



## Research Article

# Entrepreneurial Intention and Skills Needed by Today's Youths for Sustainable Development

**Dorothy Nkem Ezenwanne**

Department of Home Economics, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State, Nigeria  
Email: ladydordor2000@yahoo.com

**Received:** 3 January 2023; **Revised:** 8 February 2023; **Accepted:** 10 February 2023

**Abstract:** The development of entrepreneurial intention and raising the attitudes of today's youths to launch their own firms in Nigeria has continued to center on entrepreneurship and skill acquisition. Based on these, the study looked into various skills needed by today's youths for Sustainable Development. The study was further guided by two research questions and one hypothesis tested at the 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research approach was implemented. The participants in this study were students and lecturers at Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State, Nigeria. The population size was made up of 70 students and 30 lecturers. Data were collected using a questionnaire produced by the researcher. The responses were analysed using arithmetic mean and standard deviation scores, and the null hypothesis was tested using a t-test. The result revealed that self-motivation is among the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths. Additionally, creativity was considered essential since most entrepreneurs are beginning from zero position with limited resources. The results further revealed that students and lecturers do not differ significantly in their mean perception scores regarding sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths. It was recommended among others that the federal government should create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and supply all the tools and resources required for Nigeria's economy to grow sustainably.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurial intention, skill acquisition, youths, sustainable development

## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a creative and inventive activity that can improve social welfare, expand the economy, rejuvenate markets, add value to goods, generate employment opportunities, and increase productivity. The advantages of entrepreneurship also apply to tourist destinations since, via an entrepreneurial activity, several facets of the tourism industry may cater to visitors' requirements, enhancing both their travel experiences and the economies of their destinations (Bakker & McMullen, 2023). This is seen to be especially crucial for developing nations, where there are greater resource limitations on the ability to diversify and enhance tourism-related experiences and products. Academics and practitioners should understand where the intents of early-stage potential entrepreneurs come from and what variables encourage entrepreneurship to assure a steady supply of entrepreneurs.

When compared to local literature, the amount of foreign literature about entrepreneurial intention is greater. There

are currently very few recent studies concentrating on tertiary students' entrepreneurial intentions in the Anambra state of Nigeria (Dim et al., 2022; Uzoka & Nwaizugbo, 2021; Okeke-Ezeanyanwu & Ogbughalu, 2021). Consequently, the graduates lack knowledge of entrepreneurial expertise and start-up ideas, and are now unable to appropriately identify opportunities. According to the author's own observations, the government does not provide graduates with adequate assistance and is unable to inspire them or give them the confidence to consider a future as entrepreneurs. Therefore, this study is crucial for founders and investors to comprehend the concept behind a product and the strategies that may be used to offer entrepreneurship support; hence, there is a pressing need for research updates on the entrepreneurial intention and abilities required by young people. With this knowledge, one can decide whether or not the proposal is workable and how to succeed. The government works toward fostering an entrepreneurial culture that is concerned with employment development.

This research focuses on how a potential entrepreneur's cognitive state of intention guides him or her toward a business venture, highlighting that the more intense the intention, the more likely entrepreneurial activities are given the importance of the pre-business venture creation period. The development of an entrepreneurial intention and the adoption of entrepreneurial conduct are the two steps that make up the entrepreneurial process (Ohashi et al., 2023). Every venture begins with the creation of an entrepreneurial intention, which is a good indicator of future entrepreneurial activity. Currently, a lot of research focuses on people's intentions to start their own businesses. These studies looked at various elements, including personal traits, self-efficacy, risk perception, system design, and more. Unquestionably, having an entrepreneurial intention is a prerequisite for the growth of entrepreneurship (Neneh, 2022).

Despite having entrepreneurial goals, today's youth may not really be able to launch new firms due to their personal traits and circumstances. Entrepreneurial intention is the person's innate choice, tendency, and behavior to start a new enterprise. Potential business owners' attitudes and expectations on whether they engage in entrepreneurial activities are purely subjective. Therefore, the notion that entrepreneurs launch a firm is known as an entrepreneurial intention. To accomplish entrepreneurial achievements, entrepreneurial intention may be defined as a psychological condition that directs our focus toward certain company goals (Douglas et al., 2021). This psychological condition is typically explained by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which is a psychological theory that links beliefs to behavior. TPB explains that individual entrepreneurial behavior is affected by entrepreneurial intention and perceived behavioral control (PBC). Moreover, the entrepreneurial intention is explained by attitude, subjective norm and PBC (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Based on TPB, it also acknowledges that people take an initiative to start new firms or acquire new skills inside already-existing ones. Skill can be acquired through repetition, which leads to long-lasting improvements in a person's ability to conduct a particular task. The act of performing the task may eventually become automatic with enough practice, requiring little conscious control.

