Moderating Role of Perceived Social Support on the Relationship Between Entrepreneurship Education and Entrepreneurial Intention

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Abstract - Globally, the need for entrepreneurial activities for young graduates have become an important area of concern for researchers and policymakers. One of the main concerns that warrant this research to be undertaken is the low number of graduates venturing into entrepreneurship. Hence, we aim to investigate the effects of entrepreneurship education (EE) on entrepreneurial intentions (EI) with the role of perceived social support as a moderating variable. To test the objectives, a cross-sectional research design was employed. Data was collected using a self-completed questionnaire that was distributed to 398 undergraduate students of the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria. Upon collection, the data was analysed using SmartPLS software for Partial Least Squares modelling. Based on the results, the relationship between EE EI was not found to be significant. However, the findings also revealed that the interaction between the perception of social support and EE on EI was significant. Thus, this work provided important implications for policymakers responsible for entrepreneurship development. In particular, an understanding of the factors leading to the formation of EI is important for managers who are responsible for promoting and facilitating entrepreneurship programs.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurship education, perceived social support

1. Introduction

The intention of students to venture into entrepreneurship has become an important concern among entrepreneurship researchers and policymakers globally. It is because entrepreneurship is perceived as a contributing factor to the growth and development of nations (Beetseh & Ahima, 2012; Liñán & Fayolle, 2015; Sieger, Fueglistaller & Zellweger, 2014). However, studies have not unveiled the conflicting relationship between Entrepreneurship Education (EE) and Entrepreneurial Intention (EI). Usually, EE is associated with EI (Amos, Oluseye & Bosede, 2015; Maresch, Harms, Kailer & Wimmer-wurm, 2016; Salihu, 2016; Solesvic et al., 2014). Conversely, some studies have also discovered that EE is insignificantly associated with EI (Bae, Qian, Miao & Fiet, 2014; Oosterbeek, Van Praag & Ijsselstein, 2017; Von Graevenitz, Harhoff & Weber, 2010). Due
to such mixed observations, a moderator is required to understand the relationship. Baron & Kenny (1986) suggested the introduction of a moderator when an unexpectedly weak or inconsistent relationship exists in a relationship between a particular variable that serves as a predictor and another a criterion variable.

The study aims to address the knowledge divide by investigating whether perceived social support can explain the mixed findings of EE and EI. This study also specifically aims to investigate the interaction effect of perceived social support on the relationship between EE and EI. The structure of this article begins with the review of relevant literature on EE, social support and EI to promote theoretical development. Then, the methodology which was adopted for this study is described. The next section presents the results and discusses the findings based on theory and existing empirical studies. In conclusion, management implications are discussed in the context of Nigeria. Finally, the limitations and recommendations of future research are discussed.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Entrepreneurial Intention

Katz & Gartner (1988) asserted that understanding the intent and subsequent decisions of a new business is an interesting topic. Bird (1988) defined an individual's entrepreneurial intent as a valuable aspect in the creation of a new business. Even though a business is usually centred on one or more ideas, the basic goal is to advance these ideas into actual businesses. In light of this, Bird (1988) explained that entrepreneurial ideas are inspired by inspirations that act upon continuous attention and intent. Therefore, the transition of individuals with entrepreneurial potential becomes difficult or impossible when the intention is missing (Ismail et al., 2009). Thompson (2009) posited that EI are a self-recognised belief in a person that has the intention to start a business. Furthermore, Krueger & Carsrud (1993) defined it as a state of consciousness before action and shifted attention to starting new businesses. Similarly, it is defined as the willingness of an individual to start a new business (Dohse & Walter, 2010; Akanbi, 2013). Thus, EI represents the future course of action in entrepreneurial activities. This is an important factor in promoting the establishment of new businesses and can significantly impact the success, survival and development of the business. Therefore, researching EI provides researchers with valuable insights which will help in better understanding and predicting entrepreneurial processes by identifying prerequisites for EI (Krueger et al., 2000).

