Students' Perceptions of Entrepreneurial Skills and Sustainable Development: A Survey of Selected Higher Education Institutions in Lagos State

IKUYINMINU Taiwo[1]
CHIDI Christopher Odogwu[2]
ELEGBEDE Sikirulahi Tunde[3]

[1, 2 & 3]Department of Employment Relations & Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Lagos, Yaba, Akoka, Lagos State

Corresponding Author: [1]taiwoikuyinminu@gmail.com
[2]ochidi@unilag.edu.ng, [3]telegbede@unilag.edu.ng

Abstract

The study examined the perceptions of students in higher education institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria on the role of entrepreneurial skills in achieving sustainable development. The specific objective of the study was to investigated students' views on the contribution of entrepreneurial skills to sustainable development. The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. The population size is 6,267. Using the stratified and simple random sampling, a sample of 376 students was drawn. Data were collected using structured questionnaire with was designed using a 4-point Rensis Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and weighted mean scores, were used to analyse the data. The results showed that students have favourable opinions about how much entrepreneurial abilities support sustainable development (weighted mean = 3.02). Respondents agreed that entrepreneurial skills enable solution creation for societal problems, reduce unemployment and poverty, promote innovation-driven economic growth, and support long-term national development. Similarly, entrepreneurship education significantly influenced students' perceptions positively (weighted mean = 3.03), as it enhances their understanding of sustainable development. The study concludes that while students demonstrate favourable perceptions, greater emphasis on practical training and balanced coverage of economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability is required. It is recommended that there should be robust institutional support systems to promote entrepreneurial education in Nigeria. Students should be encouraged to develop entrepreneurial mindsets and competencies such as creativity, financial literacy, digital skills, as well as problem-solving skills to enhance their contribution to sustainable national and enterprise development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Skills, Higher Education, Students' Perceptions, Sustainable Development

Introduction

The focus of higher education institutions has shifted from knowledge transfer to being major contributors to socio-economic transformation and sustainable development, especially in the past few decades. Besides imparting knowledge, universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education are now expected to equip graduates with practical skills, innovative and entrepreneurial competencies to solve complex societal problems. The formulation of the Entrepreneurship Education Policy in 2006, made entrepreneurship education compulsory across all higher education institutions. The policy was created to inculcate in students entrepreneurial skills needed for self-reliance and societal development. This has been reinforced by subsequent policy documents such as the National Youth Policy (2019-2023) and the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards developed by the National Universities Commission. These are efforts that focus on the development of 21st-century skills such as innovation, problem-solving, creativity, and digital competence, which are key to entrepreneurship and sustainable development (National Universities Commission, 2022). The incorporation of these skills into the curriculum should enable higher education institutions to produce graduates who can make valuable contributions to sustainable economic development and adapt to the changing dynamics of the labour market.

In spite of these policy formulations, youth employment in Nigeria remains a major problem. This is evident in the subsisting mismatch between the skills gained in institutions of higher education and those needed by the labour market. The unemployment rate among post-secondary education holders remains significant, while a significant share of the youth population is neither in education, employment, nor training (NBS, 2024). This situation prompts one to question whether entrepreneurship education effectively shapes students' perceptions and attitudes towards entrepreneurship as a means to achieve sustainable development. The key entrepreneurial skills essential to business creation are also essential to sustainable development – opportunity recognition, innovation, risk-taking, and resource management. These skills help people put forward solutions to economic, environmental and social issues. However, how much students feel these skills apply to the field of sustainable development remains to be seen. Students' perceptions have special significance because they can affect their career plans, entrepreneurial activity, and the probability of participating in a venture with a long-term impact on society (Țoniș-Bucea-Manea et al., 2015).

Moreover, institutional support, such as entrepreneurship training programmes, entrepreneurial mentoring, access to finance, and business networks, has a significant impact on students' entrepreneurial experiences and perceptions. However, there is evidence that students can exhibit entrepreneurial motivation; without the necessary support systems, these skills can be less effective in achieving real-world results (Rusu & Roman, 2018; Patel et al., 2024). The effectiveness and relevance that students perceive in their entrepreneurial skills as they apply them may be related to the quality of the institutional support they receive. Lagos State is considered a commercial epicentre of Nigeria, and several initiatives have been rolled out in the area to encourage entrepreneurship and youth empowerment. This includes programmes for enterprise development,

innovation hubs, and schemes to fund businesses and drive economic growth. However, their impact will depend heavily on whether students think the entrepreneurial skills they have acquired are relevant to solving real-world problems and to sustainable development. If students feel that the skills, they have learnt are not relevant or do not impact sustainable development, then the overall objective of entrepreneurship for sustainable development might not be achieved.