Innovation, creativity, risk-taking, initiative, vision, focus, determination, team spirit, resourcefulness, financial control, self-confidence, versatility, knowledge, dynamic thinking, optimum disposition, originality, people-oriented, flexible in decision-making, need-achievement-driven, profit-oriented, persistent and persevering, are just a few activities that are associated with the concept of entrepreneurial skill (Škare et al., 2022). Various industries may be developed and created with the use of entrepreneurial talents. The ability to be an entrepreneur takes effort and dedication, just like any other talent. Entrepreneurs must actively participate in the process of developing their entrepreneurial skills throughout time. Several methods exist for acquiring entrepreneurial abilities, including taking entrepreneurial training courses, participating in development program seminars, and attending workshops. Universities, work rotation programs, specialized training programs, apprenticeships, organizational learning programs, consulting firms, natural and international agencies and bodies, non-governmental organizations, and professional associations.

The engine powering a nation's economy, generating new industries, young entrepreneurs, jobs, and wealth, is entrepreneurial purpose and skill acquisition. Once more, developing entrepreneurial intention and skills entails a process intended to generate income for the benefit of sustainable development and economic progress (Al-Qudah et al., 2022). A guiding concept of sustainable development is achieving human development goals while preserving the capacity of natural systems to supply the natural resources and ecosystem services that are essential to the economy and society. The concept of sustainable development holds that human civilizations must exist and satisfy their own needs without endangering the capacity of future generations to do the same. Sustainable development is a strategy for structuring society in a way that ensures its long-term viability. This entails considering both the immediate and long-term imperatives, such as social and economic equality or the preservation of the environment and natural resources.

## 2. Statement of the problem

Millions of today's youths from Nigeria's higher institutions enter an economy that is already overpopulated every year, increasing unemployment rates. Because of this, the government frequently works with its agencies to implement skills acquisition programs to address this anomaly and set them up for a sustainable future that will rid the economy of criminals. As each year passes, the unemployment rate rises because of the ongoing influx of youths who are unemployed at the end of the day. The sad state of affairs has led many job seekers returning to their elderly parents who invested in them in the vain hope that one day they will receive the benefits of their investments. To prevent a national calamity, this unemployment problem must be eradicated. This study is anchored on skill acquisition theory (DeKeyser, 2007) and TPB (Ajzen, 1991). It will cover creative disposition and factors that support entrepreneurial intentions, the relevance of skill acquisition by today's youths, sustainable soft skills required by today's youths, and the nexus between entrepreneurial intention, skill acquisition and sustainable development.

## 3. Literature review

This section covers a literature search of concepts related to the dominant factors in entrepreneurial intentions and skills needed by young people.

### 3.1 *Dominant factors of entrepreneurial intention*

The number of college graduates has grown nationwide, and job issues have gained attention. This has led to the adolescents' acute need for intrapreneurial involvement (Yuan et al., 2020). As a result, assessing factors of entrepreneurial ambition is crucial for assisting college students in developing sound professional values and directing hiring practices at schools and universities. Entrepreneurship among recent college graduates may help the community by generating some jobs and easing the labor market's burden, while it can also deepen their understanding of society and boost their self-worth. An empirical study on the variables affecting college graduates' inclination to start their own business was done by Wang in 2021. The study discovered that college graduates' entrepreneurial aim can be highly influenced by their gender, family business position, social practices, and entrepreneurial model, etc., but their place of origin and level of adventure had no discernible influence. The empirical study by Dong et al. (2018) demonstrated that the stronger the entrepreneurial culture is, the greater the entrepreneurial intentions of college students are; the greater the entrepreneurial ability is, the greater the entrepreneurial intentions are; and under the mediator variable impact of self-actualization, the greater the business ecosystem is, the greater the entrepreneurial intentions are.

Using the factors of perceived desirability, perceived behavioral control, and perceived social norms in conjunction with TPB, according to Cano and Tabares' (2017) research, university students' primary personal motivations for starting their own business, the degree of their entrepreneurial intention, the influence of their families, and their social environment all play a significant role in determining their entrepreneurial intention. The influence of gender on academic entrepreneurial ambition was also examined by Miranda et al. (2017). The authors noted that the lack of any elements thought to be predictors of entrepreneurial intention is not the reason for this lower female entrepreneurial activity, but rather that it is connected to the existence of implicit obstacles for women that affect their entrepreneurial intention. Most recently, characteristics affecting entrepreneurial ambition across gender were measured by Ali et al. (2023). The study revealed that a number of factors, including cognitive (self-efficacy, knowledge of entrepreneurs, and fear of failure), economic (perceived opportunity, career choice, and ease of starting), and social recognition (sense of equality, status and respect in society, and social welfare), significantly affect both men and women's likelihood of becoming entrepreneurs, with the effects of age, family size, education, working status, and household size being controlled.

