

ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AMONG CAMEROONIAN STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

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Abstract: *Entrepreneurship, a pivotal concept in contemporary discourse, plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges posed by globalization. It serves as a catalyst for both micro and macroeconomic advancements, contributing significantly to a nation's development. This paper focuses on entrepreneurial intentions (EI) and their pivotal role as precursors to new business ventures. Individual intentions wield substantial influence over subsequent behaviors, making them a vital component in understanding and fostering entrepreneurship. In the context of Cameroon, a nation rich in natural, human, and mining resources, the effective utilization of these assets is imperative for growth and development. Leveraging communication and information technology to harness these resources could unlock opportunities for millions of Cameroonians, addressing the issue of unemployment. Many countries worldwide have experienced economic development through the expansion of the private sector. In Cameroon, the government has initiated programs aimed at achieving emergence by 2035, with quantified objectives defining the path forward. As we delve into this research, we explore the critical link between entrepreneurial intentions and the socio-economic development of Cameroon.*

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Economic Development, Cameroon, Private Sector Expansion*

1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a prominent concept in everyday discussion by policymakers, economists, academics and students. Entrepreneurship is also one of the most appropriate strategies to meet the increasing needs of globalization. (Keat, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2011). Several studies (Gerçeker, Özel & Ay, 2014; Afolabi, 2015; Adusei, 2016), have noticed that entrepreneurship is an engine of development, because it is at the root of the micro and macroeconomic progress made by various countries. Entrepreneurial intentions (EI) are pertinent as they are backgrounds for new business ventures (Kolvereid, 1996b). It has been established that individual's intentions influence subsequent behavior.

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Cameroon has rich natural, human and mining resources. The economy relies mainly on the export of raw materials oil, aluminum, wood, cocoa, coffee, cotton and bananas. The human, natural and mining resources available have to be used effectively for the country to grow. The use of communication information technology to exploit the resources that will enable millions of Cameroonians get out of unemployment is possible with the help of developing entrepreneurial activities.

Several countries around the world are experiencing development through the expansion of the private sector (Abdaljawwad & Sarmidi, 2018; Ibrahim & Alagidedez, 2018). The government of Cameroon has set up since 2010, a set of programs for its emergence by 2035. To do so, Cameroon has produced a document in which the quantified objectives that could facilitate its evaluation have been well defined. As an illustration, the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper foresees, for the period 2010 to 2020, to increase growth to an average level of 5.5% per year or to reduce underemployment from 75.8% to less than 50% (MINEPAT, 2009).

Unfortunately the recent statistics, if we limit ourselves to these two indicators, are far from the expected results, the growth rate in 2018 was 4.1%, the rate of underemployment remains very high, around 77% (National Institute of Statistics (NIS), 2014). To improve its growth, the government must further diversify its economy. This diversification inevitably passes through the creation and development of competitive Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs).

According to the National Institute of Statistic (NIS) (2019), Cameroonian SMEs represent 98.6% of all modern enterprises listed in 2017 and employ only 40.8% of the permanent workforce. The weight of SMEs for the Cameroonian economy has led to the setting up by the public authorities of a set of measures to promote their expansion. As an example we can mention the creation of a Ministry dedicated to the SMEs in 2004 and the setting up since 2010 of the Cameroon Business Forum as a mechanism for public-private dialogue put in place to improve the business climate.

The growth of SMEs requires effective support of entrepreneurs. They often started their activities very young and in the informal sector. Thus, the government, through its various structures, has come up with several projects to support youth self-employment and translate youth intention into behaviour. Examples include PIAASI (Integrated Project to Support Actors in the Informal Sector), PAJER-U (Support Program for Rural and Urban Youth) and PAN-DEF (National Plan of Action for the Development of Female Entrepreneurship). Many studies evidence the benefits of self-employment compared to salaried employment (Kolvereid, 1996a; Martin, 2013; Nikolova, 2018). Entrepreneurship is one of the career options students may consider shortly before or immediately after graduation (Buang, 2011; Beeka & Rimmington, 2011; Fatoki, 2014). Therefore, scrutinizing stimulus that drive students to objectify entrepreneurship as a career is relevant.

