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ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AMONG  
UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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**Abstract**

Nigeria has a significant problem of graduate unemployment, which raises the question of whether university education can prepare graduates with skills that are relevant in the labour market. This paper explored the connection between entrepreneurial intentions and employability skills of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Three research objectives were addressed through one research question and two research hypotheses. The design used was a descriptive survey research design. The study sampled 984 final-year students using a random sampling technique. A self-constructed questionnaire titled Entrepreneurial Intentions and Employability Skills among Undergraduates Questionnaire (EIESAUQ) was used. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that the average level of employability skills among the undergraduates (grand mean = 3.47) was generally high, with the highest degree observed in teamwork skills. Significant positive relationships were found between subjective norms and employability skills ( $r = .43, p < .05$ ) and between perceived behavioural control and employability skills ( $r = .44, p < .05$ ). The study concludes that entrepreneurial intention variables are significant in enhancing the employability competencies of Nigerian undergraduates. The study suggests that government agencies should promote university–industry collaboration through supportive policies, funding, and national employability programmes, while employers provide structured internships and mentorship.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial intentions; Employability skills; Nigerian undergraduates; Perceived behavioural control; Subjective norms; Theory of Planned Behaviour.

## **Introduction**

The growing need of high skilled jobs in the 21st century society clarifies the need to offer undergraduates practical skills in the course of their studies. These are the skills that are essential in dealing with shifting industry standards and working in the dynamic environment. This is the target of the Nigerian universities producing graduates that can meet this demand by ensuring that they are able not only to complete the requirements of this demand as far as their academic capabilities and knowledge are concerned, but also their practical experiences, their fine skills and innovative ideas. These competencies are important in adjusting to the varied organisational cultures, working with the different perspectives and making a significant contribution towards the realisation of organisational objectives.

The set of skills, qualities, competencies, and expertise needed to obtain jobs among the undergraduates are called employability skills. The acquired skills are necessary to manoeuvre in the job market, impress the employers and stand out among other candidates. Employability skills are those desirable portable competencies in the employment sector of the potential employee when it comes to workforce preparation (Balogun, 2022). Such skills are crucial in any person who wants to possess a diversity of opportunities in the dynamic labour market. In the framework of this research, the areas covered by the employability skills of undergraduates are broad, which includes communication, digital literacy, time-management, collaboration, and critical- and problem-solving skills. Unemployment is one of the major concerns in Nigeria particularly among the new university graduates. It is thus urgent that critical consideration is done to determine whether or not the skills graduate have acquired are in line with what is required of the labour market.

Unemployment in Nigeria among the university graduates has been a burning issue in the country. The National Bureau of Statistics (2023) draws attention to the fact that the percentage of unemployed university graduates in Nigeria is high. Employers in Nigeria still express complaints on the lack of critical skills of graduates including problem-solving, self-management, teamwork, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. This gap between the needs in the industry and the employability skills of the graduates might be explained by the entrepreneurial intentions of the undergraduates of the universities in Nigeria.

Undergraduates in Nigeria have entrepreneurial intentions and employability skills that touch each other to establish the career paths and professional development of individuals who cross the panorama of opportunities and challenges that is dynamic in the Nigerian context. Ibidunni, Mozie and Ayeni (2021) define entrepreneurial intentions among university students as the psychological predisposition or inclination of the person towards getting involved in entrepreneurial endeavours. Entrepreneurial intention may be described as the internal drive and dedication of individuals to realise, seek and take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities. As a result, the universities in South-West Nigeria are being designed in such a way to encourage entrepreneurship and instill the desire in students.

The theory that forms the basis of the study is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) that was advanced by Ajzen (1991), who argues that behaviour is shaped by behavioural intentions, which in turn are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. In the framework of entrepreneurship education, perceived behavioural control is expressed in the confidence of students in their ability to cope with the entrepreneurial tasks, whereas subjective norms are the social requirements that affect the choice of a career. These constructs are thus significant predictors of entrepreneurial behaviour and can equally affect the construction of employability skills amongst the university students.

