

Study of the Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Intent and Entrepreneurial Action

Engoundang Nkada Freshnelle Viany

University of Yaounde 1 – Cameroon, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Department of Special Education

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PROBLEMATIC

In Cameroon, unemployment is becoming a major concern for young graduates. According to a 2023 report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), 192 million people worldwide are unemployed, 38 million of whom are in Africa. This unemployment rate has stabilized globally after a rise in 2016. The report also indicates that the unemployment rate for young people aged 18 to 25 already exceeded 12% of the active workforce in developing countries, more than three times the unemployment rate for adults aged 27 to 35. Thus, youth unemployment continues to worsen over the years. In 2018, 172 million people were unemployed worldwide, according to the ILO, which predicted an unemployment rate of 4.9%. From 2019-2020, the unemployment rate increased to 6.5% in the employment sector due to several factors. In 2021, the unemployment rate in Cameroon stood at 6.1% of the population, compared to 3.84% in 2020. Meanwhile, the underemployment rate, initially at 75%, decreased to 65%. From 2023 to 2024, the unemployment rate fell to 5.8%, bringing the number of unemployed to 3 million (International Labour Organization, 2023).

An observation made regarding these statistics in Cameroon reveals several factors contributing to the unemployment and poverty experienced by young Cameroonians. The coronavirus pandemic of 2019-2021 amplified the unemployment rate due to job losses caused by lockdowns. Furthermore, the rapid increase in the cost of living compared to nominal incomes, along with the effects of inflation and rising food prices, exacerbates unemployment in Cameroon, leading to an economic downturn. In addition, the armed uprising with secessionists in the Far North, Northwest, and Southwest Regions of Cameroon, coupled with the closure of borders to imports following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the negative consequences on supply chains, are significant factors that have led the government to reduce youth employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency in the job market for young graduates and an education system poorly suited to the formal employment sector—leading to a mismatch between training and employment in Cameroon—are factors contributing to the scarcity of salaried jobs for young graduates in Cameroon. These graduates face prohibitive conditions and constraints in the salaried job market, which have become unacceptable for both young job seekers and those already employed. Unemployment is also caused by structural factors related to education and lifestyles, such as an education system ill-suited to the needs of the formal employment sector, which is further compounded by an opaque and unsuitable professional environment. In addition, a lack of clarity in recruitment processes at various training institutions, as well as a lack of transparency regarding promotion and compensation criteria for young Cameroonians, exacerbate youth unemployment. Furthermore, the prohibitive, even indecent, working conditions and constraints faced by both job seekers and those already employed, along with the dehumanizing working conditions encountered by young graduates in the informal sector and the inhumane conditions faced by young graduates seeking work in the informal sector, are contributing factors to unemployment in Cameroon. Faced with these challenges, young Cameroonians are turning to entrepreneurship in order to achieve financial independence.

To this end, entrepreneurial dynamism is a fundamental element in youth empowerment, as it plays a significant role in a nation's development through wealth and job creation. As a rapidly emerging field, entrepreneurship is a concept encompassing numerous elements that contribute to the improvement of individuals within society.

Many researchers focus their general interest on the creation of for-profit and non-profit businesses, which explains its diverse definitions, all sharing the common thread of social creation and innovation. Entrepreneurship is a concept that emphasizes the act of creating wealth or employment through the creation or acquisition of a business.

It is worth noting that several researchers have analyzed the concept of entrepreneurship. The work of Knight (1967) and Drucker (1970) demonstrates that entrepreneurship is a risk-taking process. According to Timmons (1971), an entrepreneur is someone willing to risk their career and financial security to implement an idea, investing their time and capital in a risky venture. Furthermore, entrepreneurship describes the process of discovering, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities. Fayolle (2004) further clarifies that entrepreneurship is a situation that simultaneously connects an individual engaged in a project with an emerging organization or an existing company. This idea aligns with that of Bruyat (1993), who considers entrepreneurship a dynamic process of change where an individual is both the agent and the object of value creation. He is an active participant because he determines the modalities of business creation and the object of value creation, because he is the bearer of a project that defines him, with which he identifies, and which gives meaning to his existence. From this perspective, a person develops an idea, a goal, an objective, an intention that becomes his starting point for creating his business.