There is no doubt that entrepreneurial education is important for sustainable development. Despite the growing emphasis on entrepreneurship as a desideratum for employment creation, innovation, and sustainable development, many higher education institutions continue to face challenges in equipping students with relevant entrepreneurial skills. There is also limited understanding of how students perceive the contribution of entrepreneurial skills to sustainable development. This creates a gap in knowledge regarding whether students recognise entrepreneurial skills as essential for addressing economic, social, and environmental challenges. This is the gap this present study intends to fill.

Literature Review

The literature review section is focused on conceptual review of literature, the theoretical framework and review of empirical studies germane to the study.

Concept of Entrepreneurship

The concept of entrepreneurship has been variously described in the academic literature, as it encompasses a range of activities and attitudes that are both economic and opportunity- and value-based. There is a strong view of innovation and opportunity recognition. Entrepreneurship is defined as the pursuit of profitable opportunities by enterprising people (Bateman & Snell, 2011). It is an innovative pursuit – making a new opportunity where there was none. The entrepreneur is not just responding to market conditions; he/she is searching for the absence of something, creating something new, or changing the configuration of something that already exists in a new way. The definition emphasises the person's entrepreneurial nature, as a proactive and creative force in bringing about change and turning ideas into real economic opportunities. A complementary perspective emphasises the day-to-day duties and obligations of starting and running a business. Entrepreneurship is the practice of planning, operating, and taking risks in business (Inegbenebor & Igbinomwanhia, 2010). Planning includes market research, resource allocation, and strategic design; operating means daily management, production/service delivery, and coordination of activities; and risk assumption emphasises the personal financial, emotional, and reputational risks that the entrepreneur is willing to take. This definition describes entrepreneurship as a process rather than a one-off event, involving purposeful actions in uncertain environments.

The third definition combines value creation with personal development. Entrepreneurship is defined by Inegbenebor (2006) and Ahiauzu (2009) as the generation of value through the supply of a product or service to benefit society, while learning the skills required to take the risk of business. The focus here is on the role of the business in society: The entrepreneur creates a product

or service that meets an actual need, thereby improving social well-being. At the same time, the person learns practical skills such as financial literacy, problem-solving, resilience, and decision-making to enable risk-taking. The formulation connects economic activity to the purposes of skill-building and social meaning, indicating that entrepreneurship has a dual purpose.

Taken together, these definitions expose the active, rather than static, nature of entrepreneurship as a process, not as a trait or a single event. It starts with identifying opportunities and innovating, moves through structured planning and implementing the change, and ends with taking risks, delivering societal value, and achieving personal growth. The concept of entrepreneurship development through this synthesis becomes a structured pathway. It begins with sharing relevant information – knowledge of markets, business models, legal structures, and success criteria – and progresses to the deliberate development of the skills needed to enter the entrepreneurial world. The pathways or mechanisms that lead to awareness, capability, and, ultimately, venturing are education, training, mentoring, and experiential learning.

The overall goal of this study is to create a link between entrepreneurial education and sustainable development. The study aims to illustrate how structured learning experiences build the skills, attitudes, and behaviours outlined in the previous definitions, thereby potentially supporting the concepts of economic resilience, social inclusion, and environmental responsibility. With the pace of technological developments, resource scarcity, and inequality that persist in this world, empowering people to innovate, manage risk, and generate value is a strategic tool for sustainable long-term development. Understanding this linkage has implications for educators, policymakers, and practitioners interested in promoting enterprises that can contribute to the overall development agenda as well as to profits.

Skills for Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial talent is the ability to use ideas effectively; it is the key ingredient for being a successful entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial ability is, therefore, the talent a person must have to manage a business or contribute to their profession to achieve success (Todaro, 2001). This is not a natural power; rather, it is a degree of skill developed through learning and practising a wide range of interrelated skills. These entrepreneurial skills include problem-solving, creativity, innovation, decision-making, interpersonal, financial management, teamwork, managerial, communication, assertive, and listening skills; skills for identifying entrepreneurial opportunities; openness to change; and competencies related to business identification. Several scholars have documented these skills in detail. Skills such as problem-solving, problem creation and innovation, decision-making, interpersonal relations, teamwork, financial management, managerial functions, assertiveness, business identification, and adaptability to change are the practical skills that form the bedrock of entrepreneurial activity (Omotayo et al., 2020). In addition to entrepreneurial skills, students need employability skills. These are essential, as students may start working in private-sector jobs and later start a business. Thus, education, skills, and knowledge are interdependent

factors essential to entrepreneurial success. The ability to recognise opportunities, marshal resources, and sustain a business venture is greatly limited without a solid educational foundation. Hisrich (2012), as cited in Adegbesan and Atobajaye (2020), outlined the three main categories of skills to be acquired: Technical skills, Business management skills, and Personal entrepreneurial skills. Technical skills are writing, listening, oral presentation, organisation, coaching, teamwork and specialist technical knowledge appropriate to the specific industry or product. These skills help the entrepreneur communicate effectively, organise activities, and perform tasks precisely. The second type of skill is business management, which is essential to the development and growth of any business. They include making informed decisions, marketing, overseeing operations, securing and managing funding, keeping accurate accounting records, managing the production process, implementing control mechanisms and effective negotiation. By developing these skills, the entrepreneur should be able to turn an idea into an operational organisation that can generate revenue and withstand competition.