The perceived behavioural control and employability skills of the South-West Nigerian undergraduates are important factors in the ever-evolving employment and economic development environment. According to Aga and Singh (2022), the behaviour of an individual is predisposed by the perceived behavioural control among other factors. Such a level of understanding is necessary to address and determine the problems affecting students in South-West Nigeria where the job market is conditioned by a mix of local factors and global trends without ignoring perceived behavioural control and employability skills (Adeyonu, Balogun & Obaniyi, 2019).

It is possible to consider subjective norms as significant predictors of entrepreneurial intentions. The potential factors of the ever-evolving employment and economic landscape include the subjective norms and employability skills of the South-West Nigeria university undergraduates. The social pressures or expectation that individuals assume to exist around a particular behaviour are known as subjective norms (Aga, 2023). In the case of university undergraduates, this is the

role of peer and cultural expectations in job and career choice. The subjective norms may be expectations of friends, family, and society about choosing a job or career and the career process (Ndovela and Chinyamurindi, 2021).

Although there is an increasing literature on the issues of entrepreneurial intentions and graduate employability, little empirical research has focused on the relationship between components of the Theory of Planned Behaviour especially perceived behavioural control and subjective norms and the acquisition of employability skills among undergraduates in universities. Additionally, the majority of Nigerian research has been focused on entrepreneurial intention resultant on business start-up or self-employment intention whereas limited focus has been on how entrepreneurial cognition can enhance other competencies of employability needed in the current labour markets. There is, therefore, a lack of empirical data on likely ways and reasons on why and how the entrepreneurial intention variables lead to acquisition of employability skills amongst undergraduates, specifically in universities in South-West Nigeria. The research bridges this gap by testing how perceived behavioural control, subjective norms and employability skills are related in final-year undergraduate students in South-West Nigerian universities. It is on this background that the study seeks to explore entrepreneurial intentions and employability skills in undergraduates in South-West Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Graduate employability is one of the burning issues in Nigeria especially in South-West Nigeria whereby more university graduates are becoming unemployed and underemployed. National Bureau of Statistics (2024) reports that Nigeria had a rate of 5.3 percent unemployment rate in the first quarter (January-March) of 2024 and 4.3 percent in the second quarter (April-June) of 2024; in both cases, the combined rate of unemployment and underemployment was around 13 percent. It is important to note that the level of unemployment among post-secondary education holders was approximated at approximately 8-9 per cent meaning that the graduates are not proportionately represented regardless of their education standards. In the same manner, unemployment among the young people has been constant with estimates of between 6.5-8.4% in 2024 (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2024). These statistics point to a mismatch in the organisation between university training and the labour markets.

To this, the Nigerian universities have embarked on incorporating entrepreneurship skills in their curricular as they anticipate their graduates to acquire entrepreneurial skills and minimise their dependency on wage jobs. But the data points to the fact that the number of graduates joining the Nigerian labour market each year reaches more than 1.5 million people, which is much more than the economy can absorb (National Universities Commission, 2023). Although entrepreneurship has been taught in educational institutions, graduates still cannot apply the obtained knowledge to practical entrepreneurial activities, which casts doubts on the effectiveness of such programmes in improving employability (Afolabi and Macheke, 2021; Okolie et al., 2020).

Moreover, the current empirical research has mainly looked at entrepreneurship education as a stand-alone predictor of employability outcomes and little has been done to explore important psychological constructs including subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. Such constructs are based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour and are important in influencing the entrepreneurial intentions and behavioural conditions (Ajzen, 1991; Neneh, 2020). Nevertheless, their joint effects on employability skills of undergraduates are under researched especially in the South-West Nigeria.

Due to the fact that graduate unemployment still continues to exist, combined with the large number of graduates entering an already saturated labour market, and the seemingly loose relationship between entrepreneurship education and labour market performance, it is evident that empirical research into the role that entrepreneurial intentions via elements like subjective norms and perceived behavioural control play in enhancing employability skills among university undergraduates in South-West Nigeria is urgently required.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study aimed to investigate the relationship among entrepreneurial intentions and employability skills of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined:

1. the level of employability skills of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria.

