



## **Relationship Between Students' Entrepreneurship Attitude and their Perception of Sustainable Development**

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### **Abstract**

Entrepreneurship attitude and sustainable development are two important concepts which drive the economy of any nation to a large extent. Therefore, this paper investigated the relationship between entrepreneurship attitude and the perception of sustainable development among Imo State University students, Owerri, Imo State. Two research questions guided the study. A correlation survey design was adopted in this study. Two expert-validated instruments (EAS and PSDQ) developed by the researchers were used to collect data for the study with a Cronbach Alpha reliability of 0.76 for EAS and 0.79 for PSDQ. A total of 400 randomly selected students were drawn from the five Faculty of Imo state University Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine took part in the study. The sample was selected using random sampling technique. The data collected were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient and simple regression analysis at  $p < 0.05$ . The findings revealed that students' entrepreneurship attitude relates positively and significantly with their perceived sustainable environment. Also, students' entrepreneurship attitude contributed 26.3% to the variance observed in students' perception of sustainable development. Therefore, it was recommended that lecturers should consider students' attitude when planning and giving lectures on entrepreneurship.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Education, Attitude, Sustainable Development

### **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship education is the education that prepares students and youths to be responsible and enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs or entrepreneurial thinkers and who contribute to the economic development of the nation. It focuses on developing understanding and capacity in pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours, skills and attributes in widely different context. According to Agbionu (2008), entrepreneurship involves a process aimed at creating wealth for the purpose of growth and development of the environment, and in order to achieve this it must delve into the realm of bringing abstraction into reality.

Entrepreneurship refers to the processes and activities connected with creating, wning and managing a business firm. An entrepreneur on the other hand refers to a person who creates and nurtures a private business, (Carland, Carland & Stewart, 2000). The entrepreneurial or venture creation process is not a one day or one-step activity. The process usually begins as an idea, a dream, thought, desire,

entrepreneurial attitude and intention, which may or may not be acted upon. Entrepreneurship education is regarded as being useful in promoting an awareness of self-employment as a career option, and equipping students with skills and attitudes required for effective business ownership (Audet, 2000). This is important and imperative too as undergraduate face many problems bothering on long-term unemployment after graduation which in no small measure hinder their social development and paint an uncertain picture of their future.

However, there have been a lot of concerns in recent times on the issues of sustainable environment. Researchers in various fields of studies (Economics, Management, Agriculture, Environmental Sciences and Policy makers) are worried of the impact of humans' activity on the environment), (Du Plessis, Nel, & Al-Shamaa, 2012). Sustainability on the other hand refers to the prevention of the global resource base through conservation of natural consumption. It includes, using conservation of natural resources that can turn to money making venture through re-cycling, waste and water management, using renewable energy resources and developing environment friendly land and property assets. The term sustainable development according to Shaa (2008) refers to the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It encompasses all of material needs, values, relationship, freedom to think, act and participate in the binding and sustainability of the environment. Sustainable development no doubt recognizes that growth must be inclusive and environmentally sound in order to reduce poverty and hardship and establish a stronger and progressive platform for today's population and as well meet the needs of future generation (Ezeala, Eromaka, Bella & Nwogu, 2020).

There is no gainsaying that sustainable development is imperative and very significant for the growth, progress and upward existence of the world. The reason for the introduction of sustainable development is to enhance the achievement of a better today and greater tomorrow and building of a successful generation. This can be possible through acquiring relevant entrepreneurial skills. Stakeholders in sustainable development are of the view that people should adopt behaviour and attitudes that will create a society where people consider and evaluate the consequences of their actions based on a long term impact on the environmental well beings (Arbuthnot, 2009). Consequently, more information is required in the development of sustainable intervention to improve the employability of students after graduation.

Entrepreneurship covers the possession of relevant skills and competences for wealth creation, resource production and utilization or reinforcing the potentiality of available resources inputs for wealth creation. The introduction of entrepreneurship education requires proper change in attitudes of the students. Hornby as cited in Obidoa, Nwodo and Chukwu (2008) stated that attitude is the way you think and feel about somebody/something or the way you behave towards something/somebody perception on the other hand refers to a feeling one has on something such as a concept, idea or motion. Hornby (2006) defined it as an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something.

Regrettably, students' attitude towards entrepreneurship and their perception of sustainable



development is unimpressive, low and discouraging. Therefore, there is urgent need to make them develop positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education and positively modify their view or perception of sustainable development. One way of achieving this is by orienting and re-orienting them on the importance of entrepreneurship education, awakening their thinking, feelings, values, ideas and attitudes to enable them acquire the relevant entrepreneurial skills that will make them self-dependence even after graduation. A proper understanding of entrepreneurship education will help the students develop and maintain positive attitude towards sustainable development.

