



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



## Reviewing the impact of digital platforms on entrepreneurship in Africa

Noluthando Zamanjomane Mhlongo <sup>1</sup>, Donald Obinna Daraojimba <sup>2,\*</sup>, Odeyemi Olubusola <sup>3</sup>, Adeola Olusola Ajayi-Nifise <sup>4</sup> and Titilola Falaiye <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Accounting, City Power, Johannesburg, South Africa.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Information Management, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup> Independent Researcher, Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Business Administration, Skinner School of Business, Trevecca Nazarene University, USA.

<sup>5</sup> Walden University, USA.

International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 2024, 11(01), 1364–1375

Publication history: Received on 27 December 2023; revised on 03 February 2024; accepted on 05 February 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijrsra.2024.11.1.0228>

### Abstract

This review provides a comprehensive analysis of the profound impact of digital platforms on entrepreneurship in Africa. Against the backdrop of diverse economies and unique challenges, the examination explores the transformative role played by digital platforms in shaping the entrepreneurial landscape. Key themes include the empowerment of small businesses through enhanced market access and reduced barriers to entry, the fostering of inclusive economic participation, and the catalyzation of innovation across various sectors. The review delves into the ways digital platforms have become instrumental in overcoming traditional constraints, enabling entrepreneurs to reach wider audiences and create sustainable business models. It explores the democratization of opportunities, particularly for previously marginalized groups, fostering an environment of inclusivity and diversity within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Furthermore, the review critically assesses the challenges associated with the integration of digital platforms, such as issues related to digital literacy, access to technology, and regulatory considerations. It also highlights the potential opportunities for collaboration between digital platforms, governments, and local communities to address these challenges and create an enabling environment for entrepreneurship to thrive. As Africa increasingly embraces the digital age, understanding the nuanced dynamics between digital platforms and entrepreneurship becomes imperative. This review not only offers insights into the current state of affairs but also anticipates future trends, providing valuable guidance for policymakers, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders aiming to leverage digital platforms for sustainable economic development on the continent. The review encapsulates the multifaceted impact of digital platforms, positioning them as transformative agents in reshaping the entrepreneurial landscape and fostering a more inclusive and innovative economic future for Africa.

**Keywords:** Impact; Entrepreneurship; Digital Platforms; Business; Economies

### 1. Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of African entrepreneurship, the advent of digital platforms has emerged as a transformative force, reshaping the traditional contours of business and economic participation (Friederici, Wahome & Graham, 2020, Ochinanwata, Igwe & Radicic, 2023). This review delves into the profound impact of digital platforms on entrepreneurship across the continent, contextualizing their significance within the unique and diverse entrepreneurial landscape of Africa. The rise of digital platforms marks a paradigm shift in how businesses operate and engage with their markets. From e-commerce platforms to digital payment systems, these technologies have become integral components of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, offering innovative solutions to longstanding challenges. As Africa

\* Corresponding author: Donald Obinna Daraojimba.

embraces the digital age, the role of these platforms becomes central to unlocking new opportunities, connecting businesses with consumers, and fostering economic growth.

Africa, with its diverse array of economies, presents a mosaic of entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges. From the bustling urban markets to the rural landscapes, entrepreneurs navigate a spectrum of economic conditions, regulatory frameworks, and infrastructural disparities. The challenges faced by entrepreneurs include access to finance, market reach, and overcoming barriers to entry. Understanding this diverse backdrop is crucial for comprehending how digital platforms interact with and influence the entrepreneurial journey across different regions. Against this backdrop, this review aims to explore the transformative impact of digital platforms on entrepreneurship in Africa. From enabling broader market access to fostering inclusive economic participation, these platforms are catalysts for change. This study is rooted in the conviction that understanding the intricate dynamics between digital platforms and entrepreneurship is essential for harnessing their full potential in driving economic innovation and sustainability (Birner, Daum & Pray, 2021, Comunian, Hrac & England, 2021, Dabić, et. al., 2022). As we delve into the various dimensions of this impact, we uncover not only the opportunities presented but also the challenges that must be navigated to ensure a resilient and competitive entrepreneurial landscape for the future.

---

## 2. Digital Platforms and Market Access

The transformative impact of digital platforms on entrepreneurship in Africa is most pronounced in their ability to dismantle traditional barriers to entry, ushering in a new era of increased visibility, market reach, and economic participation for small businesses (Graham, 2019, Obed, 2020, Tarr, 2021). This section delves into the ways digital platforms facilitate the overcoming of these barriers, examining the enhanced visibility and reduced geographical constraints achieved through their integration. In the traditional business landscape, small enterprises often struggled to gain visibility and reach a wider audience. Limited marketing budgets, a lack of resources, and the dominance of established players posed significant challenges. However, digital platforms have revolutionized this dynamic, providing a level playing field for businesses of all sizes.

One of the key avenues through which digital platforms have boosted market access is the proliferation of e-commerce platforms. These platforms serve as virtual marketplaces, allowing small businesses to showcase their products and services to a global audience. African entrepreneurs can now transcend local and regional boundaries, reaching customers beyond their immediate geographical vicinity. Social media platforms play a pivotal role in amplifying the visibility of small businesses. Entrepreneurs can leverage platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to create an online presence, engage with potential customers, and showcase their products or services. The viral nature of social media enables businesses to organically expand their reach through likes, shares, and user-generated content (Akther, 2023, Costa & Castro, 2021, Li, Frederick & Gereffi, 2019; Adeleke et al., 2019).

Digital platforms empower entrepreneurs with tools and strategies for effective online visibility. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques enhance the discoverability of businesses on search engines, ensuring that potential customers can easily find them. This democratization of visibility has a profound impact on the growth trajectory of small businesses, allowing them to compete in the digital marketplace. Geographical constraints have historically limited the market reach of many African entrepreneurs, especially those operating in remote or underserved areas. Digital platforms, particularly e-commerce platforms, have emerged as powerful enablers in overcoming these spatial limitations (Battisti, Agarwal & Brem, 2022, Korongo, et. al., 2021, Sahut, Iandoli & Teulon, 2021; Ilugbusi et al., 2020).

