



Entrepreneurial Intentions Among Senior High School Students in Ghana

Abubakari Yakubu^a

Abstract

Most policymakers and academics agree that entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the development and well-being of society. Entrepreneurs not only create jobs, but they also drive innovation and contribute to structural changes within the economy. By introducing new competition, entrepreneurs indirectly enhance productivity and help shape a dynamic, competitive business environment. In this way, entrepreneurship serves as a catalyst for economic growth and national competitiveness. Despite significant research on the factors that foster entrepreneurial propensity, there has been relatively limited focus on the entrepreneurial intent among students, particularly Senior High School students. This gap in the literature is notable, especially in the context of countries like Ghana, where graduate unemployment has become a significant challenge. For many school leavers, unemployment poses a considerable burden, both for individuals and society as a whole. Encouraging entrepreneurship among younger students could be a potential solution to this issue, helping to address unemployment and fostering economic growth through innovation and business creation. Graduate unemployment has exacerbated the already prevalent issue of dependency, leading many to believe that entrepreneurship is the most effective remedy for this growing problem. To assess entrepreneurial intention, a 42-item questionnaire was utilized. The study focused on two mixed-gender and two single-sex institutions within the Sunyani municipality. A total sample size of 499 students from these four institutions was selected for the study. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 17.0, providing insights into the entrepreneurial tendencies and intentions of the participants. This approach offers valuable information on how students perceive entrepreneurship as a potential career path in the face of rising unemployment. The study aims to achieve several objectives: first, to identify the impact of family business on entrepreneurial intention; second, to assess students' perceptions regarding the influence of education on their entrepreneurial intent; third, to explore the risk-taking propensity of senior high school students in the Sunyani Municipality; fourth, to compare the entrepreneurial intentions of male and female students; and finally, to examine SHS students' overall orientation towards entrepreneurship. It is widely believed that the ideal time to acquire foundational knowledge about entrepreneurship and develop a positive attitude towards it is during childhood and adolescence. This study's findings suggest that entrepreneurial intention among SHS students in the Sunyani Municipality is generally high, indicating a strong interest in entrepreneurship among young students. This insight highlights the importance of fostering entrepreneurial education early on, as it can significantly influence future business creation and innovation.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Intention, Senior High School Students, Ghana

JEL Codes: L26, I25, J13

1. INTRODUCTION

Most policymakers and academics agree that entrepreneurship is essential for the development and well-being of society. Entrepreneurs generate employment, drive innovation, and play a crucial role in accelerating structural changes within the economy. By introducing new competition, they indirectly enhance productivity, making entrepreneurship a key catalyst for economic growth and national competitiveness (GEM 2010). Rooted in the Schumpeterian tradition, entrepreneurship has long been recognized as a driver of technological progress (Schumpeter 1934; Baumol 1986). In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on entrepreneurship as a powerful force for economic transformation. It is becoming increasingly evident that economic policy reforms in Ghana cannot succeed without robust efforts to strengthen entrepreneurial activity.

Ghana, a country endowed with rich natural resources, has recently attained lower middle-income status. The production of gold, timber, cocoa, and, more recently, crude oil provides significant foreign exchange. However, Ghana remains heavily dependent on international financial and technical assistance, a recurring theme in the country's Annual Budget statements. Despite this, entrepreneurship holds the potential to reduce this dependency by fostering local innovation and economic self-sufficiency. While considerable research has explored the factors influencing entrepreneurial propensity (Learned, 1992; Brandstatter, 1997; Amofah, 2006), there has been limited focus on entrepreneurial intent among students, particularly Senior High School (SHS) students. Given the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset early in life, this gap highlights the need for more research to understand how education, family business exposure, and societal factors influence entrepreneurial intentions in younger populations. Ghana currently finds itself at a crossroads, as graduate unemployment has become a significant burden for both school leavers and the government. This persistent issue has exacerbated the already high levels of dependency, creating socio-economic challenges that have far-reaching impacts. Many believe that entrepreneurship is the most effective solution to this problem, offering a path toward

^a Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana, Ghana

economic self-sufficiency and reducing reliance on formal employment sectors. In this context, Ghana's prosperity hinges on the development of a dynamic and thriving entrepreneurial sector.

