



Conceptual review of relationship between self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, improvisation and entrepreneurial mindset development

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to develop a conceptual framework on the relationship between self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, improvisation and entrepreneurial mindset development. The study conceptualized entrepreneurial mindset through entrepreneurship education as the endogenous variable. The role of these variables as predictors of entrepreneurial mindset development are highlighted as it helps entrepreneurs in improving their entrepreneurial mindset in developing countries like Nigeria. It was concluded that, entrepreneurial mindset development through entrepreneurship education is the first trigger needed to gain the attention of the students to venture into entrepreneurship. In order to assess the extent of entrepreneurship mindset development in developing country like Nigeria, empirical study should be conducted using the selected exogenous and endogenous variables. Specifically, by selecting a particular state in country considering the different levels of their economic development.

Key words: Self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, improvisation, entrepreneurial mindset.

1. Introduction

The high rate of unemployment is a phenomenon that occurs in developing countries (Putra & Adnyani, 2021). The large number of workers who want to enter the world of work are not proportional to the available employment opportunities (Wang et al., 2019). One of the causes of the high unemployment rate in developing countries is that the citizens' interest was mostly attracted to work in a formal sector. People do not try to create their own jobs in the private sector. Educated graduates such as university graduates contribute to the unemployment rate (Putra & Adnyani, 2021). In some developing countries (such

as Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya), the lack of success in running a business can be explained by entrepreneurial mindset (Wardana, et al, 2020). Inevitably, scholars underline the entrepreneurial mindset as a considerable variable in entrepreneurship research (Wardana, et al, 2020). In particular, Cui et al. (2019) noted that the entrepreneurial mindset is link with more profound cognitive phenomena that reflect the unique engagement of entrepreneurial activities.

In addition, the foundation of entrepreneurial intention lies on cognitive adaptability of individuals (Wardana, et al, 2020). This plays a crucial role in

accomplishing desirable outcomes following entrepreneurial action. Therefore, to foster a mindset for business startups, there are several supporting dimensions which include self-efficacy (Wardana et al, 2020; Adebayo & Racheal, 2020), creativity (Indriyani et al, 2020; Shi et al, 2020), entrepreneurship skills (Jiatong, et al, 2021), and improvisation (Balachandra, 2019).

The concept of self-efficacy is constructed from the social cognitive theory by Bandura (1977) and developed by Bandura (2012), which demonstrated that individual behavior is devised by several activities, such as the interaction of intrapersonal, individuals' involvement, and the circumstance. Interactions between these activities can shape an individual's belief in encompassing the ability to conduct certain behaviors in certain situations and their expectations of behavioral outcomes (Wardana et al, 2020). According to Adebayo and Rachael (2020), no matter the degree of training or entrepreneurial opportunities presented to an individual, the mindset of such an individual could hamper the quality of the results recorded which is because mindset determines to a great extent how much one succeeds in any endeavor.

Entrepreneurial creativity as the ability of potential entrepreneurs to give customers new choices for products, services, or performance that are previously unimaginable or different can emerge through one's observations in seeing opportunities that occur, seeing trends, seeing a problem, and so on (Wandana, et al, 2020). Higher education is currently expected to be able to provide education and foster the entrepreneurial spirit among students. Therefore, students are expected to become young entrepreneurs who can help reduce unemployment (Indriyani, et al, 2020). Entrepreneurial spirit does not just

happen right away but is driven by an entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial creativity (Indriyani, et al, 2020). Creative individuals adapt by improving the basic products, are able to spot problems and opportunities more frequently than others, provide solutions to identified problems in unique ways, acquire patents and come up with solutions valued by others and positively affect enterprises or the society (Mylonas et al., 2017).