E-commerce platforms provide a virtual marketplace where buyers and sellers can connect without the constraints of physical distance. Entrepreneurs based in rural or less accessible areas can now reach customers in urban centers and even international markets. This has profound implications for businesses in regions with limited infrastructure, as they can tap into a broader customer base. The integration of digital payment systems further contributes to overcoming geographical constraints. Customers from diverse locations can make transactions seamlessly, fostering financial inclusion (Delgado-de Miguel, et. al., 2019, Jain, Malviya & Arya, 2021, Yan, et. al., 2023). Mobile money services, for instance, have become instrumental in regions where traditional banking infrastructure is scarce, allowing entrepreneurs to receive payments and conduct transactions digitally. Digital platforms have spurred logistical innovations, particularly in the realm of last-mile delivery. Entrepreneurs can leverage technology to optimize supply chains and ensure timely delivery of products to even the most remote locations. This not only expands market access but also enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In conclusion, the impact of digital platforms on market access for African entrepreneurs is transformative, addressing longstanding challenges and opening up unprecedented opportunities. The increased visibility and reach facilitated by e-commerce platforms, social media, and SEO empower small businesses to compete on a global scale. Simultaneously,

the reduction of geographical constraints through innovative solutions in digital payments and logistics ensures that entrepreneurs can tap into markets that were previously inaccessible. As Africa continues its digital evolution, the role of these platforms in fostering inclusive economic participation becomes even more critical. Entrepreneurs are not merely connecting with markets; they are becoming active participants in a global economy that values innovation, diversity, and the democratization of opportunities. This shift underscores the profound impact of digital platforms on leveling the playing field for African entrepreneurs, paving the way for sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

## 2.1. Inclusive Economic Participation

The impact of digital platforms on entrepreneurship in Africa extends beyond market access, playing a pivotal role in fostering inclusive economic participation. This section explores how these platforms empower marginalized groups, with a particular focus on gender inclusivity and women entrepreneurship, as well as the opportunities they create for rural and underserved communities. Additionally, it delves into the democratization of opportunities, examining the inclusive access to funding through crowdfunding platforms and the broader participation in the digital economy (Bonina, et. al., 2021, Vincent et al., 2021; Friederici, Wahome & Graham, 2020, Mafimisebi & Ogunsade, 2022). Digital platforms have emerged as catalysts for breaking down traditional gender barriers in entrepreneurship, creating an environment where women can actively participate, innovate, and thrive. E-commerce platforms provide a significant avenue for women entrepreneurs to showcase and sell their products or services globally. These platforms not only break down geographical constraints but also challenge traditional norms by providing a virtual space where the quality of offerings takes precedence over gender.

Digital platforms offer opportunities for skills development and empowerment. Initiatives providing digital literacy training, coding workshops, and online courses empower women with the skills needed to navigate the digital landscape. This not only enhances their ability to leverage digital platforms but also equips them for leadership roles in the broader tech and entrepreneurial ecosystem. The impact of digital platforms on economic participation extends to rural and underserved communities, providing avenues for entrepreneurship and economic empowerment where traditional infrastructure may be lacking. Rural entrepreneurs face unique challenges due to limited access to markets. Digital platforms bridge this gap by offering a means to showcase and sell products without the need for physical storefronts. This has particular relevance for businesses engaged in agriculture, crafts, and traditional arts that originate in rural areas (Cortesi, et. al., 2020, Abrahams et al., 2023; Debbarma & Chinnadurai, 2023, Irfan & Salam, 2020). Digital payment systems and mobile money services are instrumental in promoting financial inclusion in underserved communities. Entrepreneurs in these areas can now participate in formal economic transactions, receive payments, and access financial services, thereby fostering economic resilience and sustainability. Digital platforms, specifically crowdfunding platforms, have redefined the funding landscape for entrepreneurs in Africa, democratizing access to capital and enabling a diverse array of ventures to secure financial support.

Crowdfunding platforms serve as innovative channels for raising capital, allowing entrepreneurs to present their ideas directly to a broader audience. This model has been particularly beneficial for startups and small businesses that may struggle to secure traditional financing. It democratizes the funding process, enabling individuals and communities to support projects they believe in. Beyond traditional business ventures, crowdfunding has become a powerful tool for supporting social and environmental causes. Entrepreneurs engaged in impact-driven initiatives, such as renewable energy projects, community development, or social enterprises, find crowdfunding to be a viable avenue for mobilizing support from a global community. Digital platforms are instrumental in broadening participation in the digital economy, ensuring that a diverse range of entrepreneurs can leverage technology for economic growth (Bernardino & Santos, 2020, Hervé & Schwienbacher, 2019, Yáñez-Valdés & Guerrero, 2023).

E-learning platforms offer accessible and affordable opportunities for skill development. Entrepreneurs, regardless of their background or location, can access courses, workshops, and resources to enhance their digital skills. This democratization of education plays a crucial role in leveling the playing field for those seeking to participate in the digital economy. Digital platforms facilitate remote work and virtual collaboration, enabling entrepreneurs to engage in global business activities without the need for a physical presence. This is particularly relevant for businesses in the technology, design, and service sectors, where professionals can contribute to projects from diverse locations (Sarker, et. al., 2019, Adaga et al., 2024; Veeramanickam & Ramesh, 2022).

In conclusion, the impact of digital platforms on inclusive economic participation in Africa is profound, ushering in a new era of empowerment for marginalized groups and democratizing opportunities for entrepreneurs across diverse communities. The gender inclusivity and empowerment of women entrepreneurs, coupled with opportunities for rural and underserved communities, showcase the transformative potential of digital platforms in fostering economic inclusivity. Moreover, the democratization of opportunities through crowdfunding platforms and the broadening

participation in the digital economy underscore the role of these platforms in creating a more accessible and equitable entrepreneurial landscape. As Africa continues to embrace the digital revolution, the emphasis on inclusive economic participation becomes not only a key driver of entrepreneurship but also a catalyst for sustainable and resilient economic growth on the continent. Digital platforms are not just tools for connectivity; they are instruments of empowerment, amplifying the voices and contributions of diverse entrepreneurs in shaping the future of Africa's economic landscape.

