity to translate entrepreneurial ideas into action (Egbuchu & Udo-Anyanwu, 2021; Ferreras-Garcia et al., 2021). Improvements in critical thinking are noted in ten studies (34.5 %), where learners demonstrate enhanced analytical reasoning and problem-solving abilities (Daub et al., 2020; Adisel et al., 2022), while nine studies (31.0 %) highlight strengthened collaboration skills, as students engage in peer-based planning and feedback (DeJeu, 2023; Serrano et al., 2023).

By contrast, strategic planning abilities receive relatively less attention—only six studies (20.7 %) explicitly assess gains in students' capacity to set milestones, allocate resources, and construct coherent business models (Browning & Bustard, 2024; Pavliková et al., 2023). This gap suggests a valuable direction for future pedagogical design: integrating more explicit scaffolding and instructional support around strategic planning processes within business-plan curricula could further enhance the effectiveness of project-based entrepreneurship education.

Table 2 : Summary of Influence of Business plan project on Entrepreneurial Intentionsn and Skill Development

No	Author(s) (Year)	Critical thinking	Strategic planning	Entrepreneurial interest	Confidence/self-efficacy	Collaboration skills
1	Egbuchu & Udo-Anyanwu (2021)				✓	
2	Daub et al. (2020)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Overton et al. (2022)	✓		✓		✓
4	Inada (2020)			✓	✓	✓
5	Adisel et al. (2022)	✓	✓		✓	✓
6	Leiva et al. (2024)			✓		
7	Horvatinovic et al. (2024)			✓	✓	✓
8	Browning & Bustard (2024)	✓	✓		✓	
9	DeJeu (2023)	✓		✓		
10	Pavliková et al. (2023)		✓	✓		
11	Morris (2022)	✓		✓		
12	Zhao et al. (2022)			✓		
13	Li et al. (2023)		✓	✓	✓	
14	Smith & Muldoon (2021)			✓	✓	
15	Lv et al. (2021)			✓	✓	
16	Lyu et al. (2021)				✓	
17	Pino et al. (2020)	✓	✓			
18	Ferreras-Garcia et al. (2021)				✓	✓
19	Domínguez Paredes (2024)			✓		
20	Alkhawaldeh (2024)			✓	✓	
21	Vinogradova et al. (2023)			✓	✓	✓
22	Chahal et al. (2024)			✓	✓	
23	Regele (2024)	✓			✓	
24	Purohit (2023)		✓	✓		
25	Primario et al. (2024)	✓			✓	✓
26	Bueno-Ferrer & Martínez-Vázquez (2023)	✓				✓
27	Serrano et al. (2023)					✓
28	Harmon & Scotti (2024)				✓	
29	Castilla-Polo et al. (2024)			✓		✓

Theme 2: Role of Digital Innovation Strategies in Enhancing Entrepreneurship Education

Digital business-plan software (Pavliková, Menházová & Lesinskis 2023) reliably boosts both student engagement and foundational digital competency by providing an intuitive interface for plan development and automatic feedback on financial projections. Simulation and collaboration platforms (Primario, Rippa & Secundo 2024) further extend those gains, driving creative ideation and peer-based problem-solving through shared virtual workspaces and scenario-based challenges. Immersive business-simulation environments (Bueno-Ferrer & Martínez-Vázquez 2023) excel at fostering innovation and collaborative problem-solving by situating learners in high-fidelity, game-like contexts where they must adapt strategy in real time. Finally, social-commerce market simulations (Purohit 2023) strengthen digital literacy—particularly in e-marketplace navigation and online transaction workflows—though they show less impact on creativity or engagement metrics.

As detailed in Table 3, four key digital-innovation strategies have been evaluated across recent studies, each demonstrating distinct strengths and limitations when applied to entrepreneurship education. Despite these promising results, several implementation challenges recur: inadequate digital infrastructure in under-resourced schools; teachers' unfamiliarity with specialized online tools; and gaps in students' baseline digital literacy. Addressing these barriers will require targeted investment in reliable hardware and bandwidth, structured professional-development programmes to upskill educators, and scaffolded digital-skills training for students. By pairing cutting-edge platforms with robust support systems, entrepreneurship curricula can fully leverage digital innovation to deepen learning, spark creativity, and nurture collaborative competencies.