The success of very entrepreneurial venture lies on its ability to have a competence requirement, which include skills, knowledge or know-how, persistence, initiative, efficiency orientation which may affect the performance of small and medium enterprises (Business Studies, 2015, cited in Jemal, 2020). Thus, it is necessary to highlight and summarize the possible experiences and factors focus on entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial competence that contribute for the success of small and medium enterprises (Jemal, 2020). The attention was given to SMEs due to the fact that in many developing nations like Nigeria, SMEs are considered primary potential source for the economic development and poverty reduction. In addition, this is supported by Jemal (2020) noted that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have given much emphasis in the recent entrepreneurship researches due to their vital contributions in the economy of every country. Empirical works reveal that most countries, specially developing ones nowadays are facing a surge in unemployment problems. Thus, entrepreneurial knowledge and skills may help the countries to reduce the unemployment problem (Adebayo & Rachael, 2020).

Business which are struggling to continuously adapt and survive in today's rapidly changing environment are turning to an emerging technique known as improvisation (Bari & Arsha, 2017). Previous study indicated the improvisation is a key form of entrepreneurial behavior (Gojny-Zbierowska & Zbierowski, 2021; Balachandra, 2019; Bari & Arshad, 2017; Hmieleski et al., 2013). The reason for such behavior might stem from the presentation of a problem, lack of an appropriate heuristic or alternative solution that can be applied to a problem, or simply as an impulse to try something new in the moment (Bari & Arshad, 2017). Improvisation might be seen as a method of responsible innovation in organizations, due to its potential to be more responsive and enable bottom-up initiative (Gojny-Zbierowska & Zbierowski, 2021). Considering that, entrepreneurs do indeed spend a significant amount of time formulating and executing strategic decisions, using only the resources available to them in the moment. However, this fact should not be perceived as implying that improvisational behavior is always, or even usually, a beneficial form of action for entrepreneurs (Hiemelski, et al, 2013). The improvised materials should be able to convey special instructional message just as the original material. Therefore, improvisation is necessary for the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for self-employment and sustenance (Collins et al, 2021).

Attempts were made by prior studies on the factors that influence entrepreneurial mindset. However, many studies used one or two variables for assessment. Relatively few studies include as much as four variables as combined by this study. Realizing this gap in literature, the current study aims at sharpening knowledge in the area of entrepreneurial mindset development, by focusing on key

dimensions (self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills and improvisation) that foster entrepreneurial activity undertaking, responding to previous research calls in this area.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the 60s and 70s, unemployment was not pronounced among university graduates. As at that time, mainly due to desperate need for human resources, public and private organizations would visit universities and grant employment to graduating students in advance (Mamman et al, 2018). The rosy situation for university graduates began to change in the 80s. The Commission on the Review of Higher Education, popularly called "Longe Commission" (1992), reported that by 1984 the phenomenon of graduate unemployment had begun to emerge in Nigeria. Graduate unemployment was also attributed to the inability of successive government regimes to effectively manage the oil boom of the 70s and the oil windfall of the 90s to create infrastructural and industrial development that will generate employment for the teeming youth in general and university graduates in particular (Collins et al, 2021).

Among other causes of the graduate unemployment in Nigeria, the most appealing is attributed to the problem of disequilibrium between labor market requirement and lack of essential employable skills by the graduates. Mamman et al (2018) also noted that the major defect in the Nigerian educational system, including universities, is its theoretical inclination. They also observed that most Nigerian universities produce graduates who are at best only suited for white collar jobs and have little or no entrepreneurial mindset, basic skills of any other vocational relevance, and all these greatly contribute to the high rate of

unemployment among university graduates.

Based on the above premises, many researchers (such as Wardana et al, 2020; Adebayo & Racheal, 2020; Indriyani et al, 2020; Shi et al, 2020; Jiatong, et al, 2021; Balachandra, 2019, Cui et al, 2019) explored in the area of the factors that can influence the development of entrepreneurial mindset. However, to the knowledge of the researcher, the studies reviewed examined one or two factors of the variables (for example; self-efficacy only was examined by Adebayo & Racheal, 2020; skills and self-efficacy was examined by Islam, et al 2017; creativity only was investigated by Indriani et al, 2020; only improvisation was examined by Gojny-Zbierowska, & Zbierowski, 2021). On the other hand, some studies concentrate on other developing and developed nations (such as Jiatong, et al, 2021 in China; Indriani, et al, 2020 in Malaysia; Keshishyan & Boghosian, 2020 in Armenia). However, this study responded by conceptually integrating the self-efficacy, creativity, skills and improvisation and their relationship with entrepreneurial development mindset based on the prior literature.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the research work done by various scholars on self-efficacy, creativity, skills and improvisation and entrepreneurial mindset in the context of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and contribute to the body of literature systematically. The conceptual study is useful to appraise and understand factors that are critical for enhancing the students' entrepreneurial mindset in the context of SMEs.