## 2.2. Innovation Catalyst

Digital platforms have emerged as dynamic catalysts for entrepreneurial innovation, transforming the business landscape in Africa and propelling the continent into a new era of creativity and growth (Nwokolo, et. al., 2023, Qobo & Qobo, 2022, Tererai, 2021). This section explores how these platforms serve as hubs for entrepreneurial innovation, facilitating collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and incubating startups across various sectors. Digital platforms provide a virtual space where entrepreneurs can collaborate, share knowledge, and tap into the collective intelligence of a global community. This collaborative environment serves as a breeding ground for innovative ideas and solutions, breaking down geographical barriers and fostering a culture of shared learning. Entrepreneurial forums and communities on digital platforms create spaces for like-minded individuals to connect and exchange ideas. Platforms such as LinkedIn, industry-specific forums, and online communities enable entrepreneurs to seek advice, share experiences, and collaborate on projects. These interactions stimulate creativity and innovation by exposing entrepreneurs to diverse perspectives and insights.

Digital platforms facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration by bringing together entrepreneurs from different industries. This interdisciplinary approach encourages the transfer of knowledge and ideas between sectors, leading to the development of innovative solutions that draw inspiration from diverse fields. For example, a collaboration between a technology startup and a healthcare entrepreneur may result in novel digital health solutions. Digital platforms play a pivotal role in incubating and accelerating startups, providing resources, mentorship, and exposure to a global market (Gamidullaeva, et. al., 2021, Klein & Spsychalska-Wojtkiewicz, 2020, Kurniawati & Kustulasari, 2021). These platforms act as launchpads for emerging businesses, offering the support needed to navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship and drive innovation. Digital platforms host virtual startup incubators and accelerators that provide comprehensive support to early-stage ventures. These programs offer mentorship, funding opportunities, and access to a network of industry experts. Entrepreneurs can leverage these platforms to refine their business models, access capital, and gain valuable insights into market dynamics. Some digital platforms host crowdsourced innovation challenges that invite entrepreneurs to solve specific problems or develop innovative solutions. These challenges attract talent from diverse backgrounds and encourage entrepreneurs to think creatively. Organizations, both public and private, leverage these platforms to discover novel ideas and potential collaborations.

To illustrate the real-world impact of digital platforms as innovation catalysts in Africa, we can explore two notable case studies: AfriLabs is a pan-African network of technology and innovation hubs that collaborates with digital platforms to support startups across the continent. By providing co-working spaces, mentorship programs, and access to a network of like-minded entrepreneurs, AfriLabs has become a hub for innovation. Digital platforms play a crucial role in connecting startups with resources, mentors, and potential investors, fostering a collaborative ecosystem for entrepreneurship. Andela, a company that identifies and develops software developers in Africa, exemplifies the transformative power of digital platforms in talent development and innovation. Through a rigorous selection process, Andela identifies top-tier software developers and provides them with training and mentorship. Digital platforms enable Andela to deliver a remote work model, connecting African developers with global tech companies. (Cherunya & Ahlborg, 2020, Montague-Mfuni, Fabian & Scheepers, 2023, Odufuwa, F., & Mureithi, M. (2023) This model not only empowers African developers but also contributes to a more inclusive and globally competitive tech industry on the continent.

In conclusion, digital platforms serve as potent catalysts for entrepreneurial innovation in Africa, shaping a landscape where collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and startup acceleration thrive. The ability of these platforms to break down traditional barriers and create virtual spaces for cross-sectoral collaboration has a profound impact on the entrepreneurial ecosystem. As demonstrated by case studies such as AfriLabs and Andela, digital platforms are instrumental in connecting entrepreneurs with the resources they need to innovate and succeed. The collaborative spirit fostered by these platforms empowers startups to navigate challenges, access mentorship, and contribute to the development of groundbreaking solutions. Moving forward, the role of digital platforms in fueling entrepreneurial innovation will continue to evolve. Entrepreneurs, supported by these platforms, will play a pivotal role in driving technological advancements, addressing societal challenges, and contributing to a more innovative and resilient African

economy. Digital platforms are not just tools for communication; they are dynamic ecosystems that nurture and propel the spirit of entrepreneurial innovation, positioning Africa at the forefront of global creativity and entrepreneurship.

### 2.3. Challenges in Integration

As digital platforms continue to shape the entrepreneurial landscape in Africa, the integration of these technologies is not without its challenges. This section explores the hurdles related to digital literacy and regulatory considerations, two critical aspects that entrepreneurs must navigate to fully harness the transformative potential of digital platforms. Digital literacy, encompassing the ability to use and navigate digital technologies effectively, is a foundational skill for entrepreneurs looking to leverage digital platforms. However, significant disparities in access to technology across different regions and demographics present a major challenge. Rural areas often face infrastructural challenges that limit access to reliable internet connectivity and technology devices. Entrepreneurs in these regions may encounter barriers in acquiring the necessary skills to engage with digital platforms. Initiatives aimed at bridging the rural-urban digital divide are crucial for ensuring that all entrepreneurs, regardless of their geographic location, have equal opportunities (Nguimkeu & Okou, 2021, Taura, Bolat & Madichie, 2019).

Gender-based disparities in digital literacy also persist, with women entrepreneurs facing additional challenges in accessing and utilizing digital platforms. Addressing gender-specific barriers, such as providing targeted digital literacy training for women entrepreneurs, is essential for fostering inclusivity and ensuring that the benefits of digital platforms are accessible to all. Digital literacy initiatives targeted at the youth can play a pivotal role in building a digitally skilled workforce. Empowering the younger generation with digital skills not only benefits individual entrepreneurs but also contributes to the overall economic development of Africa by creating a tech-savvy workforce (Ceia, Nothwehr & Wagner, 2021, Sicut, et. al., 2020).

