

Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurial Confidence Among Students of Kwara State University

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Abstract

Despite the increased focus on entrepreneurial skills teaching and learning experiences, students find it challenging to apply them effectively and independently in the real world. Most students are not fully endowed with practical experience, thus preventing the overall improvement of their entrepreneurial skills and self-confidence. This research explores the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial confidence of students at Kwara State University. This study adopted a descriptive research design, and data were collected using a closed-question structured questionnaire with a closed-ended Likert scale of five points. From a population of 250 students, 154 samples were drawn from Taro Yamane's formula and a simple random sampling method was used to administer the questionnaires. The analysis was performed using multiple regression analysis. The findings showed that both entrepreneurial and soft skills development accounted for 69.7% of the total variation in entrepreneurial confidence ($F = 188.15$, $R^2 = 0.701$). ANOVA results confirmed the model: $F = 444.937$, $p < 0.05$. The study's results reveal that entrepreneurial skills, with a regression coefficient of $B = 0.134$, contribute moderately to confidence. Still, the role of soft skills, $B = 0.755$, is even more significant. These results support the importance of considerable skill training and discover that generic skills, which have become prominent in communication, adaptability, and emotion management, significantly enhance confidence, which is central to the entrepreneurial process. The study, therefore, recommends that to improve entrepreneurial confidence, there is a need to enhance both technical and soft skills training interventions.

Keywords:

Entrepreneurial Skill, Soft Skill Acquisition, Entrepreneurial Confidence.



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1 . Introduction

Skill acquisition has become fundamental in building confidence among businesspeople and is a building block for those who wish to venture into business. As Barinua and OLAREWAJU (2022) described, skill acquisition is the means through which essential learning for the effective entrepreneurial management of business studies is developed. Hussain and Li (2022) established a connection between learning new skills and adjusting new entrepreneurial skills; learning and accumulating specific skills, including financial management skills, strategic planning, and market analysis, increases confidence among new entrants when confronting difficult industry challenges. Confidence in personal self-efficiency based on practical skills is an indispensable foundation for building new businesses and enterprises.

Self-efficacy, resilience, and the capacity to make good decisions as provided by self-efficacy, resilience, and decisiveness are among the most significant influences on entrepreneurial confidence, which is acquired through skills (Souto et al., 2022). Business self-confidence refers to understanding one's ability to achieve the intended goals, respond to change, and sustain a healthy business. Usman et al. (2024) posits that personal optimization of specific skills will likely encourage the entrepreneur's confidence when approaching market risks, constructing strategies, and promoting innovation.

In addition, the acquired skills are crucial in building the resilience of an entrepreneur. Depending on the challenges experienced, they may be able to push through, while maintaining a positive attitude. Hanandeh et al. (2024) argue that the more skilled and resilient entrepreneurs are, the better they can deal with stress and bounce back from failures that may be attributed to market volatility, thus reinforcing confidence in stable markets. It helps entrepreneurs change their tactics to compete effectively in the marketplace and face advancing business challenges (Juliana et al., 2021). This is because skill acquisition, due to the creation of a growth and flexibility-oriented mindset, directly ties into an entrepreneur's ability to make it through the ups and downs of business.

Skills, especially skill acquisition, are essential in emerging economies, where resources and economic risks are likely to be unique. In such settings, competencies in functional areas, such as resource management and control, budgeting, and creative marketing are relevant and critical for existence and competitive growth (Salau et al., 2024). The place also provides skills that aid the discovery of how to utilize scarce resources effectively, thus giving businesspeople confidence to pursue their business objectives, notwithstanding any state of affairs (Wasim et al., 2023). Therefore, acquiring skills also benefits the skills propeller, generally the entrepreneur, and the economy, by developing firm capacities to operate throughout an unpredictable economy.

Furthermore, skill acquisition enables entrepreneurial practices to be innovative, an essential component of continuous success. Studies show that through the process of cumulative creative and innovative effort, the entrepreneur occurs in a position to proactively design prompt solutions to new demands that meet specific consumer needs in the marketplace (Juliana et al., 2021). Confidence arising from innovations makes businesses ready for change as they are well-placed to meet the needs of customers and the task at hand from the differentiation standpoint. Consequently, the capacity to innovate enhances entrepreneurs' conviction of value creation, which results in a strong motive force (Hanandeh et al., 2024).