Alarmingly, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2014 involving 10 Sub-Saharan African countries indicated the low intention of Nigerian youth to venture into entrepreneurship. Compared to countries like Uganda, Botswana, Angola and Malawi that averaged above 70% intention level, Nigeria was ranked 7th with a low intention level of 44% (Singer, Amoros & Arreola, 2014). Similarly, Nigeria was ranked 101 among 137 countries across the world with a 19.7 score by the Global Entrepreneurship Index (2018). This score is considerably very low compared to Botswana and South Africa which were ranked 52 with 34.9 and 57 with 32.9 scores, respectively (Acs, Estrin, Mickiewicz & Szerb, 2018). To corroborate the low EI among the Nigerian youths, the NPower Social Investment Program of the Federal Government recorded over 2.5 million applications by Nigerian graduates for just 300,000 jobs indicating their preferences over government jobs (Sani, 2017). Hence, the Nigerian entrepreneurship climate is facing a serious challenge and needs urgent attention to improve the involvement of potential entrepreneurs.
Previous studies (Kiiru, Iravo & Kamau, 2015; Weber, Graevenitz & Harhoff, 2009) have examined the effects of several determinants of EI to understand the forces influencing the formation of EI. Authors from another study (Van Riel, Henseler, Kemény & Sasovova, 2017) argued that researchers’ interests have shifted from linear effects to non-linear effects including quadratic and interaction effects. Moreover, Elfving, Brännback & Carsrud (2009) concluded that the non-linear relationships between variables were present while significant variables such as motivation were missing in the intention model. Nevertheless, a conceptual framework was suggested by Krueger & Carsrud (1993) involving a mediation and interaction to progress in entrepreneurship research. Therefore, the existing intention models are considered viable frameworks that need to be extended. This study looks at moderation as a deviation from the existing intention models.

2.2. Concept of EE

Today, there is a continuous increase in the number of universities offering entrepreneurial research. Kourilsky & Walstad (1998), therefore, recognised EE as the most important factor in helping youths understand and develop a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship. It aims to promote creativity, innovation and self-employment among students by inculcating the knowledge, competence and attitudes of entrepreneurs (Israel & John Mark, 2014). In general, it desires to build an entrepreneurial mindset among students by training them with the necessary skills and knowledge to help turn their ideas into action (Adeyemi, 2016). Therefore, EE is perceived as a vital factor affecting the intention of self-employment.

EE is defined as a learning process that develops learner skills and thinking to create a way to transform creativity into entrepreneurial action (Sozen-O'Neill, 2018). Hence, it is an education on entrepreneurial attitudes and skills (Bae et al., 2014). However, a group of scholars (Bosma, Akos, Otio, Cordulas & Levy, 2008) believe that EE not only entails teaching and managing businesses but also fosters self-worth and creative thinking. Meanwhile, Jones & English (2004) consider EE as a provides the platform to personally identify and profit from business opportunities, to develop self-esteem and to gain knowledge and skills to conduct risky business activities. Similarly, Mauchi et al. (2011) defined it as a process of providing individuals with knowledge, skills and attitudes to identify business opportunities and act accordingly. In general, EE aims to enhance entrepreneurship as a career choice and raise awareness on the process of starting and managing new enterprises (Hills, 1988).

2.4. EE and EI

Due to the significant contribution of entrepreneurship to the economy, policymakers and researchers have emphasized on EE. Policymakers focus on the impact of EE on graduate career decisions and policies affecting EE (Sieger, Fueglistaller & Zellweger, 2011; Kelley, Singer & Herrington, 2012). Literature in the field of entrepreneurship also confirms that the EE program is the right and effective tool to enhance EI. The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and extant studies on EE (Galloway & Brown, 2015; Kuratko, 2005; Pittaway & Cope, 2007) pointed out that there might be important positive links between EE and various entrepreneurial-related outcomes. For example, individuals who have attended university-level entrepreneurship courses or trained are more inclined to start a business than those who have not (Galloway & Brown, 2015; Kolvereid & Moen, 2007).