2. the relationship between perceived behavioural control and employability skills among the undergraduates.
3. the relationship between subjective norms and employability skills among the undergraduates.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research question:

1. What is the level of employability skills of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria?

### **Research Hypotheses**

For the direction of this research, the following research hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and employability skills among the undergraduates.
2. There is no significant relationship between subjective norms and employability skills among the undergraduates.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept of Employability Skills**

Employability skills refer to a set of abilities, characteristics and skills that aids people to find employment, operate appropriately within the workplace, and comply with the changing labour market demands. These skills are not just technical skills but consist of transferable skills (communication, teamwork, critical thinking, digital literacy, time management, and problem-solving). As the current labour markets are typified by a high rate of technological change and organisational change, employers are now in need of graduates with a combination of knowledge elsewhere and the workplace skills.

Balogun (2022) argues that employability skills are transportable competencies that help people to increase their effectiveness in various work situations. Otherwise, Bua and Toryila (2019) theorise the notion of employability skills as a set of knowledge, attitudes, and capabilities that enable you to succeed in the paid job and in the business. Although these views focus on the

functional relevance of employability skills, they also indicate that employability skills are not naturally acquired but they are acquired through education and experience.

In this way, universities are supposed to be at the forefront in equipping employability skills in terms of curriculum design and pedagogical practices. Empirical evidence suggests that experiential modes of learning, which include internships, teamwork, and problem-based learning, have a great impact on assisting students to develop transferable skills (Okolie et al., 2020; Afolabi and Macheke, 2021). Nevertheless, despite all these efforts there are still concerns about graduate preparedness in Nigeria. Indicatively, Coker, Sule, Mohammed and Jirgi (2021) noted that employers continue to believe that graduates have not acquired relevant workplace skills, especially those that tackle issues and innovativeness. This difference in the views indicates that although universities play a role in skills development, other elements of formal education in addition to universities can also affect the results of employability.

### **Concept of Entrepreneurial Intentions**

Entrepreneurial intention is a state of mind that guides the attention, experience and action of an individual towards the entrepreneurial behaviour like venturing into the business or acting out of opportunity-driven venture. It is considered to be one of the most significant predictors of the entrepreneurial behaviour as people cannot possibly be involved in entrepreneurial activity without having intentions. According to Godswill et al. (2022), entrepreneurial intention is the wish of people, especially students, to pursue creative and active career activities that entail the establishment of new products, services, or business opportunities. On the same note, Ezeh, Nkamnebe and Omodafe (2020) underline that individual (attitudes and self-efficacy) and context (education, institutional support, and social networks) aspects determine entrepreneurial intentions.

Notably, there is growing body of literature that suggests that entrepreneurial intention is not merely limited to business start-up experiences but also has some impact on extending competency to competencies that are pertinent to employability. As an example, Ibidunni, Mozie and Ayeni (2021) note that the entrepreneurial orientation of students develops creativity, innovation and opportunity recognition skills that are also competent in the organisational employment situation. Such a prospect points to an overlap of conceptualisation between

entrepreneurship intentions and employability skills, indicating that entrepreneurial cognition can be utilised as a basis to acquire transferable capabilities in the workplace.

Nevertheless, there has been a paucity of empirical connection despite this conceptual connection with all the existing studies mainly focusing on entrepreneurial intentions and employability skills separately, rather than combining the two constructs. This leaves a gap on how the entrepreneurial intention elements could contribute to increasing employability skills in undergraduates either directly or indirectly.

### **Perceived Behavioural Control and Employability Skills**

The concept of perceived behavioural control (PBC) is related to the views of an individual about their capability to accomplish a certain behaviour. In the Theory of Planned Behaviour, PBC is very close to self-efficacy and the degree to which people think that they have the skills and resources and opportunities to perform certain actions. According to Aga and Singh (2022), the perceived behavioural control brings about confidence among individuals and it shapes their performance in regards to their behavioural results especially in the business world. High perceived behavioural control students have higher chances of having proactive behaviours like problem-solving, innovativeness, and finding opportunities. These behaviours are conceptually consistent with employability skills, which implies the possible connection between PBC and the development of employability.