A recent research on the variables influencing university students' intentions to become entrepreneurs is done by Al-Qadasi et al. (2023). The authors found a favorable correlation between the personality qualities of the locus of control and the need for accomplishment and their effects on entrepreneurial self-efficacy and intention. The contextual factors indicate a favorable correlation between entrepreneurial intention and self-efficacy but not entrepreneurial intention, and a positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. The results

of the study also indicate that the link between the desire for success, locus of control, instrumental preparedness, and entrepreneurial intention is partially mediated by entrepreneurial self-efficacy. To determine the correlates of entrepreneurial intents, Awofala et al. (2023) evaluated personal and environmental characteristics. The findings demonstrated that 84.1% of the variance in the prediction of entrepreneurial intention among participants was accounted for by individual factors (need for achievement, internal locus of control, risk-taking propensity, and creativity) and situational factors (perceived structural support, perceived educational support, and perceived relational support). Each of the personal and environmental characteristics exhibited a favorable link with the entrepreneurial purpose of pre-service science, technology, and math teachers.

### ***3.2 Skills needed in entrepreneurship***

Due to the high unemployment rates among university graduates, issues relating to young graduates' employment are a concern in the current difficult socioeconomic climate and massification of higher education. These jobless occurrences are linked to graduates' lack of entrepreneurial abilities. Technical abilities, leadership and business management abilities, and creative thinking are just a few examples of the different skill sets that might be categorized as entrepreneurial. The impact of gender on the professional integration and pay of young Tunisian higher education graduates was examined by Lasram et al. (2022). The results of the survey analysis show that girls are substantially more affected by unemployment, particularly students. For agronomic engineers in particular, significant gender inequalities in waiting times for the first employment and pay were found. People and students lack specific entrepreneurial abilities, or they are unaware of those talents, according to Vaidya and Dhruv (2021).

Bejinaru (2018) identified a key group of entrepreneurial talents that are anticipated to characterize the entrepreneurial behavior by the 2030-time horizon: complex issue solving, critical thinking, originality thinking, active learning, judgement and decision making. In their 2015 study on the establishment of community-led social enterprises, Munoz et al. (2015) found that the creation of such rural community-based service providers required both community capacities and entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurial leaders, according to Raby et al. (2023), exploited traits such as cooperation to create a culture of innovation and strategically employed connections with stakeholders to establish themselves as navigators of institutional environments. Additionally, Nofrida and Mahmudah (2023) demonstrated that the university student's entrepreneurial skills measuring tool has five components, including technopreneur, ecopreneur, sociopreneur, edupreneur, and entrepreneur management; the quality of the tool was well tested using two approaches, namely content and construct validity; practicality in developing the instrument has a very practical value in terms of clarity of instructions, use of the instrument, and other practical aspects.

### ***3.3 Theoretical framework***

#### ***3.3.1 The Theory of Planned Behavior***

TPB propounded by Ajzen (1991) was intended to explain all behaviors, over which people can exert self-control. The key component to this model is behavioral intent; behavioral intentions are influenced by the attitude to the likelihood that the behavior will have the expected outcome and the subjective evaluation of the risks and benefits of that outcome. TPB has been used successfully to predict and explain a wide range of health behaviors and intentions including smoking, drinking, health services utilization, breastfeeding, and substance use, among others. The theory states that behavioral achievement depends on both motivation (intention) and ability (behavioral control). It distinguishes between three types of beliefs-behavioral, normative, and control. TPB comprises six constructs that collectively represent a person's actual control over the behavior, which includes attitudes, behavioral intention, subjective norms, social norms, perceived power, and perceived behavioral control.

#### ***3.3.2 Skill acquisition theory***

The study was based on the skill acquisition theory, which describes how people learn new abilities and move to higher levels of competency. According to DeKeyser (2007), the central thesis of skill acquisition theory is that learning a wide range of skills exhibits an exceptional similarity in development from initial knowledge representation through early behavioral changes to final fluent, unrestricted, to a significant extent, and profoundly gifted behavior, and that

this phenomenon can be explained by a variety of key principles common to skill acquisition. In general, learning has been defined as the storage of information in memory concerning some natural or psychological experiences. Skill development may be thought of as a specific sort of learning. As a result, skill acquisition is a sort of learning, in which, in some circumstances, skilled behaviors can be routineized and even programmed. Additionally, as a general theory of learning, it ensures that adults begin learning something new skills that are largely unambiguous before transitioning into more advanced procedures with sufficient practice and exposure. To date, the relevant skills needed by today's youths for sustainable development are still mostly unknown. To close the gaps that exist, the present research aims to:

1. Determine the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths
2. Establish the sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths.

### 3.4 Hypothesis

One hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance was formulated to guide the conduct of the study.

$H_0$ : There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of students and lecturers regarding sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths.

## 4. Method

A descriptive research design was employed based on the specific study goals. The research design is considered suitable for the present study because it can systematically obtain information to describe the phenomenon of entrepreneurial intentions and associated entrepreneurial soft skills among the youth population. Additionally, this method has been used successfully in related past studies. The population for the study is made up of the lecturers and students in Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe, Anambra state, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was made up of 70 students and 30 lecturers. The sample size was selected using a simple random sampling technique. This technique involves the selection of participants from a population chosen at random by the researcher, which is a sort of probability sampling, in which every person in the population has the same probability of getting chosen.