The idea that early exposure to entrepreneurial principles can shape future success resonates strongly with the biblical adage, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Instilling entrepreneurial values and skills at a young age could lay the foundation for a new generation of innovators and job creators who can drive economic growth and address the country's unemployment crisis. This underscores the critical importance of fostering entrepreneurial mindsets in students, equipping them with the tools to become the engines of Ghana's future prosperity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Bird (1988), intention models that focus on attitudes and their antecedents have been proposed as a means of better understanding the entrepreneurial process. These models emphasize the role of attitudes in shaping entrepreneurial intentions, and several personal variables—such as age, gender, education, vicarious experience, and experiences of change—have been linked to attitudes that influence conviction and entrepreneurial intent (Davidson, 1995, Amofah, 2006). The development of entrepreneurship in primary and secondary schools has gained increasing attention (Kourilsky, 1995), largely because students have shown a strong desire to engage in entrepreneurship education programs. It is widely believed that childhood and adolescence are the ideal stages to acquire basic knowledge about entrepreneurship and to cultivate a positive attitude toward entrepreneurial ventures (Filion, 1994). The recognition that starting a business is an intentional act is particularly relevant to this study. Intention models provide a framework for better understanding and predicting entrepreneurial activity, offering insights into how educational programs can nurture entrepreneurial mindsets. By incorporating these models, the study can more effectively explore how early exposure to entrepreneurship influences students' future business endeavors and contributes to the broader goal of fostering a culture of innovation and self-sufficiency.

Intentions are a reliable predictor of action, as noted by Bagozzi et al. (1989), even when there are significant delays due to life events such as marriage, childbearing, finishing school, or starting a rewarding job. A strong entrepreneurial intention often leads to an eventual attempt to start a business, regardless of such delays. Therefore, if entrepreneurial intentions are identified early, structures and support systems can be put in place to help individuals realize their entrepreneurial dreams. Understanding intentions also helps researchers and theoreticians better grasp related phenomena, such as what triggers the scanning of opportunities, where ideas for new business ventures come from, and how these ventures ultimately come to fruition. Intention models provide valuable insights into how entrepreneurial training can shape intentions, which may later lead to the creation of new ventures. By promoting entrepreneurial intentions and fostering a public perception of both the feasibility and desirability of entrepreneurship, societies can significantly increase entrepreneurial activity.

In less developed countries, the encouragement of entrepreneurial activities is frequently recommended as a strategy to stimulate economic growth (Harper, 1991). As a result, many governments in Asian and Latin American countries, as well as in the transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe, have instituted national incentive and education programs designed to stimulate new venture development (Gibb, 1993). Ghana, too, stands to benefit from learning from these economies and implementing similar programs that nurture entrepreneurial intentions and support venture creation. By doing so, the country could better address its unemployment challenges and foster sustainable economic growth through entrepreneurship.

3. METHODOLOGY

The Brong Ahafo Region, originally part of the Ashanti Region, was established in April 1959. It covers an area of 39,557 square kilometers and shares borders with the Northern Region to the north, the Ashanti and Western Regions to the south, the Volta Region to the east, the Eastern Region to the southeast, and La Cote d'Ivoire to the west. The region comprises 22 administrative districts, with Sunyani serving as the regional capital. Within the Sunyani municipality, there are 8 Senior High Schools (SHS) and 2 vocational and technical institutions, with an estimated student population of around 7,000 across the SHS institutions. A reconnaissance tour was conducted among the 8 SHS institutions in the Sunyani municipality, and 4 were randomly selected for the study. A descriptive approach was used to thoroughly analyze and present the results of the research. The stratified sampling technique was employed to group the institutions into mixed-gender and single-sex categories, ensuring representation from different types of schools within the municipality. The students from the four selected institutions formed the sampling unit for the study, while the target population included students from all 8 institutions in the Sunyani municipality. The survey population was derived from a list of institutions in the Brong Ahafo region, obtained from the Ghana Education Service. This list served as the sampling frame from which the study population was selected, ensuring a comprehensive and representative sample for the research.