Empirical research, including Ibrahim, Jumare and Musa (2023) have determined that perceived behavioural control is a great predictor of entrepreneurial intentions and self-employment behaviour. It is noteworthy, though, that this research is concerned mostly with the result of entrepreneurship and not necessarily with employability skills. Thus, the results are rather indirectly supportive, although one should be careful when generalising the results to the context of employability. There is however, theoretical and other related empirical evidence that perceived behavioural control can affect employability skills by having an impact on self-confidence and adaptive behaviour. Students with self-confidence believe that they are able to do things, and they will have a higher probability of undertaking skill development, persevering in the hard work and gaining skills like critical thinking, decision making and group collaboration. Therefore, even though there is a lack of direct empirical evidence, the correlation between PBC

and employability skills can be facilitated in the framework of the bigger picture of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

### **Subjective Norms and Employability Skills**

Subjective norms are social pressures that are perceived to influence the behaviour of a person. These are the pressures that are usually emanated by the significant others who include family members, peers, mentors, and societal expectations. In the Theory of Planned Behaviour, subjective norms are important to influence behavioural intentions and the following behaviour. According to Aga (2023), subjective norms also determine the perceptions of what is socially acceptable or desirable hence affecting the attitudes of individuals towards behaviours. Subjective norms have the potential to influence career decisions, entrepreneurial activity, and skill development in the case of university students. It is possible to promote the use of relevant competencies and career opportunities by family requirements, peer influence, and mentorship support.

Empirical evidence to support this view is given by Ndovela and Chinyamurindi (2021), who show that social expectations play a major role in determining the career choice and employability rates of graduates. They propose their findings that positive social conditions may boost the motivation of students to learn employability skill and also seek career development opportunities. On the same note, Kolvereid (1996) concluded that subjective norms have a profound impact on entrepreneurial intentions especially when the subjects believe that social approval to entrepreneurship is high. Though this paper is about entrepreneurship, the findings can be applied in the case of employability since even transferable skills may be promoted by social support systems.

Subjective norms may be interpreted as a contextual force when they are synthesised with the concept of employability skills and determine how students engage in the acquisition of skills. Students that are integrated into positive social networks have higher chances of becoming confident and exploring opportunities as well as getting competencies that are applicable in employment and entrepreneurship.

## **Literature Gap**

The synthesis of the literature reviewed shows that the constructs of employability skills, entrepreneurial intentions, perceived behavioural control and subjective norms are not independent phenomena, but rather interconnected. Although employability skills are the dependent variables to achieve success in the labour market, the elements of entrepreneurial intention especially perceived behavioural control and subjective norms are the psychological and social factors that might determine the attainment of these skills. The Theory of Planned Behaviour is an invaluable framework in the integration of these constructs, in terms of the way individual beliefs (PBC) and social influences (subjective norms) affect behavioural outcomes.

Nonetheless, in spite of such theoretical correspondence, currently available pieces of empirical research have mostly failed to test the direct correlation between the elements of entrepreneurial intention and employability skills. There is a lack of integration between the two areas because most of the studies either examine entrepreneurship intentions as predictors of business start-up or investigate employability skills as the outcomes of educational interventions. This absence of integrative empirical evidence is especially notable in the Nigerian context which is currently experiencing the issue of graduate unemployment. As a result, it is possible that there is a gap in the literature that requires fulfilment through studies investigating the specific relationship between aspects of entrepreneurial intentions perceived behavioural control and subjective norms and the achievement of employability skills among undergraduates. This research thus adds to the existing body of literature by offering empirical data on this relationship in South-West Nigeria Universities.

## **Methodology**

This section is concerned with the procedures and methods through which the study was conducted.

## **Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large population in order to describe existing conditions and examine relationships among variables without manipulating them. According to Nworgu (2016), descriptive survey research is suitable for

studies that seek to obtain accurate information about current phenomena and draw valid conclusions from respondents' perceptions and experiences.

**Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprised all 90,702 full-time final-year undergraduate students in selected federal, state and private universities in South-West Nigeria as shown in Table 1. The universities included in the study are accredited institutions that have admitted students into their programmes since 2013. Final-year students were selected because they are expected to have gained adequate academic exposure and institutional experience that would enable them to provide informed responses regarding entrepreneurial intentions and employability skills.

**Table 1:** The population of the Study

States	Federal University	Population	State Universities	Populati on	Private Universities	Popula tion
Lagos	UNILAG	6772	LASU	9104	Anchor	196
Ogun	FUNAB	6364	OOU	7081	Bells	812
Oyo	UI	4228	LAUTECH	9802	Lead City	1229
Osun	OAU	10935	Osun State Uni	7416	Fountain	447
Ondo	FUTA	6418	Adekunle Ajasin Uni	5533	Elizade Uni	460
Ekiti	FUOYE	6138	Ekiti State Uni	4571	Afe Babalola	3196
		<b>40855</b>		<b>43507</b>		<b>6340</b>

**TOTAL=90,702**

**Source:** Extracted from NUC, 2024

**Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The minimum sample size for the study was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations. Based on this model, a minimum sample size of 398 undergraduate students was obtained. However, to improve the reliability, representativeness and generalisability of the findings, the calculated sample size was multiplied by three (Cochran, 1977). Consequently, a total sample size of 1,194 respondents was used for the study as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Sample Size

States	Federal University	Participants	State University	Participants	Private University	Participants
Lagos	UNILAG	89	LASU	120	Anchor	3
Ogun	FUNAB	84	OOU	93	Bells	11
Oyo	UI	56	Lagoke Akintola Uni of Tech	129	Lead City	16
Osun	OAU	144	Osun State Uni	98	Fountain	6
Ondo	FUTA	84	Adekunle Ajasin Uni	73	Elizade Uni	6
Ekiti	FUOYE	81	Ekiti State Uni	60	Afe Babalola	42
<b>TOTAL=</b>						<b>1194</b>

**Source:** Researcher’s Computation

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted for the selection of respondents. In the first stage, three universities (one federal, one state and one private) were selected from each of the six states in South-West Nigeria, resulting in a total of eighteen universities. In the second stage, three academic departments that were common across the selected universities such as Business Administration, Computer Science and Chemistry were purposively selected to ensure disciplinary representation. In the third stage, stratified and proportional sampling techniques were used to determine the number of respondents selected from each university and department. Finally, simple random sampling was employed to select the required number of final-year undergraduate students (400, 500 and 600 levels depending on programme duration) from each department.

**Research Instrument**

A researcher-constructed questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The self-constructed questionnaire was titled “Entrepreneurial Intentions, and Employability Skills among Undergraduates (EIESAU)”. The instrument was divided into two sections: A and B. Section A of the instrument sought demographic information such as sex, university type/ownership, level of study, age range, etc., about the respondents. Section B solicited information from the participants on entrepreneurial intentions and employability skills among undergraduates based on the variables identified in this study. The rating scale was a 4-point modified Likert-type scale

of: To a Great Extent (TGE), To an Extent (TAE), To a Low Extent (TLE), Not at All (NAA), and Very High Level (VHL), High Level (HL), Low Level (LL), Very Low Level (VLL) with a scale of 4, 3, 2, and 1, for Questionnaire items measuring both the independent and dependent variables, respectively.

### **Validity of the Research Instrument**

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity procedures. Experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Lagos reviewed the questionnaire to assess the clarity, relevance and appropriateness of the items in relation to the objectives of the study. Their comments and suggestions were used to revise the instrument and ensure that the questionnaire adequately captured the constructs under investigation.

