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Relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation, Entrepreneurial Skills, Environmental Factor and Entrepreneurial Intention among Nigerian Students in UUM

Najafi Auwalu Ibrahim^{*1,2} and Esuh Ossai-Igwe Lucky¹

1. Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia.

2. Department of Business Administration and Entrepreneurship, Bayero University, Kano. PMB 3011, Kano, Nigeria.

Governments in the developing countries are doing enough to ensure student's engagement in entrepreneurship activities in order to reduce the level of unemployment among graduates. However, among these students lack of entrepreneurial intention is very common. Therefore, this study examined the entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian students in UUM. The study used cross-sectional research design with quantitative questionnaire approach. The study used convenience sampling technique to select 155 participants who provided information on the entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skill and environmental factor and their connection with entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian students. A regression analysis was used to analysis the data. Overall, the study revealed that both entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial skill have a strong association with entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian students. On the contrary, the finding revealed that the environmental factor is not significantly related with the entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian students. The study concludes that both entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial skill are essential factors required to realize entrepreneurial intention by the Nigerian students in UUM. Limitations and future directions are also discussed in this study.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skill, environmental factor, entrepreneurial intention, Students, UUM

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has long been in the history of human beings; it has cut across almost every aspect of human endeavors such as management, engineering, economics and marketing. It has been growing radically for the past two decades, with organizations, individuals and academicians becoming more concern with the role it plays in the development of youth towards becoming self-reliance (Abidin & Bakar, 2005). Entrepreneurship

plays major roles as economic and development force, especially in developed countries. In general, entrepreneurship has been described as a process of the creation of new things that will improve the standard of living or solve a particular problem of the human being which leads to the creation of a new wealth (Drucker, 1985). Moris, Lewis and Sexton (1994) found that entrepreneurship activities have great impacts on the economy of the

*Corresponding author: Najafi Auwalu Ibrahim,

Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia.

²Department of Business Administration and Entrepreneurship, Bayero University, Kano. PMB 3011, Kano, Nigeria.

E-Mail: najafauwal@gmail.com

country, and also the life of the citizens. It is achieved by generating employment that lead to the empowerment of the people that in turn impact positively on the economy.

Many countries are adopting entrepreneurship development program in their tertiary institutions with a view to inculcate the concept to their teaming populations, to achieve better-economic development and growth. However, the possibility of students taking entrepreneurship course to become future entrepreneurs has become a major concern within and outside the academic community as many of them never turns out to become one (Abidin & Bakar, 2005; Lucky & Minai, 2011). In Malaysian for instance, understanding the role of entrepreneurship toward economic development has been very clear to the government. For example, the government and all stakeholders are doing more to ensure they promote its conduct at all levels. These include the introduction of compulsory entrepreneurship program in schools and universities with the aim of producing and inculcating the culture and habit of becoming entrepreneurs. However, these programs failed to put the foreign students into consideration. We are of the belief that most-foreign students may possess the entrepreneurial abilities that may contribute to the nation's transformation agenda. The assumption in this study is that allowing the foreign students involvement in one form of entrepreneurial activity or the other would allow the students to contribute some quota in the overall Malaysian economic development. The study by Veciana, Aponte & Urbano (2005) students' career believed that the university institutions play a crucial and dominant role for university students to embark on entrepreneurial activities. The assumption is that institutions rules, attitude, and social function plays a dominant role for university students to embark on an entrepreneurial career (Veciana, Aponte, & Urbano, 2005).

However, one major problem with the student's entrepreneurial intention is the lack of entrepreneurial orientation among them due to the lack of emphasis on entrepreneurial programs for foreign students by the university. For instance, most of the entrepreneurial programs in UUM are only meant for the local students. For example, the