The third category is personal entrepreneurial skills, attributes that distinguish an entrepreneur from a regular manager. These encompass self-control or personal discipline, a willingness to take calculated risks, inventiveness, perseverance when things go wrong, visionary leadership and an orientation to ongoing change. These personal attributes help to keep the individual focused in times of uncertainty, motivate others, and adjust strategies when conditions change. Many entrepreneurial education programmes are built around these three skill clusters and the learning goals they encompass: from basic technical skills to management skills to the personality traits necessary for successful entrepreneurial work.

Notion of Development

The concept of development is complex and multidimensional, and has been interpreted differently by different scholars. Development is more than an economic indicator; it is a process of change in human capabilities, social relationships, and institutions. According to Du Pisani (2006), development is an evolutionary process in which the capacity of the human being grows in a setting in which new structures are initiated, problems are coped with, continuous changes are experienced, and purposeful and creative action towards new goals is taken. This view places greater emphasis on agency, adaptability, and purposeful creativity, viewing development as the continuous growth of human potential rather than a static end state.

Complementary to this is Reyes's (2001) view, which sees development as a social phenomenon in which a country's natural resources and processes are used sensibly and sustainably for the benefit of its people. Sustainability and responsible resource management are also key components of this definition, making development directly connected to intergenerational equity and environmental responsibility. A more general formulation is given by Todaro and Smith (2006). They see development as an intricate process involving economic growth, the reduction of inequality, the elimination of absolute poverty, and the significant transformation of institutions, social structures, and attitudes. In this perspective, higher national income is not enough; there

must also be equity, poverty reduction, and changes in norms and organisational arrangements in society.

Various theories have been proposed to account for the process of development. Theories of globalisation, world-systems analysis, modernity and dependency are among the most influential. Theories of globalisation try to explain the growing interdependency of economies, technologies and cultures, the benefits of faster growth rates, and, on the other hand, the risks of unequal distribution of these benefits. World-systems approaches focus on the interconnections among the core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral zones of the world economy, revealing the structural limits to development in less industrialised regions. Theories of modernity are concerned with the shift from traditional to modern social and economic systems and may stress industrialisation, rationalisation and the use of scientific and bureaucratic institutions. By contrast, dependency theories emphasise the past and current economic subordination of countries in the periphery that restricts their development. Together, the definitions and theoretical perspectives indicate that development is not one-dimensional nor automatic. It is about augmenting human potential, efficient use of resources, minimising inequality and poverty, and radical institutional and attitudinal transformation. It is useful to have background knowledge on development in this broad context to understand the potential impact of entrepreneurial skills and education on an overarching process of societal development.

Concept of Sustainability

At a most basic level, sustainability is the ability to sustain an object, a result or an activity over time (Basiago, 1999). Within academic, research and development practice, however, the basic understanding of continuity has been extended to a great degree. The term is used by most of the literature and practitioners in the field of development to mean the gradual enhancement of good ecological, economic, and social systems that drive human development (Mensah & Enu-Kwesi, 2018; Tjarve & Zemīte, 2016; Thomas, 2015). Sustainability is not just about keeping things as they are; it is about actively sustaining and improving the interdependent systems that support human well-being.

Stoddart, etal. (2011) provides a more specific definition: sustainability is the fair sharing and judicious deployment of resources between and within generations, while maintaining socioeconomic activity within the biophysical constraints of a finite ecosystem. This formulation brings in two critical points: intergenerational and intragenerational equity, and respect for ecological boundaries. A complementary view that Ben-Eli (2015) proposes is that sustainability is a dynamic balance in the continuous process of a population and its carrying capacity, i.e., its environment. From this perspective, sustainability allows the population to achieve its full potential without destroying the future potential for life in the environment. The focus is on balance – human activities need to be adjusted to meet current wants and needs without exporting or reducing the productive potential of natural resources (Thomas, 2015).