The instrument for data collection is a self-created cross-sectional survey questionnaire with three clusters and twenty items, which was distributed electronically for data collection via email and social media channels to the respondents using Google Forms. Google Forms is a cost-effective method that can reach many respondents who are in different areas. The study's objectives, which center on young people's entrepreneurial intentions and the skills they require for sustainable growth, were carefully addressed by the questionnaire. The subjects responded to the statements given and chose their answers based on their perceptions. The various sections of the questionnaire included: (Cluster 1) Personal Details, (Cluster 2) the students and lecturers' knowledge about influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths and (Cluster 3) the sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths. The questionnaire was based on 4-point Likert Scale ranging from: 4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree and 1 = Strongly Disagree.

The questionnaire was face validated by three experts and necessary corrections were made in light of their findings and comments. This was done to guarantee the validity of the survey. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was used in this study to check the instrument's internal reliability. This technique, often referred to as the test index score, is used to determine the relationship between the results of each test item and the test's overall score. Items with high test index correlation scores have high reliability, whereas those with low test index correlation scores have low reliability and will be removed from the exam. This instrument's Cronbach's alpha value is 0.76, which is considered acceptable for the study.

A total of one hundred respondents comprising seventy students and thirty lecturers participated in the study. The mean and standard deviation were computed using SPSS version 22 (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences); the decision rule stipulates that any item with a mean scores of 2.5 and above was accepted, while any item with mean score below 2.5 was considered not perceived by the respondents and then was rejected. The research hypotheses were also examined using inferential statistics (t-test). The critical value and estimated t-value are compared to decide whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis. If the absolute computed t-value is higher than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis is rejected; otherwise, the null hypothesis is accepted if the absolute calculated t-value is lower than the



critical t-value.

## 5. Results

The researcher presents and discusses the study's findings in this part.

### 5.1 Research Question 1: What are the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths?

**Table 1.** Mean and standard deviation on the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths

S/N	Item	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std.D	Dec
1	Self-efficacy	20 (20%)	46 (46%)	20 (20%)	14 (14%)	2.72	0.94	A
2	Family background	57 (57%)	37 (37%)	3 (3%)	3 (3%)	3.48	0.7	A
3	Social environment	69 (69%)	13 (13%)	16 (16%)	2 (2%)	3.49	0.83	A
4	Innovativeness	35 (35%)	20 (35%)	26 (26%)	19 (19%)	2.71	1.13	A
5	Supportive environment	47 (47%)	25 (25%)	23 (23%)	5 (5%)	3.14	0.94	A
6	Risk-taking propensity	44 (44%)	8 (8%)	5 (5%)	43 (43%)	2.53	1.41	A
7	Entrepreneurship barrier	48 (48%)	33 (33%)	13 (13%)	6 (6%)	3.23	0.89	A
8	Educational support	54 (54%)	15 (15%)	12 (12%)	19 (19%)	3.04	1.19	A
9	Need for power	48 (48%)	11 (11%)	33 (33%)	8 (8%)	2.99	1.06	A
10	Self-motivation	66 (66%)	26 (26%)	3 (3%)	5 (5%)	3.53	0.78	A

Dec = Decision,  $\bar{x}$  = mean, Std.D = Standard Deviation, R = Rejected, A = Accepted

Table 1 shows the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths. It was observed that self-motivation is an important factor of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths (3.53). The respondents also agreed that the social environment (3.49) and family background (3.48) contributed majorly to entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths. Table 1 also shows that the overall reporting mean indicated a modest level. For self-efficacy factor ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.72, Std.D = 0.94), out of 100 respondents, 20% strongly agree, 46% agree, 20% disagree and 14% strongly disagree. For family background as a factor influencing entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.48, Std.D = 0.7), 57% respondents strongly agree, 37% agree, 3% disagree and 3% strongly disagree. Considering the social environment as a factor influencing entrepreneurial intentions ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.49, Std.D = 0.83), 69% respondent strongly agree, 13% agree, 16% disagree and 2% strongly disagree. For the statement "supportive environment as a factor of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths" ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.14, Std.D = 0.94), 47% respondent strongly agree, 25% agree, 23% disagree, and 5% strongly disagree. In general, items number 1-10 yielded a mean score of 2.72, 3.48, 3.49, 2.71, 3.14, 2.53, 3.23, 3.04, 2.99, and 3.53 corresponding to standard deviation of 0.94, 0.7, 0.83, 1.13, 0.94, 1.41, 0.89, 1.19, 1.06, and 0.78 were all respectively accepted.