Therefore, when discussing entrepreneurship, it is important to emphasize the creation of a business, which begins with an intention before ultimately resulting in wealth. In psychology, the term intention refers to a mental operation that sets a goal, objectives, or desired outcomes (Blay, 2003; Lalande, 1993). Bruyat (1993) defines entrepreneurial intention as a personal will or mindset oriented toward business creation. This should not be confused with the behavior that refers to the entrepreneurial act itself, that is, the work of creating a business. Following this logic, Bird (1992) defines intention as a state of mind that directs attention toward a specific objective—the new organization—and a means of achieving it. The literature on the concept of intention is extensive and provides a variety of definitions. The seminal work of Ajzen & Fishbein (1977) contributed to the recognition of intention as a determinant of behavior. The unique interest in addressing the notion of intention and action lies in the fact that this study focuses on young Cameroonian graduates. Previous research centered on the socio-professional context of adults with projects. In Cameroon, we have a high proportion of young graduates seeking empowerment. Faced with this situation, they develop entrepreneurial ideas that require effective action. It is therefore important to examine the relationship between the intentions of young Cameroonian graduates and their process of translating these ideas into concrete actions. To achieve this original aspect of our analysis which will solve the problem of the non-realization of an intention into entrepreneurial action by young Cameroonian graduates, we will highlight the work of authors who bring new elements to consolidate Ajzen's theory of planned behavior and significant advances are made in the explanation of behavior by emphasizing the specific planning of intention (Gollwitzer, 1999).

In the entrepreneurial process, intention is a difficult task because it requires having a goal, specific abilities, or skills. It resides in the mind of the person developing it and is linked to taking action. It is also the movement by which the mind strives toward the object it has internalized. From this conception, intention is the act of striving toward a goal (Boutinet, 1999). As for action, which is a very important element because it is imbued with intention, it is crucial that this intention be transformed into an undertaking, and this involves implementing a number of actions. Early psychologists gave significant importance to action because it was considered the fundamental unit of psychology due to its inherent tendency to be directed toward a goal that produces satisfaction (Lewin, 1935). In Weber's sense (1959), action is the opposite of habit and routine. It corresponds to all activities directed towards achieving the objectives defined beforehand (Achtziger & Gollwitzer, 2010; Moussa Mouloungui, 2012).

The definition of action proposed by these authors is close to the one used in our analysis. Indeed, we believe that action is the controlled implementation of an intentional goal. This definition originates from motor control theory, which posits that a person implements a number of control mechanisms to carry out their action (Lachman & Butterfield, 1979). These mechanisms are developed based on knowledge related to the action a person wishes to perform. In the case of an entrepreneurial project, action highlights the components of cognitive skills and the goal to be achieved. These components demonstrate that the project leader must be able to anticipate the goal,

which has not yet been reached, and implement means that establish a relationship between the goal and the activities leading to the realization of the action (Moussa Mouloungui, 2012).

This theoretical model begins with the observation that an individual with an entrepreneurial mindset has the potential to create a business and plan projects with pre-established intentions that facilitate action (Boissin et al., 2009). Therefore, for an intention to translate into action in entrepreneurship, Ajzen specifies that an individual must orient their behavior toward their perceived attitude toward the intention, their subjective norm, and their perceived behavioral control. Here, perceived attitude refers to an individual's evaluation of the degree of attraction and drive they feel toward the goal. This factor is composed of an individual's beliefs about the consequences of fulfilling the intention. Subjective norm refers to the social pressures exerted on an individual by their closest circle regarding their perception of how others view the fulfillment of the initial intention. Finally, perceived behavioral control represents an individual's belief about the degree of difficulty or ease in carrying out an action. These aspects involve monitoring elements such as motivation and cognitive mechanisms such as planning, self-assessment, and the context of the transition from intention to action.

It is recognized that intention is the starting point for action in the field of entrepreneurship. However, not everyone with an intention manages to turn an idea into a business. As we have clarified with Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, the relationship between an entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action can be understood through perceived attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control.

It is on this idea that we will focus our analysis, basing our hypothesis on Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, which demonstrates that the transition from entrepreneurial intention to entrepreneurial action takes into account perceived attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. We support the idea that the entrepreneurial intention of young Cameroonian graduates with projects promotes the implementation of entrepreneurial action. Thus, we will examine how entrepreneurial intention, guided by perceived attitudes, subjective norm, and behavioral control, fosters entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates with entrepreneurial projects.

METHODOLOGY

1. Participants

The participants in our study consisted of all young Cameroonian graduates with entrepreneurial projects. We administered a paper-and-pencil questionnaire to a sample of 250 young project leaders in the city of Yaoundé. These participants were selected using convenience sampling. After obtaining the necessary permissions, we administered the questionnaire to young graduates with entrepreneurial projects on a voluntary basis. This sample is the same one we described in the section on participant proportions during the adaptation phase of the measurement tools for the exploratory analysis. We took into account the sex (75 women and 175 men), marital status (160 married, 92 single, 43 common-law, 09 divorced), level of education (133 with a Master's degree, 74 in Bachelor's program, 43 in Doctoral program), type of training (140 academic training, 110 professional training), age (159 are in an age range of 31-40 years, 91 remaining participants are in the range of 25-30 years, This demonstrates that we have an average age of 37 years).