All of these definitions raise fundamental questions about how communities and individuals use ecological resources to achieve social and economic growth. They suggest that decisions about resource extraction, consumption, and technology cannot be based on short-term positive returns. Rather, decisions should be judged on their impacts on future generations, social equity and ecological integrity. Sustainability is thus a normative goal as well as a practical constraint on policy, business and individual action, driving toward activities that can persist without jeopardising the conditions under which they are possible. Badejo and Chidi (2025) examined entrepreneurship education for sustainable enterprise development and the need for the incorporation of vocational education and training (VET) in the curricula of higher education institutions in Nigeria to combat the unemployment challenges bedevilling the country.

Sustainable Development

The term sustainable development (SD) is rich in meanings, interpretations, and applications, and has become a central term in contemporary development discourse. If we take the term sustainable development literally, it would just mean "development that can be continued either indefinitely or for a given period of time" (Stoddart, etal. 2011). Structurally, the word is a merger of the ideas of "sustainable" and "development", each of which has been interpreted in various ways and contexts. Sustainable development has therefore been considered from many perspectives, leading to many different definitions. The most popular definition, however, remains that of the Brundtland Commission. This definition of sustainable development is sustainable development. Sustainable development is sustainable development, according to this definition. The Brundtland definition is near-canonical (Schaefer & Crane, 2005); however, there are alternative definitions. This, according to Cerin (2006) and Abubakar (2017), is reflected in its ubiquity in the global development policy and agenda-setting. The definition offers societies a way to engage the natural environment in a manner that does not lead to irreversible depletion of essential resources. It places sustainable development as a way of thinking and as a tangible approach that aims at enhancing the quality of life while avoiding environmental degradation – such as deforestation, air and water pollution – that can lead to bigger crises, such as climate change and extinction of species (Browning & Rigolon, 2019).

As a process, sustainable development is one in which resource use is managed so that resources are conserved for future generations (Mohieldin, 2017). Evers (2018) then correlates it to an organising principle to realise human development objectives while maintaining the ability of natural systems to provide the ecosystem services and natural resources that underpin economies and societies. In this regard, sustainable development aims to achieve economic development, environmental balance, and social progress simultaneously (Gossling-Goidsmiths, 2018; Zhai & Chang, 2019). The three pillars – economic, environmental and social – are not a hierarchy; if one aspect of development is not seen to contribute to the others, development in that aspect is not considered genuine development. In their investigation of what constitutes sustainable development, Ukaga et al. (2011) highlight the need to shift from activities that result in overall

negative socioeconomic impacts to those that create simultaneous gains for society, the economy, and nature. The transition will involve changes in the production systems, consumption patterns, institutional arrangements, and cultural attitudes. It also requires ongoing assessment and adaptive management to ensure that development trajectories remain within ecological thresholds and social equity goals over long time horizons.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study is anchored on two theories. These are the Schumpeterian theory of entrepreneurship and the human capital theory. Both theories are relevant to the study as their assumptions aptly explain the problem under investigation.

Schumpeterian Theory of Entrepreneurship

According to Schumpeter (1934), the pivotal role of entrepreneurs entails the efficient and effective combination of factors of production as well as the coordination of resources to achieve certain ends. This is also known as the theory of economic development. Schumpeter's definition of economic development as it relates to entrepreneurial activities entails creativity and innovation, such as the development of a new product/service, the adoption of new technology/method of production, the discovery of new markets and opportunities to name a few. Thus, entrepreneurship and enterprise development are germane to economic growth and development. According to Schumpeter (1934), entrepreneurship leads to innovation which in turn drives economic development as entrepreneurs are agent for positive social change. However, many commentators have criticised the theory as it places more emphasis on innovation, thereby relegating to the background other social and institutional factors that influence entrepreneurship and economic development. More so, innovation does not always lead to economic development. The theory is relevant to this study as it explains how students' entrepreneurial skills can be developed for sustainable national development.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory is credited to Becker (1964). Human capital theorists posit that education and training act as boosts to workers' productivity via the impartation of requisite knowledge, attitude and skills. This theory assumes that human capabilities are not entirely innate. Such capabilities can be improved through education and training. This study is anchored on the human capital theory as entrepreneurship education aims to instill in students the knowledge, orientation, culture and requisite competencies or skills for entrepreneurship and enterprise development which increases their lifetime earnings. Human capital theory is hinged on education and human capital development. Human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education and training are highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population or society. Thus, the human factor is pivotal in value creation and it is the utmost basis for the wealth of nations according to classical economists.

Natural resources and capital are passive factors of production, the human factor is the active agency that combine capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organisations, and foster national development. However, the theory has be criticised on the basis that possession of qualifications or skills does not necessarily lead to employment or entrepreneurship. Other factors such as labour market conditions, government labour and economic policies have implications for entrepreneurship and economic development. The human capital theory is relevant to this study as it explains how entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, education, competencies, and experience are acquired by students through training to make them not only employable but also to become job creators.