## 5.2 Research Question 2: What are the sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths?

**Table 2.** Mean and standard deviation of the sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths

S/ N	Items	Students (N = 70)							Lecturers (N = 30)						
		SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std.D	Dec	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	Std.D	Dec
11	Ability to take the initiative and adapt to changing circumstances	40 (57%)	22 (31%)	5 (7%)	3 (4%)	3.41	0.80	A	10 (33%)	11 (37%)	5 (17%)	4 (13%)	2.90	1.01	A
12	Entrepreneurs must hone the skill of leadership	31 (44%)	18 (26%)	14 (20%)	7 (10%)	3.04	1.02	A	13 (43%)	10 (33%)	4 (13%)	3 (10%)	3.10	0.98	A
13	An entrepreneur must have a confident demeanor when haggling and closing deals	32 (46%)	22 (31%)	14 (20%)	2 (3%)	3.20	0.86	A	6 (20%)	21 (70%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	3.07	0.63	A
14	An entrepreneur must have effective networking skills	25 (36%)	12 (17%)	21 (30%)	12 (17%)	2.71	1.12	A	10 (33%)	13 (43%)	5 (17%)	2 (7%)	3.03	0.87	A
15	An entrepreneur must communicate his/her ideas or a product effectively to a group of individuals in the environment they operate	22 (31%)	35 (50%)	1 (1%)	12 (17%)	3.00	1.01	A	19 (63%)	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	6 (20%)	3.10	1.25	A
16	Creativity is essential since most entrepreneurs are beginning from zero position with limited resources	22 (31%)	11 (16%)	21 (30%)	16 (23%)	2.56	1.15	A	8 (27%)	11 (37%)	4 (13%)	7 (23%)	2.67	1.11	A
17	An entrepreneur should have collaboration skills for effective problem-solving	52 (74%)	14 (20%)	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	3.66	0.67	A	11 (37%)	16 (53%)	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	3.20	0.79	A
18	The secret to being successful as an entrepreneur is self confidence	45 (64%)	2 (3%)	9 (13%)	14 (20%)	3.11	1.25	A	18 (60%)	2 (7%)	5 (17%)	5 (17%)	3.10	1.19	A
19	An entrepreneur who possesses self-control can make informed decisions, resist the urge to take unwise or inconvenient actions	44 (63%)	12 (17%)	10 (14%)	4 (6%)	3.37	0.93	A	10 (33%)	2 (7%)	10 (33%)	8 (27%)	2.47	1.20	A
20	Analytical thinking is the capacity to comprehend situations and solve issues	23 (33%)	12 (17%)	24 (34%)	11 (16%)	2.67	1.09	A	13 (43%)	11 (37%)	4 (13%)	2 (7%)	3.17	0.90	A
	Group mean					3.07	0.99						2.98	0.99	

Dec = Decision,  $\bar{x}$  = mean, Std.D = Standard Deviation, R = Rejected, A = Accepted

Table 2 shows that an entrepreneur should have sufficient collaboration skills for effective problem-solving (Students = 3.66; Lecturers = 3.20). It is observed that the ability to take the initiative and adapt to changing circumstances is crucial for sustainable entrepreneurial ventures (Students = 3.41; Lecturers = 2.90). However, the respondents differ in their perception regarding entrepreneurs who possesses self-control and ability to make informed decisions, and resist

the urge to take unwise or inconvenient actions (Students = 3.37; Lecturers = 2.47). Both the students ( $\bar{x} = 3.04$ , Std.D = 1.02) and lecturers ( $\bar{x} = 3.10$ , Std.D = 0.98) believed that entrepreneurs must hone the skill of leadership. Among the students, 44% respondents strongly agree, 26% agree, 20% disagree and 10% strongly disagree; however, among the lecturers, 43% respondents strongly agree, 33% agree, 13% disagree and 10% strongly disagree. For analytical thinking, the capacity to comprehend situations and solve issues, 33% of the students responded strongly agree, 17% agree, 34% disagree and 16% strongly disagree; while 43% of the lecturers responded strongly agree, 37% agree, 13% disagree and 7% strongly disagree. On the whole, items 11-20 were accepted with a means score of 3.41, 3.04, 3.20, 2.71, 3.00, 2.56, 3.66, 3.11, 3.37, and 2.67 corresponding to standard deviation of 0.80, 1.02, 0.86, 1.12, 1.01, 1.15, 0.67, 1.25, 0.93, and 1.09 were respectively accepted by the student respondents. Also, from Table 2, items 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 20 were accepted with a mean score of 2.90, 3.10, 3.07, 3.03, 3.10, 2.67, 3.20, 3.10, and 3.17 corresponding to standard deviation of 1.01, 0.98, 0.63, 0.87, 1.25, 1.11, 0.79, 1.19, and 0.90 were accepted, respectively, while item 19 with mean scores of 2.47 and standard deviation of 1.20 were, respectively, rejected by lecturers.

### 5.3 Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean perception scores of students and lecturers regarding sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths

**Table 3.** t-test group statistics on the mean perception scores of students and lecturers regarding sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths

Group	n	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-cal	t-crit	df	sig.
Students	70	3.073	0.99				
				0.425	1.661	98	0.05
Lecturers	30	2.981	0.993				

From the independent t-test means in Table 3, the results show that the mean perception scores of students regarding sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths ( $\bar{x} = 3.073$ , SD = 0.99) is higher than the mean perception scores of lecturers regarding sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths ( $\bar{x} = 2.981$ , SD = 0.993). The calculated t-value of 0.425, which is not significant at the 0.05 level of probability and lower than the critical t-value of 1.661 indicates that students and lecturers do not differ significantly in their mean perception scores regarding sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths.