technopreneurship program which emphasizes the need for the students to become an entrepreneur is limited to the local students. Accordingly, most-entrepreneurial orientation (e.g. Bhuian, Richard, & Shamma, 2012; Bolton & Lane, 2012; Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001) studies are organizational based with much consideration to the students in higher institutions. Secondly, Arowomole (2000) has identified the lack of entrepreneurial skill as one major problem to entrepreneurial intention. Also, Kuratko and Hodgetts (2004) also observed that entrepreneurial skill is an important factor for a successful entrepreneurship development which also covers entrepreneurial intention. According to Adeyemo (2009), entrepreneurs need to possess certain entrepreneurial skills such as sales and marketing skills, self-motivation skill, financial know-how, time management skill, administrative skills, management skills, technological skill, etc. to be able to achieve their entrepreneurial goals. The author argued that potential entrepreneurs can acquire these skills through their effort and time investment. Furthermore, Grimaldi, Marzocchi and Sobrero (2009a) affirmed that the entrepreneurial skill such as the ability to use new technology will affect entrepreneurial intention of an individual. Pyysiäinen et al. (2006) suggest further study on the entrepreneurial skill in relation to the entrepreneurial intention.

Apart from entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial skill highlighted above, environmental factor is also of serious concerned for an effective entrepreneurial intention among the students. There is also a lack of enabling and supportive environment is a major challenge among the students in the academic institution towards building their intention on entrepreneurship activities (Abdullah, Hamali, Deen, Saban, & Abdurahman, 2009; Indarti, Rostiani, & Nastiti, 2007; Lucky & Minai, 2011; Taormina & Lao, 2007). They all believe that the relationship between environment and entrepreneurial intention is worth investigating. The Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1991) assumed that certain factors such as behavior (orientation), characteristics (skills) and environment play a vital role in stirring individual

intention in becoming what he/she wants to become.

Despite the above mentioned study, there is still not enough study on entrepreneurship especially on foreign student. Thus, purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skills, environmental factor and entrepreneurial intention especially on foreign students in UUM with particular interest in Nigeria students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurial intention

Just like entrepreneurship the concept of entrepreneurial intention has been defined by several authors. The concept of entrepreneurial intention is defined by Bird (1988), as the mindsets that direct, guide, coordinate and control the basic concept (action) of new business development, implementation and evaluation. Entrepreneurial intention as defined by Thompson (2009) as the self-acknowledged conviction of the individual mind in the possibility of starting up a new business with a sincere and dedicated plan to so at a certain point of time. He went further to state that the concept of entrepreneurial intention helps in determining the strength of intention of starting up a new business. These are in line with the assumption of the Ajzen's theory that explains that the higher the intention, the higher the possibility of displaying the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In fact, it has been strongly established that entrepreneurial intention validated determinants of the entrepreneurial activities of an individual. Therefore, studying the entrepreneurial intention clearly helps in understanding the antecedents that predict entrepreneurial intention (Bird, 1988; Davidsson, 1995; Ismail et al., 2009; Krueger Jr, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000; Liñán, 2004; Peterman & Kennedy, 2003).

For example, Autio, Keeley, Klofsten, Parker, and Hay, (2001) study the entrepreneurial intention of students in USA. The study was conducted using the theory of planned behavior using a sample of four different business schools from four countries; this gives enough and robust possibility of comparing them in other to see the entrepreneurial

intention of these different schools. The study shows that all the three factors identified by Ajzen's theory of planned behavior were found to be significant in terms of determining the entrepreneurial intention of the students. Also, when compared with the school, only London business school students were found not to be significant in relation to subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention. Recently, Samuel, Ernest, and Awauh (2013) investigate an assessment of Entrepreneurship Intention among Sunyani Polytechnic Marketing Student found that intention of students to become entrepreneurs is high and that students have high interest in becoming entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial Orientation

The idea of the concept of entrepreneurial orientation can be traced back to probably Miller (1983) who provides significant insight especially at the firm level. He suggested that an entrepreneurial firm is one that "engages in product market innovation, undertakes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with 'proactive' innovations, beating competitors to the punch" (1983: 771). In his view "innovativeness," "risk taking," and "proactiveness" are the key factors of entrepreneurial firms. Many researchers have approached the concept of entrepreneurial orientation on the original conceptualization of Miller (1983) e.g. (Covin & Slevin, 1989; Naman & Slevin, 1993). However, Lumpkin and Dess (1996) based on the concept of Miller (1983) incorporate two more characteristics which are autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. According to him, autonomy is defined as the possibility of an individual or groups develops an idea and also executes it without any intervention, control or supervision. While competitive aggressiveness is defined as the possibility of an individual to directly and intensely question the strategy and challenge the performance of its industrial rival.