The regulatory environment plays a critical role in shaping the integration of digital platforms into the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Entrepreneurs face challenges related to navigating complex regulatory frameworks that may not always align with the fast-paced nature of digital entrepreneurship. The evolving nature of digital platforms often outpaces the development of clear and comprehensive regulatory frameworks. Entrepreneurs may encounter legal ambiguities and uncertainties, especially in areas such as data protection, e-commerce, and digital payments. This lack of clarity can hinder innovation and create compliance challenges. Digital entrepreneurship often involves cross-border transactions and collaborations. Entrepreneurs operating in multiple jurisdictions may encounter challenges in navigating diverse regulatory landscapes (Alaassar, Mention & Aas, 2022, Cicchiello, 2019, Elia, Margherita & Passiante, 2020). Harmonizing cross-border regulations is crucial for fostering a seamless and collaborative digital ecosystem across African nations. As digital platforms handle vast amounts of user data, concerns related to data protection and privacy become paramount. Entrepreneurs must navigate regulations that safeguard user information while ensuring the smooth operation of their digital businesses. Striking a balance between innovation and data protection is a delicate challenge that requires careful consideration.

Kenya's success in implementing mobile money services, such as M-Pesa, highlights the importance of adapting regulatory frameworks to accommodate digital innovations. The Central Bank of Kenya took proactive steps to create a conducive regulatory environment, fostering financial inclusion and entrepreneurship. This case underscores the positive impact that regulatory innovation can have on the integration of digital platforms in entrepreneurship. Nigeria's e-commerce sector has faced challenges related to regulatory frameworks that did not initially address the unique aspects of digital entrepreneurship. In response, ongoing efforts to review and adapt regulations are being made to foster a more enabling environment for e-commerce businesses. This case illustrates the dynamic nature of regulatory considerations and the importance of adapting policies to support digital innovation ().

In conclusion, addressing challenges related to digital literacy and regulatory considerations is paramount for the successful integration of digital platforms into the entrepreneurial landscape in Africa. Initiatives focused on enhancing digital literacy, particularly in underserved areas and among marginalized groups, can unlock the full potential of entrepreneurs across the continent. Simultaneously, navigating regulatory complexities requires collaborative efforts between entrepreneurs, policymakers, and regulatory bodies. Learning from case studies, such as Kenya's mobile money success and ongoing e-commerce regulatory developments in Nigeria, provides valuable insights into the dynamic nature of regulatory considerations and the need for continuous adaptation. As Africa continues to embrace the digital age, fostering an environment where entrepreneurs can confidently navigate digital literacy barriers and regulatory challenges is essential. Through targeted initiatives, collaborative policymaking, and proactive regulatory adaptations, Africa can pave the way for a thriving digital entrepreneurial ecosystem that benefits entrepreneurs, consumers, and the overall economic development of the continent. Balancing innovation with regulatory compliance

## 2.4. Opportunities for Collaboration

In the dynamic landscape of African entrepreneurship, the potential for collaboration between digital platforms, governments, and local communities presents a unique opportunity to drive sustainable economic growth. This section explores the opportunities for collaboration through public-private partnerships and community engagement, showcasing how these initiatives can create an environment conducive to innovation, inclusivity, and resilient entrepreneurial ecosystems. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) serve as a powerful mechanism for leveraging the strengths of both the public and private sectors to foster economic development. In the context of digital platforms and entrepreneurship in Africa, collaborative initiatives between these platforms and governments can have a transformative impact (Opute, et. al., 2021, Peter, 2021, Union, 2020).

PPPs can play a crucial role in developing and enhancing digital infrastructure. This includes initiatives to expand broadband access, improve connectivity in remote areas, and invest in the development of a robust digital ecosystem. Digital platforms can collaborate with governments to align their technological innovations with broader infrastructure development goals. Governments and digital platforms can collaborate on digital literacy programs to address disparities in access to technology. These initiatives can include training programs, workshops, and educational campaigns designed to enhance digital skills among entrepreneurs, particularly in underserved communities (Jayasena, Chan & Kumaraswamy, 2021, Jayasena, Chan & Kumaraswamy, 2022, Selim & ElGohary, 2020). By combining resources and expertise, these collaborations can amplify the impact of digital literacy initiatives. Collaboration between digital platforms and governments is essential for advocating policies that support digital entrepreneurship. PPPs can facilitate a dialogue between the private sector and policymakers to ensure that regulations are conducive to innovation while addressing concerns related to consumer protection, data privacy, and security. This alignment creates a more favorable environment for entrepreneurs to thrive.

Community engagement is a cornerstone for building resilient entrepreneurial ecosystems. Digital platforms can contribute significantly to community development by actively engaging with local stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and addressing the unique needs of different communities. Digital platforms can initiate or support local economic development initiatives that empower entrepreneurs at the grassroots level. This may involve creating digital marketplaces for local artisans, supporting community-based enterprises, or facilitating access to financial resources for small businesses in underserved areas. Establishing entrepreneurship hubs and incubators at the community level creates spaces for collaboration, idea exchange, and skill development. Digital platforms can contribute resources, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities to these hubs, fostering a culture of innovation and supporting local entrepreneurs on their journey. Digital platforms can engage in crowdsourcing initiatives that directly involve local communities in problem-solving and decision-making. By tapping into the collective intelligence of communities, entrepreneurs can identify challenges, co-create solutions, and implement projects that have a meaningful impact on the local economy (Elia, Margherita & Petti, 2020, Gómez-Carmona, et. al., 2023, Martínez-Peláez, et. al., 2023).

Jumia, one of Africa's leading e-commerce platforms, has collaborated with governments across the continent to enhance digital infrastructure. Through partnerships focused on improving logistics and connectivity, Jumia has contributed to the development of a more robust e-commerce ecosystem. This collaborative approach not only benefits the platform but also facilitates economic growth by enabling small businesses to access wider markets. Google's Digital Skills for Africa program exemplifies a community-focused initiative aimed at fostering digital literacy (Badran, 2021, Banga, et. al., 2021, Foster & Azmeh, 2019). This program provides free online courses and training to individuals, small business owners, and entrepreneurs across Africa. By partnering with local organizations and governments, Google enhances its impact by reaching diverse communities and contributing to the development of a digitally skilled workforce.