2. Materials

We used a questionnaire as a data collection tool. This questionnaire contains the Cameroonian version of the tool for measuring entrepreneurial intention, the Cameroonian version of the tool for measuring entrepreneurial action, and sociodemographic variables.

- **Entrepreneurial intent**

This variable was measured using an adapted version of the 13-item Entrepreneurial Intention Tool, divided into three dimensions: perceived attitude (3 items), subjective norms (4 items), and perceived behavioral control (6 items). The Cronbach's alpha values indicate good reliability of the measurement instrument. Specifically, these values are $\alpha = .893$ for the perceived behavioral control dimension, $\alpha = .768$ for the perceived attitude dimension and $\alpha = .74$ for the subjective norms dimension.

• Entrepreneurial action

It was measured using the Cameroonian version of the Entrepreneurial Action Tool, comprising 14 items divided into two dimensions: activities to be identified (4 items) and activities to be carried out (10 items). The Cronbach's alpha values indicate good reliability of the measurement instrument. Indeed, these values are $\alpha = .94$ for the activities to be carried out dimension, $\alpha = .88$ for the activity dimension to be identified.

3. Statistical approach

In this part of our analysis, inferential analysis was used to verify the study's hypothesis. Specifically, we sought to determine whether a direct relationship exists between a person's intention and their entrepreneurial action. We favored regression analyses using the linear least squares method. This statistical technique allows us to clarify the contribution of the dimensions of entrepreneurial intention to the realization of entrepreneurial action. To test the structural model linking entrepreneurial intention to entrepreneurial action, we employed structural equation modeling (SEM). The distinctive feature of the SEM method, as described by Roussel et al. (2002), is its ability to handle multiple and simultaneous relationships between dependent and independent variables. These models are highly accurate because they account for measurement errors in all estimation procedures.

To process the data collected in the field, we used JASP version 17 and SPSS version 26 under Windows 10. JASP was used for structural equation modeling analyses, while SPSS version 26 was used for correlational and simple linear regression analyses. This software is easy to use and provides clearer interpretation of the results.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

1. Correlational analysis

In the scientific literature, correlation analyses are performed to verify the assumptions underlying regression analysis. In reality, to perform a regression, significant correlations between the dimensions of the variables must already exist. In this sense, this section dedicated to correlation analysis allows us to verify the existence of statistically significant relationships between the variables involved in this study. Thus, the table below presents the correlation matrix between the dimensions of entrepreneurial intention and the dimensions of entrepreneurial action among young entrepreneurs.

Table: Correlation matrix

	ATTIT	NORMAL	CONTR	IDENT	REAL	ACTION
Attitude	-					
Standard	,572 **	-				
Control	,353 **	,457 **	-			
Identify	,361 **	,511 **	,548 **	-		
Realize	,205 **	,291 **	,364 **	,345 **	-	
Action	,342 **	,484 **	,552 **	,807 **	,833 **	-

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-sided).

Initial analysis reveals that the majority of variables and dimensions are significantly correlated with each other, with correlation coefficients greater than .20. The objective of this analysis is to present the results obtained from the correlation test. Indeed, examination of the correlation matrix shows that:

➤ The dimension of perceived attitude and entrepreneurial action

The results of the correlation test show that there is a significant and positive link between the perceived attitude dimension and entrepreneurial action ($r=.342$; $p=.000$). Thus, we also have a significant link between perceived attitude and the activity to be identified ($r=.361$; $p=.000$), and then between attitude and the activity to be carried out ($r=.205$; $p=.001$). This means that entrepreneurial intention based on perceived attitudes leads to entrepreneurial action.

➤ The subjective norm dimension and entrepreneurial action

The results of the correlation analysis show a significant and positive relationship between the subjective norm dimension and entrepreneurial action ($r = .484$; $p = .000$). The relationship also remains significant between the subjective norm and the activity to be identified ($r = .511$; $p = .000$), and between the subjective norm and the activity to be carried out ($r = .291$; $p = .000$). This means that entrepreneurial intention based on the subjective norm leads to entrepreneurial action.

➤ The dimension of perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial action

The correlation test results show no significant link between the perceived behavioral control dimension and entrepreneurial action ($r = .552$; $p = .00$). Similarly, a significant link remains between the perceived behavioral control dimensions and the activity to be identified ($r = .548$; $p = .000$), and then with the activity to be carried out ($r = .364$; $p = .000$). This means that entrepreneurial intention based on perceived behavioral control leads to entrepreneurial action.