### **Reliability of the Research Instrument**

The reliability of the instrument was determined using the test–retest method. A pilot test was conducted using 50 undergraduate students from Caleb University, who were not part of the main study but possessed similar characteristics to the target population. The questionnaire was administered to the participants on two separate occasions, with an interval of two weeks between the first and second administrations. This interval was considered appropriate to minimise memory effects while ensuring that the construct being measured remained stable over time. The data obtained from the two administrations were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to determine the stability of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for data collection.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

The researcher and three trained research assistants administered copies of the questionnaire, in each of the selected universities. Copies of the instrument were distributed to the respondents. The researcher assured the respondents of strict confidentiality in the process. Out of the 1,194 questionnaires distributed, 984 were properly completed and returned, representing an 82.4% response rate.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, mean and standard deviation, were used to answer the research question regarding the level of employability skills among undergraduates. Inferential statistics were employed to test the study hypotheses. Specifically, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) technique was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

**Results**

This section presented the results of the analysis of data in the study conducted. The results covered the analysis of demographic characteristics of the respondents, answer to research questions, research hypotheses, and discussion of findings.

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Final Year Undergraduates

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N (N= 984)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Male	469	47.7
	Female	515	52.3
<b>Age</b>	Below 20 years	65	6.6
	20–24 years	730	74.2
	25–29 years	174	17.7
	30–34 years	8	0.8
	35 years and above	7	0.7
<b>Level</b>	400 Level	806	81.9
	500 Level	178	18.1
<b>University Type</b>	Federal	413	42.0
	State	490	49.8
	Private	81	8.2

**Source:** Field Survey (2025).

Table 1 indicates that the respondents were reasonably even in terms of sex and slightly more females (52.3) compared to males (47.7). Majority of the final-year undergraduates were aged between 20-24 years (74.2), meaning that the population was largely composed of young individuals with very few aging past the 30 years. At the level, most were in 400 Level (81.9%), and a smaller percentage in 500 Level (18.1%), implying that most of the programmes sampled were four-year courses. In terms of type of university, the state university was the most represented (49.8%), then federal university (42.0%), and lastly, the least represented were the

private universities (8.2). In general, the table represents a varied but somewhat state-university-oriented group of students mainly of young final-year students.

**Research Question One:** What is the level of employability skills of undergraduates in South-West Nigeria?

**Table 2:** Employability Skills

Variable	University Type	N	Grand Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Grand SD	Level
Employability Skills	Federal	413	3.45	0.63	High
	State	490	3.45	0.63	High
	Private	81	3.49	0.62	High
	<b>All Universities</b>	<b>984</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>High</b>

**Metrics:** 3.50 – 4.00 = Very High, 2.50 – 3.49 = High, 1.50 – 2.49 = Low, 1.00 – 1.49 = Very Low

The mean scores of employability skills in Table 2 were 3.45 (Federal), 3.45 (State) and 3.49 (Private), and the overall mean was 3.47 (SD = 0.63). This means that the undergraduates in South-West Nigeria have high level of employability skills.

**Test of Hypotheses**

The results of the hypotheses tested in this study were presented in this section.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between perceived behaviour control and employability skills among the undergraduates.

**Table 3**

Relationship between perceived behaviour control and employability skills among the undergraduates

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r	Sig.	Decision
Perceived Behavioural Control	984	17.19	2.12	982	.44	.000	Ho Rejected
Employability Skills		96.79	9.91				

Significant @ p< 0.05

Table 3 presented the results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis showing the relationship between perceived behavioural control and employability skills among undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. The results showed a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and employability skills ( $r = .44$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Since the probability value was less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and employability skills among university undergraduates, was therefore rejected.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between subjective norms and employability skills among the undergraduates.

**Table 4**

Relationship between subjective norms and employability skills among the undergraduates

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	r	Sig.	Decision
Subjective Norms	984	17.58	2.20	982	.43	.000	Ho Rejected
Employability Skills		96.79	9.91				

Significant @  $p < 0.05$

The results in Table 4 showed the relationship between subjective norms and employability skills among undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. The results showed a moderate positive and significant relationship between subjective norms and employability skills,  $r(982) = .43$ ,  $p < .05$ . Since the probability value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no significant relationship between subjective norms and employability skills, was therefore rejected. This implied that undergraduates who received stronger social influence and encouragement from family members, friends, and mentors tended to demonstrate higher employability skills.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the only research question indicated that the degree of employability skills possessed by undergraduates in South-West Nigeria is fairly high with the grand mean of 3.47. Especially, time management skills, critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills, high and very high communication skills, respectively, and teamwork skills were highly ranked by the respondents. The finding is accompanied by the view of Balogun (2022), who asserted that

employability skills among undergraduates consist of a combination of skills that are transportable such as ability to communicate, work in a team, ICT skills, and problem-solving skills, which make undergraduates more willing to be employed. Continuing on the same theme, Bua and Toryila (2019) emphasised that the employability skills are those types of knowledge, attitude and skills that one possesses in order to succeed in a paid job or as an entrepreneur. However, despite such a good outcome, previous studies also cast some concerns about whether the graduates in Nigeria are prepared to venture into the labour market or not.