When development become unsustainable, it leads to various serious problems such as deteriorating atmospheric conditions; erratic change in the climate, increased cost of produce food worldwide, increasing inequality among nations; and unrenting economic conditions (Keys, Thomse & Smith, 2010), Plessis (2012) opines that students' perception and attitude towards development sustainability is limited. The authors further established that respondents with different cultures and varied personal and professional background have different approaches towards entrepreneurship and sustainable development. This paper is designed to ascertain the relationship between students' entrepreneurship attitude and their perception of sustainable development.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Undergraduates face many challenges, but the prospect of long-term unemployment after graduation paints a particularly bleak picture for the social development and the future of the youths. Very few research results are available on students' attitudes towards entrepreneurship and sustainable development and their future plans. Consequently, more information is required in the development of sustainable interventions to improve the employability of students after graduation. The view of researchers is that students' entrepreneurship attitude toward sustainable development programme will change the attitude and perception towards sustainable development. This paper therefore, intends to investigate the relationship between students' entrepreneurship attitude and their perceived sustainable development.

### **Research Questions**

The study provides answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between students' entrepreneurship attitude and their perception of sustainable development?

### **Method**

The choice of the study area is not unconnected to the increase in the unemployment level and wastage of human and material resources especially among graduates. The target population for the study comprised all 16,528 students of Imo state University, Owerri. This set of population is considered appropriate for the study due to their exposure to entrepreneurship skills, acquisition. A multi-stage sampling technique by balloting. Thus, a proportionate sampling technique was adopted in selecting samples from each of the selected faculties in the order of 96,83,75,74 and 72 respectively. Two experts validated instruments were used in the study for data collection. The instruments which were tagged "Entrepreneurship Attitude Scale (EAS) and "Perceived Sustainable Development

Questionnaire (PSDQ)” were divided into two section of “A” and “B”. The section “A” of the questionnaires assessed the respondents’ bio-data such as sex, age, department/faculty, type of programme and level. While section “B” examined the attitude of students towards entrepreneurship and their perception of sustainable development respectively. The instrument was designed in a modified Likert format of strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed. Each response pattern was rated in the following order, SA=4 points, A=3points, D=2 points and SD=1 point for positive statements, while negative statements are rated thus; SA=1 point, A=2 points, D=3points and SD= 4points.

Following the validation of the instrument, the researcher visited the selected faculties and administered the instruments to the sampled respondents. This was done by their researchers alone and was done by hand. The essence is to avoid loss of instruments and to give all respondents equal opportunity to respond adequately to the instruments.

## Results

**Research Question one:** What is the relationship between students’ entrepreneurship attitude and their perception of sustainable development?

**Table 1**

**Correlation of the Students’ Entrepreneurship Attitude and their Perception of Sustainable Development**

		PSD	Entrep-Attitude
<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	PSD	1.000	.512
	Entrep-Attitude	.512	1.000
<b>Sig. (1-tailed)</b>	PSD	.	.000
	Entrep-Attitude	.000	.
<b>N</b>	PSD	400	400
	Entrep-Attitude	400	400

*Significant at  $p < 0.05$ .*

The result in Table 1 shows that students’ entrepreneurship attitude relates positively and significantly with their perceived of sustainable development ( $R = 0.512$ ). This relationship is significant as attested to by the p-value (Sig. = 0.000,  $p < 0.05$ ).

## Discussion of Findings

From the findings of the study, it shows that students’ entrepreneurship attitude relates positively and significantly with their perceived sustainable development. This, on the other hand, implies that an improvement in entrepreneurship attitude would lead to improved perception of sustainable development and that the relationship between entrepreneurship attitude and perceived sustainable development is significant to an extent that it cannot be neglected or overlooked.

On other land, students’ entrepreneurship attitude contributed 26.3% to the variance observed in students’ perception of sustainable development. This by implication goes to show that there is urgent



need to make students develop positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education and positively modify their perceptions of sustainable development. This is in agreement with Audet's (2000) submission that entrepreneurship education in particular is regarded as being useful in promoting an awareness of self-employment as a career option, and equipping students with skills and attitudes required for effective business ownership. Therefore, proper understanding of entrepreneurship education will help the students develop and maintain positive perception of sustainable development.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study show that students' entrepreneurship attitude relates positively and significantly with their perceived sustainable development and also contributed significantly to students' perception of sustainable development. The fact that students' entrepreneurship attitude related positively and significantly with their perceived sustainable development indicates that there is needed to help undergraduate students develop attitudes required for effective business ownership. Such help and effort, by lecturers, will go a long way to improve students' attitude in entrepreneurship education and at the same time help students to sustain their environment through entrepreneurship.

## Recommendations

1. Lecturers should consider students' attitude when planning and giving lectures on entrepreneurship education.
2. Also, there is need to cultivate in our youths the spirit of business adventure, the audacity to take calculated risk and the strength of character which will enhance sustainability on the part of the students.

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