The stratified sampling technique was employed to determine the sample size due to the population consisting of various subgroups with differing characteristics. To ensure an adequate and representative sample, a multi-stage sampling procedure was utilized. In the first stage, the institutions were categorized into mixed and single-sex schools using the stratified sampling technique. In the second stage, two mixed and two single-sex institutions were randomly selected from the sampling frame. The third stage involved the random selection of students from each of the chosen institutions. The total population for the four selected institutions was as follows: Twene Amanfo SHS with 1,500 students, Sunyani Senior High School (SUSEC) with 1,943 students, St. James Seminary with 750 students, and Notre Dame Girls SHS with 579 students. From this total population of 4,772 students, a sample size of 499 respondents was purposefully selected to

gather relevant information for the study. The breakdown of the sample was as follows: 105 students from Twene Amanfo SHS, 188 students from Sunyani Senior High School, 108 students from St. James Seminary, and 98 students from Notre Dame Girls SHS. This selection ensured that the sample was representative of the population, allowing for meaningful data collection and analysis.

A questionnaire was the sole tool used for data collection in this study. Its design was informed by a thorough theoretical review of entrepreneurial intention models and theories. The questionnaire was pre-tested to assess respondents' attitudes and behaviors toward the structure and wording of the questions. This pre-testing also helped determine whether the questionnaire items would elicit the necessary responses effectively. An often-overlooked aspect of research ethics is securing access to research sites. In Ghana, institutions have specific regulations governing research activities and the release of information to external parties. Therefore, permission to conduct the study was formally sought from the school authorities, and approval was granted. To maintain confidentiality and ensure that responses were independent and free from peer influence, the authors personally supervised the administration of the questionnaire. This approach helped prevent participants from feeling uncomfortable about sharing information or being influenced by their peers' answers. Field editing was conducted by the authors during the data collection process to ensure that all questions were answered completely and clearly marked. This thorough supervision and editing helped improve the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. The questionnaire method was chosen for data collection because the respondents, being students, were literate and able to read, understand, and respond to the questions accurately. Hand-delivering the questionnaires ensured that the intended respondents received them and filled them out properly. This approach also provided respondents with a sense of privacy and increased confidence in answering the questions truthfully and without external influence. After the questionnaires were collected, the data processing phase began, which involved editing and data entry. The items on the questionnaire were coded after office editing, and the data were entered into the SPSS for Windows software. Once the data entry was completed, computer editing was conducted to ensure the accuracy of the data. Given the nominal nature of the variables, descriptive analysis was employed as the primary tool for data interpretation. The results were presented using absolute figures of respondents, with corresponding percentages provided in brackets to facilitate a clear understanding of the data. This method of presentation allowed for a straightforward interpretation of the respondents' answers, ensuring clarity in the communication of the study's findings.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 shows the breakdown and the distribution of respondents by Institutions, departments, programme, year, gender and position. The table did not show the breakdown of respondents by age group because the average age was 18 years.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Male	293	58.7
Female	206	41.3
Total	499	100.0
INSTITUTION		
Twene Amanfo	105	21.0
SUSEC	188	37.7
Saint James Seminary	108	21.6
Notre Dame Girls SHS	98	19.6
Total	499	100.0
PROGRAMME		
Science	115	23.0
Visual Arts	27	5.4
Business	146	29.3
Home Economics	40	8.0
VOTEC	31	6.2
General Arts	118	23.6
Agric	22	4.4
Total	499	100.0
YEAR		
2	104	20.8
3	89	17.8
4	306	61.3
Total	499	100.0
POSITION		
Prefects	253	50.7
Non-Prefects	246	49.3
Total	499	100.0