The result of the first hypothesis showed that employability skills of the undergraduates were statistically related with perceived behavioural control ( $r = .44, p < .05$ ). The null hypothesis that supposed that there is no significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and employability skills was therefore rejected. More to the point, the given finding can be empirically used as the extension of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to employability development. Although the TPB has been used to traditionally explain the entrepreneurial intention and behaviour, the current outcome indicates that there is perceived behavioural control that leads to acquisition of the employability skills. This observation conforms with the data presented by Ibrahim, Jumare and Musa (2023), who have discovered that perceived behavioural control emerged as a major predictor of the entrepreneurial intentions and self-employment desirability among students. Despite the fact that these studies bear the results of entrepreneurship in their scope of interests, the current study builds on them by showing that such psychological confidence equally applies to employability skills development.

The findings of the second hypothesis also showed that the employability skills of the undergraduates according to the subjective norms significantly and moderate correlated ( $r = .43, p < .05$ ), and the null hypothesis was rejected. It implies that relatives, peers, teachers, and social factors are significant to the cultivation of the employability competencies among students. The finding is aligned with the efforts of Ndovela and Chinyamurindi (2021), who reported that social expectations are important aspects of career decision-making and employability in graduates. Their research article has indicated family support, peer influence, and societal expectations have the great impact on the attitudes towards career development and professional preparation. Similarly, in research done by Kolvereid (1996) on entrepreneurial intentions, the subjective norms were important in explaining intentions of individuals to start a business and

especially in a situation where perceived social approval is high. Notably, the social aspect of the Theory of Planned Behaviour is strengthened by this observation as it shows that the subjective norms do not only influence intention but also competency development in reality.

### **Conclusion**

This study has significant contribution to the role of the entrepreneurial intention elements in the development of the employability skills in undergraduates in South-West Nigeria. Though the results suggest that the level of employability skills among undergraduates is generally high, the study is more critical in showing that psychological and social determinants are what are more perceived to have been controlling the behaviours and subjective norms in influencing the level of employability skills. Theoretically, the research broadens the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to the context of the employability development, not just to the context of entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial behaviour. The implications of the findings in terms of policy choice are that a more concerted action in graduate employability beyond curriculum reform is needed. In practice, the paper highlights the fact that it is not the sole duty of the universities to produce employable graduates. The role of employers, families, peer networks and even students themselves is critical in the results of employability.

### **Recommendations**

In the context of the study findings, the following recommendations can be suggested:

1. Universities need to enhance practical and real-world studies by incorporating internships, industrial training, projects based learning and entrepreneurial incubation programmes into courses. It will allow students to apply a theoretical knowledge into practical skills and improve their employability competencies.
2. The government, via its corresponding bodies like the National Universities Commission (NUC) as well as the Ministry of Education ought to formulate and implement policies that work towards enhancing strong university-industry connections. This may involve investment in entrepreneurship centres, encouraging industry involvement in training of students and national employability development programmes to help in closing the gap between the education sector and labour market needs.

3. There should be active involvement of employers and industry players with universities through offering structured internship placements, mentorship programmes, and career development programs. This will make graduates to have skills that are relevant in the industry and equipped to meet their expectations in the workplace.
4. Parents and guardians should support skill learning, entrepreneurship and career exploration, whereas peer groups and professional networks ought to support innovation, self-reliance, and lifelong learning.
5. Proactive responsibility should be undertaken by students to enhance their employability skills by undertaking continuous self-enhancement activities including online learning, certification of skills, networking and entrepreneurial activities.

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