The results from the correlation analysis show that the dimensions of entrepreneurial intention maintain a significant and positive relationship with each of the dimensions of entrepreneurial action.

2. Hypothesis test results

It is worth recalling that the general hypothesis is formulated as follows: *the entrepreneurial intention of young graduates with projects promotes the implementation of entrepreneurial action*. Based on Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, which demonstrates that the transition from entrepreneurial intention to entrepreneurial action takes into account perceived attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, we will examine how entrepreneurial intention, as shaped by perceived attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control, fosters entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates with entrepreneurial projects.

➤ Verification of the first hypothesis

The first hypothesis of our analysis was formulated as follows: *entrepreneurial intention focused on perceived attitudes promotes entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates*.

Table: Simple regression of perceived attitude towards entrepreneurial action

VI	VD	B	T	P	r ² aj
Perceived attitude	activity to be identified	,361	6.105	,000	127
	activity to be completed	,364	6.15	.000	129
	global entrepreneurial action	,342	5,732	.000	113

The objective of this analysis is to verify the idea that entrepreneurial intention based on perceived attitudes promotes entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates. Since both variables (perceived attitudes and entrepreneurial action) were measured using numerical scales, the collected data are presented as continuous scores. A simple linear regression was used to predict entrepreneurial action based on perceived attitudes. These results show that **11.3% (R^2_{aj})** of the variance can be explained solely by our factor (perceived attitudes). The ANOVA table [$F(1, 248) = 32.857$; $p = 0.000$] allows us to reject the null hypothesis suggesting that the coefficient of the regression line is equal to 0: the Beta coefficient is therefore not equal to 0. This coefficient is positive ($\beta = .342$; $p = .000$) and suggests that when perceived attitudes increase, entrepreneurial action also increases. This means that perceived attitudes promote entrepreneurial action.

This hypothesis is all the more valid given the effect of perceived attitudes on each dimension of entrepreneurial action (the action to be identified and the action to be carried out). Thus, perceived attitudes alone explain **12.7% (R^2_{aj})** of the variance in the action to be identified and **12.9% (R^2_{aj})** of the variance in the action to be carried out. Clearly, both models are significant based on the ANOVA test values for both the first dimension [$F(1, 248) = 37.276$; $p = 0.000$] and the second [$F(1, 248) = 37.851$; $p = 0.000$]. Similarly, the regression coefficients have the same sign, both are positive and suggest that the observed values of actions to identify ($\beta = .361$; $p = .000$) and on actions to perform ($\beta = .364$; $p = .000$) are predicted by an increase in perceived attitude scores.

➤ Verification of the second hypothesis

The second hypothesis was formulated as follows: *entrepreneurial intention focused on subjective norm promotes entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates.*

Table: Simple regression of the subjective norm on entrepreneurial action

VI	VD	B	T	P	r ² aj
Subjective standard	activity to be identified	,511	9.37	,000	,258
	activity to be completed	,291	4.78	.000	081
	global entrepreneurial action	,484	8,722	.000	,232

The objective of this analysis is to verify the idea that entrepreneurial intention focused on subjective norms promotes entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates. Since both variables (subjective norms and entrepreneurial action) were measured using numerical scales, the collected data are presented as continuous scores. A simple linear regression was used to predict entrepreneurial action based on subjective norms. These results show that **23.2% (R² aj)** of the variance can be explained solely by our factor (subjective norm). The ANOVA table [**F(1, 248) = 76.073; p = 0.000**] allows us to reject the null hypothesis suggesting that the coefficient of the regression line is equal to 0: the coefficient Beta is therefore not equal to 0. This coefficient is positive (**β = .484; p = .000**) and suggests that when subjective norms increase, entrepreneurial action also increases.

This hypothesis is all the more valid, given the effect of subjective norms on each of the dimensions of entrepreneurial action (activity to be identified and activity to be carried out). Thus, subjective norms alone explain **25.8% (R² aj)** of the variance of the activity to be identified and **8.1% (R² aj)** of the variance of the activity to be carried out. Obviously, both models are significant given the ANOVA test values for both the first dimension [**F(1, 248) = 87.788; p = 0.000**] and the second [**F(1, 248) = 22.919; p = 0.000**]. Similarly, the regression coefficients have the same sign, both are positive and suggest that the observed values of the activities to be identified (**β = 0.000). 511; p = .000**) and on the actions to be carried out (**β = .291; p = .000**) are predicted by an increase in subjective norm scores.