There are several studies that highlight the variety of explanatory factors of students' entrepreneurial intentions. Amanamah, Acheampong & Owusu (2018) in their study identify two groups of factors, the internal and external factors environment. Ayalew & Zeleke (2018) in their paper, focused their

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research on the following factors: entrepreneurial education/ training, entrepreneurial attitudes, demographic factors and socio-economic factors. Previous academics works have highlighted the influence of personal background on entrepreneurial intention (Singh, 2014); Nguyen, 2018)

More research is needed to identify factors that distinguish students with strong intentions to develop entrepreneurship from those who have not developed a strong entrepreneurial intention (Ismail, Khalid, Othman, Jusoff, Abdul Rahman, Mohammed & Shekh, 2009). Studying antecedents of entrepreneurial intention can inspire teachers, consultants, advisors and policy makers to know more on how these are formed and how new venture founders' beliefs, perceptions, experiences, and motives impact the intent to start a business (Wang, Lu & Millington, 2011; Zellweger, Sieger & Halter, 2011). Ismail, Khalid, Othman, Jusoff, Abdul Rahman, Mohammed & Shekh(2009) notice that in addition to personality traits, several additional individual differences have been found to predict entrepreneurship.

Considering Cameroonian context, the objective of this research is to assess the influence of environmental factors (pre university residential areas and household head occupations) and personal background (Age, Gender, Level of study and prior exposure to self-employment) on entrepreneurial intention of University and Higher Institute students. Assessing the stimulus that conduct students for entrepreneurship is highly significant given the importance of entrepreneurship for job creation and economic growth.

2 Literature Review

Several theories and models have been used since 1975 to set the stage for studies on the determinants of entrepreneurial intention. After defining the entrepreneurship intention, we will focus on Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

2.1 Entrepreneurship intention

Several authors have defined entrepreneurial intention. Tkachev & Kolvereid (1999) describe entrepreneurial intention as one's willingness in undertaking entrepreneurial activity, in other words becoming self-employed. Entrepreneurial intention is a state of mind and a desire to create a new business or take up an activity (Wu & Wu, 2008). Thompson (2009) argue that entrepreneurial intentions are an individual's conscious awareness and conviction to start a new venture in the near future.

2.2 Entrepreneurial intentions motives models

Most of models trying to explain the relationship between individual's personal characteristics and their entrepreneurial intention are largely based on two models specifically, the Entrepreneurial Event Model (Shapero, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991).

Entrepreneurial Event Model was a primal contribution to intention models literature by Shapero and Sokol in 1982. In this model, the entrepreneurial event was the dependent variable, the individual or the group was treated as the independent variable, along with social, economic, political, and cultural

contexts. Shapero and Sokol tried to understand two main questions: what triggers the action of changing one's life? And why do people choose a particular path from countless other options? This model views the intention to start a new venture as being dependent on three elements: (a) Perceived Desirability, the perceptions of desirability is the personal attractiveness of starting a business, including both intrapersonal and extra personal impacts. (b) Propensity to Act, the propensity to act is the personal disposition to act on one's decisions, thus reflecting volitional aspects of intentions ("I will do it"). (c) Perceived Feasibility, the perception of feasibility is the degree to which one feels personally capable of starting a business- Entrepreneurship is feasible...it can be done.

Ajzen (1991) on the other hand, defined that the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), outlined three key factors that influence an individual's intention to perform a given behaviour. Its model explains the formation of intention through three elements: (a) The subject's attitudes toward the act (ATB) - This construct (akin to expectancy) taps perceptions of the personal desirability of performing the behaviour. This attitude depends on expectations and beliefs about personal impacts of outcomes resulting from the behaviour. (b) Social norms (SN) - The TPB taps perceptions of what important people in respondents' life think about performing a particular behaviour. Included would be the individual's family expectations about the desirability of becoming a farmer, lawyer, doctor, or entrepreneur. These normative beliefs are weighted by the strength of the motivation to comply with them. (c) Perceived behavioural control (PBC) - Perceived behavioural control reflects the perceived feasibility of performing the behaviour and is thus related to perceptions of situational competence (self-efficacy). Iakovleva & Kolvereid (2009) indicate that these two intentions models can be successfully integrated into one, where attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control determine desirability-feasibility, which in turn, determines intentions.