On the other hand, Alimardan et al. (2017) identified the factors affecting EI of students at higher vocational schools in Gilan province, Iran. A total 15 factors affecting student entrepreneurship were identified including education, research, motivation and
entrepreneurship, attitudes, personality, information technology, management support, environment, entrepreneurial skills, culture, family, entrepreneurship courses, commercialisation and infrastructure. Of these factors, EE greatly affected students’ EI. Based on this finding, Nabi et al. (2017) proposed a complete experiment with a new method designed to evaluate the pre and post effects of the entrepreneurial teaching plan (ETP). The t-test results indicated that ETP may have a positive impact on some students and may inversely affect the EI of others. Hence, ETP which was designed to improve students’ entrepreneurial skills may not be useful for all types of students. Besides that, Malebana (2016) investigated whether EI of rural college students in South Africa with different degrees of EE would bring about some changes. The results indicated that the mindset of respondents with 3 years of EE was quite different from those who had been in EE for six months and those who had not received EE. Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference between respondents who received EE over three years than those who were not trained.

To the contrary, there is also evidence that EE could sometimes negatively impact EI. For example, Liñán, Rodríguez-cohard & Rueda-Cantuche (2005) investigated the factors influencing the EI level. The findings indicated that the perceived feasibility and personal attitudes to entrepreneurship are significantly and positively correlated with EI. However, the inclusion of entrepreneurial knowledge did not directly affect EI. Similarly, Martins et al. (2013) performed the first meta-analysis of the existing EE studies to link EE-specific interventions to entrepreneurial outcomes. Based on their results, entrepreneurship education and training (EET) and other entrepreneurship-related human capital assets were associated with entrepreneurial outcomes. Another study by Oosterbeek, Van Praag & Ijsselstein (2017) measured the EI of college students before and after completing their entrepreneurship courses. The results demonstrated that students were less willing to start a business after completing their studies. Their study revealed that the impact of the program on students' self-assessment of entrepreneurial skills is negligible and has negatively impacted their intention to become entrepreneurs. Moreover, a study on the economics graduate students and their EI indicated no increase in EI due to EE (Vukovic, Kadmenek & Collente, 2015).

Nasiru, Keat & Bhatti (2015) analysed the effects of effective EE, perceived creativity and university support on EI. A significant negative correlation was found between effective EE and EI. Recently, Putra, Tridayanti & Sukoco (2018) investigated whether EE could significantly improve students' entrepreneurial willingness. They revealed that EE has no direct impact on students' EI. Based on the paragraph, the following hypothesis was drawn:

**Hypothesis 1:** EE will be positively related to EI.

2.3. Perceived Social Support as a potential moderator

Social support is viewed by scholars as a complex and multifaceted concept (Vogel & Wei, 2015). They defined it as a person's voluntary actions against another in the form of financial, physical and emotional assistance which can be sourced from the family, friends, school, community etc (Samadifard-Damirchi, 2018). According to social support information, people care about, respect and value (Abbey, Abramis & Caplan, 1985; Kwok, Yeung & Chung, 2015) social assets, social resources or social networks which can be accessed when they need advice, help, assistance, protection or support. Although social support has been classified differently in many studies, most of the classifications are similar despite the different terminologies used. The classifications also indicated that social support is both tangible and intangible. This research will use Cohen & Hoberman's (1983) classification
method which uses reflection formation to consider construction under belonging, appraisal and tangible supports.

Literature evidence suggests that social support may be the moderator of the relationship between EE and entrepreneurial willingness. Social support or social support network is a key factor affecting the success of university students (Conner, 2015), and is a mechanism to promote students' resilience and happiness (Juliano & Yunes, 2014). It helps improve the graduation completion rates (Jairam & Kahl, 2017), enhances students' self-efficacy and offsets the effects of student burnout (Wrzus, Hänel, Wagner & Neyer, 2015). Several scholars added that a collaborative network in a supportive environment fosters a sense of collective effectiveness, thereby improving student achievement (Moolenaar, Sleepers, Karsten & Daly, 2016). In addition, Rigg, Day & Adler (2015) discovered that students with supportive relationships both in and out of school were less tired, highly self-efficient and participatory. These factors can help students overcome barriers to succeed in school and balance multiple roles in life. Hence, a student with an EE will have a strong willingness to start a business, especially when he/she realises the presence of a support system when starting a business in the future.