➤ Verification of the third hypothesis of the study

The third hypothesis was formulated as follows: *entrepreneurial intention focused on perceived behavioral control promotes entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates.*

Table: Simple regression of perceived behavioral control on entrepreneurial action

VI	VD	B	T	P	r ² aj
Perceived behavioral control	activity to be identified	,548	10,328	,000	,298
	activity to be completed	,205	3,296	,000	038
	global entrepreneurial action	.552	10,435	,000	.302

The objective is to test the idea that entrepreneurial intention based on perceived behavioral control promotes entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates . Since both variables (perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial action) were measured using numerical scales, the collected data are presented as continuous scores. A simple linear regression was used to predict entrepreneurial action based on perceived behavioral control. These results show that **30.2% (R² aj)** of the variance can be explained solely by our factor (perceived behavioral control). The ANOVA table [**F(1, 248) = 108.880; p=.000**] allows us to reject the null hypothesis suggesting that the coefficient of the regression line is equal to 0: the Beta coefficient is then different from 0. Said coefficient is positive (**β = .552 ; p = .000**) and suggests that when behavioral control entrepreneurial action also increases.

This hypothesis is all the more valid in light of the effect of perceived behavioral control on each of the dimensions of entrepreneurial action (activity to be identified and activity to be carried out). Thus, perceived behavioral control alone explains **29.8% (R² aj)** of the variance of the action to be identified and **3.8% (R² aj)** of

the variance of the action to be carried out. Obviously, both models are significant given the ANOVA test values for both the first dimension [$F(1, 248) = 106.662$; $p=0.00$] and the second [$F(1, 248) = 10.863$; $p=0.00$]. Similarly, the regression coefficients have the same sign, both are positive and suggest that the observed values of the activities to be identified ($\beta = .548$; $p = .000$) and on the activities to be carried out ($\beta = .205$; $p = .000$) are predicted by an increase in perceived attitude scores.

Overall, regression analyses indicate that the entrepreneurial intention of young Cameroonian graduates with projects promotes the undertaking of entrepreneurial action. However, the implemented linear regression tests analyze the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action in isolation.

To overcome the limitations inherent in this approach, structural equation modeling was chosen. This approach is highly accurate because it accounts for measurement errors in all estimation procedures. As a confirmatory statistical method, structural equation modeling allows us to verify whether the collected data fit the postulated theoretical model. Most often, this theoretical model describes a causal explanatory mechanism between the variables in the study.

Structural equation modeling primarily presents two aspects: the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model accounts for the relationship between the manifest variable and the latent variables of a given construct. In our analysis, the measurement models of the variables (entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action) were studied through exploratory and confirmatory analyses. The structural model, for its part, is a combination of all possible relationships between the highlighted variables and their underlying dimensions within a single model. The validity of a structural model is determined by structuring indices.

3. Results of structural equation modeling

Table: Structural equation analysis

Clues	χ^2/dl	CFI	GFI	TLI	NFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model	1.99	0.92	0.99	0.81	0.91	0.15	0.04

The results of this analysis show that the value of the ratio χ^2/dl ($27.944/4$) is 1.99. In accordance with the recommendations of Jöreskog & Sörbom (1993), a value less than 2 indicates an excellent fit. This initial indicator suggests that the proposed model adequately represents the sample data.

The comparative goodness-of-fit (CFI) index, obtained by comparing the proposed model with the null model (in which no relationship is assumed between variables), reveals a good level of fit between the model and the data. Very often, its value is between 0 and 1; the higher the value, the better the fit. Indeed, in the present model, the CFI (0.92) indicates an acceptable fit to the data.

The Goodness of Fit (GFI), which measures the fit between the hypothetical model and the observed covariance matrix, has a value of .99. This value meets the criterion for a good fit of the data. Similarly, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) has a value of .81. This value also meets the criterion for a good fit of the data.

The normalized goodness-of-fit index (NFI) has a value of .91, indicating an acceptable fit for the model. The root mean square error of the estimate (RMSEA, Steiger, 1990) indicates a problematic fit. This value is .11. It should also be noted that the standardized residual mean squared (SRMS) value also indicates a good fit for the model. This value (.04) is less than .08.