In the past, several studies have been conducted in order to test entrepreneurial intention, and other factors consider influencing entrepreneurial intention like environment, skills, gender, religion, Employment Status, Family Background, Personality type, etc. For instance, a study

conducted by Wiklund (1999) on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance. The study which was conducted using Swedish small firms, the findings of the study indicates a positive relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and firm performance. The findings also indicates that this relationship increases over time, it also shows that investing in entrepreneurial orientation is very good for small firms as it will yield a high return in the long run. Similarly, Pihie and Bagher (2011) examined the entrepreneurial attitude orientation of Malay secondary school students in relation to self-efficacy. The study was conducted using the descriptive approach in order to examine the entrepreneurship intention among the secondary school of Malaysia. A set of questionnaire was distributed to 2,574 students that were selected randomly in order to test their entrepreneurial orientation and self-efficacy. The findings of the study indicate that a moderate high entrepreneurial attitude toward entrepreneurial intention. The students see themselves as entrepreneurs in the future as they have high self-esteem and need for achievement.

Environment Factors

Both entrepreneurs and business feel the reaction of the environment; this is because neither of them acts in a vacuum (Peters & Waterman, 1982). As such the entrepreneurs and business have to relate in one way or the other, through the exchange of goods and services, human capital and resources with the larger society. The critical factors for the development and sustainability of entrepreneurship in a country or region are referred to as an entrepreneurial environment (Gnyawali & Fogel, 1994). Ogundele (2007) describe environment as all the conditions and influences affecting the development of an organism or organization. Van de Ven (1993) is of the view that for any study on entrepreneurship that disregard environment is insufficient and incomplete. Environment has been widely identified as one of the key players that ensure, and dictate the continual survival and continuation of the business (Arowomole, 2000).

Obviously, the assumption and perception of people to engage in business is encouraged by

conducive environment irrespective of the region or specialty of the business. Gnyawali and Fogel (1994) Classify entrepreneurial environment as policy and programs of the government, entrepreneurial skills, socioeconomic conditions, financial and non-financial support. The business environment plays a very vital role in influencing entrepreneurial activities, which many scholars associated it with the role of government in promoting entrepreneurship. Some of the roles of the government come in term policies and programs such as of funding, externalities, and infrastructures that shape the real local context. In addition, the university environment (support) is also identified as vital mechanisms that influence entrepreneurial activities (Fini, Grimaldi, & Sobrero, 2009c; Morris & Lewis, 1995).

For instance, Abdullah et al. (2009) noted that the environment plays a positive impact on the development of small firms in the society to the extent that it influences entrepreneurial activity. Accordingly, several studies e.g. Uddin and Bose (2012) found a strong correlation between the environment and the entrepreneurial intentions. Their study suggests that the relationship between environment and entrepreneurial intention is worth investigating. Similarly, Taormina and Lao (2007), pointed out that environment has a strong influence on every individual. They argued that the environment can encourage or discourage them from becoming entrepreneurs. For example, an individual is likely to be interested in becoming an entrepreneur in an environment that promote business, while, on the other hand, the reverse will be the case in an environment that does not promote business activities. According to Lucky and Minai, (2011) environmental factor plays a crucial role in determining the probability of individual becoming entrepreneurs. They argued that enabling environment would help people to think of becoming an entrepreneur. Also, the study by Indarti, Rostiani, and Nastiti (2007) found that the environment is a significant factor in influencing entrepreneurial intention among Asian students.

Entrepreneurial skills

The need for an entrepreneur to obtain or acquire certain skills for him/her to be successful cannot

be over emphasized. According to Green, Jones, & Miles (2012), there is no consensus on what the definition of skill should be. In other words, authors are yet to agree on a universal definition of skill. Lucky and Nurahimah (2013) defined skill as the ability and capacity to do something. Wickham (2006) also defined skill as the knowledge that is best described by an action. The word "skill" is synonymous with any of the following words; "ability," "competence," "knack," "aptitude" and "talent" and its interpretation varies according to languages. Ogundele (2007) described skill as the ability and the capacity to do things. Skill has been used in many different contexts and disciplines (Adeyemo, 2009) such as entrepreneurship skill, teaching skill, football skill, etc. In entrepreneurship context, for example, skill has been identified as one of the most-important factors required to become entrepreneurs to be successful in their entrepreneurial practices, including those that have the intention to become entrepreneurs.