This table 1 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, offering a breakdown by gender, institution, program of study, year of study, and position (prefect or non-prefect). In terms of gender, the respondents are

predominantly male, although females also make up a significant portion of the sample. The balance of male and female participants provides a fairly even gender representation in the survey. Looking at the respondents by institution, the majority come from SUSEC, followed by Saint James Seminary, Twene Amanfo, and Notre Dame Girls SHS. This spread indicates that the respondents are drawn from a variety of educational institutions, though with a slightly larger representation from SUSEC. When examining the programs of study, the largest group of respondents is enrolled in Business, followed by those studying General Arts and Science. Smaller numbers are enrolled in Visual Arts, Home Economics, VOTEC, and Agriculture. This distribution suggests a diverse set of academic interests among the respondents, with a concentration in Business and General Arts. In terms of year of study, most of the respondents are in their fourth year, while smaller proportions are in their second and third years. This indicates that the majority of respondents are in the later stages of their education. Finally, when looking at positions held within the schools, the respondents are almost evenly split between those who serve as prefects and those who do not. Prefects, representing student leaders, make up a slightly larger portion of the sample. Overall, this demographic breakdown reflects a diverse group of respondents in terms of gender, institution, academic program, year of study, and leadership roles, which helps to provide a well-rounded view of the surveyed population.

This table 2 illustrates respondents' perceptions of control over their lives, measured through various statements related to the concept of locus of control. The responses are categorized into three groups: disagree, uncertain, and agree, and are broken down by gender (male and female) for each statement. For the first statement, "Whether or not I am successful in life depends mostly on my ability," the majority of both male and female respondents agree, indicating a shared belief that success is primarily determined by personal ability. A small percentage of respondents are uncertain or disagree, with no significant difference between genders. When asked whether "what happens in life is mostly determined by people in powerful positions," most respondents, particularly males, disagreed, suggesting a sense of autonomy over life events. However, a notable portion of both males and females were uncertain or agreed, indicating that some respondents believe external forces or authority figures have a strong influence on their lives.

On the statement that "success depends on being lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time," about half of both males and females agreed, while a third disagreed. This suggests that many respondents believe luck plays a significant role in success, though a sizeable portion attribute success to other factors. For the statement that life is controlled by "accidental happenings," the majority of both genders disagreed, showing that most respondents do not feel that chance governs their lives. However, a smaller proportion were either uncertain or agreed, indicating that some feel external forces or randomness play a role. Regarding the idea that getting what they want is "usually because they are lucky," male respondents were more likely to disagree, while females were more evenly split between agreeing and disagreeing. This shows a gender difference in perceptions of luck's role in achieving goals. Both males and females overwhelmingly agreed that their "life is determined by their own actions," indicating a strong sense of personal control and responsibility over their outcomes. This belief in self-determination is consistent across genders.

In response to the statement that success is usually due to "working hard for it," a large majority of both males and females agreed, underscoring a belief in the value of effort and perseverance in achieving goals. When asked whether they "feel in control of their lives," a majority of respondents agreed, though a notable portion expressed uncertainty or disagreement. This suggests that while many feel in control, there is still a significant number who may experience doubt or lack confidence in their ability to shape their future. Regarding the statement "success in business is mostly a matter of luck," more than half of the respondents disagreed, indicating that they do not believe luck is the primary factor in business success. However, a smaller proportion, particularly females, were more likely to agree, showing some variation in opinions. Finally, when asked if it is unwise to plan too far ahead due to the risk of bad fortune, the majority of respondents, particularly females, disagreed. This shows that most do not view life as being governed by unpredictable misfortune, although a smaller percentage expressed caution about long-term planning due to concerns about luck or bad fortune. Most respondents, regardless of gender, tend to believe that success and control in life are largely determined by personal ability, effort, and actions, though some acknowledge the role of luck and external forces in certain situations. Gender differences emerge in areas related to perceptions of luck and planning for the future.

The majority of respondents, 353 (70.7%), perceived an entrepreneur to be someone who owns a small business, while 36 (7.2%) viewed an entrepreneur as a manager of a large corporation. A smaller group, 7 (1.4%), considered a government official running a regulatory agency to be an entrepreneur, and 63 (12.6%) believed an entrepreneur could be some or a combination of all of these roles. A further 40 (8%) responded that none of these descriptions fit their idea of an entrepreneur. Regarding the motivations of entrepreneurs, 340 (68.1%) of respondents were of the opinion that money is the primary motivator for entrepreneurs. While financial gain is seen as a key driver, respondents also recognized that the most important aspect of business is the idea behind it. Ideas lead to the creation of products, and it is through the sale of these goods that entrepreneurs generate profit. Walstad (1998) emphasizes the significant role of entrepreneurship education in helping young people develop an entrepreneurial mindset. Many researchers and commentators have argued that the "nature versus nurture" debate surrounding entrepreneurship is resolved, with consensus now leaning towards the belief that entrepreneurship can be learned as a set of competencies (Bolton and Thompson, 2004). This shift poses new challenges for individuals aiming to follow their entrepreneurial aspirations, as well as for educational stakeholders who must provide the necessary support.