Networking is an essential part of skill acquisition, as confidence in entrepreneurship can be significantly strengthened by immediate access to necessary resources, advice from experienced practitioners, and other crucial details about the industry. Those who foster coworker networking skills are rewarded because such connections help encourage business growth and the identification of mentors with other coworkers (Salau et al., 2024). Such support is essential at the beginning of a business because other people's experiences reduce risk factors and increase confidence.

Indeed, by developing a network support orientation in start-ups, the foundation for enhancing performance-related skills essential to achieving goals in business contexts can be built (Shahzad et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurial skill development among students at Kwara State University faces many challenges that hamper the growth of entrepreneurial confidence. One major problem is the absence of a realistic approach whereby students spend most of their time depending on theories that do not have practical implications within business organizations. Entrepreneur resources such as business incubators and start-up capital are scarce, which limits practical learning experiences, and lack of interactions with professionals snatch away learning opportunities from students. It is also devoid of programmes for the development of both critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Regarding soft skills, there is a lack of adequate training in leadership, communication, and emotional intelligence. Students also experienced a lack of opportunities for teamwork and negotiation. Furthermore, there is a lack of mentoring and/or networking, as well as limited exposure to real entrepreneurial environments. This study aims to examine the relationship between skill acquisition and entrepreneurial confidence among students at Kwara State University, specifically exploring how entrepreneurial skill development and soft skill acquisition influence entrepreneurial confidence.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Skill Acquisition

Skill acquisition entails the acquisition of knowledge of the practice method and enhancing skills through tutoring, elevating learners from proficiency mastery to expert performance level (Spruit et al., 2014). Such a progression from novice to expert enhances mastery in the professional field because practical experience enriches knowledge that enhances self-directed performance in actual practice settings (Barinua and OLAREWAJU, 2022). Thus, training forms the cornerstone of career development to prepare people to effectively and proactively manage change contexts.

Acquisition of skills is critical in entrepreneurship because it prepares aspiring entrepreneurs with various technical and strategic techniques that can be applied to overcome future uncertainties of the market force (Juwairia et al., 2024). Studies have shown that accessing appropriate skills for the necessity of an entrepreneur's task increases their ability to mitigate risks, analyze market demand and financial capacity, and produce new ideas in a timely manner to address changing market environments (Morris et al., 2023). This practical knowledge is crucial in the daily running of a business, especially for business developers who want to create and nurture viable companies, because it provides reliable ways and means of minimizing risks and enhancing productivity.

In addition, the skill acquisition process is always ongoing, particularly for initiatives, as business environments constantly shift. Specific skills gradually develop in entrepreneurship and progress to progressively higher levels of expertise, enabling them to become more successful and adapt to change (Salau et al. 2024). Therefore, skills enhance personal development and foster economic growth, empowering skilled and confident professionals equally ready to adapt and create within their work disciplines (Choudhary & Jain, 2023). This dynamic characteristic of skill development makes it extremely important for achieving long-term economic growth and gaining a competitive edge in entrepreneurship. Hence, skill acquisition is a structured process of attaining formal or professional skills that enable one to perform tasks efficiently (Gerasimov et al., 2019).

2.1.1 Entrepreneurial Skill

According to Hartmann et al. (2022), entrepreneurial skills refer to a well-defined functional capability to identify

and exploit opportunities, optimally utilize resources, and maintain competitive dominance. Such skills are knowledge, resource management skills, recognition of opportunities, and the ability to perform risk analysis, which are vital to the scale of entrepreneurs in adversity. Hence, entrepreneurial skills are more learned behaviors that enhance learning and create structured educational programs that promote students' entrepreneurial spirit and grant them the various types of business skills that they would need when conversing about business operations (Hartika, 2023).