Empirical Studies

Ogedengbe et al. (2026) conducted related research on the role of Entrepreneurial Education in Sustainable Development. The authors considered that entrepreneurship education is an important part of the sustainability of the economy because it helps foster students' creativity and innovation. The study highlighted that sustainable development depends greatly on the role of educational institutions in fostering an entrepreneurial attitude among young people. It also highlighted the need to re-orient education policy towards more practical, skills-based learning, with an emphasis on innovation and enterprise building. The authors recommended that entrepreneurial education should be present in numerous institutions, and that the quality of entrepreneurship education depends on how entrepreneurship is incorporated on sustainability issues.

Recent empirical research by Gracia-Zomeño et al. (2025) examined the effects of entrepreneurial competence on education for sustainable development. The study examined the perceptions of education professionals, and found that entrepreneurial competence, in the form of skills, is a must to promote sustainable learning and solve the contemporary problems of societies. The skills are entrepreneurial leadership, communication, initiative, and teamwork. Interestingly, the study also revealed differences in perceptions of entrepreneurial competence by gender and experience among women entrepreneurs, with more experienced women entrepreneurs reporting higher perceptions than less experienced women entrepreneurs, and male entrepreneurs reporting lower perceptions than more experienced women entrepreneurs. It also pointed to a lack of proper large-scale training for entrepreneurs, revealing a gap in the educational system. Improving entrepreneurship education to develop competence and perceptions, particularly regarding sustainable development was highlighted in the study.

Entrepreneurship skills are among the pillars of sustainable development that Chukwuemeka et al. (2025) examined in their study of variations in entrepreneurship skills and their role in poverty alleviation. The key entrepreneurial skills required to achieve sustainable development outcomes identified in the study were technical, leadership, financial management, marketing, and human resource management. They believe that entrepreneurship is fundamentally about ideas and making them happen through creativity, innovation, and risk-taking, and that learning a range of entrepreneurial skills is a major contributor to reducing poverty and promoting economic

sustainability. The study also recommended that for entrepreneurship education to realise sustainable development goals, it should be delivered through structured, and continuous training programmes.

Sustainable development has been extensively discussed in the literature. The study by Mensah (2019) revealed that sustainable development is viewed as a development process underpinned by three interconnected pillars (social, economic, and environmental) and that it emphasises intergenerational and intragenerational equity. This not only requires the development to be economically viable, but also socially inclusive and environmentally protective, especially for the entrepreneurial activities. This means that skills need to be passed on to students so they can create business ventures that balance these three aspects of sustainability.

In a similar study, Olusola and Ibrahim (2019) studied the role of skills development on entrepreneurship towards sustainable development in Nigeria. They discovered that entrepreneurship plays an important role in the development of any country, as it provides people with the independence to earn money and helps reduce unemployment. The authors noted that entrepreneurship programmes have been introduced, but the developmental outcomes of entrepreneurship are not well achieved. This was linked to poor implementation, a lack of training facilities, and insufficient support systems. It was found that entrepreneurial skills are important in the field of sustainable development; however, their application in practice needs to be more intentional to be more impactful. Of all these empirical studies reviewed, none had a focused on students' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills and sustainable development particularly within the context of higher education institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria. This is the gap this study is intended to fill.

Methodology

Research Design

The authors adopted the cross-sectional survey research design. This is most suitable for the study as the objective was to sample the views or opinions of the participants/ subjects at one point in time without any attempt to manipulate or control them (Asika, 1991). The study examined the perceptions of students in higher education institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria, on the role of entrepreneurial skills in achieving sustainable development. The study further assessed the influence of entrepreneurship education on these perceptions.

Study Population and Sample Procedure

The study population consists of students of the Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, comprising the School of Vocational Education (SVE), which has the following departments: Home Economics Education, Agricultural Education, and Fine and Applied Arts Education. The choice of these groups was considered suitable as their programmes are closely related to skill acquisition and entrepreneurship development. The population size is 6, 267. Using the stratified and simple random sampling, a sample of 376 students was drawn from the study

population sequel to the determination of sample size using Yamane (1967) formula. All students had an equal chance of being sampled.

Instrumentation

The data for the study were primary data. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using the 4-point Rensis Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). The instrument used for the study was validated by experts in the fields of educational research and entrepreneurship studies for face and content validation, and to ascertain its reliability. Data collection was conducted through direct administration of the questionnaire to the respondents. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was sought.

