



## AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURSHIP ATTITUDE AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

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### Abstract:

This paper investigated the relationship between students' entrepreneurship attitude and their perception of sustainable environment among Imo State University students Owerri, Imo State. Two instruments developed by the researchers and validated by experts in measurement and evaluation in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri were used to collect relevant data for the study. The total population was 1,500 students and a total of 400 randomly selected 200 level students from the faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine took part in the study. The data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics of correlational type and multiple regression analysis at  $P < 0.05$ . The result of the analysis showed that students' entrepreneurship attitude relates positively and significantly with their perceived sustainable environment. Students' entrepreneurship attitude contributed 3.72% to the variance observed in students' perception of sustainable environment. Therefore, it was recommended that lecturers should consider students' attitude when planning and giving lectures on entrepreneurship education. Thus, it was concluded among other things that, there is need to help undergraduate students to develop attitude required for effective sustainability after graduation.

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship, attitude, perception, sustainable environment

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## 1. 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 for pursuit of entrepreneurial behaviours skills and attributes in widely different context. According to Agbionu (2008), entrepreneurship 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 privately- owned enterprises are well known for propelling national development. (United Nations, 1993).

In particular, indigenously owned, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) are perceived as the bedrock of sustainable economic development. An entrepreneur refers to a person who creates and nurtures a private business, while entrepreneurship refers to the processes and activities connected with creating, owning and, managing a business firm, (Carland, Carland, J. W., & Stewart, 2000). The entrepreneurial or venture creation process is however not a one day or one-step activity. Rather, 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 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 (Audet, 2000).

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). The authors further defined sustainability as the preservation of the global resource base through conservation of natural consumption. He also considers sustainable environmental development to include, 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.

This can be possible through acquiring relevant entrepreneurial skills. Stakeholders in sustainable environment 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 impart on the environmental well beings (Arbuthnoth, 2009). Abulu (2007) in a lecture on the importance of entrepreneurs on wealth creation emphasized that it was only entrepreneurs that could move Nigeria into an economic super-power. It 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 of 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 (2000) defined it as an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something.

Unfortunately, students' attitude towards entrepreneurship and their perception of sustainable environment is unimpressive, low and discouraging. Therefore, there is urgent need to make them develop positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education and positively modify their perceptions of sustainable environment by helping them manage their attitude and environment well. 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 perception of sustainable environment and also be able to plan, and manage the outcome effectively.

When environment become unsustainable it leads to various serious problems such as deteriorating atmospheric conditions; erratic change in the climate, increased cost to produce food worldwide. Increasing inequality among nations; and unrenting economic conditions (Keys, Thomsen, & Smith, 2010). Students perceptions, attitude towards environmental sustainability is limited (Du Plessis, 2012 et al). The authors further established that different cultures and varied personal and professional background have different approaches towards sustainability and the feel differently about the environment. Policy makers in the areas of sustainable environment are provided with a policy guide on changing attitude and perception on sustainable environment.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Undergraduates face many challenges, but the prospect of long-term 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 for sustainable environment 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 environment if properly harnessed and managed. This paper therefore, intends to explore and investigate the relationship between students' entrepreneurship attitude and their perceived sustainable environment since they are future leaders of the economy.

## 2.1 Research Questions

The study provides answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Do students' entrepreneurship attitude relate significantly with their perceived of sustainable environment?
- 2) What is the contribution of student's entrepreneurship attitude to their perceived sustainable environment?

## 3. Research Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was employed to carry out this study. The aim of the researchers was to record, analyze and interpret the existing conditions or variables. The research is non-experimental and therefore variables were not manipulated. This makes descriptive survey research design suitable for this study. This design also accommodates generalization of findings of the study upon the target population from which only a representative or sample was actually studied. The target population for the study comprised all the students in Imo State University Owerri, Imo State. Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine total, 1500, only 400 level students formed the sample. Two instruments were used to collect data for this study. They are: (i) Entrepreneurship Attitude Scale (EAS) and (ii) Perception of Sustainable Environment Questionnaire (PSEQ). The data collected were analyzed using simple regression analysis at  $p < 0.05$ .

### 3.1 Analysis and Results

**Table 1:** Summary of the correlation matrix

	PSE	Attitude
PSE	1.000	
Attitude	0.193*	1.000

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

The result in Table 1 shows that students' entrepreneurship attitude relates positively and significantly with their perceived of sustainable environment ( $R = 0.193$ ). However, this relationship is significant as attested to by the p-value (Sig. = 0.195,  $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 2:** Percentage Contribution of the predictor variables

	Attitude
Multiple R	0.193
R-Square (R <sup>2</sup> )	0.0372
Percentage of Contribution	3,72%

Table 2 presents the percentage contribution of the predictor variables to the variance observed in students' perceived of sustainable environment. The result shows that

students' entrepreneurship attitude contributed 3.72% to the variance observed in students' perceived of sustainable environment.

#### **4. Discussion of Findings**

From the findings of the study, it shows that students' entrepreneurship attitude relates positively and significantly with their perceived sustainable environment. This, on the other hand, implies that an improvement in entrepreneurship attitude would lead to improved perception of sustainable environment and that the relationship between entrepreneurship attitude and perceived sustainable environment is significant to an extent that it cannot be neglected or overlooked, on other hand. Students' entrepreneurship attitude contributed 3.72% to the variance observed in students' perceived of sustainable environment. 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 environment. 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 environment.

##### **4.1 Conclusion and Recommendation**

The findings of this study show that students' entrepreneurship attitude relates positively and significantly with their perceived sustainable environment and also contributed significantly to students' perception of sustainable environment. The fact that students' entrepreneurship attitude related positively and significantly with their perceived sustainable environment 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. Therefore, lecturers should consider students' attitude when planning and giving lectures on entrepreneurship education. 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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