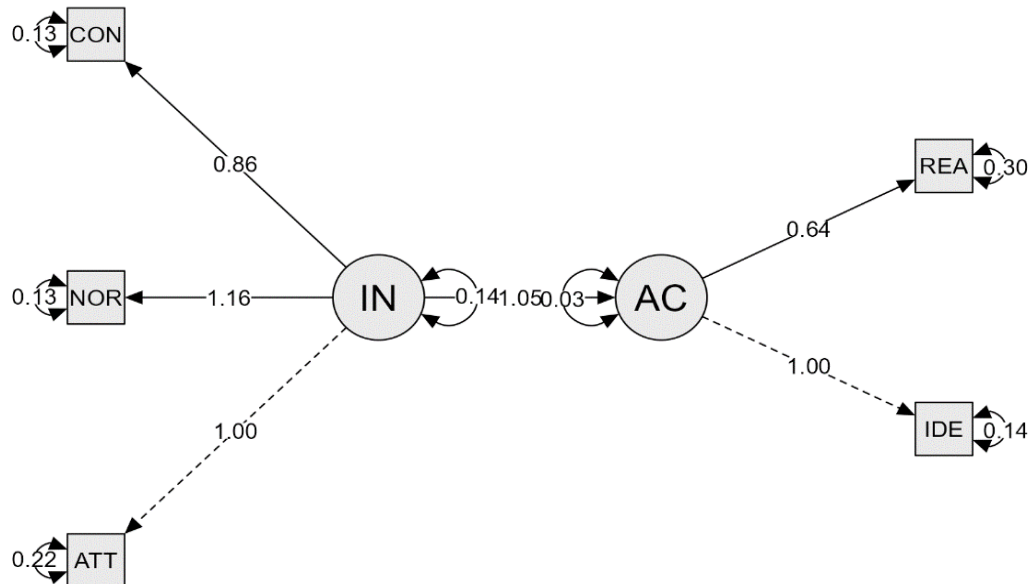
These structural indicators logically confirm that the model linking entrepreneurial intention to entrepreneurial action fits the collected data well. Beyond this model fit, structural equation modeling also reveals that the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action appears to be quite real.

Table: Regression analysis between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action

VI	VD	B	Standard Error	z-value	P
Entrepreneurial intent	Entrepreneurial action	1.054	0.175	6.010	< .001

As expected, entrepreneurial intention promotes entrepreneurial action among the young Cameroonian graduates surveyed ($\beta=1.054$; $P < .001$). In line with initial predictions, well-formulated intention translates into concrete action to combat unemployment among young Cameroonian graduates seeking empowerment.

Figure: Model of the structural relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action



Legend: CON: perceived behavioral control, NOR: subjective norm, ATT: perceived attitude, IN: entrepreneurial intention, AC: entrepreneurial action, REA: activities to be carried out, IDE: activities to be identified.

DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study confirm the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior model (Ajzen, 1991) for explaining the entrepreneurial dynamics of young Cameroonian graduates. The three dimensions of entrepreneurial intention (perceived attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control) exert a positive and significant influence on entrepreneurial action, although their intensity differs according to the behavioral dimensions. These observations align with the conclusions of recent systematic reviews (Rohanaraj, 2023; Neneh, 2024), which maintain that the conversion of intention into action depends as much on internal beliefs as on the social and institutional context. Perceived attitude maintains a significant and positive link with entrepreneurial action. Thus, this dimension of entrepreneurial intention, in accordance with the initial predictions, promotes the realization of intention in action within the entrepreneurial process. Because young Cameroonian graduates who have the opportunity and the necessary resources embark on the creation of a business, while taking the option of becoming an entrepreneur, which is a career involving more advantages.

In the literature, the work of Shane and Venkataran (2003) attempts to establish a link between perceived attitude and entrepreneurial behavior. These authors assert that entrepreneurial behavior is self-determined, based on opinions derived from individuals' attitudes. More precisely, attitude-based intention stems from individual beliefs and opinions (Shéran, 2002). Furthermore, according to Ajzen (1991), attitudes associated with behavior involve a person's evaluation, favorable or unfavorable, of the behavior they intend to exhibit. They depend on the probable outcomes a person expects from the behavior in question. Attitudes associated with behavior relate to the concept of desirability proposed by Shapero and Sokol (1982). We believe that the intention to create a business can be explained by attitudes, which can be measured by the level of project structuring. These attitudes can be realized, among other things, by seeking information from resource people (teachers, entrepreneurship experts), business creation incubation centers or specialized organizations.

This means that young graduates with a favorable perception of entrepreneurship are more inclined to initiate entrepreneurial ventures, even if this disposition does not guarantee the actual realization of projects. Recent studies (Mishra, 2022; Rohanaraj, 2023) confirm that attitude influences the formation of intention more than the execution of behavior, especially in environments marked by economic constraints. In Cameroon, where difficulties in accessing financing and the fear of failure persist, a positive attitude often remains at the motivational stage without leading to tangible action. Pham (2023) emphasizes that this gap between attitude and behavior is explained by the low perception of real opportunities despite high individual optimism. Thus, while a favorable attitude is essential, it must be supported by a conducive environment and support mechanisms to promote the effective implementation of entrepreneurial projects. In this case, attitude represents the degree to which a student evaluates entrepreneurship. Besides attitudes, intention is underpinned by perceived social norms and the control that we believe can be predicted, in addition to intention, the progression towards action. It is from this perspective that our confirmed hypothesis makes sense.