Decision-making is one of the most critical aspects of entrepreneurial competence because decisions are based on limited information, and decisions are usually made at short notice. This skill involves making sound decisions based on financial knowledge, market trends, and customer behavior that will produce value at a level above the risks undertaken by entrepreneurs (Ogorchukwu & Taiwo, 2023). Marketing and customer relations are as important as each other because they form the basis through which the entrepreneur not only acquires more customers to patronize their business, but also nurtures them for future business. These are also important because having customers is vital to the growth and continuation of an entrepreneur's business. Simultaneously, these skills afford composure and solidity to the foundation of a confident entrepreneur because they are equipped with tools that enable the handling of entrepreneurial dilemmas (Soomro et al., 2024).

As most people realize that entrepreneurial skills are essential in their day-to-day activities, learning institutions have accorded importance to student training. Accurate life models allow students to understand how business works and how these aspects can be handled (Wasim et al., 2023). By acquiring these skills, students develop confidence and competence in developing and managing successful companies. Such a learning approach enhances students' skills and readiness for the entrepreneurial world because it requires more than just knowledge to succeed (Mohammed et al., 2023). Entrepreneurial skills refer to functional capabilities that enable individuals to identify and exploit business opportunities, optimize resource utilization, and maintain a competitive advantage.

2.1.2 Soft Skill Acquisition

Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, communication, team building, flexibility, attitude, and emotional intelligence are core competencies of leadership and business. Soft skills, on the other hand, can generally be used in any organization's fields to build good working relationships and motivate the workforce (Poláková et al., 2023). Tem et al. (2020) highlight soft skills as essential to an entrepreneur's success as they help interact with the customers and negotiate and manage diverse teams with perspectives and emotions.

Soft skills support confidence in that they improve the way entrepreneurs handle individual and business relationships. For instance, flow is a critical element in the communication process when presenting a business vision, mobilizing capital, and patronizing customer commitment. Similarly, adaptability looks at the flexibility and perseverance that the entrepreneur should bring to bear in approach and respond to their challenges in a fluid business environment (Usman et al., 2024). Consequently, soft skill acquisition directly drives an entrepreneur's capacity to build an inclusive business environment, which is crucial for sustainable development (Barinua and OLAREWAJU, 2022).

However, soft skills do not seem to attract much attention in all educational systems, mainly because these systems only value the dissemination of program content knowledge over the development of program content that is characteristic of human beings (Mwita et al., 2023). This shortfall is well understood by universities with programs in professional training and future entrepreneurial education, who weigh more on the cultivation of soft skills. Therefore, there is no doubt that soft skills are essential because they help develop confidence and improve leadership performance, which is necessary for the overall development of sustainable business (Martínez-Martínez et al., 2021). In this study, soft skills are indispensable for developing confidence and leadership performance, and fostering sustainable business growth and resilience in competitive markets.

2.1.3 Entrepreneurial confidence

Entrepreneurial confidence is the confidence among entrepreneurs to venture into business opportunities and take necessary actions to overcome emerging problems. This confidence is essential to entrepreneurship, as it is the basis on which an individual is willing to assume risks, set lofty goals, and relate with other players (Hartmann et al., 2022). Confidence in implementation is associated with self-efficacy, which is the extent to which an individual feels capable of performing definite tasks. Barinua and OLAREWAJU (2022) argued that increased entrepreneurial confidence is directly associated with higher resilience, creativity, and long-term business performance.

It has also been observed that overall entrepreneurial confidence is enhanced by skills learned and exposure to experience (Pham et al., 2023). As businesspeople develop competence, they can build their own beliefs as they acquire the necessary skills as they embark on their businesses. For instance, knowledge in financial management, the market, and strategic planning improves an entrepreneur's ability to make proper decisions and increases feelings of control and preparedness for business dynamics (Ahmad et al., 2019).

Self-efficacy is crucial because of the increased competition. Such programs build confidence through case-based studies and mentoring, which guide students in solving business problems (Anas, 2024). Such changes allow students to develop better entrepreneurial literacy and courage to act and experiment, which is crucial for operating in a challenging and competitive environment (Al-Fattal et al., 2024). This confidence is critical for entrepreneurial success, as future businessmen and women can accomplish their business goals confidently and effectively (Serenko 2023).