2.2.1 Age and entrepreneurial intentions

Previous studies on the relationship between age and entrepreneurial intent have controversial results. Some research found significant EI difference among age groups. According to Pauceanu, Alpenidze, Edu & Zaharia (2019), entrepreneurship orientation is stronger when it is associated with age (20–25 years old). Choo & Wong (2006) admit that people mostly decide to establish their own firms between the ages of 25 to 34. Praagh & Ophem (1995) point out the fact that with age, people become more resilient against risks and uncertainty. People reaching middle age should be in favor of the entrepreneurship path, motivated by superior financial and non-financial resources, managerial experience, and probably a well-established stakeholders' network compared to younger individuals (Parker, 2009). Hatak, Harms & Fink (2015) confirm that age is associated with a lower likelihood of having an entrepreneurial intention. In contrast to these works, other studies show that age does not distinguish the intention to undertake. (Talaş, Çelik & Oral, 2013; Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018). Therefore, the first hypothesis of this study is proposed as:

H1: There is a significant difference between age ranges and entrepreneurial intention

2.2.2 Gender and Entrepreneurial Intentions.

In studies that focus on the relationship between demographic factors and EI, there is the recurring consideration of gender. Very often it is shown that men's EI is superior to that of women. In accordance with Uddin, Mohammad & Hammami (2016), males have more inclination towards entrepreneurship than females. Through a binary logistic regression and Chi-Square Tests, Megibaru (2014) concluded that Ethiopian female students are less entrepreneurially intended than males. In contrast, some studies evidenced no significant difference between men and women in terms of new business ventures (Pawlak, 2016; Nguyen, 2018). Consequently, the second hypothesis of this study is posed as:

H2. Female students will exhibit lesser entrepreneurial intentions than male students.

2.2.3 Level of Study and Entrepreneurial Intentions

Murphy, Liao & Welsch (2006) found that the educational background plays a vital role on creating entrepreneurial skills. In their study focused on 1500 undergraduate Arab students in government universities, and subjected to one-way ANOVA tests, Al Bakri & Mehrez (2017) demonstrates that students in higher levels of education (third and final years) are seen to be more inclined towards entrepreneurship than those in freshman and sophomore years. Based on the qualitative study, Achchuthan & Nimalathasan (2012) show that the entrepreneurial intention level of the management undergraduates is in the weakest level. On the other hand, Pittaway & Cope (2007) expose that the relationship between university education in general and entrepreneurship is not so strong and contested. Khan (2019) establishes that academic level is not an important factor encouraging Alumni to embrace entrepreneurship. Nguyen (2018) demonstrates that educational levels show practically no impact on Vietnamese business students' entrepreneurial intention. Hence, the impact of the level of education on entrepreneurial intention is still remaining ambiguous, so the third hypothesis of this study is proposed as:

H3 There is a meaningful divergence between the level of study and entrepreneurial intentions.

2.2.4 Pre-university residing area and entrepreneurship intentions

Despite a multitude of studies analyzing the influence of explanatory factors of entrepreneurial intent, we can observe a scarcity of those interested in the impact of place of residence on EI. In the same way, there are studies that relate environmental factors to business creation (Indarti, Rostiani & Nastiti, 2010). Bird (1988) notices that both personal characteristics and environmental factors define entrepreneurial intentionality. Turker & Selcuk (2009) demonstrate that educational and structural support factors affect the entrepreneurial intention of students. Peng, Lu & Kang (2012) show that in social environment factors, supporting policies and entrepreneurial environment exert significantly positive impact on entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norm and entrepreneurial self-efficacy of university students. In their study on rural community, Norziani, Mastura & SitiAasma (2015) showed that both attitude (attitude toward money and attitude toward start-up) influence EI, the relationship

between attitude toward start-up and entrepreneurial intention was mediated by opportunity recognition. Urban youth entrepreneurs (87%) in sub-saharan Africa pursue entrepreneurship based on opportunity with the intent to create jobs, personal wealth, to earn more money and to be their own boss (Chiloane-Tsoka & Botha, 2015). Specht (1993) distinguishes five main environmental factors affecting organization formation: social, economic, political, infrastructure development and market emergence factors. Wirth (1938) distinguishing urban from rural society, defined city in terms of three fundamental features: population size, density, and heterogeneity. These characteristics meant that though the citydweller would experience more human contacts than the rural inhabitant, he would also feel more isolated because of their „emotionally empty“ nature. Hence the fourth hypothesis is suggested as:

H4. Students whose reside in rural areas during the pre-university study show a lesser level of entrepreneurial intentions than students whose reside in urban areas.