## 6. Discussion

Research question one focused on the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths. Findings revealed that self-efficacy, family background, social environment and innovativeness are influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths. Bullough et al. (2014) reported that the social environment coupled with students' self-efficacy beliefs can strengthen or weaken their intentions for future entrepreneurial efforts. Scholars have long been interested in the causes of entrepreneurial activity, and the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial conduct is entrepreneurial intention (Kautonen et al., 2015). It was observed that the supportive environment, risk-taking propensity, and entrepreneurship barrier are influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths. This finding is collaborated by Lee et al. (2022), who observed that the process of acquiring information that may be applied to risk-taking propensity and achievement of commercial objectives is also characterized as entrepreneurial intention.

All business process-related issues will appear more serious than those involved in entrepreneurship to someone who is not engaged in entrepreneurship (Ohashi et al., 2023). Entrepreneurs are viewed as confident risk-takers who are beginning to actualize their ideas and aspire to achieve on their own in the commercial world. According to the literature on creativity, the entrepreneurial process greatly benefits from creativity (Juliana et al., 2021). People with stronger



levels of creativity can retain a more self-assured and upbeat attitude throughout the entrepreneurial process. The result also showed that the availability of robust educational support is a significant factor of entrepreneurial intentions by today's youths. In line with this finding, a recent study suggests that people having the right knowledge and a positive attitude toward business are considered role models in the field of entrepreneurship (Iwara et al., 2019). Therefore, learning about entrepreneurship may help someone become more adept at seeing market possibilities and assessing risk. When today's youths are thought of as future business owners, entrepreneurship education serves as a way to impart knowledge, foster an entrepreneurial spirit, and enhance entrepreneurship skills and psychological qualities. As a result, entrepreneurial education has a favorable effect on a person's entrepreneurial mindset and skills (Olutuase et al., 2020).

Research question two focused on the sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths. Findings revealed that the ability to take the initiative and adapt to changing circumstances are part of the sustainable entrepreneurial soft skills required by today's youths. Eniola (2020) upheld that taking business initiatives requires adaptation to changing circumstances, the provision of resources, ideas, and creative ways that promote the development of the new venture. Also, the findings indicate that entrepreneurs must hone the skills of leadership, and an entrepreneur must have a confident demeanor when haggling and closing deals. In line with these findings, Bakker and McMullen (2023) noted that entrepreneurs must hone the skill of leadership, which involves the capacity to persuade others and assist them in carrying out activities in order to accomplish a shared objective. It was also observed that an entrepreneur must have effective networking skills to enable his/her to communicate ideas or a product effectively to a group of individuals. Creativity is essential since most entrepreneurs are beginning from a zero position with limited resources, and an entrepreneur should have collaboration skills for effective encourage problem-solving with others (Douglas et al., 2021).

## ***6.1 The nexus between entrepreneurial intention, skill acquisition and sustainable development***

Because it gives today's youth the talents, knowledge, and skills for self-employment, skill acquisition is a technique for youth empowerment. This encourages today's youth to create their own jobs. The purpose of entrepreneurship is crucial because it encourages kids to learn about economics and business, as well as to be "enterprising" and see business as "good and worthwhile". Economic development literature describes the capacity of today's youths to have the necessities of life, to be a person, and to attain freedom as the fundamental principles of sustainable development (Al-Qudah et al., 2022). The key to sustainable growth, the economy, and wealth creation is entrepreneurial intention and skill acquisition. The vast majority of employment is produced by small businesses founded by someone with an entrepreneurial mindset.

A practical method for honing academic talents is to pursue an entrepreneurial goal and acquire relevant skills. As a result, skilled entrepreneurs are constantly given the authority to utilize local resources in their immediate surroundings. Learning with an entrepreneurial mindset helps learners build a work ethic that is a key to overcoming poverty and advancing rural communities. Due to the range of entrepreneurial activities offered throughout school, youth/today's youth might develop confidence in their potential to become entrepreneurs in the future. Based on the idea that today's youth are the best resources for fostering their own development in dealing with the challenges and issues faced in today's world and in the new millennium, entrepreneurship education offers a roadmap for empowering the next generation (Eniola, 2020). Good support skills, such as commenting, decision-making, interpersonal abilities, economic comprehension, digital skills, marketing, management, and financial capabilities, are developed via entrepreneurial intention and skill development. Entrepreneurial purposes and skill acquisition also give people the training they need to be creative and inventive and to acquire skills that will support their independence and self-employment for sustainable development.