Method of Data Analysis

The generated primary data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 26. The responses to the questionnaire items were summarised using descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean item score.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Information of Respondents

The data from the field survey is analysed in this part and is shown below. Following the presentation of the respondents' demographic data, the study questions were answered.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15–20 years	96	25.5%
	21–25 years	148	39.4%
	26–30 years	82	21.8%
	31 years and above	50	13.3%
Gender	Male	172	45.7%
	Female	204	54.3%
Total		**376**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 shows that the most of the respondents fall within the age bracket of 21–25 years, accounting for 39.4% of the total population, indicating that most participants are young adults in their active academic stage. This is followed by those aged 15–20 years (25.5%), while respondents aged 26–30 years and 31 years and above constitute 21.8% and 13.3% respectively. This distribution suggests that the study is largely dominated by younger students who are likely to be more engaged in entrepreneurship education. In terms of gender, female respondents represent (54.3%) which slightly outnumber male respondents which accounts for (45.7%). This

implies a relatively balanced representation, although females form the majority of the respondents.

Survey Responses

Table 2: Students' Perceptions on Entrepreneurial Skills and Sustainable Development

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Entrepreneurial skills enable students to create solutions to societal problems.	158 (42.0%)	120 (31.9%)	58 (15.4%)	40 (10.6%)	3.05
2	Skills such as innovation and creativity contribute to sustainable economic development.	142 (37.8%)	134 (35.6%)	55 (14.6%)	45 (12.0%)	2.99
3	Entrepreneurial skills help in reducing unemployment and poverty.	165 (43.9%)	112 (29.8%)	54 (14.4%)	45 (12.0%)	3.06
4	The application of entrepreneurial skills can promote environmental sustainability.	130 (34.6%)	140 (37.2%)	65 (17.3%)	41 (10.9%)	2.95
5	Entrepreneurial skills are essential for achieving long-term national development.	150 (39.9%)	132 (35.1%)	60 (16.0%)	34 (9.0%)	3.06
	Weighted Mean					**3.02**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

From Table 2, the findings revealed that 278 (73.9%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that entrepreneurship education has improved their understanding of sustainable development, while 276 (73.9%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that skills such as innovation and creativity contribute to sustainable economic development. Of the 376 respondents, 282 (75%) agreed that entrepreneurial skills are essential for achieving long-term national development with a mean item score of 3.06. Of the 376 respondents, 277 (73.7%) agreed and strongly agreed that entrepreneurial skills can help to reduce unemployment and poverty with a mean item score of 3.06.

Table 3: Students' Perceptions on Entrepreneurship Education

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
6	Entrepreneurship education has improved my understanding of sustainable development.	148 (39.4%)	136 (36.2%)	54 (14.4%)	38 (10.1%)	3.05

7	The entrepreneurship courses I have taken have influenced my perception of business as a tool for development.	140 (37.2%)	138 (36.7%)	60 (16.0%)	38 (10.1%)	3.01
8	Practical training in entrepreneurship has enhanced my belief in its role in sustainable development.	152 (40.4%)	130 (34.6%)	55 (14.6%)	39 (10.4%)	3.05
9	Entrepreneurship education encourages students to develop solutions for real-life challenges.	135 (35.9%)	145 (38.6%)	58 (15.4%)	38 (10.1%)	3.00
10	The knowledge gained from entrepreneurship education motivates me to contribute to sustainable development.	146 (38.8%)	132 (35.1%)	60 (16.0%)	38 (10.1%)	3.02
	Weighted Mean					**3.03**

Source: Field Survey, 2026

From Table 3, the findings revealed that 284 (75.6%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that entrepreneurship education has improved their understanding of sustainable development. Majority of the respondents are of the view that practical training in entrepreneurship has enhanced their perception of the role of entrepreneurship education in sustainable development. More so, 280 (74.5%) agreed and strongly agreed that entrepreneurship education encourages students to develop solutions for real-life challenges with a mean sore of 3.00. In a similar vein, 278 (73.9%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that entrepreneurship courses have changed their attitudes towards business, which is vital for development and self-reliance with a mean score of 3.01.

Discussion of Findings

Students' perceptions of the role of entrepreneurial skills in attaining sustainable development, was viewed positively with a weighted mean of 3.02. This aligns with Mensah (2019), who observed that sustainable development has social, economic, and environmental components. There is a general consensus by respondents that entrepreneurship can help address societal challenges and could reduce the rate of youth unemployment. The findings also corroborate those of Chukwuemeka et al. (2025), who found that entrepreneurial skills, such as innovation and creativity, played a significant role in poverty reduction and enhanced economic growth. It also confirms the findings of Olusola and Ibrahim (2019), who reported that entrepreneurship fosters self-reliance but may not yield positive results in practice owing to implementation challenges.