2.2 Underpinning theory

2.2.1 Human capital theory

The human capital theory propounded by Becker in 1964 posited that people's investments (time, money, and effort) in education, training, and acquiring skills lead to increased productivity and, as such, have a higher economic value. In the entrepreneurial context, the theory states that gaining specialized technical and soft skills is essential for entrepreneurship. Businesspersons with higher levels of training and experience in some areas of endeavor, such as financial management, marketing, and leadership, are in a better place to make good decisions, come up with new ideas, adequately understand and deal with problems, and increase their entrepreneurial confidence. Nonetheless, scholars believe that human capital theory lacks precision when defining the concept of an entrepreneur because of the lack of attention to quantitative factors and disseminating principles that help determine entrepreneurship outcomes (Daradkeh, 2023).

To fill these gaps, entrepreneurship education must transcend the formulation of crucial effectiveness to include the honing of softer skills, which include creativity, leadership, and perseverance. In addition, the analysis of phenomena related to entrepreneurship should be expanded with parameters such as the business environment, the support of experienced professionals, and financial resources. Another seamless method of applying theory and practice is also essential in enhancing the utilization of the intended experiential learning activities, the Internet, and networking, since they also help improve the kinds of experiences that entrepreneurs need to have in enduring real-life experiences and confidence. Extending the human capital theory may provide a better focus on both personal growth and external resources to promote entrepreneurship more appropriately, thereby contributing to improved individual and business performance (Muhyiddin et al., 2021).

Applying Human Capital Theory to study skill acquisition among students at Kwara State University underscores

the importance of education and training in building entrepreneurial confidence. By extending the theory to include qualitative factors, experiential learning, and external support systems, a more comprehensive understanding of how skill acquisition influences entrepreneurial confidence can be achieved. This approach promotes personal growth and enhances students' ability to contribute to their economic development through successful entrepreneurial ventures.

2.3 Empirical Review

Idowu and Zekeri (2023) examined the correlation between entrepreneurial skill development and start-up among undergraduates in selected institutions in Kwara. This study addresses how skill-building for entrepreneurship might help youth earn money. The descriptive research design entrenched in the survey was conducted by distributing 374 questionnaires at two universities in Kwara State. Correlations and t-tests were used to analyze the data. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analyses ($N = 374$) affirmed that entrepreneurial skill development has a positive correlation of 0.628 with venture startups for financial self-sufficiency. On the other hand, there was a positive correlation value of 0.571 between entrepreneurial skill development and a reliable source of income.

Vera et al. (2024) examined the impact of developing entrepreneurial skills and confidence to venture into university students. The empirical method adopted here involved completing a structured questionnaire with a sample of students from a university in Lima, Peru. All students were provided with a copy of the tool and were requested to complete the questionnaire voluntarily. For validation purposes, the tool's reliability and validity were determined using the alpha coefficient Hem and fraternities of 44, 051, and 300, respectively. At the same time, a pilot study was conducted at a local University in Lima, Peru. The information gathered was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) to establish the impact of the variables. This study showed that self-awareness, problem solving, and effective communication positively and determinatively affect entrepreneurial skills and enhance students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Mohammed et al. (2023) assessed the entrepreneurship skills required by Business Education students to establish their own many and medium-scale enterprises in Kwara state, Nigeria. This study used a descriptive survey design. This study focused on 449 business education students in Kwara State. Because the target population was small, no sample or sampling procedure was involved. A self-administered four-point scale questionnaire was used to collect the data. From the respondents' data, 20 items were tested in this study to estimate the internal consistency of the items and the reliability of the instrument, which was found to be 0.88, based on Cronbach's alpha. Among other things, the findings indicate that Business Education students need marketing and accounting competencies to promote them through the labor market, make them self-reliant, and empower them to manage small-scale businesses in Ilorin for a period that would enhance the sustenance of our economy.

Salau et al. (2024) focused on assessing the skills acquisition and employment generation by the entrepreneurs of Kwara state. A qualitative study in Kwara State examined the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and employment creation among the IVTEC Ajase Ipo alumni. Ranking 12 alumni through face-to-face interviews, the study examined skills learned, ways of learning skills, and employment as an outcome of skill development through business creation. The analyses revealed technical skills, entrepreneurship skills, ICT competencies, interpersonal skills, and flexibility/viability among participants. These included hands-on training, project-based training, internal internships, group and individual learning, mentees, and nonacademic learning.