Several authors have examined entrepreneurial skill and how it relates to entrepreneurial intention e.g. (Adeyemo, 2009; Levie & Hart, 2009; Liñán, 2008). For instance, the empirical study by Adeyemo (2009) in his study to understand the entrepreneurial skills acquisition through a case study reported that teachers who want to become entrepreneurs must possess entrepreneurial skills. In his on view teachers with entrepreneurial skill tends to contribute more in terms of educating students on the need for them to engage in entrepreneurship irrespective of their discipline. That is to say there is a strong correlation between entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, a study conducted by Liñán (2008) in which he studies how skills and value perception affect entrepreneurial intention using the Ajzen's theory of planned behavior. The study conducted on 249-university students using a structural equation model to test hypothesis, with the main objectives of determining existence and reach of both skills and value perception. The result of the study indicates that both skills and perceived value are found to be significant, therefore, plays a vital role in the determination of entrepreneurial intention.

Moreover, the study conducted by Phelan & Sharpley (2012), on the entrepreneurial skills in relation with the competency of farm tourism with the aim of finding on how to diversify the farm tourism in other to generate more incomes, as a result, of sustainability and diversification. The findings of the study show that managerial skills are valued and vital to the farmers, however many of the farmers are found to be wanting or lacking in terms of entrepreneurial skills and business competency which are key requirements for the success of this diversification of the rural economy. Based on this it is clear that an entrepreneurial skill is significant to the success of the farm tourism.

From above literature review some following hypothesis are subtracted to examine Relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skills, environmental factor and entrepreneurial intention.

H₁: Entrepreneurial orientation will positively correlate with entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian students in UUM.

H₂: Entrepreneurial skill is positively related with the entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian students in UUM.

H₃: Environmental factor is positively related to entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian students in UUM.

FIGURE 1 HERE

METHODOLOGY

The researcher distributed 200 questionnaires, out of which 155 were filled and return to the researcher, this amount to 77.5% of respondent's rate of return. This amount is assumed to represent the sample size which can be use to represent the total population of Nigerian students in UUM of 278 as at June 2014. From the statistics, the descriptive analysis shows a total number of 127 males students (81.9%) and 28 female (28%). The result also indicates that 56 (36.1%) of the respondents are between the age of 20-30, 62 (40%) are within the age bracket of 31-40 and 37 (23.9%) where above the age 41. The result further shows that 49 (31.6%) respondents were not married, while 103 respondents making up (66.5%) were

married, and lastly the remaining 3 (1.9%) were divorced. In terms of the academic qualification of the respondents, it shows that 3 (1.9%) are Ph.D. holders, 109 (70.3%) have masters while the remaining 43 (27.7%) have degree. In the specialization, 113 (72.9%) are of management sciences; 22 (14.2%) are of arts and humanities while the remaining 20 (12.9%) are of sciences. Looking at the statistics of the semester duration of the respondents 15 (9.7%) are semester one, 62 (40.0%) are of the second semester, 47 (30.3%) are of the third semester, 17 (11.0%) were in there fourth semester; 10 (6.5%) are of the fifth semester and the remaining 4 (2.5%) belongs to semester six and above.