Subsequently, the subjective norm maintains a statistically significant and positive link with entrepreneurial action. Thus, this dimension of entrepreneurial intention, in accordance with initial predictions, promotes the realization of intention into action within the entrepreneurial process. This is illustrated by the fact that young Cameroonian graduates take into account the reaction of their relatives (family and friends) in their empowerment process towards creating a business.

In the scientific literature, subjective norms correspond to an individual's perception of how significant others in their life think of the behavior they intend to adopt (Ajzen, 1991). They can therefore be said to result from perceptions of social pressure, which relate to what parents, family, and friends think of an individual's career plans—in this case, the student. However, it seems to us that subjective norms extend beyond the simple influence of an individual's immediate environment, encompassing the influence of cultural factors and motivation. Nowadays, subjective norms are situated within a broader sphere than the influence of family, peers, and parents. They are also the effect of sensitivities resulting from the influence of cultural factors (the presence of entrepreneurial role models in the student's social circle and government social integration policies) and motivations (the need for achievement and the pursuit of autonomy).

This finding also highlights the crucial role of social influences in the decision to become an entrepreneur. In collective contexts like Cameroon, young graduates place great importance on the expectations of their social circle, social recognition, and family encouragement. Pham (2023) demonstrated that in societies with strong social cohesion, subjective norms can act as direct catalysts for intention, reinforcing confidence and the legitimacy of entrepreneurial choice. Similarly, Neneh (2024) observed that the perception of social support strengthens the conversion of intention into action, particularly during the opportunity identification phase. In short, subjective norms, fueled by family encouragement and the social value placed on entrepreneurship, constitute a powerful lever for activating the entrepreneurial process among young graduates. Thus, subjective norms are now embedded in a broader sphere than simply the influence of a person's immediate environment. They are also, in turn, the effect of sensitivities that arise from the influence of the existence of an entrepreneurial model, of the social integration policies implemented by public authorities, and of motivations such as the need for accomplishment and the quest for autonomy.

Finally, perceived behavioral control maintains a statistically significant and positive link with entrepreneurial action. Thus, this dimension of entrepreneurial intention, in line with initial predictions, promotes the realization of intention through action in the entrepreneurial process. This is further supported by the fact that young Cameroonian graduates believe they possess a satisfactory level of problem-solving skills, creativity, opportunity recognition, professional networking and contact skills, and new product development abilities within the entrepreneurial process. These internal skills facilitate control over the process of creating a new business while developing their entrepreneurial project.

In the literature, perceived behavioral control corresponds to the third predictive variable of behavior according to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). In this framework, an intention can only develop if it is under the control of a person's will. This is why perceived behavioral control predicts not only intention but also behavior. Perceiving behavioral control involves taking into account the degree of knowledge and control a person has of their own abilities, as well as their resources and the opportunities available to them, in order to achieve the desired

behavior. Ajzen (1991) assigns a crucial role to behavioral control in that it provides greater accuracy in predicting behavior. This importance lies primarily in the fact that perceived behavioral control directly predicts future behavior. Therefore, behaviors do not depend on any variable that a person cannot master or control.

However, he admits that intentions can predict them more accurately. Perceptions of behavioral control cannot be realistic if a person has little information about the behavior to adopt, if the necessary or available resources change, or if a new and little-known element enters the context. The actor's goals depend on the resources and constraints they perceive in the situation. According to Crozier and Friedberg (1977), a potential resource only becomes available if it is perceived. Thus, perceptions of behavioral control are similar to Shapero and Sokol's concept of feasibility (1982). They play an important mediating role between past experiences and future behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Furthermore, young people who feel capable of mobilizing resources, overcoming obstacles, and managing uncertainty are more likely to realize their intentions. These results align with the work of Tagha (2024) and Neneh (2024), which shows that confidence in one's skills, the perception of available resources, and the ability to manage risks increase the likelihood of taking action. However, this study reveals that this influence is stronger on the identification of activities than on their actual implementation. This finding is consistent with Rohanaraj (2023), who argues that a sense of competence facilitates planning and the search for opportunities, but not always concrete implementation when structural barriers persist (access to credit, technical support). In Cameroon, the lack of post-creation support and the weakness of the entrepreneurial ecosystem often hinder this transition. Thus, strengthening perceived control through mentorship programs, practical training, and facilitating access to resources appears to be a key lever for entrepreneurial success.