2.2.5 Household head occupation and entrepreneurial intentions

Family background is a key factor influencing entrepreneurial intention. Ozaralli & Rivenburgh (2016) indicated that families with entrepreneurial occupation provide youngsters with an opportunity to obtain certain business skills, confidence, experience, and vision, all of which contribute to the inclination to start a new business. Israr & Saleem (2018) showed that the students whose mothers were working as entrepreneurs had significantly more intentions to start a business, compared to the students whose mothers were involved in any other occupation. Family business has a role to play in enhancing the development of entrepreneurship among family members (Alsos et al., 2014). Pruet, Shinnar, Toney, Llopis & Fox (2009) noted that entrepreneurial intentions were positively strongly influenced by the presence of entrepreneurial parents. According to Singh (2014), parental occupation in India is positively influencing entrepreneurial intention at 1% significance level. The literature also makes it possible to identify studies showing a non-significant relationship between parental status and EI. So, Nguyen (2018) demonstrates that students whose parents are self-employed score higher entrepreneurial intentions, but the difference is not statistically significant. According to Rasli, Khan, Malekifar & Jabeen (2013), there is insufficient evidence to show that there is difference in EI by Parent's Occupation. Thus, the fifth hypothesis of this study is posed as:

H5: Children whose household heads are self-employed exhibit a higher level of entrepreneurial intention than children whose households head are not self-employed.

2.2.6 Previous experience and entrepreneurship intention

Prior experience is relevant for entrepreneurial career choice. Kolvereid (1996b) verifies that those with prior experience in entrepreneurial activities have higher EI compared to those with no prior experience. Peterman and Kennedy (2003) found a positive relationship between prior work experience in a small business environment and attitudes toward entrepreneurship. The involvement in the establishment of different firms will provide the entrepreneur with the opportunity of knowing

the risks and problems associated with new venture formation (Barringer, Jones & Neubaum, 2005). Other research oppose this orientation, the work experience is not an important factor behind encouraging Alumni to embrace entrepreneurship (Khan, 2019). Al Bakri & Mehrez (2017) confirm that work experience in Arab countries is not an important determinant of students' entrepreneurial attitudes. Thus, the sixth hypothesis of this study is introduced as:

H6: Students with previous work experience are more likely to engage in self-employment than those without work experience.

3 Methodology

3.1 Design

This study used a quantitative, descriptive design based on entrepreneurial intention models. Data is collected to assess the EI of the different groups of students. A survey instrument was specifically designed for the purpose of this study. The instruments used comprised entrepreneurial intention component and the following variables: age, gender, pre-university residential area, education level, household head's occupations and prior work experience.

3.2 Sample, Sampling method and Data Collection Procedure

This study was conducted by using convenient sampling. In this case the non-probability sampling technique was applied. Plowright (2012) supports the premise that non-probability sampling involves selecting cases that do not necessarily represent groups outside of the research. They are chosen because the researcher knows that they have information that will contribute directly to answering the research question.

Our sample is composed mainly of students from the University of Bamenda (UBa) (82.6 %), the rest of this sample includes students from the University of Yaounde II (UYII) (8.0 %), the National School of Posts, Telecommunications, Information Technologies and Communication (SUPPTIC) (6.9 %) and the Higher Institute of Applied Technology and Management (ISTAG) (2.5 %).

Data were collected through the use of self-administered questionnaires in a survey. Data collected are strictly committed for the only use of this research and the confidentiality of students is ensured. The questionnaires were distributed face-to-face to the students in class with the assistance of the authors and some other lecturers. The questionnaires were written both in English and French in order to avoid any misunderstandings. The table 1 below shows the sample profile matrix of the questionnaire surveyed. A total of 1550 questionnaires were distributed "randomly" amongst the selected respondents. However only 1481 were collected back and after removing questionnaires with missing data, 1420 were finally used for analysis. Which resulted in 95 % and 92 % of response rate and good response rate respectively?

Table 1: Sample profile matrix

Elements (Items) Total questionnaires and collection percentage

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	Yaounde	Bamenda	Total
Number of questionnaires distributed	300	1250	1550
Number of questionnaire collected back	267	1214	1481
Response rate	89 %	97 %	95 %
Number of questionnaire used for analysis	248	1172	1420
Good and useful response rate	83 %	93 %	92 %

Source: Authors

The majority of students of this study are between the ages of 22 and 25 (55.4 %). This research involves 705 male students and 715 female students. There is an approximated equal distribution of students residing in rural and urban area during the pre-university studies.