Variable measurement

All the variables in this study were measured using five-point scale with an option ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree based on the previous studies of Liñán (2008), Liñán and Chen (2009) and Bolton and Lane (2012). Entrepreneurial intention was measured using the items developed by Liñán and Chen (2009), in which six (6) items were adapted. In the same vein, entrepreneurial orientation was measured with the items developed by Bolton and Lane (2012) which was developed specifically to measure the individual entrepreneurial orientation, the study adopt all the ten (10) items. In measuring entrepreneurial skill, the study adapted six (6) of the item developed by (Liñán, 2008). In the same vein, the environmental factors were adapted from the study of Liñán (2008) which has 7 items. All the items indicate internal consistency reliability of .85, .81, .91 and .88 for entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skills, environmental factors and entrepreneurial Intention respectively.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics and Pearson's moment correlation was used to analyze the Relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skills, environmental factor and entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian students in UUM. The study also states Cronbach's alpha of each of the variable in order to test its reliability. The present study calculates the mean and

standard deviations for all the four (4) variables as shown in the table 1 below, Using 5-point scales for all the variables (entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skills, environmental factor and entrepreneurial intention).

TABLE 1 HERE

The correlation Analysis was done after fulfilling the basic assumptions such as ascertains the outliers, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity, etc. The result of the analysis in Table 1 shows that there is a correlation between entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial intention ($r=.515$, $p<0.01$); entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intention ($r=.559$, $p<0.01$). However, the result did not find any correlation between the environmental factor and entrepreneurial intention ($r=.136$, $p<0.01$). Based on correlation result, it is revealed that the correlation between entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intention is considered a strong one while the correlation between the environmental factor and entrepreneurial intention is a very weak one. However, this is in line with Salkind (2009) study that an entrepreneurial skill has the highest and strongest correlation with entrepreneurial intention.

Since correlation analyses only provide the cause and effect of the relationship, there is a need for us to conduct a regression analysis in other to confirm the research hypothesis. The process of testing the variables simultaneously using SPSS is referred to as multiple regression analyses. The main reason of the multiple regressions is to analyze the strength of the variable if they are tested in a group in relation to the dependent variable-entrepreneurial intention.

TABLE 2 HERE

Specifically, the result from table 2 shows *Hypothesis 1* the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial intention is statistically significant ($\beta = 0.28$; $t = 3.38$; $p < 0.05$). Hence, indicating support for hypothesis 1. Similarly, *Hypothesis 2* indicates that the relationship between environmental factors is not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.39$; $t = 4.67$; $p < 0.01$). The result also provides support for hypothesis 2. The result of *Hypothesis 3* shows

that the relationship between environmental factors and entrepreneurial intention is not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.03$; $t = 0.17$; $p > 0.01$). Thus, hypothesis 3 was not supported.

DISCUSSION ON THE FINDINGS

This study investigates the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skills, environmental factor and entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian students in UUM. The study was conducted using the theory of planned behavior (1991) as an underpinning theory. The study like other studies reveals the existence of the relationship between a dependent variable (entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skills and environmental factor) and the independent variable (entrepreneurial intention).

First the study found a moderate positive significant correlation between entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian students in UUM. Generally speaking, the finding is consistent with previous studies (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; Smith & Perks, 2006) that either found a significant relationship at individual or organizational level highlighted entrepreneurial orientation and entrepreneurial skill as significant predictors of entrepreneurial intention. The study also revealed that entrepreneurial skill is a significant determinant of entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian students in UUM.

Second the study found a strong positive significant associate between entrepreneurial skill and entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian students in UUM. The study also revealed that entrepreneurial skill is strongly linked to entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian students in UUM. This result supports the findings by Fini, Grimaldi, et al. (2009b) who affirmed that entrepreneurial skills are significantly related to entrepreneurial intention. Thus, the study affirmed that the entrepreneurial skill is significant related to entrepreneurial intention. Also, Sookhtanlo, et al. (2009) also found that effective entrepreneurial intention among students highly depend on entrepreneurial skill of the students.

Finally, but on the contrary, the study also revealed a very weak and insignificant interaction

between environmental factors and entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian students in UUM. This finding failed to support the previous findings by Sama-Ae (2009) which affirmed that external factor affect the entrepreneurial intention of the Thai student in UUM. Also, the study did not collaborate the finding by Fini, Grimaldi, et al. (2009b) which affirmed that environment is significantly related to entrepreneurial intention. They further concur that the environmental support and environmental influence are very crucial for the effective attainment of student's entrepreneurial intention. The finding also fails to support the finding of Uddin and Bose, (2012) states that environment is significantly related to entrepreneurial intention among students. However, the study is in line with the findings of Ahmed et al., (2011), in their study they found that even though environment can play a major role in motivating an individual to become an entrepreneur, but there is no significant relationship was found between the environmental factor and entrepreneurial intention.