The opportunities for collaboration between digital platforms, governments, and local communities present a pathway to catalyze sustainable entrepreneurial growth in Africa. Public-private partnerships offer a framework for aligning technological advancements with broader economic development goals, ensuring that digital platforms contribute to the overall well-being of the society. Simultaneously, community engagement initiatives empower entrepreneurs at the grassroots level, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration. Digital platforms play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between technology and local communities, creating spaces where innovation flourishes and the benefits of digital entrepreneurship reach every corner of the continent. As Africa continues to embrace the digital revolution, fostering collaborative initiatives becomes essential for building resilient and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystems (Camaren, 2021, Evans, et. al., 2019, Mair, et. al., 2023). By leveraging the strengths of digital platforms, governments, and local communities, Africa can unlock its full potential, creating a future where entrepreneurship is not only a driver of economic growth but also a force for positive social change. The opportunities for collaboration are vast, and their realization holds the promise of a vibrant and thriving entrepreneurial landscape in Africa.

## 2.5. Anticipating Future Trends

The future of digital platforms and entrepreneurship in Africa is poised for dynamic transformation, driven by emerging trends that are reshaping business models and market dynamics (Aithal & Aithal, 2023, Guillén, 2021, Omol, 2023). In this review, we delve into the anticipated trends in digital entrepreneurship, examining the evolution of business models and the potential impacts of emerging technologies on the entrepreneurial landscape in Africa. The landscape of digital entrepreneurship in Africa is experiencing a paradigm shift, marked by the evolution of business models and dynamic market dynamics. Anticipating future trends involves understanding how entrepreneurs are adapting to changing consumer behaviors and leveraging technology for innovative business approaches.

E-commerce is expected to extend its reach beyond urban centers to embrace more rural and peri-urban areas. Entrepreneurs will explore innovative last-mile delivery solutions and adapt their e-commerce models to cater to diverse consumer needs in different regions. This expansion has the potential to connect local artisans, producers, and businesses with a broader market, fostering economic inclusivity. Anticipated trends include the rise of niche and specialized digital platforms catering to specific industries or consumer segments. Entrepreneurs may develop platforms tailored to unique needs, such as artisanal products, eco-friendly goods, or cultural experiences. This trend reflects a move towards personalized and curated digital marketplaces that resonate with the diverse preferences of consumers (Mori, 2022, Song, et. al., 2023, Wang, et. al., 2021).

Traditional sectors, such as agriculture, will witness a digital transformation. Entrepreneurs in agri-tech may leverage technologies like precision farming, IoT (Internet of Things), and blockchain to optimize agricultural processes, enhance supply chain efficiency, and connect farmers directly with consumers. This digital integration can revolutionize traditional industries, creating new avenues for entrepreneurship. The adoption of emerging technologies is set to have a profound impact on African entrepreneurship, opening up new possibilities and disrupting conventional business practices. Entrepreneurs who embrace these technologies stand to gain a competitive edge and contribute to the continent's economic growth.

Blockchain technology has the potential to revolutionize financial services in Africa, particularly in the realm of financial inclusion. Entrepreneurs may explore blockchain-based solutions to enhance transparency, reduce transaction costs, and provide secure financial services to unbanked populations. This can empower entrepreneurs and facilitate more inclusive economic participation. The integration of AI is anticipated to drive innovation across various sectors (Mhlanga, 2023, Rella, 2019, Tafotie, 2020). Entrepreneurs may leverage AI for data analytics, customer personalization, and automation of routine tasks. In healthcare, for example, AI applications can enhance diagnostic capabilities and streamline patient care. Entrepreneurs embracing AI-driven solutions can foster efficiency and deliver novel products and services. The widespread adoption of 5G technology is set to revolutionize connectivity in Africa. Entrepreneurs may capitalize on the enhanced speed and reliability of 5G to develop and scale digital platforms that demand high-bandwidth capabilities, such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and immersive multimedia experiences. This can lead to new opportunities in content creation, entertainment, and interactive commerce.

Flutterwave, a Nigerian fintech company, exemplifies the impact of emerging technologies on entrepreneurship. The company leverages APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) and blockchain to facilitate seamless and secure payment transactions. By embracing innovative technologies, Flutterwave contributes to the evolution of financial services in Africa, fostering Twiga Foods, based in Kenya, represents the intersection of agri-tech and entrepreneurship. The company uses mobile technology to connect farmers with vendors, streamlining the supply chain for fresh produce. By leveraging mobile platforms, Twiga Foods enhances efficiency, reduces post-harvest losses, and creates opportunities for small-scale farmers to participate in the digital economy (Damilola, 2022, Iheanacho & Oluwasemilore, 2021, Ifechukwu, 2022).

Anticipating future trends in digital entrepreneurship in Africa involves navigating the evolving landscape of business models and the transformative potential of emerging technologies. Entrepreneurs and stakeholders must remain agile and adaptable, ready to embrace innovation and leverage digital platforms to address unique challenges and opportunities across the continent. As the digital revolution continues to unfold, entrepreneurs who stay ahead of the curve, incorporating emerging trends and technologies into their ventures, are well-positioned to drive economic growth and contribute to the development of resilient and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystems in Africa. The intersection of innovative business models and cutting-edge technologies holds the promise of a vibrant and inclusive future for digital entrepreneurship on the continent.

### 3. Conclusion

In the dynamic landscape of African entrepreneurship, the impact of digital platforms has been profound, reshaping business paradigms and unlocking new opportunities across the continent. As we recapitulate key findings, it becomes evident that digital platforms are pivotal drivers of innovation, inclusivity, and sustainable economic development in Africa. Throughout our review, we witnessed the transformative power of digital platforms on entrepreneurship in Africa: Digital platforms have expanded market access, fostering inclusivity by connecting entrepreneurs in both urban and rural areas with a global customer base. E-commerce has emerged as a powerful tool for economic empowerment, enabling businesses to thrive beyond geographical constraints.