The details on personal background and environmental factors (Gender, Age, higher institution, year of study, residing area in primary and secondary school, household head's occupation and prior work experience) are available in table 2 below. The students were briefed on the purpose of the study and instructions were given on how to respond to the questionnaire.

Table 2: Respondents Demographic Profile

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	Less than 22 years old	407	28.7%
	Between 22 and 25 years old	786	55.4%
	26 years old and above	227	15.9%
	Total	1420	100%
Gender	Male	705	49.6%
	Female	715	50.4%
	Total	1420	100%
University and Higher Learning Institute	UBa	1172	82.5%
	UYII	114	8.0%
	SUP ^o TIC	98	6.9%
	ISTAG	36	2.5%
	Total	1420	100%
Year of study	100 & 200	789	55.6%

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	300	495	34.9%
	400 & Above	136	9.6%
	Total	1420	100%
Pre university residing area	Urban area	716	50.4%
	Rural area	704	49.6%
	Total	1420	100%
Household head self-employed	Yes	848	59.7%
	No	572	40.3%
	Total	1420	100%
Previous work experience	Yes	670	47.2%
	No	750	52.8%
	Total	1420	100%

Source: Authors

3.3 Instrumentation and measurement

A questionnaire was designed specifically for this study. In view to test the questionnaire, a preliminary stage of the study was carried out. From the 3rd March to 10th March 2019, the questionnaire was pre-tested on 20 students from the University of Yaounde II and 20 students from the University of Bamenda. The aim of this pre-test was to validate the scale in the questionnaire (Omorede, Thorgren & Wincent, 2015). Following our pre-test, some errors were detected and corrected, some minor adjustments were made to bring English-speaking students and Frenchspeaking students up to standard. The students who participated in the questionnaire's pre-test phase were not included in the final sample. The data has been collected in Yaounde and Bamenda during the last week of May 2019. The instrument used comprised the following components: individual variables, environmental variables and entrepreneurial intent. The immediate and future entrepreneurial intention items statements were adopted from prior studies, the dictionary of variables (table 3) included items considered for immediate and future entrepreneurial intention. We developed a five-point likert-based questions to assess the students' immediate and future entrepreneurial interest (ranging from 1, Total disagreement, to 5, Total agreement).

The following coding has been used for the independent variables: Age (Less than 22 years old-1, Between 22 and 25 years old-2, 26 years old and more-3), Gender (Male-1, Female-2), Education level (Year one and two-1, Year three-2, Year four and above-3), Pre university main residing area (Urban area-1, Rural area-2), Household head selfemployed (Yes-1, No-2), Previous work experience (Yes-1, No-2).

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Table 3: Dictionary of variables

Entrepreneurial Intentions	Item Analysis	Adopted from
My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur.	Entrepint1	Solesvik et al. (2012)
I prefer to be an entrepreneur rather than to be an employee in a company.	Entrepint2	Fatoki (2010)
I am prepared to do anything to be an entrepreneur.	Entrepint3	Fatoki (2010)
I'll put every effort to start and run my own business.	Entrepint4	Fatoki (2010)
I have thought seriously to start my own business after completing my study.	Entrepint5	Fatoki (2010)
<i>I have a strong intention to start a business someday.</i>	Entrepint6	Fatoki (2010)
<i>I'm determined to create a firm in the future.</i>	Entrepint7	Liñán and Chen (2006)
I want to be my own boss.	Entrepint8	Fatoki (2010)
<i>I will start my business in the next five years.</i>	Entrepint9	Fatoki (2010)
I have thought of entrepreneurship as a career option.	Entrepint10	Solesvik et al. (2012)

Source: Authors

Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal reliability of the survey instrument (namely Global EI, Immediate EI and Future EI. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for each EI type construct is as follow: global EI (0.886), immediate EI (0.884) and future EI (0.713). The table 4 presents the Cronbach Alpha value for each EI category and the corresponding number of items. These results indicate high levels of internal reliability⁴.

Table 4: Summary of reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Entrepreneurial intention	10	0.886
Immediate entrepreneurial intention	7	0.844
Future entrepreneurial intention	3	0.713

Source: Authors

3.4 Data Analysis

Adequate software is used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics and Statistic tests of comparison are used to investigate and compare the EI of students belonging to different groups. Specifically, the One-way ANOVA Analysis is running to test hypotheses H1 and H3, while the Independent Sample T-Test is used to test hypotheses H2, H4, H5 and H6.