Obananya (2022) assessed the impact of students' skill acquisition and entrepreneurship education in the public universities of Anambra State, Nigeria. This study used a coded data analysis research design. The researcher relied on primary and secondary data according to the data type. It comprises of 1116 students. The study sample

included 218 respondents from two universities who used the Borg and Gal formulas. The results obtained from the questionnaires were subjected to Multiple Regression analysis. This research established that students' financial skills positively affect entrepreneurial education programs in public universities. Hence, the marketing skills acquired by students exert no positive influence on entrepreneurial education programs in public universities. Overwhelmingly, a rise in the marketing skills acquisition of students positively impacts entrepreneurial education programs in public universities.

3. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis

3.1 Direct Link Among Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurial Confidence

The link among skill acquisition, entrepreneurial confidence, and entrepreneurial success is central to entrepreneurship research. Skill acquisition, which includes entrepreneurial and soft skills, provides the basis for developing entrepreneurial confidence. Skills such as risk-taking, finding ways and means, and planning equip people technically to look for opportunities. When these skills are used effectively, they help foster confidence, an aspect that allows businesspeople to tackle business tasks to do so confidently and assertively (Hartmann et al., 2022).

Soft skill acquisition supports entrepreneurial skills because it strengthens individuals and group interactions and personal development concerning self-organization, problem solving, and empathy. All of these competencies are fundamental to developing and enabling people to become adaptable, resilient, and able to make good decisions within complex business environments. The soft skills placed in the hands of an entrepreneur are very useful for their interaction with their counterparts and/or stakeholders, which in turn boosts the confidence levels of the entrepreneur in handling tricky business circumstances (Poláková et al., 2023).

This confidence is crucial in explaining the success of entrepreneurship. Confidence enables people to take risks, conduct experiments, and achieve higher business objectives. According to Ahmad et al. (2023), confidence increases specific entrepreneurial outcomes, including business development, competitiveness, and innovation, and breeds resilience-aspiring business owners in a better position to bounce back in the face of adversity and continue running their businesses, especially during turbulent economic times.

Human capital theory supports this mutual dependency by asserting that human resources are capitalized, and expenditures made to upgrade human capital create value. The attainment of technical and soft competencies means establishing the right foundations for constructing entrepreneurial confidence, which enables the owner to apply the appropriate technical competencies in practical situations. Such integration leads to increased business outcomes and improved durability (Muhyiddin et al. 2021). Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

H01: Entrepreneurial skill development does not significantly affect entrepreneurial confidence among students of Kwara state university

H02: Soft skill acquisition does not significantly influence the entrepreneurial confidence among students of Kwara state university

4. Methodology

To ensure that the objectives of the study were met, this study used a descriptive research method, whereby data were collected randomly from respondents. The target population was 250 final-year students of Kwara State University, Malate, Department of Business and Entrepreneurship, 2024/2025 academic sessions, and 154 were

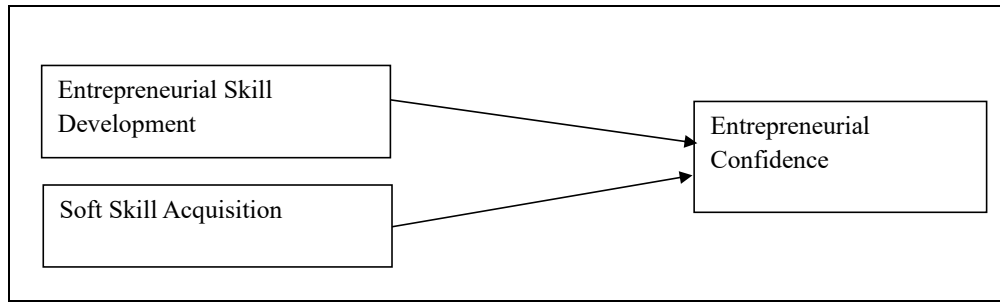


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the study

determined using the Taro Yamane Formula. Thus, to facilitate this research, a simple random technique was employed. Questionnaires were administered to final-year students of Kwara State University, Malate, Department of Business and Entrepreneurship, 2024/2025 academic sessions. In addition, the questionnaire incorporated closed-ended questions with ordinal data, such as a 5- 5-point Likert scale, which enables easy quantification. A survey was used in this study, and data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Instrument validity was verified through the face, and content checks and reliability were tested. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.7, reflecting reliable and consistent measurements.