An approach for increasing entrepreneurial intention and skill development to lower unemployment in Nigerian society is to promote quality entrepreneurship education (Agboola, 2021). It is critical at this moment to shift today's youth's attention away from white-collar jobs and toward innovation and creativity. The sort of education that would enable the receiver to be independent is the greatest and most relevant education, as both the government and people have acknowledged. The ethical perspective that left today's youths with the false notion that they needed to work for the government or someone else in order to exist is false and lacking in a plan for youth empowerment.

Youth in Nigeria should be given the tools they need to succeed by giving them training that is rich in the entrepreneurial competences, abilities, exposures, skills, knowledge, and values that will help them fit in and integrate

with the corporate world. Youths' entrepreneurial ability and success in business will be significantly influenced by the kind of skills they learn while attending various postsecondary schools. Those involved in education have long decried the terrible tendency of our higher schools annually producing today's youths who wander the streets looking for vacant employment (Douglas et al., 2021). They have blamed this unpleasant phenomenon on a broken educational system that has systematically failed to recognize education's role as a transformative force and a catalyst for both personal and societal independence.

To prepare Nigerian today's youths for self-employment and to improve their ability to be self-sufficient, the government altered the curricula of universities, polytechnics, and institutes of education in 2007. The secondary school curriculum in Nigeria has also been updated to include entrepreneurship education because entrepreneurship education of the highest caliber at all educational levels is the only method for empowering today's youth, creating jobs, and fostering economic growth.

## 7. Conclusions and recommendation

Youth empowerment and job creation may be achieved through entrepreneurship; however, this cannot be done without providing the youth with a direction, which can only be done with concentrated entrepreneurship intentions. A practical instrument for developing one's skills and promoting sustainable development is entrepreneurship. When today's youth have the necessary skills, they seek opportunities in their immediate surroundings rather than running after shadows and unpredictability in metropolitan regions. The talent opens the way to greatness. A skilled youth speaks with assurance, whereas a non-skilled one is terrified. The youth require skill development. It's crucial to have this to succeed in life.

Generally, entrepreneurs and those working for organizations have a huge demand for soft skills. Soft skills are necessary for employees to advance their job in relation to the goals of the company. Teamwork, resiliency, and empathy are the qualities that are required for both employees and business owners. Some soft skills are job-specific; for instance, a building architect must have a broad, holistic vision of the finished result, whereas an administrative professional needs to be organized and clear. Since he must comprehend both the soft skills required for his technical job and those that his staff must possess, an entrepreneur should possess a fairly diverse set of soft talents. There are further soft talents that entrepreneurs share in common. Soft talents are those that are necessary to perform tasks like negotiation, leadership, resilience, and long-term vision.

The federal government should create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and supply all the tools and resources required for Nigeria's economy to grow sustainably. This would enable youngsters to create jobs. Small business schools should be established by the government so that interested students and local residents can enroll. The government should create an internship program for entrepreneurs that pairs students with regionally successful business owners who have clearly defined educational goals. As part of the national economic development strategies, some studies should incorporate real schoolwork-based learning. This suggests enhancing the curriculum to include more career and technical education. The creation of an apprenticeship program would provide recent today's youths with practical work experience.

## Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## References

- Agboola, O. W. (2021). Framework for school stage entrepreneurship education in Nigeria. *Entrepreneurship Education and Pedagogy*, 4(3), 312-345. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2515127419899484>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179-211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)