Digital platforms serve as hubs for entrepreneurial innovation, providing spaces for collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and the incubation of startups. From agri-tech solutions to fintech innovations, entrepreneurs are leveraging these platforms to address local challenges and drive positive change. Initiatives on digital platforms have empowered marginalized groups, particularly women entrepreneurs and those in underserved communities. Digital literacy programs, financial inclusion efforts, and community engagement have played a crucial role in ensuring that the benefits of digital entrepreneurship are accessible to all. The collaborative efforts between digital platforms, governments, and local communities have demonstrated the potential for creating synergies that drive sustainable economic growth. Public-private partnerships and community engagement initiatives have paved the way for a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The pivotal role of digital platforms in shaping the future of entrepreneurship in Africa cannot be overstated. These platforms have not only facilitated economic transactions but have become catalysts for innovation, agents of social change, and bridges that connect entrepreneurs with unprecedented opportunities. The ability of digital platforms to transcend traditional barriers has empowered entrepreneurs to redefine industries, explore new markets, and contribute to the overall economic development of the continent. Digital platforms have become the backbone of a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem, providing the tools and resources necessary for businesses to thrive in the digital age. From the bustling e-commerce marketplaces to the collaborative spaces for innovation, these platforms have become integral to the entrepreneurial journey, offering scalability, visibility, and access to a global audience.

As we conclude this review, a compelling call to action emerges for stakeholders, policymakers, and entrepreneurs alike. The potential of digital platforms to drive inclusive and sustainable economic development in Africa requires collective and concerted efforts: Collaborative initiatives and partnerships between stakeholders, including businesses, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations, can amplify the impact of digital platforms. By fostering an ecosystem that encourages collaboration, stakeholders contribute to the creation of a robust and interconnected entrepreneurial landscape. Policymakers play a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for digital entrepreneurship. Clear and adaptable regulatory frameworks, support for digital literacy programs, and incentives for innovation can ensure that entrepreneurs navigate a conducive landscape. Policymakers are encouraged to engage in proactive dialogue with digital platforms and entrepreneurs to develop policies that reflect the evolving nature of the digital economy. Entrepreneurs are urged to embrace the opportunities presented by digital platforms fully. This includes staying abreast of emerging technologies, participating in collaborative networks, and leveraging digital platforms to not only grow their businesses but also contribute to societal development. The spirit of innovation and adaptability is at the core of successful entrepreneurship in the digital era. In conclusion, the impact of digital platforms on entrepreneurship in Africa is a story of transformation, empowerment, and resilience. The journey has just begun, and as Africa navigates the digital age, the collaboration between stakeholders, the strategic policymaking, and the entrepreneurial spirit will collectively shape a future where digital platforms are not just tools but integral components of a thriving and inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Through these concerted efforts, Africa is poised to unlock its full potential and position itself as a global leader in the ever-evolving landscape of digital entrepreneurship.

---

### Compliance with ethical standards

#### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

---

### References

- [1] Aithal, P. S., & Aithal, S. (2023). Super Innovation in Higher Education by Nurturing Business Leaders through Incubationship. *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML)*, 7(3), 142-167.



- [2] Akther, F. (2023). E-commerce in India: Trends, Hurdles, and Growth Opportunities. *Formosa Journal of Science and Technology*, 2(10), 2871-2880.
- [3] Alaassar, A., Mention, A. L., & Aas, T. H. (2022). Ecosystem dynamics: Exploring the interplay within fintech entrepreneurial ecosystems. *Small Business Economics*, 58(4), 2157-2182.
- [4] Badran, M. F. (2021). Digital platforms in Africa: A case-study of Jumia Egypt's digital platform. *Telecommunications Policy*, 45(3), 102077.
- [5] Banga, K., Gharib, M., Mendez-Parra, M., & Macleod, J. (2021). E-commerce in preferential trade agreements: Implications for African firms and the AfCFTA. ODI Report.
- [6] Battisti, S., Agarwal, N., & Brem, A. (2022). Creating new tech entrepreneurs with digital platforms: Meta-organizations for shared value in data-driven retail ecosystems. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 175, 121392.
- [7] Bernardino, S., & Santos, J. F. (2020). Crowdfunding: an exploratory study on knowledge, benefits and barriers perceived by young potential entrepreneurs. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 13(4), 81.
- [8] Birner, R., Daum, T., & Pray, C. (2021). Who drives the digital revolution in agriculture? A review of supply-side trends, players and challenges. *Applied economic perspectives and policy*, 43(4), 1260-1285.
- [9] Bonina, C., Koskinen, K., Eaton, B., & Gawer, A. (2021). Digital platforms for development: Foundations and research agenda. *Information Systems Journal*, 31(6), 869-902.
- [10] Camaren, P. (2021). Social Innovation for Sustainable Urban Developmental Transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa: Leveraging Economic Ecosystems and the Entrepreneurial State. *Sustainability*, 13(13), 7360.
- [11] Ceia, V., Nothwehr, B., & Wagner, L. (2021). Gender and Technology: A rights-based and intersectional analysis of key trends.
- [12] Cherunya, P. A. U. L. I. N. E., & Ahlborg, H. E. L. E. N. E. (2020). Report from scoping of innovation hubs across Africa.
- [13] Cicchiello, A. F. (2019). Building an entrepreneurial ecosystem based on crowdfunding in Europe: the role of public policy. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Public Policy*, 8(3), 297-318.
- [14] Comunian, R., Hracs, B. J., & England, L. (2021). Understanding and supporting creative economies in Africa.
- [15] Cortesi, S., Hasse, A., Lombana-Bermudez, A., Kim, S., & Gasser, U. (2020). Youth and digital citizenship+ (plus): Understanding skills for a digital world. Berkman Klein Center Research Publication, (2020-2).
- [16] Costa, J., & Castro, R. (2021). SMEs must go online—E-commerce as an escape hatch for resilience and survivability. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 16(7), 3043-3062.
- [17] Dabić, M., Dana, L. P., Nziku, D. M., & Ramadani, V. (Eds.). (2022). *Women entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa: Historical framework, ecosystem, and future perspectives for the region*. Springer Nature.
- [18] Damilola, A. O. (2022). FinTech and Financial Inclusion in West Africa: Nigeria's SMEs Market. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary and Current Educational Research*, 4, 210-2018.
- [19] Debbarma, A., & Chinnadurai, A. S. (2023). Empowering Women through Digital Literacy and Access to ICT in Tripura. *Research Journal of Advanced Engineering and Science*, 9(1), 5-9.
- [20] Delgado-de Miguel, J. F., Buil-Lopez Menchero, T., Esteban-Navarro, M. Á., & García-Madurga, M. Á. (2019). Proximity trade and urban sustainability: Small retailers' expectations towards local online marketplaces. *Sustainability*, 11(24), 7199.
- [21] Elia, G., Margherita, A., & Passiante, G. (2020). Digital entrepreneurship ecosystem: How digital technologies and collective intelligence are reshaping the entrepreneurial process. *Technological forecasting and social change*, 150, 119791.
- [22] Elia, G., Margherita, A., & Petti, C. (2020). Building responses to sustainable development challenges: A multistakeholder collaboration framework and application to climate change. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 29(6), 2465-2478.
- [23] Evans, J., Karvonen, A., Luque-Ayala, A., Martin, C., McCormick, K., Raven, R., & Palgan, Y. V. (2019). Smart and sustainable cities? Pipedreams, practicalities and possibilities. *Local Environment*, 24(7), 557-564.