5. Data Analysis

The R-squared value of 0.701 in the model summary table shows that the independent variables, namely entrepreneurial skill development and soft skill acquisition, account for 69.7% of the variance in the entrepreneurial confidence among students of kwara state university. Factors not included in the model account for the remaining 30.3% of the variation. The regression model's strong explanatory power indicates how useful it is for evaluating and making judgments about the entrepreneurial confidence.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.837 ^a	.701	.697	3.58971

a. Predictors: (Constant), entrepreneurial skill development, soft skill acquisition

The variation analysis displayed in the ANOVA table suggests that the model explains differences in entrepreneurial confidence among students of kwara state university. With a significance level of .000 and an F-value of 444.937, the p-value threshold of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) is significantly exceeded. This indicates that the entrepreneurial confidence among students of kwara state university is significantly impacted by entrepreneurial skill development and soft skill acquisition.

Table 3: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	7.530	1.676		4.493	.000
Entrepreneurial skill development	.134	.101	.604	4.507	.014
Soft skill acquisition	.755	.107	.702	7.060	.000

a. Dependent Variable: entrepreneurial confidence

An increase in the coefficient ($B = 7.530$, Std. Error = 1.676) indicates that a baseline of confidence exists before any actual evolution in terms of entrepreneurial skills and soft skills development. This essential confidence score of 7.530 bears witness to the fact that the individuals had inbuilt self-confidence, even though they might seek further training to bolster their confidence levels. Nevertheless, this essential self-confidence can be attributed to personality traits and past experiences.

6. Discussion of Results

The results showed moderate evidence of the influence of entrepreneurial skill development on entrepreneurs' confidence levels ($B = 0.134$). This finding reveals that for every increment in entrepreneurial skill development, confidence in entrepreneurship increased by 0.134. Although this effect size appears insignificant, it means that skill enhancement, especially in one's weaknesses such as risk-taking ability, financial understanding, and business strategies, provides more extensive confidence enhancement than skills in interpersonal communication, stress management, or interpersonal relationships, although perhaps not as loud as interpersonal skills. This finding supports the research of Muhyiddin et al. (2021), who pointed out that entrepreneurial skills are crucial, yet to have a more significant influence on confidence, other skills are necessary, such as those connected with communication and emotional intelligence. According to Kucharčíková et al. (2015), there is support for this view, as the technical skills inventory, including opportunity recognition, innovation, and confidence when undertaking them in correlated business contexts, are more effective when communicated by persons with interpersonal

skills. Salau et al. (2024) agree that self-confidence depends on three vital entrepreneurial skills: resilience, thinking and strategic mindsets. These experiences make information processing more likely to reduce menace and, thus, improve confidence levels for higher-risk bearings as entrepreneurs grow. Therefore, even though skills developed within the scope of entrepreneurial activities are essential, they are usually auxiliary to the basic equation, which focuses on skills that develop confidence, indicating the need for versatile skills.

A coefficient for soft skill acquisition of 0.755 explains a robust positive effect, signifying that a one-unit increase in soft skill acquisition causes an equivalent 0.755-point increase in entrepreneurial confidence. This significant impact confirms the importance of developing soft skills, such as communication, interpersonal, flexibility, and teamwork skills, to show how much they affect the confidence level needed to achieve the goals of leading small businesses. This finding accords with Tem et al. (2020), who agree that soft skills are essential for entrepreneurship's success, especially as they stress relationship-building, which relates to networking, drawing resources, or building a support structure. Thus, such interactions increase confidence by necessitating entrepreneurs to learn and interact with others, affirming their feelings. Lin et al. (2017) have argued in a similar assertion that soft skills prepare business owners for contingencies and pressures associated with new ventures, which, in effect, strengthens their belief in such endeavors. Spruit et al. (2014) also echo this view, pointing out that soft skills enhance self-efficacy and personal growth and are necessary in helping entrepreneurs understand the soft skills that will enable enhanced communication, interpersonal relationships, and development of trust, thereby enabling effective operation within entrepreneurial networks. Establishing such skills enhances an entrepreneur's confidence and ability to perform in all settings in an entrepreneurial business. Hence, one can definitively state that rising confidence comes from acquiring soft skills, which makes this one of the primary factors that define success in business, making it unique and enhancing the effect of all other factors.