- Ali, J., Jabeen, Z., & Burhan, M. (2023). Measuring factors influencing entrepreneurial intention across gender in India: Evidence from Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) Database. *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, 25(1), 63-82. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRME-08-2021-0105>
- Al-Qadasi, N., Zhang, G., Al-Awlaqi, M. A., Alshebami, A. S., & Amer, A. (2023). Factors influencing entrepreneurial intention of university students in Yemen: The mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 1(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1111934>
- Al-Qudah, A. A., Al-Okaily, M., & Alqudah, H. (2022). The relationship between social entrepreneurship and sustainable development from economic growth perspective: 15 'RCEP' countries. *Journal of Sustainable Finance & Investment*, 12(1), 44-61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20430795.2021.1880219>
- Awofala, A. O. A., Olabiyi, O. S., Ojo, O. T., Oladipo, A. J., Fatade, A. O., & Udeani, U. N. (2023). Personal and contextual factors as correlates of entrepreneurial intentions among pre-service science, technology, and mathematics teachers. *ASEAN Journal of Science and Engineering Education*, 3(3), 265-278.
- Bakker, R. M., & McMullen, J. S. (2023). Inclusive entrepreneurship: A call for a shared theoretical conversation about unconventional entrepreneurs. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 38(1), 106268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2022.106268>
- Bejinaru, R. (2018). Assessing students' entrepreneurial skills needed in the knowledge economy. *Management & Marketing*, 13(3), 1119-1132. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mmcks-2018-0027>
- Bullough, A., Renko, M., & Myatt, T. (2014). Danger zone entrepreneurs: The importance of resilience and self-efficacy for entrepreneurial intentions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38(3), 473-499. <https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12006>
- Cano, J. A., & Tabares, A. (2017). Determinants of university students' entrepreneurial intention: GUESSS Colombia study. *Espacios*, 38(45), 22.
- DeKeyser, R. (2007). Skill acquisition theory. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 97-113). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Dim, E., Onyejedum, C., & Nwankwo, A. (2022). Entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurship intention amongst undergraduate students of universities in Anambra state. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation*, 5(2), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.52589/IJEBI-OGDU9C4P>
- Dong, Y., Pang, L., & Fu, L. (2018). Research on the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intentions based on mediating effect of self-actualization. *International Journal of Innovation Science*, 11(3), 388-401. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJIS-03-2018-0027>
- Douglas, E. J., Shepherd, D. A., & Venugopal, V. (2021). A multi-motivational general model of entrepreneurial intention. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 36(4), 106107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2021.106107>
- Eniola, A. A. (2020). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy and orientation for SME development. *Small Enterprise Research*, 27(2), 125-145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13215906.2020.1752295>
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Iwara, I. O., Amaechi, K. E., & Netshandama, V. (2019). The Igba-boi apprenticeship approach: Arsenal behind growing success of Igbo entrepreneurs in Nigeria. *Journal of Conflict and Social Transformation*, 8(1), 227-250.
- Juliana, N. O., Hui, H. J., Clement, M., Solomon, E. N., & Elvis, O. K. (2021). The impact of creativity and innovation on entrepreneurship development: Evidence from Nigeria. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 9(4), 1743-1770. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojbm.2021.94095>
- Kautonen, T., van Gelderen, M., & Fink, M. (2015). Robustness of the theory of planned behavior in predicting entrepreneurial intentions and actions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 39(3), 655-674. <https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12056>
- Lasram, A., Boukef, S., Chaker, H., & Dellagi, H. (2022). Gender effect on the professional integration and remuneration of tunisian young higher education graduates. In M. Shelley, H. Akcay & O. T. Ozturk (Eds.), *Proceedings of ICRES 2022-International Conference on Research in Education and Science* (pp. 286-294). Antalya, TURKEY. ISTES Organization.
- Lee, K., Holland, A., & McNeill, D. (2022). Global sustainable development in the twenty-first century. *Global Sustainable Development in the Twenty-First Century*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Miranda, F. J., Chamorro-Mera, A., Rubio, S., & Pérez-Mayo, J. (2017). Academic entrepreneurial intention: The role of gender. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 9(1), 66-86. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJGE-10-2016-0037>
- Munoz, S. A., Steiner, A., & Farmer, J. (2015). Processes of community-led social enterprise development: Learning from the rural context. *Community Development Journal*, 50(3), 478-493. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsu055>

- Neneh, B. N. (2022). Entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial intention: The role of social support and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. *Studies in Higher Education*, 47(3), 587-603. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1770716>
- Nofrida, E. R., & Mahmudah, F. N. (2023). The development of an instrument to measure the college student entrepreneurship skills. *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*, 13(1), 241-250. <https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.13.01.26>
- Ohashi, T., Kusu, H., Inoue, M., Tsukagoshi, H., Takeda, R., & Saijo, M. (2023). Enhancing graduate student entrepreneurial intention: A designed workshop based on exploratory factor analysis. *International Conference on Business and Technology* (pp. 839-855). Springer, Cham.
- Okeke-Ezeanyanwu, J. A., & Ogbughalu, A. M. (2021). Contribution of business studies towards enhancing students' entrepreneurial intention in junior secondary schools in Onitsha education zone, Anambra state. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education (NIGJBED)*, 8(2), 241-253.
- Olutuase, S. O., Brijlal, P., & Yan, B. (2020). Model for stimulating entrepreneurial skills through entrepreneurship education in an African context. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08276331.2020.1786645>
- Raby, R. L., Fischer, H., & Cruz, N. I. (2023). Community college international leaders' sensemaking: Entrepreneurial leadership skills and behavior. *Community College Review*, 51(1), 52-74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00915521221125822>
- Škare, M., Blanco-Gonzalez-Tejero, C., Crecente, F., & del Val, M. T. (2022). Scientometric analysis on entrepreneurial skills-creativity, communication, leadership: How strong is the association? *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 182, 121851. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2022.121851>
- Uzoka, O. L., & Nwaizugbo, I. C. (2021). Government intervention, subjective norms and the entrepreneurial intentions of Nigerian University Graduates. *Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)*, 5(4), 1650-1659. <https://www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd43691.pdf>
- Vaidya, D. M., & Dhruv, A. J. (2021, September). Data-science to predict entrepreneurial skills based on profession. *2021 International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Machine Vision (AIMV)* (pp. 1-5). IEEE.
- Wang, J. (2021, May). An empirical study on the influencing factors of entrepreneurial intention of college graduates majoring in marketing. *2021 2nd International Conference on Computers, Information Processing and Advanced Education* (pp. 545-550). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3456887.3457010>
- Yuan, Y., Cao, J., & Zhang, F. (2020). Research on the problems existing in the employment of college students in the new era and the employment guidance strategy of counselors. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(9), 245-250. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2020.89019>