It is encouraging to note that a large majority, 91.0%, of respondents believed that entrepreneurship can be developed through education. Furthermore, 65.3% of respondents indicated that their schools offered lessons on entrepreneurship, underscoring the growing emphasis on entrepreneurial education (see Table 4). This highlights the importance of integrating entrepreneurship into school curricula to foster a culture of innovation and self-sufficiency among students.

The study found that the inclination towards entrepreneurship differed between students from single-sex schools and those from mixed-sex schools, with a stronger entrepreneurial intent observed among students from single-sex schools.

Table 2: Locus of Control Scale

	1. Whether or not I am successful in life depends mostly on my ability				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	48 (16.4%)	36 (12.3%)	209 (71.3%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	27 (13.1%)	31 (15.0%)	148 (71.8%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	75 (15.0%)	67 (13.4%)	357 (71.5%)		499 (100.0%)
	2. I feel that what happens in my life is mostly determined by people in powerful positions				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	162 (55.3%)	63 (21.5%)	68 (23.2%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	128 (62.1%)	40 (19.4%)	38 (18.4%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	75 (15.0%)	67 (13.4%)	357 (71.5%)		499 (100.0%)
	3. My success depends on whether I am lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	94 (32.1%)	50 (17.1%)	149 (50.9%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	72 (35.0%)	38 (18.4%)	96 (46.6%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	166 (33.3%)	88 (17.6%)	245 (49.1%)		499 (100.0%)
	4. To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	163 (55.6%)	82 (28.0%)	48 (16.4%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	119 (57.8%)	54 (26.2%)	33 (16.0%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	282 (56.5%)	136 (27.3%)	81 (16.2%)		499 (100.0%)
	5. When I get what I want, it is usually because I am lucky				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	158 (53.9%)	56 (19.1%)	79 (27.0%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	84 (40.8%)	41 (19.9%)	81 (39.3%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	242 (48.5%)	97 (19.4%)	160 (32.1%)		499 (100.0%)
	6. My life is determined by my own actions				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	30 (10.2%)	23 (7.8%)	240 (81.9%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	20 (9.7%)	17 (8.3%)	169 (82.0%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	50 (10.0%)	40 (8.0%)	409 (82.0%)		499 (100.0%)
	7. When I get what I want, it is usually because I worked hard for it				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	44 (15.0%)	38 (13.0%)	211 (72.0%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	32 (15.5%)	24 (11.7%)	150 (72.8%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	76 (15.2%)	62 (12.4%)	361 (72.3%)		499 (100.0%)
	8. I feel in control of my life				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	58 (19.8%)	58 (19.8%)	177 (60.4%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	52 (25.2%)	43 (20.9%)	111 (53.9%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	110 (22.0%)	101 (20.2%)	288 (57.7%)		499 (100.0%)
	9. Success in business is mostly a matter of luck				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	158 (53.9%)	72 (24.6%)	63 (21.5%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	104 (50.5%)	43 (20.9%)	59 (28.6%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	262 (52.5%)	115 (23.0%)	122 (24.4%)		499 (100.0%)
	10. It is not wise for me to plan too far ahead, because things turn out to be a matter of bad fortune				
	Disagree		Uncertain	Agree	Total
Male	173 (59.0%)	57 (19.5%)	63 (21.5%)		293 (100.0%)
Female	131 (63.6%)	39 (18.9%)	36 (17.5%)		206 (100.0%)
Total	304 (60.9%)	96 (19.2%)	99 (19.8%)		499 (100.0%)

A test was conducted to determine which group would be more willing to take the risk of starting their own business. The results indicated that single-sex school students were more likely to venture into business compared to those from mixed schools. At a 5% significance level and with 3 degrees of freedom, the data supported the hypothesis, showing a significance level of 0.1, which is greater than the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that students from single-sex schools demonstrate a greater willingness to take entrepreneurial risks, a characteristic that is considered essential in

entrepreneurial education and behavior. However, it is important to note that risk-taking propensity, while central to understanding entrepreneurial behavior, does not necessarily distinguish between successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs (Brockhaus, 1980).