7. Implication of findings

The practical implications of the findings underscore the importance of designing skill acquisition programs that prioritize the development of soft skills (e.g., communication, interpersonal relationships, teamwork), as they have a significantly higher impact on entrepreneurial confidence. Universities, such as Kwara State University and entrepreneurial training centers, should integrate modules focusing on these areas into their curricula. In addition, given the robust influence of soft skills on confidence, entrepreneurial development initiatives should include EI training in emotional intelligence to equip students and entrepreneurs with tools for managing stress, building networks, and fostering team dynamics. Although technical and entrepreneurial skills are essential, their moderate impact on confidence suggests the need for a balanced approach. As essential confidence stems from personality traits and past experiences, workshops to enhance self-awareness, resilience, and adaptability will help individuals tap into their inbuilt self-confidence and further strengthen it. Finally, institutions should create opportunities for students and aspiring entrepreneurs to connect with experienced professionals and peers, as these relationships provide practical insights, affirm self-belief, and enhance confidence.

The theoretical implications affirm the need to expand Human Capital Theory to include soft skills as a critical component of human capital. Traditional emphases on technical and complex skills should complement interpersonal and emotional intelligence skills to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the factors driving entrepreneurial confidence. In addition, the moderate impact of entrepreneurial skills compared to the strong effect of soft skills suggests that entrepreneurial success and confidence rely on an integrated skill framework. Future theories should address the interplay between technical, interpersonal, and emotional skills to foster entrepreneurial outcomes. Meanwhile, the observation that individuals possess a basic level of self-confidence rooted in

personality traits and past experiences suggests the need to incorporate psychological and personality-based variables into human capital and entrepreneurial development models. This study reinforces the theoretical value of incorporating experiential learning and mentorship into skill development frameworks. Scholars should explore how real-life interactions such as internships or collaborative projects mediate the relationship between skills and confidence. Finally, the findings emphasize the contextual importance of personality traits, past experiences, and support systems. Future theoretical frameworks should explore how individual and environmental factors interact to shape confidence in an entrepreneurial setting.

By incorporating these practical and theoretical implications, stakeholders in education, entrepreneurship, and policy can enhance the understanding and application of factors contributing to entrepreneurial confidence.

8. Conclusion

The research findings indicate that entrepreneurial skill development is positively correlated with entrepreneurial confidence and has a moderate influence. These capability areas include risk-taking, financial control, and strategic management, adding to a basic level of trust. However, such training is crucial for technical competence, but may not offer the added confidence needed to handle other, less easily defined facets of business. At the same time, the results for soft skills showed a positive and significant impact on entrepreneurial self-efficacy, with a focus on interpersonal skills. Communication, emotional intelligence, and flexibility help achieve effective resistance and support an entrepreneur's needs in a situation with high risks and uncertainties. Such a significant effect of soft skills underlines their importance, proving that soft skills are not just a bonus but critical in entrepreneurs' efforts to confidently promote their business agenda.

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made. First, the acquisition of practical knowledge in the sphere of entrepreneurship should be emphasized. Training programs should promote the development or growth of other competencies, including risk-taking and financial skills. These skills are essential for anyone involved in entrepreneurship, as they not only make an individual more confident when interacting with other people but also form an analytical point of view, as they provide expert knowledge in order to make the right decision about a business. Developing such fundamental skills enables entrepreneurs to effectively manage and depict the existence of businesses in the sphere of difficulties.

In addition, attention should be paid to the training of soft skills, as these skills have a large impact on confidence. The core skills that should be addressed through training include communication skills and emotional intelligence levels. Such skills are critical, as they enable entrepreneurs to work on relationships, changes, and people management. When a person learns to regulate his/her emotions and to be good at communication, it will be easier for the person to develop the strength and certainty of the issues that are being implemented, thereby improving the leadership skills and business resilience in the business world.

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