4. Results

The main results of this research include: descriptive statistics on Cameroonian students EI (table 5) and the results of different research hypotheses, obtained thanks to the independent T-test (table 6) and the one-way ANOVA (table 7).

4.1. A descriptive analysis of Cameroonian Students’ entrepreneurial intention

The descriptive statistics analysis presented here are the means of the different forms of entrepreneurial intent. Table

5 below shows that Cameroonian students’ level of general EI (mean = 3.918) is high. The level of students’ future EI (mean = 3.948) is higher than the level of students’ immediate EI (mean = 3.905). This result confirms Cameroon's ranking in Africa in terms of entrepreneurship.

Table 5: Entrepreneurial Intention means

Type of entrepreneurial Intention	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
General Entrepreneurial Intention	1420	1	5	3.918
Immediate Entrepreneurial Intention	1420	1	5	3.905
Future Entrepreneurial Intention	1420	1	5	3.948

Source: Authors

Table 6: Independent t-test findings summary

Variables	Entrepreneurial intention	Categories	Mean	t-value
Gender	General Intention	<i>Male</i>	3.928	0.420
		Female	3.909	
	Immediate intention	<i>Male</i>	3.924	0.760
		Female	3.887	
	Future intention	Male	3.938	-0.416
		<i>Female</i>	3.959	
Longest residing area during primary and secondary school	General Intention	<i>Urban area</i>	3.974	2.405**
		Rural area	3.863	
	Immediate intention	<i>Urban area</i>	3.966	2.534**
		Rural area	3.844	
	Future intention	<i>Urban area</i>	3.991	1.692
		Rural area	3.906	
Household head (self-employed)	General Intention	<i>Yes</i>	3.967	2.541**
		No	3.847	
	Immediate intention	<i>Yes</i>	3.955	2.480**
		No	3.833	
	Future intention	<i>Yes</i>	3.994	2.229**
		No	3.881	
Previous work experience	General Intention	<i>Yes</i>	3.978	2.431**
		No	3.866	
	Immediate intention	<i>Yes</i>	3.966	2.367**
		No	3.852	
	Future intention	<i>Yes</i>	4.005	2.144**
		No	3.898	

Bold and Italic: The category or group with the greatest mean

** Significant at 5%.

Source: Authors

4.2 Cameroonian students age ranges does not differentiate their immediate and future EI.

Table 7 lays out the summary results of one-way ANOVA analysis between age ranges and EI (p-value = .157 for general EI, p-value = .278 for immediate EI and p-value = .067 for future EI). The level of general, immediate and future EI of students between the ages of 23 and 25 (mean = 3.958, mean = 3.940 and mean = 4.000 respectively) is greater than that of students under 23 (the youngest) (mean = 3.869, mean = 3.865 and mean = 3.878 respectively) and over 25 (the oldest) (mean = 3.868, mean = 3.857 and mean = 3.894 respectively). The ages ranging between 23 and 25 are associated to that of students who have already completed university education. These differences remain insignificant, the Sig. of ANOVA is greater than 0.05 so hypothesis H1 is rejected. There is no significant difference among age ranges and EI. This finding is inconsistent with previous studies which confirm that age is negatively associated with EI (Singh, 2014; Yaghmaei & Ghasemi, 2015).

However, this finding is in accordance with different other studies (Talaş, Çelik & Oral, 2013; Tran & Tran, 2018; Khan, 2019). Age is not relevant in defining youth self-employment policies in Cameroon.

4.3 The entrepreneurial intent of Cameroonian students has similarities regarding their gender.

Table 6 presents the independence t-test analysis results, including the relationship between gender and EI of students from Cameroonian Universities and Higher learning institutes. The EI levels of the two sets are different. Contrary to the future EI, where female students' future EI level (mean = 3.959) is higher to that of male students (mean = 3.938), the levels of global and immediate EI of male students (mean = 3.928 and mean = 3.924 respectively) is higher than that of female students (mean = 3.909 and mean = 3.887 respectively), but all those differences are insignificantly at 5%. Thus the hypothesis H2 is not supported. This finding is consistent with many previous studies showing that gender is not influencing entrepreneurial intention (Mustapha & Selvaraju, 2015; Pawlak, 2016). This result shows an evolution in women's current thinking about their role in Cameroonian entrepreneurship. With the evolution of gender definition, we realize that boys and girls tend to have the same responsibilities and behaviour progressively. Very often, they have the same commitments, the same jobs or activities, the same aspirations, the same dreams. There is a diversification of income sources in households due to the improving schooling rate of women and gender equality policies. Therefore, the Cameroon government should consider the evolution of gender definition while defining youth self-employment policies.