The study also explored the relationship between student leadership and entrepreneurial intent. The data, based on frequency, indicated that most student leaders expressed a desire to take on entrepreneurial initiatives after completing school. A chi-square test conducted at a 5% significance level, with 2 degrees of freedom, confirmed a correlation between student leadership roles and entrepreneurial intent. The computed significance level of 0.66 supported the hypothesis that prefects and other student leaders in Senior High Schools (SHS) are more likely to pursue entrepreneurial ventures compared to their peers who did not take up leadership positions. Furthermore, the study examined the relationship between entrepreneurial acumen and family business background using a chi-square test at 4 degrees of freedom and a 5% significance level. The test results indicated that if the computed p-value is greater than the significance threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis would be supported. In this case, the computed p-value was 0.13, which is higher than the 0.05 significance level. This supports the hypothesis that students whose families own businesses are more inclined to pursue entrepreneurship compared to those whose families do not own businesses. Previous research has shown that family background, particularly having self-employed parents, can significantly influence entrepreneurial propensity in their children (Cooper and Dunkleburg, 1987; Davidsson, 1995). Growing up in a family business environment provides formative experiences that can shape children's perceptions of entrepreneurship and influence their career aspirations (Katz, 1992).

A chi-square test was conducted to examine the relationship between gender and entrepreneurial insight, using 3 degrees of freedom and a 5% significance level. The results revealed a significant relationship between gender and the respondents' aspirations to become entrepreneurs. The p-value of 0.13 (Table 9), being greater than 0.05, supports the hypothesis that male SHS students are more inclined toward entrepreneurship compared to their female counterparts. This suggests that male students are more willing to venture into new businesses and take entrepreneurial risks than females. The results align with findings from a study by Amofah (2006), which also indicated that male students tend to exhibit higher entrepreneurial intentions and are more likely to be risk-takers compared to female students.

Additionally, a further test on the willingness to start a new business reinforced the idea that male students in SHS are more likely to pursue entrepreneurial ventures than their female peers. This observation is consistent with the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2010), which reports that in Ghana, the ratio of women's participation in entrepreneurship relative to men is approximately 120:100. While women participate significantly in entrepreneurship, the study suggests a stronger predisposition among male students to engage in entrepreneurial activities. The personality trait theory (Kristiansen and Indarti, 2004) offers an explanation for this predisposition by suggesting that individuals with a high need for achievement are more likely to behave entrepreneurially (McClelland, 1961). Traits such as being forward-looking, self-sufficient, optimistic, task-oriented, results-driven, energetic, self-confident, persistent, and determined are associated with entrepreneurial behavior. As shown in Table 5, the SHS students in this study exhibited many of these qualities, indicating a strong potential for entrepreneurial success among them. These traits, coupled with the observed gender differences in entrepreneurial intent, suggest that targeted support for both male and female students could further enhance entrepreneurial outcomes in the future.

According to Hisrich and Peters (1998), locus of control refers to the sense of control individuals feel they have over their lives. People with an internal locus of control tend to be more achievement-oriented than those with an external locus of control. To assess the extent to which respondents believed their success or failure was contingent on their personal actions, a ten-item scale adapted from Rotter (1996) was used. This scale provided three structured choices: "Agree," "Neither Agree nor Disagree," and "Disagree." Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. The study findings (see Table 2) showed that respondents scored positively on this scale, suggesting they demonstrated traits associated with an internal locus of control. These traits include taking advantage of opportunities, discounting fate, creating their own luck, being self-confident, believing in their ability to control their own destiny, equating results with effort, and showing significant determination. The responses were color-coded, with red indicating a negative (wrong) response and blue representing a positive (right) response, providing clear insights into the respondents' tendencies toward internal control. Innovation is a key characteristic of successful entrepreneurs (McClelland, 1987). To measure the degree of innovativeness among respondents, a seven-item scale adapted from the Jackson Personality Inventory (Jackson, 1994) was employed. Respondents were again asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with various statements. This helped gauge their propensity for innovation, an essential trait for entrepreneurial success. The results provide an important understanding of how these SHS students perceive control over their achievements and their level of innovativeness, both of which are critical elements in fostering entrepreneurial potential.