The paper was divided into three different segments; the segments include the introductory part of the paper, where the background, problem statement, purposes

and significance of the study are discussed. The second segment dwells on the literature review, where the conceptual theoretical and empirical review were briefly discussed. The final segment concludes the paper and make necessary recommendations for policy makers as well as the future researchers.

2. Literature Review

This segment was divided in three sections, starting with the conceptual review, followed by the theoretical review and finally the empirical review.

2.1 Conceptual review

Entrepreneurship refers to the ability to recognize or create an opportunity and take action aimed at realizing the innovative knowledge practice or product. It does not aim at the realization of monetary profit, but focuses on opportunities with the goal to improve the production (Costin et al, 2021). The term entrepreneur is derived from a French word "*entreprendre*" meaning to undertake. It is the entrepreneur who undertakes to organize, manage and assume the risk of business (Shi et al, 2020). Furthermore, they opined that an entrepreneur is an innovator who recognizes and seizes opportunities, converts those opportunities into workable ideas, adds values through money, time, effort and skills, assumes the risks of competitive market place to implement these ideas and realizes the rewards from these efforts. Frankly speaking, the world could be boring and without any excitement in the absence of entrepreneurs; they keep things happening and rolling in new directions and dimensions (Jiatong et al, 2021). Their un satisfaction and disinterest of the status-quo and continued pursuits of new ways to do business, their sense of opportunity, their derived to innovate and their capacity

accomplished have become a standard by which free enterprise is now measured throughout the world (Shi et al, 2020).

Entrepreneurship is divided into three components: innovation, venturing, and strategic renewal. Innovation refers to “an entrepreneur’s commitment to making and presenting products, production processes, and organizational systems.” Venturing means, the entrepreneur is entering a new business by expanding its operations in existing or new markets. Strategic renewal relates to the revitalization of the entrepreneur’s operations by changing its scope of business, its competitive approach, or both (Altahat & Alsafadi, 2021). In light with the above definitions, this study defined entrepreneurship as the process of identifying the opportunity and taking the risks to seize the identified opportunity.

Entrepreneurial mindset refers to a state of mind which orientates human conduct towards entrepreneurial activities and outcomes (Jemal, 2020). Individuals with entrepreneurial mindsets are often drawn to opportunities, innovation and new value creation also includes assuming associated risk and accepts realities of change and uncertainty (Wandana, et al, 2020). Growth mindset messaging implies that everyone has the capacity to succeed even when challenges arise or experience is lacking, and represents a potent and implicit message that development is possible. A developing mindset is a persuasive tool, especially for students when presented with failure feedback after working on a challenging academic task. A student with a developed mindset reported that he or she had the skills to reach their goal (strong self-efficacy), whereas a student with a fixed mindset noted that they “wouldn’t feel smart enough to make it” on future tasks (Elnadi & Gheith, 2021). In the context of this paper,

entrepreneurial mindset indicates a way of thinking about business and its opportunities that capture the benefits of uncertainty.

Self-efficacy according to Bandura’s social cognitive theory is defined as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1997). In the opinion of Aima et al (2020) they defined self-efficacy as task-specific consideration of perceived fitness to perform a particular activity. In the case of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial self-efficacy may be comprised of deliberation of those tasks that relates to the intention and development of new ventures. Self-efficacy reflects the confidence and beliefs that individuals have on their skills and capabilities to successfully complete the required tasks despite the challenges associated with these tasks (Elnadi & Gheith, 2021). Studying self-efficacy is critical to understand individuals’ behavior as it can determine a person’s persistence, resilience, and dedication when facing problems, as well as, the level of effort that the person will exert to complete a task (Mamman et al., 2019). Similarly, Jiatong et al (2021) defined entrepreneurial self-efficacy as the degree to which a person believes in his skills and abilities to successfully accomplish the required duties to start-up a new business venture. This paper follows Bandura’s approach, where entrepreneurial self-efficacy is defined as the degree to which an individual believes in his skills and abilities to successfully accomplish the required tasks to start-up a new business venture.