Although much extant research indicated the importance of EE in motivating students' EI, the findings were mixed. According to the recommendations of Baron & Kenny (1986), moderating variables are introduced when there is a mixed relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. Furthermore, integrating perceived social support as a moderator of the relationship between EE and EI can lead to important and useful insights for theory and practice that may advance the entrepreneurship and strategic management field. Hence, social support can be speculated to moderate the relationship between EE and EI. Hence, the following hypothesis was drawn:

**Hypothesis 2:** Perceived social support will moderate the relationship between EE and EI, such that the relationship becomes stronger for individuals with a higher level of perceived social support than those with poor social support

### 3. Methodology of Study

#### 3.1. Research Design, Procedure, Sample and Analytical Method

A cross-sectional research design was adopted in this study to collect primary data from 501 final year students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria during the 2018/2019 session using a self-administered questionnaire. The university was chosen as university and graduate students in general were chosen as they seemed ideal respondents for a futuristic entrepreneurial behaviour (Krueger et. al., 2000). The Cochran sample size table arrived at 385 samples. However, going by the suggestion of Israel (2013), 30% of the minimum sample i.e. 116 was added to the computed sample size to a total of 501. Simple randomisation was employed to select from 9945 students.

Prior to the main analysis, normality and multicollinearity of this data were ensured (Hair, Hult, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2017). After successfully satisfying all assumptions, the data collected was further analysed using SmartPLS software for Partial Least Squares (PLS) modelling, a statistical process designed to estimate the causal network between two or more potentially complex concepts and is defined in terms of a theoretical framework (Vinzi,
3.2 Measures

The questionnaire was adopted from Liñán & Chen (2009), all questions were in close-ended form and responses were on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree and strongly disagree). EE consisted of 6 items. Sample items include: “My University course prepares me well for an entrepreneurial career” and “as a result of taking entrepreneurship courses, I now have better understanding about business”. Subjective norms consisted of 3 items. Sample items include: including “My parents are positive and accept my future career as an entrepreneur” and “My friends see entrepreneurship as a logical choice for me”. Then, EI was measured using 6 items. Sample items include “I will do anything to be an entrepreneur” and “I am determined to start a business in the desired future”.

Finally, the measure for perceived social support which was modelled as a reflective formative variable adapted from Cohen & Wills (1985) consisted of 12-items with 4 items each measuring 3 dimensions/constructs forming the perceived social support namely Tangible, Belonging and Appraisal supports. Example of items included was “if I were unable to get a job, there is someone who could assist me start a business” and “If I needed capital to start a business, there is someone who could help me with it”.

4. Result

4.1. Measurement Model

4.1.1 Assessment of Reflective Model

The present study adopts a two-step process to evaluate and report the results of PLS-SEM path as suggested by Henseler, Ringle and Sinkovics (2009). Hence, before evaluating the structural model, the measurement model was confirmed. Evaluation of the measurement model involves assessment of items reliability, internal consistency reliability discriminant validity and convergence validity. The items reliabilities were ascertained by examining the loadings of each construct. Hair et al. (2017) recommended retaining of items with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70, especially when such deletion can increase the reliability of constructing AVE or Composite, Table 1 and Figure 1 indicate that mostly all of the indicators scored approximately 0.70, indicating that the data is reliable to measure the respective reflective latency structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Outer Loadings</th>
<th>Comp. Rel.</th>
<th>Cronbach. Alpha</th>
<th>AVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>EE1</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EE2</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, the composite reliability and Cronbach’s alpha values were evaluated to determine the internal consistency of the reflective structure (between 0 and 1), where bigger values represent higher reliability. All of the constructs were deemed reliable as their respective composite reliability and Cronbach alpha values were above the threshold (>0.60). Therefore, when the threshold level of AVE is 0.50, all structures achieved convergence validity because the AVE level of each structure was higher than 0.50.

**Figure 1: Measurement Model**
Furthermore, to ascertain the discriminant validity, Duarte & Amaro (2018) proposed the use of multitrait-multimethod (HTMT) matrix as an alternative approach. Hamid, Sami & Sidek (2017) added that the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading are insufficient and insensitive in detecting the effects of the identification compared to the HTMT criterion. Table 2 presents the result of discriminant validity using HTMT criterion.

**Table 2: HTMT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>EE</th>
<th>EI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>0.147446</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the HTMT value was lower than the 0.85 threshold proposed by Kline (2011), the reflective latent structure of this study is confirmed to have discriminative validity.