- [24] Foster, C., & Azmeh, S. (2019). E-Commerce and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). GEG Africa, Pretoria.
- [25] Friederici, N., Wahome, M., & Graham, M. (2020). Digital entrepreneurship in Africa: How a continent is escaping Silicon Valley's long shadow. The MIT Press.
- [26] Gamidullaeva, L., Tolstykh, T., Bystrov, A., Radaykin, A., & Shmeleva, N. (2021). Cross-sectoral digital platform as a tool for innovation ecosystem development. *Sustainability*, 13(21), 11686.
- [27] Gómez-Carmona, O., Buján-Carballeda, D., Casado-Mansilla, D., López-de-Ipiña, D., Cano-Benito, J., Cimmino, A., ... & Bujalkova, N. (2023). Mind the gap: The AURORAL ecosystem for the digital transformation of smart communities and rural areas. *Technology in Society*, 74, 102304.
- [28] Graham, M. (2019). Changing connectivity and digital economies at global margins. *Digital economies at global margins*, 1-18.
- [29] Guillén, M. F. (2021). The platform paradox: How digital businesses succeed in an ever-changing global marketplace. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [30] Hervé, F., & Schwiendbacher, A. (2019). Crowdfunding and innovation. *Contemporary Topics in Finance: A Collection of Literature Surveys*, 331-349.
- [31] Ifechukwu, A. (2022). Regulating Fintech in Developing Economies: Examining The Risks, Policies and Nigeria's Path to Financial Prosperity. *Policies and Nigeria's Path to Financial Prosperity* (December 26, 2022).
- [32] Iheanacho, N., & Oluwasemilore, I. (2021). Leveraging Financial Technology: A Comparative Analysis of the Legal Readiness of Nigeria for Fintech Disruption Vis-A-Vis Other Jurisdictions. Available at SSRN 3938737.
- [33] Irfan, T., & Salam, M. T. (2020). Kaarvan Crafts Foundation: Embracing digital literacy for women empowerment. *Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies*, 10(4), 1-34.
- [34] Jain, V. I. P. I. N., Malviya, B. I. N. D. O. O., & Arya, S. A. T. Y. E. N. D. R. A. (2021). An overview of electronic commerce (e-Commerce). *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, 27(3), 665-670.
- [35] Jayasena, N. S., Chan, D. W., & Kumaraswamy, M. (2021). A systematic literature review and analysis towards developing PPP models for delivering smart infrastructure. *Built Environment Project and Asset Management*, 11(1), 121-137.
- [36] Jayasena, N. S., Chan, D. W., & Kumaraswamy, M. M. (2022). Is public-private partnership (PPP) a preferred strategy for procuring smart infrastructure in developed countries: an empirical study of the perceived benefits, barriers and recommended strategies. *Sustainability*, 14(11), 6421.
- [37] Klein, M., & Szychalska-Wojtkiewicz, M. (2020). Cross-sector partnerships for innovation and growth: can creative industries support traditional sector innovations?. *Sustainability*, 12(23), 10122.
- [38] Korongo, J. N., Mutai, J. K., Masese, B. C., Mbugua, S. T., & Nambiro, A. W. (2021). Empowering small-scale women entrepreneurs through ICTs for socio-economic development.
- [39] Kurniawati, I., & Kustulasari, A. (2021). Public Value Creation by Private Sector through Cross-Sector Collaboration: A Case Study of the Gojek Wirausaha Program. *Bisnis & Birokrasi: Jurnal Ilmu Administrasi dan Organisasi*, 27(3), 5.
- [40] Li, F., Frederick, S., & Gereffi, G. (2019). E-commerce and industrial upgrading in the Chinese apparel value chain. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 49(1), 24-53.
- [41] Mafimisebi, O. P., & Ogunsade, A. I. (2022). Unlocking a continent of opportunity: Entrepreneurship and digital ecosystems for value creation in Africa. *FIIB Business Review*, 11(1), 11-22.
- [42] Mair, J., Gegenhuber, T., Thäter, L., & Lührsen, R. (2023). Pathways and mechanisms for catalyzing social impact through Orchestration: Insights from an open social innovation project. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 19, e00366.
- [43] Martínez-Peláez, R., Ochoa-Brust, A., Rivera, S., Félix, V. G., Ostos, R., Brito, H., ... & Mena, L. J. (2023). Role of digital transformation for achieving sustainability: mediated role of stakeholders, key capabilities, and technology. *Sustainability*, 15(14), 11221.
- [44] Mhlanga, D. (2023). Block chain technology for digital financial inclusion in the industry 4.0, towards sustainable development?. *Frontiers in Blockchain*, 6, 1035405.