The findings revealed that students' perception on entrepreneurship education has a positive effect on their entrepreneurial drive/motivation (weighted mean = 3.03). This aligns with Ogedengbe et

al. (2026), who found that creativity and innovation are means to achieve sustainable national and enterprise development. This outcome aligns with that of Gracia-Zomeño et al. (2025) who reported that entrepreneurial competence has positive implications for solving societal development challenges.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The study concludes that entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, innovation, problem-solving, risk-taking and business management can enhance students' capacity to create employment, and contribute to economic and societal development. Students' perceptions of entrepreneurial skills are important to enhance their entrepreneurial drive/motivation. While students demonstrate favourable perceptions, greater emphasis on practical training and balanced coverage of economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability are necessary. The findings revealed that higher education institutions have an important role to play in developing these skills and preparing students to become self-reliant and to contribute to sustainable national and enterprise development. There is no doubt that entrepreneurship education will contribute to sustainable national development as well as proffering solution to the youth unemployment challenge besetting the country.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

i. Higher education institutions should provide practical, skills-based entrepreneurship training, including business simulations, internships, and real-world projects, capable of assisting students to translate their knowledge and learning into sustainable enterprise and national development.
ii. Students should be encouraged to develop entrepreneurial mindsets and competencies such as creativity, financial literacy, digital skills, leadership, opportunity recognition and problem-solving skills to enhance their contribution to sustainable national development.
iii. Industry collaboration should be encouraged so that students can gain practical knowledge, through internships, mentorship and exposure to current entrepreneurial practices.
iv. Government at all levels should focus attention on entrepreneurship education and provide the enabling environment as well as adequate funding for entrepreneurship programmes, with a view to promoting research, innovation and sustainable enterprise development.

References

Abubakar, I. R. (2017). Access to sanitation facilities among Nigerian households: Determinants and sustainability implications. *Sustainability*, *9*(4), 547. doi:10.3390/su9040547.

Adegbesan, S.O & Atobajaye, E.M. (2020). Youth empowerment and entrepreneurship in Nigeria. *Studies in Educational Planning and Administration*, *8*(3), 1-7.

Ahiauzu, A. (2009). Entrepreneurship and economic development in Nigeria: The way forward. *Nigerian Academy of Management Journal, 3*(1), 1-18.

Asika, N. (1991). *Research methodology in the behavioural sciences*. Lagos: Longman.

Badejo, A.E., & Chidi, O.C. (2025). Entrepreneurship education as a precursor for sustainable enterprise development and youth employment in Nigeria. In I.O. Fajana et al. (Eds). *Employment and Management Issues: Recent Local and Global Developments and Emerging Challenges: Festschrift in honour of Professor Francis Chukwudike Anyim.* (pp. 471-481). University of Lagos.

Basiago, A. D. (1999). *Economic, social, and environmental sustainability in development theory and urban planning practice: The environmentalist.* Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Bateman, T. S., & Snell, S. A. (2011). *Management: Leading and collaborating in the competitive world* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, Irwin Companies, Inc.

Becker, G. S. (1964). *Human capital.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Ben-Eli, M. (2015) *Sustainability: Definition and five core principles a new framework the sustainability laboratory* New York, NYinfo@sustainabilitylabs.org | www.sustainabilitylabs.

Browning, M., & Rigolon, A. (2019). School green space and its impact on academic performance: A systematic literature review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(3), 429. doi:10.3390/ijerph16030429.

Cerin, P. (2006). Bringing economic opportunity into line with environmental influence: A discussion on the coase theorem and the Porter and van der Linde hypothesis. *Ecological Economics*, 56, 209–225. doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2005.01.016.

Chukwuemeka, L. K., Ilo, K. O., Nebo, I. K., Ugwu, C. C. O., & Ohabuenyi, J. (2025). Entrepreneurship skill variations and sustainable development goal of poverty eradication in Nigeria. *International Journal of Research (IJR), 12*(3), 194–205. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14992127.

Du Pisani, J. A. (2006). Sustainable development – historical roots of the concept. *Environmental Sciences, 3*(2), 83–96. doi:10.1080/ 15693430600688831.

Evers, B. A. (2018) *Why adopt the sustainable development goals (SDGs)? The case of multinationals in the Colombian coffee and extractive sector:* Master Thesis Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Gossling-Goidsmiths, J. (2018). *Sustainable development goals and uncertainty visualization.* Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation of the University of Twente in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Cartography.

Gracia-Zomeño, A., García-Toledano, E., García-Perales, R., & Palomares-Ruiz, A. (2025). Impact of entrepreneurial competence on education for sustainable development in the 21st century. *World, 6*, 37. https://doi.org/10.3390/world6020037.