Entrepreneurial Creativity is the capability of an entrepreneur to venture into new business, to bring new products into the market, open new offices,

branches, test new technology and venture into new markets (Asenge, et al, 2018). Creativity in organizational context is characterized as discovering and incorporating new ideas into the company, and then implementing them to fulfill various aims and objectives and achieve a rate of production higher than that of the industry and better than any other competitor's rate (Altahat & Alsafadi, 2021). Similarly, entrepreneurship creativity combines a sense of self confidence, problem-solving, the ability to marshal resources, ability to identify opportunity, establishing entrepreneurial networks and technological knowledge (Jemal, 2020). According to Shin et al (2020), creativity is the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain. They went further to state that in order to be considered creative, a product or an idea must be different from what has been done before but the product or idea cannot be merely different for difference sake, it must also be appropriate to the goal at hand, correct, valuable, or expressive of meaning.

This paper adopts the creativity definition of Asenge et al (2018), where he defined creativity as the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain. Therefore, creativity refers to the generation of novel, useful idea, and one's ability to create new practical ideas. It is the start point of innovation.

Entrepreneurship skills is viewed the capability of thinking and behaving in the way that is relevant to all parts of society and the economy, and such an understanding of entrepreneurship skill requires a different approach to training (Jiatong et al, 2021). Generally, the word skills have been used to refer to individual characteristics. However, entrepreneurial skills is the ability of entrepreneur to have a technical competence, with the

combination of opportunity, capability and resources and conduct a business with the team to efficiently achieve the intended goals to be successful (Sousa, 2018). After considering the literature that are published on the skill-sets essential to be an entrepreneur, this paper captures much of the core of what many researchers have presented as key requirements as presented in NESTA (2008). The skill-sets can be broken down into three groups: Entrepreneurship Skills, Technical Skills and Management Skills. The level of education and training required to develop each of these skills will be highly dependent upon the levels of human capital that individuals might already possess before embarking upon their entrepreneurial journey. Indeed, it has been argued that developing these skill-sets will engender enterprising persons who should be equipped to fulfill their potential and create their own futures, whether or not as entrepreneurs (NESTA, 2008).

In light with the different concepts discussed above, entrepreneurial skills is defined in this paper as an individual characteristics that someone can use to enhance his ability to take risks, identify the practical methods of starting and running a business and prepare to make all the opportunities available.

Improvisation is a form of intuition that guides the action in a spontaneous way and is something done and produced on the spur of the moment rather than through a deliberate process of thought and evaluation (Bari & Arshad, 2017). Improvisation is the deliberate extemporaneous composition and execution of novel action (Hmielski, 2013), which means, a person can improvise his/her actions at any given time. Impulsiveness represents one of the most evident and important aspects of

improvisation (Balachandra, 2019). Balachandra described impulsiveness as the convergence of composition and execution in time. Additionally, improvisation is an action-oriented behavior led under uncertain circumstances, time pressure, and task demands (Elnadi & Gheith, 2021). Improvisation behavior can cope with the rapid changes in environmental demands because it provides firms with flexibility and capabilities. Thus, businesses without time to plan may find improvisation useful as a strategy (Bari & Arshad, 2017).

Improvisation is also seen as a new paradigm for organization's strategic choice and strategic performance construct (Hmieleski et al., 2013). Adomako et al (2018) argued that, an individual can improvise at any time. And as such, may be many potential causes for such behavior. For example, the introduction of a problem, an opportunity for which the person has no satisfactory, pre-composed arrangement, or the desire for something new and impulsive. This paper adopts the definition of Adomako et al (2018), where he defined improvisation as a deliberate spontaneous execution of novel activity.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This section discussed the theory selected to underpin the variables of this study. Social cognitive theory of Bandura (1977) was grounded and anchored for the study.