Ultimately, the results indicate that the psychological determinants of entrepreneurship are indeed present among young Cameroonian graduates, but their transformation into actual behaviors remains dependent on contextual factors such as institutional support, the availability of financing, and the stability of the socio-economic environment. These findings align with the conclusions of Neneh (2024) and Rohanaraj (2023), who emphasize the importance of an integrated approach combining personal factors and structural support. It appears that the theory of planned behavior remains relevant for understanding entrepreneurial action, provided that contextual variables specific to African realities are integrated, notably the weight of social capital and structural constraints.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Understanding this part of our analysis requires a practical approach, followed by a theoretical approach.

1. On a practical level

The results of this study show that in the entrepreneurial process, the intention of young Cameroonian graduates leads to the concrete action of creating a viable business. The results recommend that young Cameroonian graduates focus on their perceived attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to achieve positive goals in the youth empowerment process. This approach allows us to consider the intention of young Cameroonians as a central component of the progression toward entrepreneurial action in their empowerment, as it is inherent to their development and linked to their environment. Furthermore, from a practical standpoint, intention transforms into action as a person interacts with their environment. This transition to action requires the three phases developed by Parcherie (2003): future intentions, driving intentions, and present intentions; followed by the goal intention developed by Gollwitzer (1993). Thus, the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action appears today as a relationship of control over action in the internal aspects of the behavior and personality of young graduates in the process of empowerment.

2. From a theoretical point of view

In the scientific literature, although the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action has been explored, certain parameters have not been taken into account, such as the impact of the environment, individual behaviors, and perceived attitudes. This study therefore constitutes a scientific contribution and advances knowledge on the link between these two constructs. Following the work of Moussa Mouloungui (2012)

and Nguedong (2020), who focused on the relationship between intention and action among project leaders and workers, this study shows that intention is a central component of the progression toward entrepreneurial action. Here, intention transforms into action as an individual interacts with their environment. This transition to action requires the three phases described by Parcherie (2003). It should be noted that the existence of these different typologies led Perugini and Conner (2000) to assign intention to three main functions: a directional function, a planning function, and a volitional function. Of these functions, our study places particular emphasis on the volitional or voluntary function (Gollwitzer, 1993), which is similar to perceived behavioral control. This is an aspect of intention developed in our study and is also evident in the work of Ajzen (1991, 2002, 2014).

The results of this study reveal that young Cameroonian graduates emphasize goal-intentions, which refer to an objective achieved through specific actions that often require waiting for favorable circumstances. Here, when the execution of a particular action presents difficulties and is subject to conscious control, another level of action identification comes into play, giving rise to instrumental intentions, which are execution intentions. This aspect of the study is outlined in the work of Heckhausen & Beckmann (1990), which demonstrates that a successful goal-intention results in concrete action. Therefore, this study specifies that intention exerts a controlling function or a supervisory role over internal aspects of behavior and personality (Brockhaus, 1975; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975, 1980; Gollwitzer, 2016; Hikkerova et al., 2016). These two types of control are directly related to the implementation of behaviors or actions. In other words, the strength of the relationship between the predictor, which here is entrepreneurial intention, and the action (entrepreneurial behavior: identifying and carrying out activities) depends on the control a person exerts over the behavior. Thus, perceived control is studied during the formation of entrepreneurial intentions, while direct or actual control is studied during the implementation phase of the action. This approach is inspired by the logic implemented in certain studies that attribute both a volitional and a motivational status to intention (Gollwitzer, 1999; Heckhausen & Kuhl, 1985; Kuhl, 1985). It therefore appears that the role of intention in the progression toward action is effective in the empowerment process of young Cameroonian graduates.

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The results of this study confirm the predictions made at the outset of our analysis, which indicated an empirical relationship between entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial action among young Cameroonian graduates. However, this study has two main limitations. First, the sample size is somewhat limited for exploratory, confirmatory, and causal analyses. These samples invite further investigation. This also highlights the limitations of generalizing the results obtained. It would also be worthwhile to pursue these studies with larger samples to ensure the stability of the revealed structures. Furthermore, it would have been interesting to examine, within the framework of our study, the effect of sociodemographic variables such as age, gender, and educational background on the relationship between intention and action in the entrepreneurial process. Such an analysis could reveal whether the modeling of this relationship between intention and action varies according to individual profiles.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the development of knowledge and highlights the crucial role of intention in transforming an idea into entrepreneurial action. Having an idea to develop is not enough to achieve this goal; it is essential to possess necessary skills such as a positive attitude, an understanding of societal norms, and the ability to control one's behavior to create a viable business. These elements facilitate the empowerment of young Cameroonian graduates in transforming their intention into entrepreneurial action, a factor that is beneficial for escaping unemployment in Cameroon.

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