Hisrich, R.D. & Peter, M.P. (2012). *Entrepreneurial perspective* (5th ed.) Singapore: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.

Inegbenebor, A.U. (Ed.). (2006). *You can be an entrepreneur. In The Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship* (pp. 1-14). Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited.

Inegbenebor, A.U., & Igbinomwanhia, O.R. (2010). Entrepreneurship in a developing society. In F.C. Okafor, P. A Isenmila, A.U. Inegbenebor and P.A. Donwa (Eds.), *Entrepreneurship: A Practical Approach* (pp 1-10). Benin City: Mindex Publishing Co. Ltd.

Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review. *Cogent Social Sciences, 5*(1), 1653531. https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531.

Mensah, J., & Enu-Kwesi, F. (2018). Implication of environmental sanitation management in the catchment area of Benya Lagoon, Ghana. *Journal of Integrative Environmental Sciences*. doi:10.1080/ 1943815x.2018.1554591.

Mohieldin, M. (2017). *The sustainable development goals and private sector opportunities.* EAFIT University of Medellín. http://pubdocs.worldbank.orgTheSustainableDevelopment-Goals-and-Private-SectorOpportunities.pdf.

National Bureau of Statistics (2024). *Nigeria labour force survey report Q2 2024*. https://www.scribd.com/document/1050369900/Nigeria-labour-force-statistics-report-q2-2024.

National Universities Commission (NUC). (2022). *Guidelines on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities*. Abuja: NUC Publications.

Ogedengbe, F. A., Okhakhu, C. O., & Adekunle, S. A. (2026). Entrepreneurial education for sustainable development. *Journal of Assertiveness1*(1). https://repository.nileuniversity.edu.ng/handle/123456789/778.

Olusola, E. M., & Ibrahim, M. E. (2019). Entrepreneurship skills development for sustainable development in Nigeria. *National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) Publication*.

Omotayo, O.T., Adeyemi, V.S., & Adebayo, O.A. (2020). Entrepreneurship as a tool for Reducing. Unemployment among Nigerian Youth. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Educational Planning and Administration, 5*(2**),** 85–94.

Patel, J., Eranki, S., Tan, I., Huang, I., Sindhu, T., Lam, D., Mukherjee, R., Chakraborty, A., & Weber, P. (2024). Inspiring student entrepreneurship and innovation. *Cureus, 16*. https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.71195.

Reyes, G. E. (2001). Four main theories of development: modernization, dependency, word-system, and globalization. *Nómadas. Revista Crítica de Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas, 4*(2), 109–124.

Rusu, V., & Roman, A. (2018). Entrepreneurial motivations in the European Union countries: An empirical approach. *Management Dynamics in the Knowledge Economy, 6*(1), 9–31. https://doi.org/10.25019/mdke/6.1.01.

Schaefer, A., & Crane, A. (2005). Addressing sustainability and consumption. *Journal of Macro-marketing, 25*(1), 76–92.

Schumpeter, J.A. (1934). *The theory of economic development.* Cambridge, MA Harvard

Stoddart, H., Schneeberger, K., Dodds, F., Shaw, A., Bottero, M., Cornforth, J., & White, R. (2011). *A pocket guide to sustainable development governance*. Stakeholder Forum 2011.

Thomas, C. F. (2015). *Naturalizing sustainability discourse: paradigm, practices and pedagogy of Thoreau, Leopold, Carson and Wilson: Ph.D. Thesis*: Arizona State University.

Tjarve, B., & Zemīte, I. (2016). The role of cultural activities in community development. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis, 64* (6), 2151–2160. doi:10.11118/ actaun201664062151.

Todaro, M. (2001). *Distance education for basic education in the E – 9 countries.* Retrieved from www.en.wikipedia.org\wiki\michealTodaro.

Todaro, M. P., & Smith, S. C. (2006). *Economic development* (8th ed.). Reading: Addison-Wesley.

Țoniș-Bucea-Manea, R., Catană, M. G., & Tonoiu, S. (2015). Network business environment for open innovation in SMEs. *Applied Mechanics and Materials, 760*, 751–756. https://doi.org/10.4028/www.scientific.net/AMM.760.751.

Ukaga, U., Maser., C., & Reichenbach, M. (2011). Sustainable development: Principles, frameworks, and case studies. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education, 12*(2). doi:10.1108/ ijshe.2011.24912bae.005.

University Press.

Yamane, T. (1967) *Statistics: An introductory analysis* (2nd ed.). New York: Harper and Row.

Zhai, T. T., & Chang, Y. C. (2019). Standing of environmental public-interest litigants in China: Evolution, obstacles and solutions. *Journal of Environmental Law*, 30, 369–397. doi:10.1093/jel/eqy011.