The findings for this study have some implications. The study provides additional insight in the existence of a substantial number of literatures that exist in the concept of entrepreneurial intention and the factors affecting it with particular focus on Nigerian students in UUM. The study also contributes by providing an appropriate guideline the policy makers especially government agency in identifying interest of entrepreneurs, thereby providing training and other support needed to enhance their entrepreneurial intention. The study will also guide the government in promoting the positive image of entrepreneurship in the mind of the students.

Limitation and recommendation for future study

Based on the objectives of this study, the analysis was limited only to the regression analysis in order to understand the influence of entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skill and environmental factors on the entrepreneurial intention among foreign students in UUM. Therefore, this study recommends hierarchical regression with the introduction of a mediating or

moderating variable in order to better explain the variation in the influence of entrepreneurial orientation, entrepreneurial skill and environmental factors on the entrepreneurial intention among foreign students in UUM.

Apart from that another limitation of this study is the value of the R-squared reported. The study reported 38% of the total variance in entrepreneurial intention, clearly suggesting that other factors could significantly explain the variance in students' entrepreneurial intention. Besides 38%, the remaining 62% of the total variance is beyond this study; therefore, future research can be conducted using other underlying factors that explain entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian students in Malaysian Universities. The present study was conducted in one of the universities in Malaysia precisely UUM. Therefore, it is recommended that future study should conduct a similar research collecting data from other universities not only in Malaysia but in other countries with a view to validating and increase the generalization of the finding obtained in this study.

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APPENDIX

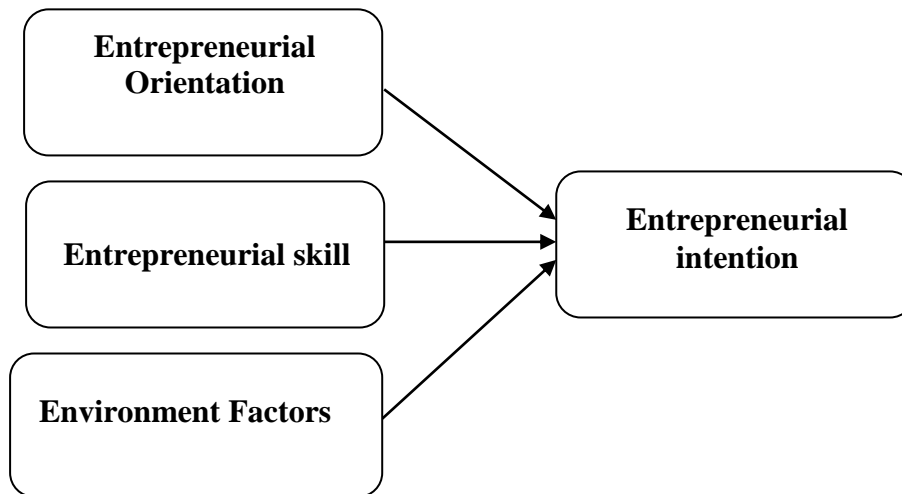


Figure 1: The conceptual framework

Table 1: Pearson’s moment correlation N=155

Description of Variables	Mean	SD	Alpha	EO	ES	EF	EI
Entrepreneurial Intention	4.25	.70	.85	1			
Entrepreneurial Orientation	3.96	.63	.81	.607**	1		
Entrepreneurial Skills	4.17	.59	.91	.116	.179	1	
Environmental Factors	3.03	.97	.88	.515**	.559**	.136	1

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

Table 2: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis (entrepreneurial intention as Dependent Variable).

Variables	Beta	SE	t-value	Sig.	Findings
Entrepreneurial Orientation	0.28	0.11	3.38	.001**	Supported
Entrepreneurial Skills	0.39	0.12	4.67	.000*	Supported
Environmental Factors	0.03	0.54	0.17	.592 ^{NS}	Not Supported

*p<0.001, **p<0.005, Sig =Significant, NS = Not Significant