4.4 The future EI of third-year students is more important than those of freshmen and sophomores.

Table 7 exhibits the summary results of one-way ANOVA analysis between education level and EI (p-value = .027 for general EI, p-value = .103 for immediate EI and p-value = .002 for future EI). These values allow us to confirm, with respect to the general EI and the future EI, that there is a significant difference in students' EI between at least two student's subgroups of education levels. An observation of the respective levels of each of the subgroups shows that: the general EI and future EI levels of students enrolled in the third-year (mean = 3.993 and mean = 4.044 respectively) are greater than the general EI and future EI of freshmen and sophomores (mean = 3.863 and mean = 3.868). The general EI and future EI levels of students enrolled in the fourth-year or more (mean = 3.964 and mean = 4.066 respectively) are also greater than the general EI and future EI of freshmen and sophomores (mean = 3.863 and mean = 3.868). These differences are significant between the subgroups of students enrolled in the third year and those enrolled in the first and second year, with a threshold of 5% for the general EI and a threshold of 1% for the future EI. Thus verifying hypothesis H3. There is significant difference between educational level and the students' general EI and future EI. This finding is consistent with previous studies which confirm that educational levels influence the entrepreneurial intention (Achchuthan & Nimalathasan, 2012; Uddin, Mohammad & Hammami, 2016). Differences between fourth year and over students and first and second year students, fourth year students and third year students are insignificant at the 5% level.

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Table 7: One-way ANOVA findings summary

Variables	Entrepreneurial intention	Categories	Mean	p-value
Age	General Intention	Less than 22	3.869	0.281
		<i>Between 23 and 25</i>	<i>3.958</i>	
		<i>Less than 22</i>	<i>3.869</i>	1.000
		26 and above	3.868	
		<i>Between 23 and 25</i>	<i>3.958</i>	0.511
		26 and above	3.868	
	Immediate intention	Less than 22	3.865	0.538
			<i>Between 23 and 25</i>	
		<i>Less than 22</i>	<i>3.865</i>	1.000
			26 and above	
		<i>Between 23 and 25</i>	<i>3.940</i>	0.682
			26 years old and above	
	Future intention	Less than 22 years old	3.878	0.100
			<i>Between 23 and 25</i>	
		<i>Less than 22</i>	3.878	1.000
			<i>26 and above</i>	
<i>Between 23 and 25</i>		<i>4.000</i>	0.404	
		26 and above		3.894
Level of study	General Intention	Level 100 & 200	3.863	0.027**
		<i>Level 300</i>	<i>3.993</i>	
		<i>Level 300</i>	<i>3.993</i>	1.000
		Level 400 & Above	3.964	
		Level 100 & 200	3.863	0.0631
			<i>Level 400 & Above</i>	
	Immediate intention	Level 100 & 200	3.861	0.102
			<i>Level 300</i>	
		<i>Level 300</i>	<i>3.972</i>	1.000
			Level 400 & Above	
		Level 100 & 200	3.861	1.000
			<i>Level 400 & Above</i>	
	Future intention	Level 100 & 200	3.868	0.003***
			<i>Level 300</i>	
		Level 300	4.044	0.071
			<i>Level 400 & Above</i>	
		Level 100 & 200	3.868	1.000
			<i>Level 400 & Above</i>	

Bold and Italic: The category or group with the greatest mean

***, ** Significant at 1% and 5% respectively.

Source: Authors' computation

4.4 The urban environment is more conducive to entrepreneurship than the rural environment

The result of independence t-test, comparing EI of students residing in urban area and those residing in rural area is contained in table 6. The level of general EI, immediate EI and future EI (mean=3.974, mean= 3.966 and mean= 3.991 respectively) of students who have completed their pre-university

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studies in urban areas are greater than those of students who have completed their pre-university studies in rural areas (mean = 3.863, mean = 3.844 and mean = 3.905 respectively). This difference is significant at 5% threshold for general EI and immediate EI but insignificant at 5% for future EI. Therefore our fourth hypothesis is confirmed. Bako, Ajibode, Oluseye & Aladelusi(2017) revealed that opportunities existing in Nigerian environment affect students“ EI.