**4.1.2 Collinearity and Significance of Formative Model**

On the other hand, two conditions were assessed to check the validity of an indicator for a perceived social support (Hair et al., 2017). The co-linearity between the indicators was evaluated using the variance expansion factor (VIF) value, which should not be greater than 5 to avoid multiple co-linearity. In addition, the importance of the (relative and absolute) statistical significance or contribution of each indicator to the main structure was also assessed. Initially, the first-order constructs were assessed to understand their contribution to the formation or construction of a second-order construct (Hair et al., 2011). Hence, the significance of the first order and second-order constructs were assessed. The weight of lower-order structures is particularly important for the formation of the higher-order structures because they represent the operational drivers of higher-order structures (Becker et al., 2012).

**Table 3: Measurement Model: VIF and Indicator Significance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative Construct</th>
<th>Formative Indicators</th>
<th>VIF</th>
<th>Outer Loading</th>
<th>Outer Weight</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Social Support</td>
<td>Appraisal Support</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belonging Support</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 3, the measurement model of formative constructs indicated that all three indicators were absolute and relatively important for the main construct (Hair et al., 2014). All outer loads that make up the indicator exhibited absolute contribution to the formative construct because their values were greater than 0.50. The "belonging" and "tangible" support have a large external weight, compared to "appraisal" support with a small weight. Although appraisal support is not significant, it is retained as a structure due to its absolute and relative contributions.

4.3 Structural Model

Once all the requirements of the measurement model are met, the structural model was evaluated. The first part of the structural model evaluation involved the examination of theoretical relationships. Hence, for the sample size of 398, a standard 5,000 bootstrap samples were used to assess the importance of path coefficients for direct and interaction relationships (Hair et al., 2014; Hair, 2012; Hensel et al., 2009). In this study, the moderation analysis was performed by using a two-stage PLS approach. This method is particularly recommended to better estimate and detect interactions involving continuous predictors and regulatory variables (Helm et al., 2010; Henseler & Fassott, 2010). The moderating variable of this study is a reflective-formative type of hierarchical component model (HCM). Hence, firstly, the repeated indicator approach was employed by repeating all indicators of the lower order components (LOCs) (appraisal, belonging and tangible) on the higher-order component (HOC) which is the perceived social support to obtain the latent variable score (LVS) of the LOCs (Afthanorhan, 2014; Becker, Klein & Wetzels, 2012). The resulting potential variable score was then used in a two-stage approach, where the score for each LOC was used as a formed indicator of the HOC (Hair et al., 2014; Linger et al., 2012) (Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Beta Values</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>P Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE -&gt; EI</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE*PSS -&gt; EI</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS -&gt; EI</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: PSS = Perceived Social Support, EE = Entrepreneurial Education, EI = Entrepreneurial intention.

The bootstrapping values listed in Table 4 indicated that EE and EI are insignificantly related (t=0.98, P>0.05). However, a significant moderating relationship was found when EE and PSS interacted to predict EI (t=2.87, P<0.05) at the 5% level of significance. The moderation result was further illustrated in the simple plot analysis (Figure 3).
Figure 3: Simple Plot

Based on Figure 3, The middle line represents the direct relationship between the exogenous variable and the endogenous variable, while the lower and the upper lines refer to the low and high PSS, respectively.

The upper line represented a high level of moderator construct PSS indicating a positive and significant slope. This observation further implies that the relationship between EE and EI is significantly improved when PSS is high.

4.3 Effect size ($f^2$) and Predictive Relevance ($Q^2$)

The $f^2$ values provide an overview of the potential effect or impact of a particular exogenous variable on the endogenous variable. The general criterion for evaluating $f^2$ values of either small, medium and large $f^2$ values is measured by 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 respectively (Cohen, 1988). However, Aguinis et al. (2005) indicated that the average $f^2$ in a moderate test was only 0.009. Therefore, Kenny (2016) suggested that 0.005, 0.01 and 0.025 $f^2$ values constituted more realistic standards for small, medium and larger effect dimensions, respectively. In this study, the predictive relevance ($Q^2$) using the cross-validated redundancy criteria, was found to be satisfactory (Table 4).