Social Cognitive Theory

In order to explain the relationship between entrepreneurship variables and entrepreneurial mindset, this paper follows Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which reveals interactions between personal (cognitive) variables, environmental factors, and behaviors in human functioning. Hmieleski et al, (2013) argue that SCT may provide a coherent

framework to understand holistically entrepreneurship variables from the view of cognitive psychology. Cui et al (2019) applied this theory into the context of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurship mindset in the context of China, which contributes to investigation of how entrepreneurship education factors affect student entrepreneurial mindset. Cui et al, (2019) used entrepreneurship inspiration to mediate the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial mindset. They further identified environmental factors such as curriculum attendance, extracurricular activities, and entrepreneurial inspiration. In this sense, SCT provides to some extent the theoretical grounding for our research leading us to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills and improvisation against entrepreneurial mindset development. Therefore, the impact of the aforementioned variables on entrepreneurial mindset could be explained by SCT in a broad view.

2.3 Empirical Review

Several studies were reviewed before embarking on this study for the relationships between the selected exogenous variables and the endogenous variable of the study. Notable among them is the study of Cui et al (2019), who investigated the impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial mindset of college students in China, while using entrepreneurial inspiration as mediating variable. In the findings, extracurricular activity was found to be significantly positive whilst that of curriculum attendance was significantly negative. The study makes use of only in-school attributes while ignoring other factors that can benefit students after graduation. This study

therefore included more variables to include post-school factors for students.

Similarly, Rodriguez and Lieber (2020) assessed the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset development and students in entrepreneurship education programs compared with other career-focused academies. Using quasi-experimental design, the findings shows that, students in entrepreneurship education showed an overall statistically significant increase in entrepreneurial mindset, specifically in communication and collaboration, opportunity recognition, and critical thinking and problem-solving. However, unlike Cui et al (2019), this study include other factors that are outside in-school factors but did not encompass any variable that can help in long term sustenance of the business.

Additionally, Islami et al, (2017) determined the contribution of entrepreneurship knowledge, skills competence, and self-efficacy to entrepreneurship readiness. The design used was cross-sectional, analysis was done using regression analysis. The results showed that there was a significant contribution between entrepreneurship knowledge to entrepreneurship readiness. There is also a significant contribution between the skills competence to entrepreneurship readiness and there is a significant contribution between self-efficacy to entrepreneurship readiness. The sample selection of the study is not justified to shoe bias free by randomly choosing four schools out of 13 populated schools.

Further, Wardana et al (2020) investigate the relationship between students' entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial mindset as well as understanding the mediating role of

attitude and self-efficacy. The approach adopted was convenience random sampling method, which is widely used in entrepreneurship research. Participants were recruited from several universities in Malang of East Java in Indonesia undergoing an online survey and were calculated using structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings indicate that, entrepreneurship education successfully influences entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial attitude, and the entrepreneurial mindset. On the other hand, entrepreneurial self-efficacy promotes entrepreneurial attitude instead of the entrepreneurial mindset.

Furthermore, Gojny-Zbierowska, and Zbierowski, (2021) investigated the impact of improvisation on individual components of entrepreneurial orientation. Using the data from 567 senior managers from medium and large organizations we find that improvisation has moderate effect on entrepreneurial orientation. Importantly, different dimensions of improvisation shape components of entrepreneurial orientation in different way: Creativity and bricolage have positive impact on innovativeness and proactiveness and ability to function and excel under stress has impact on propensity to take risk.

Indriani et al (2020) emphasized on the impact of entrepreneurial creativity and entrepreneurial mindset on entrepreneurial spirit among undergraduate students in Surabaya. The data for the study is taken from a private university in Surabaya, Malaysia with management study program. Data obtained from distributed questionnaires 149 and returned 130 responded with Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS). The results showed that entrepreneurial creativity had a positive and significant effect on

entrepreneurial spirit and entrepreneurial mindset had a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial spirit.