- [45] Montague-Mfuni, M., Fabian, F., & Scheepers, C. B. (2023). Advancing technological hub collaborations to promote transnational African communities. *Technological Leapfrogging and Innovation in Africa: Digital Transformation and Opportunity for the Next Growth Continent*, 71.
- [46] Mori, M. (2022). Financial Implications of the Urban-rural Divide. *Current Aspects in Business, Economics and Finance Vol. 5*, 15-29.
- [47] Nguimkeu, P., & Okou, C. (2021). Leveraging digital technologies to boost productivity in the informal sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Review of Policy Research*, 38(6), 707-731.
- [48] Nwokolo, S. C., Eyime, E. E., Obiwulu, A. U., & Ogbulezie, J. C. (2023). Africa's Path to Sustainability: Harnessing Technology, Policy, and Collaboration. *Trends in Renewable Energy*, 10(1), 98-131.
- [49] Obed, E. K. (2020). *The Impact of Traditional and Modern Marketing Strategies on the Success of SMEs: An Analysis of Northwest Europe and Sub Saharan African Businesses* (Doctoral dissertation, Dublin, National College of Ireland).
- [50] Ochinanwata, C., Igwe, P. A., & Radicic, D. (2023). The institutional impact on the digital platform ecosystem and innovation. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.
- [51] Odufuwa, F., & Mureithi, M. (2023). *African Tech Startups*.
- [52] Omol, E. J. (2023). Organizational digital transformation: from evolution to future trends. *Digital Transformation and Society*.
- [53] Opute, A. P., Kalu, K. I., Adeola, O., & Iwu, C. G. (2021). Steering sustainable economic growth: entrepreneurial ecosystem approach. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Emerging Economies*, 7(2), 216-245.
- [54] Peter, C. (2021). Social innovation for sustainable urban developmental transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa: Leveraging economic ecosystems and the entrepreneurial state. *Sustainability*, 13(13), 7360.
- [55] Qobo, M., & Qobo, M. (2022). Africa's Digital Futures. *The Political Economy of China—US Relations: Digital Futures and African Agency*, 163-182.
- [56] Rella, L. (2019). Blockchain technologies and remittances: From financial inclusion to correspondent banking. *Frontiers in Blockchain*, 2, 14.
- [57] Sahut, J. M., Iandoli, L., & Teulon, F. (2021). The age of digital entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*, 56, 1159-1169.
- [58] Sarker, M. F. H., Mahmud, R. A., Islam, M. S., & Islam, M. K. (2019). Use of e-learning at higher educational institutions in Bangladesh: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, 11(2), 210-223.
- [59] Selim, A. M., & ElGohary, A. S. (2020). Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in smart infrastructure projects: the role of stakeholders. *HBRC Journal*, 16(1), 317-333.
- [60] Sicat, M., Xu, A., Mehetaj, E., Ferrantino, M., & Chemutai, V. (2020). Leveraging ICT technologies in closing the gender gap.
- [61] Song, B., Robinson, G. M., Bardsley, D. K., Xue, Y., & Wang, B. (2023). Multifunctional agriculture in a peri-urban fringe: Chinese farmers' responses to shifts in policy and changing socio-economic conditions. *Land Use Policy*, 133, 106869.
- [62] Tafotie, R. (2020). *Fostering Digital Financial Services in Africa: a case of embracing innovation for business and inclusion*. University of Luxembourg Law Working Paper, (2020-005).
- [63] Tarr, M. (2021). *The impact of disruptive technologies on the growth and development of small businesses in South Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, Cape Peninsula University of Technology).
- [64] Taura, N. D., Bolat, E., & Madichie, N. O. (Eds.). (2019). *Digital Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects*.
- [65] Tererai, S. (2021). *Strategic African alliances: success drivers in platform economies*.
- [66] Union, A. (2020). *The Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-30)*.
- [67] Veeramanickam, M. R. M., & Ramesh, P. (2022). Analysis on quality of learning in e-Learning platforms. *Advances in Engineering Software*, 172, 103168.

- [68] Wang, C. C., Miao, J. T., Phelps, N. A., & Zhang, J. (2021). E-commerce and the transformation of the rural: the Taobao village phenomenon in Zhejiang Province, China. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 81, 159-169.
- [69] Yan, Z., Lu, X., Chen, Y., & Wang, K. (2023). Institutional distance, internationalization speed and cross-border e-commerce platform utilization. *Management Decision*, 61(1), 176-200.
- [70] Yáñez-Valdés, C., & Guerrero, M. (2023). Equity crowdfunding platforms and sustainable impacts: encountering investors and technological initiatives for tackling social and environmental challenges. *European Journal of Innovation Management*.
- [71] Adeleke, O.K., Segun, I.B. and Olaoye, A.I.C., 2019. Impact of internal control on fraud prevention in deposit money banks in Nigeria. *Nigerian Studies in Economics and Management Sciences*, 2(1), pp.42-51.
- [72] Ilugbusi, S., Akindejoye, J.A., Ajala, R.B. and Ogundele, A., 2020. Financial liberalization and economic growth in Nigeria (1986-2018). *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 5(4), pp.1-9.
- [73] Vincent, A.A., Segun, I.B., Loretta, N.N. and Abiola, A., 2021. Entrepreneurship, agricultural value-chain and exports in Nigeria. *United International Journal for Research and Technology*, 2(08), pp.1-8.
- [74] Abrahams, T.O., Ewuga, S.K., Kaggwa, S., Uwaoma, P.U., Hassan, A.O. and Dawodu, S.O., 2023. Review of strategic alignment: Accounting and cybersecurity for data confidentiality and financial security.
- [75] Adaga, E.M., Egieya, Z.E., Ewuga, S.K., Abdul, A.A. and Abrahams, T.O., 2024. Philosophy In Business Analytics: A Review Of Sustainable And Ethical Approaches. *International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research*, 6(1), pp.69-86.