The urban environment, which is characterized by a diversity of infrastructures and a higher level of development than the rural areas, is a source of inspiration that encourages and accompanies young students on the road to self-employment. The urban population has risen sharply since 1996. The demographic structure of Cameroon in 2010 shows a mainly young population with 43.6% of people aged under 15 and 20.7% of people between the ages of 15 and 24, 64.3% of the population under 25 years of age. Applying this rate gives more than 7 million people under 25 living in urban areas in 2010.

4.5 Entrepreneurial Intention of students with self-employed household head is greater than students with salaried household head

The summary of independence t-test, comparing students“ EI with self-employed household heads to those

with employed household heads is shown in Table 6 above.

The levels of general EI, immediate EI and future EI of students with salaried household heads(mean= 3.847, mean= 3.833 and mean= 3.811 respectively) is lesser than that of students with self-employed household heads(mean= 3.967, mean= 3.955 and mean=3.994 respectively). These differences are all significant at 5% level. Thus the hypothesis H5 is verified.

The EI of students with self-employed parents is greater than students with salaried parents. The parent“s occupation has a significant influence on the EI of their offspring, this finding is consistent with previous studies (Megibaru, 2014; Pauceanu, Alpenidze, Edu & Zaharia, 2019). Students tend to follow their parent“s career path. Students“ best counselors and advisors are parents. The children wish to be like their parents in the future. Parent guide the younger ones to face the potential obstacles.

4.6 The Entrepreneurial Intention of students without a prior work experience is less important than that of students with a previous work experience

Independence t-test summary, comparing student“s EI with previous experience to those without previous

work experience is exhibited in Table 6 above.

The levels of general EI, immediate EI and future EI of students justifying a previous experience (mean= 3.978, mean= 3.966 and mean= 4.005 respectively)are higher than those of students without a prior work experience. All these differences are significant at the level of 5%.Consequently the hypothesis H6 is verified. This result confirmed former tendencies (Rasli, Khan, Malekifar & Jabeen, 2013; Al Bakri & Mehrez, 2017; Ayalew & Zeleke, 2018). Previous work experience helps to develop the skills and

competencies required to be an entrepreneur. The experience gained through self-employment is decisive in the desire to become a job creator in the future.

5 Conclusion

The present study was intended to investigate students' personal background and environmental factors influencing the Cameroonian Universities and Higher learning institutions general EI, immediate EI and future EI. The descriptive analysis result shows that Cameroonian students' future EI is higher than their immediate EI.

The study looked at four individual factors and two environmental factors. It appears from analysis through Independent Sample t-test and One-way ANOVA, that among the six factors considered in the current study, four factors: pre-university residing area, education level, household head occupation, previous work experience show a significant influence on students' I while the two others essentially related to personal background namely, gender and age show no significant effect on students entrepreneurial desire.

The above results can contribute directly or indirectly to the achievement of the objectives that Cameroon has set itself to achieve its vision of an emerging country by 2035. Objectives contained in the Growth and Employment Strategy Paper. The stakes of this research results are at several levels. Strengthening measures to combat social exclusion should be put in place. Entrepreneurship contributing to the fight against youth unemployment is at the heart of the fight against social exclusion, as women, young people and children constitute the layers of the most fragile in our society. The findings have implications on the government, policy makers, universities, national and international communities.

The EI of Cameroonian students is high and many are willing to start their own businesses immediately after graduation or hereafter. In order to encourage entrepreneurship in Cameroon, students should be made aware of the various existing support or programs and financing schemes for entrepreneurs being provided by the government, NGOs and others stakeholders. The introduction of a course presenting the opportunities available for students who intent to develop an income generating activity in the curriculum is relevant.

Successful entrepreneurs from various fields should be invited to give practical talks to students in the University and Higher Learning Institutes. Government agencies such as the Centre for formality and business creation, SMEs promotion Agency, the Small Enterprise Development Agency and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency should make student entrepreneurship one of their core missions. Universities and other learning institutions could develop students' entrepreneurial capabilities by organizing mentorship programs, workshops and conferences in urban and rural area, which could enable students to interact with entrepreneurial role models.

Further research should be able to involve more diverse respondents from more Cameroonian public and private higher institute in the different regions. They could also modify the size of likert-scale from

5 to 6 to reduce undecided respondents. For a more comprehensive analysis of EI determinants, future studies may look at the influence of students' personality and their field of study.

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