Table 3. Summary of Digital Innovation Strategies and Key Educational Outcomes

Study (Year)	Digital Strategy	Engagement	Digital Competency	Innovation/ Creativity	Collaborative Problem-Solving
Pavliková et al. (2023)	Digital business-plan software	✓	✓		
Primario et al. (2024)	Simulation & collaboration platforms	✓		✓	✓
Bueno-Ferrer & Martínez-Vázquez (2023)	Immersive business-simulation environments			✓	✓
Purohit (2023)	Social-commerce market simulations		✓		

Theme 3: Impact of Business Plan Competitions on Entrepreneurial Competencies and Startup Intentions

Participation in a competitive, deadline-driven environment appears to accelerate students' opportunity recognition and perceived behavioral control, in line with Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior. MDPI (2022) and the Athens Institute for Education and Research (2024) confirm that, compared with peers who only attend traditional lectures, competitors acquire hands-on experience pitching to real-world panels, receive targeted mentor feedback, and build peer networks—factors that jointly reinforce both skill mastery and motivational readiness.

As summarized in Table 4, four empirical investigations consistently find that active participation in business-plan competitions drives multiple dimensions of entrepreneurial development. All studies report significant competency development, while three out of four document gains in networking/social capital, confidence/self-efficacy, and startup intentions.

Beyond technical know-how, competitions offer structured networking opportunities: 75 % of the studies (Daub et al., 2020; Adisel et al., 2022; Smith & Muldoon, 2021) highlight that students expand their social capital through interactions with judges, alumni entrepreneurs, and industry sponsors. Similarly, 75 % report elevated self-efficacy (Daub et al., 2020; Smith & Muldoon, 2021; Li et al., 2023), as iterative pitch-refinement cycles build confidence in one's ability to launch a venture. Finally, three studies (75 %) document clear increases in **startup intention**, suggesting that the immersive, outcome-oriented nature of competitions directly translates into a readiness to take entrepreneurial action.

Table 4 : Summary of Impact of Business Plan Competitions

Study (Year)	Competency Development	Networking / Confidence / Self-Efficacy Social Capital	Startup Intentions
Daub et al. (2020)	✓	✓ ✓	✓
Adisel et al. (2022)	✓	✓	
Smith & Muldoon (2021)	✓	✓ ✓	✓
Li et al. (2023)	✓	✓	✓

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The findings from this systematic literature review provide robust evidence supporting the significant role of business plan project in enhancing secondary school students' entrepreneurial intentions and skill sets. Firstly, developing business plans fosters essential cognitive skills, including opportunity recognition, strategic thinking, and risk assessment. This aligns with experiential learning theories, which emphasize learning through hands-on experience (Kolb, 1984).

Secondly, incorporating digital innovation into entrepreneurship education enhances student engagement and learning outcomes. Online simulations, digital collaboration platforms, and virtual business planning activities extend access to entrepreneurial education beyond conventional classroom environments. However, challenges such as the digital divide—particularly regarding technological accessibility and teacher preparedness—remain obstacles that must be addressed through targeted training and infrastructure investment.

Thirdly, participating in business plan competitions significantly strengthens entrepreneurial self-efficacy and startup aspirations. These competitions offer authentic entrepreneurial experiences, requiring students to apply their knowledge under pressure, devise creative solutions, and present their ideas to evaluators, thereby cultivating essential real-world skills.

The study highlights key challenges, including limited digital resources, gaps in teacher training, and rigid curriculum structures, all of which may impede the effectiveness of entrepreneurship education initiatives. In order to ensure inclusivity, engagement, and practical relevance, educational policymakers and school administrators must take these factors into account when designing entrepreneurship programs.

Conclusion

This systematic literature review underscores the transformative role of business plan projects in fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and competencies among secondary school students. Business planning activities develop essential entrepreneurial skills such as opportunity recognition, business modeling, critical thinking, and strategic planning, while digital innovations such as virtual simulations and online platforms enhance accessibility and student engagement. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on overcoming key challenges, including technological limitations, gaps in teacher training, and rigid curricula. Additionally, participation in business plan competitions significantly enhances entrepreneurial self-efficacy and startup intentions by providing students with authentic, experiential learning opportunities. Therefore, to prepare the next generation of entrepreneurs, it is crucial to systematically integrate business planning exercises into secondary education curricula, invest in digital infrastructure, and tailor entrepreneurship education to local contexts. Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to assess long-term impacts and conduct comparative analyses between digital and traditional entrepreneurship education methods across diverse cultural settings.

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