Table 4: $f$-Square

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>EI</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE*PSS</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$Q$-Square

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>SSO</th>
<th>SSE</th>
<th>$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EI</td>
<td>2388.00</td>
<td>2011.18</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 illustrated that EE has no effect size, PSS has a medium effect and the moderating relationship of EE*PSS on EI has a medium effect. Consequently, since the $Q^2$ is greater than zero, it is assumed to have predictive relevance because according to Duarte & Roposo (2010), the larger $Q^2$ values refer to higher predictive relevance.

4.4 Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA)

The x-axis in the importance-performance graph (Figure 4) below represents the (unstandardised) overall effect of EE & PSS on the target construct, EI (their importance). The y-axis represents the average rescaled (unstandardised) latent variable scores (their performance) of EE and PSS.

![Importance-Performance Map](image)

According to Figure 4, if other conditions remain the same, increasing the performance of the former member by one unit will increase the size of the non-standardised overall effect of the former member, thereby improving the performance of the target construct. The relative importance and performance of exogenous variables representing EE and PSS scored 0.04% (49%) and 0.48% (61%), respectively. These scored suggested that EE is of low importance and medium performance, while PSS is of medium importance and above-average performance.

5. Discussion

This study expanded the use of theory of planned behaviour (TPB to provide useful information on EE and EI. Although Kruger et al. (2000) believed that TPB is beneficial to teachers and educators in assessing their training programs, Courneya et al. (2000) argued that the model renders incomplete without social support. They further argued that social support is more relevant to entrepreneurial behaviour, hence, should be included in the TPB model. This is one of the first studies to include perceived social support as a predictor of EI. Hence, the study is deemed to contribute to the development of the theory. Based on the
current findings, that perceived social support is of prominent importance for the
development of intention to venture into entrepreneurship. This finding is in agreement with
the studies byCourierá et al. (2000) and Jairam & Kahl (2017), which highlighted the
buffering strength of perceived social support to enhancing individual intention and
productivity.

5.1 Implications of the study

Using the current findings as a foundation, governments and students would be able to
determine the role of EE and perceived social support in increasing EI. Hence, governments
and other agencies involved in policymaking will be able to channel their resources and ideas
to young people who may develop the intention to venture into entrepreneurship. Therefore,
knowing and understanding the forces that determine EI can help in entrepreneurship
training to support students by discovering efficient ways to boost EI. As such, it will
enhance the likelihood of the consequential behaviour of new business start-ups.

In order to avoid methodological blunders, the PSS model in the present study was measured
as the reflective-formative type of HCM (Lohmoller, 1989). The study employed repeated
indicator approach, thereby repeating all indicators of the first-order constructs (tangible,
belonging and appraisal) on PSS to obtain latent variable scores of these dimensions. The
obtained scores were then used as formative indicators.

Besides that, this study also utilized additional analysis approach in the assessment of
reflective measurement model, namely HTMT to assess discriminant validity. Conventionally, the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings were used to check the
discriminatory effects of past studies. However, Hair et al. (2017) argued that neither the
Fornell-Larcker standard nor cross-loading allows reliable detection of discriminatory
effectiveness issues. Therefore, they suggested that the HTMT technique as a more reliable
criterion for discriminant validity assessment. This study is one of the few studies to
demonstrate the HTMT application in discriminant validity assessment.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestion for Future Studies

Despite the enormous contribution of this study in terms of theoretical, practical and
methodological aspects, several limitations were recognised. Firstly, this study adopted a
cross-sectional research design whereby data was collected from students in Nigeria over a
period of time. Therefore, one should exercise caution when generalising. Future studies can
address this limitation by adopting longitudinal studies in which data is collected over two
or more points in time to compare with the results of this study to infer a proper causal effect.

Secondly, although, the previous sections of this study justified the concept of PSS used as
an HCM model, it may still be of significance to investigate the impacts of each of the three
dimensions (tangible, belonging, and appraisal support) on EI. Additionally, the impact of
each of these dimensions on EI in their logical sequence needs to be investigated. Hence,
future research may investigate the interaction effects of other dimensions of PSS (e.g.,
tangible, belonging and appraisal support) between EE and EI

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