Adebayo and Rachael (2020) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial mindset. The study adopted survey research design. The population comprised of 25,353 four hundred level undergraduates in all Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The sample size was obtained using Krejcie and Morgan formula. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the participants. An analysis conducted revealed that, self-efficacy was found to have a significant effect on mindsets towards entrepreneurship.

Jiatong et al (2021) investigate the direct influence of entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial mindset, and creativity on the entrepreneurial intention with the indirect role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. The study applied the structural

equation model technique using AMOS software to verify the hypothesis relationships. This study collected self-administered survey data from 365 university students of Jiangsu and Zhejiang province of China. The findings indicated that entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial mindset, and creativity have a positive and significant influence on entrepreneurial intention. Further results revealed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy partially mediates in the relationship between entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial mindset, and creativity on entrepreneurial intention.

2.4 Research Framework

The conceptual framework shows the interplay of the primary variables of the study. The conceptual framework exemplifies the association of dependent and explanatory variable of the study. In this particular study, the independent variables are self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills and improvisation, while the dependent variable is the entrepreneurial mindset development.

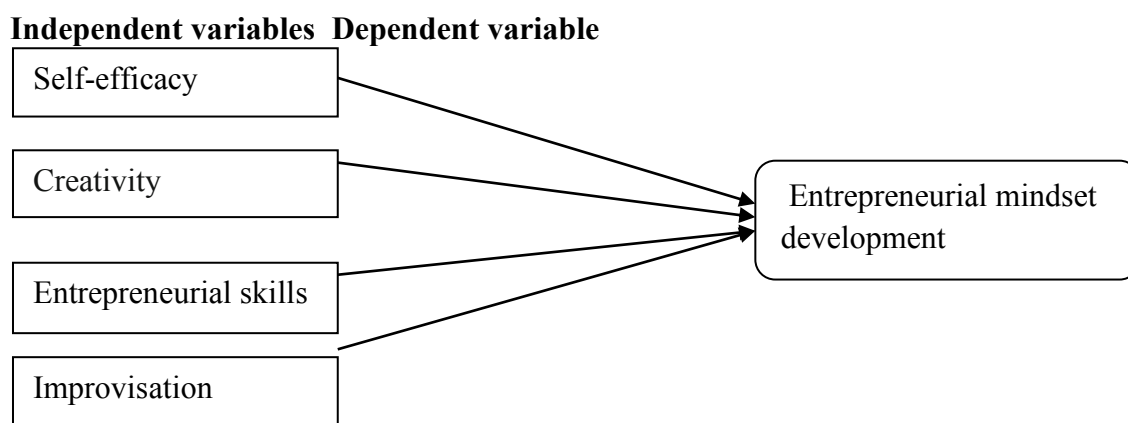


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3. Conclusions

This paper has reviewed the previous studies into a conceptual framework to help enhance the existing knowledge on

the relationship between self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skill, improvisation and entrepreneurial mindset development. The extent of relationship between these variables as a predictors of entrepreneurial mindset development is

highlighted in empirical review as it helps entrepreneurs improve their entrepreneurial mindset in developing economies like Nigeria. The conceptual framework provides a theoretical platform from which to further explore the selected variables particularly among entrepreneurs.

4. Recommendation and Implication for Future Research

This paper suggests that, self-efficacy, creativity, skills and improvisational qualities of entrepreneurs are important to their mindset development. Hence, business success could be influenced by the aforementioned characteristics of an entrepreneur. Moreover, for entrepreneurs to further improve their business, policy makers should formulate better policies or support programs aimed at assisting entrepreneurs to gain better access to global markets, technology and finance as well as to improve their management capabilities especially the graduates among entrepreneurs who can use the skill acquired in schools to have a better performance and continuity.

The conceptual framework offered in this paper may serve as a platform for future empirical study on self-efficacy, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, improvisation as the factor of business mindset development especially in the context of small and medium entrepreneurship. An avenue for future research could then be addressed and develop the operationalization of the constructs in the framework and empirically test the proposition to empirically confirm or reject the theoretical assumption in this paper. In assessing business development mindset among entrepreneurs in developing countries like Nigeria, study should be conducted using the selected variables in the context of a particular state considering

the different levels of economic development among states.

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