5. CONCLUSION

The research findings are not only interesting but also revealing and promising, offering valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders alike. These results provide a deeper understanding of the factors that influence entrepreneurial intent and behavior, such as gender differences, the impact of family business background, and the role of education in shaping entrepreneurial attitudes. The positive correlation between leadership roles, risk-taking propensity, and entrepreneurial intention also offers an encouraging outlook for fostering entrepreneurship among students. These findings carry several implications. For policymakers, the research underscores the importance of promoting entrepreneurship education at an early stage, as it can significantly influence students' future career paths.

Tailored educational programs that nurture entrepreneurial skills and traits, such as innovation and an internal locus of control, can equip the younger generation with the tools necessary to drive economic growth. For stakeholders in the educational sector, the study highlights the need to ensure that both male and female students are equally encouraged and supported in their entrepreneurial pursuits. The observed gender differences in entrepreneurial intent suggest the necessity for targeted interventions that empower female students to develop entrepreneurial mindsets. Additionally, fostering leadership opportunities within schools may serve as a catalyst for entrepreneurial development, as students with leadership experience show a higher inclination toward entrepreneurship. These findings provide essential "food for thought" for anyone involved in shaping the future of entrepreneurship in Ghana. By addressing the identified gaps and building on the strengths observed in this research, policymakers and educators can help create a more entrepreneurial society. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the overall entrepreneurial intention among Senior High School (SHS) students in the Sunyani municipality is high and encouraging. This suggests a strong potential for fostering entrepreneurship among the youth in this region. However, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial intent, further studies are recommended. Future research could explore additional variables, such as the impact of family income on entrepreneurial intention, to see how financial background influences students' entrepreneurial aspirations. Additionally, including students from vocational and technical institutions in the study could provide valuable insights, as these students may have different perspectives or levels of readiness for entrepreneurship compared to those in traditional SHS programs. Another important area for future research is investigating the role teachers can play in stimulating entrepreneurial intention among SHS students. Understanding how educators can encourage and nurture entrepreneurial mindsets within the classroom would be beneficial for designing more effective entrepreneurship education programs.

By addressing these variables, future studies could offer deeper insights into the factors shaping entrepreneurial intent, leading to more tailored interventions and support systems for students aspiring to become entrepreneurs. There is a clear need to incorporate entrepreneurship into the educational curriculum of Senior High Schools (SHS) in Ghana. The study revealed that many students have a limited understanding of who an entrepreneur is, as evidenced by the fact that 70.7% of respondents viewed an entrepreneur simply as someone who owns a small business. This narrow perception highlights the importance of broadening students' knowledge of entrepreneurship to include its various dimensions, such as innovation, risk-taking, and leadership in both small and large enterprises. By integrating entrepreneurship education into the curriculum, students can be enlightened about the full scope of what it means to be an entrepreneur. This would help them understand that entrepreneurship is not limited to small business ownership but also encompasses innovation, strategic thinking, and value creation in a wide range of sectors. Such education could empower students to view entrepreneurship as a viable career path and equip them with the necessary skills and mindset to succeed in entrepreneurial endeavors.

Incorporating entrepreneurship into the curriculum would also provide practical knowledge and foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills—key attributes that are essential for future entrepreneurs. The empowerment of the girl-child must be intensified to ensure they reach the same level of entrepreneurial development as their male counterparts, aligning with the objectives of Millennium Development Goal 3, which promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women. The study's findings suggest that male students tend to exhibit higher entrepreneurial intentions than females, underscoring the need for targeted efforts to encourage and support girls in pursuing entrepreneurial ambitions. One key approach to achieving this is through the introduction of role models and mentors for students. Role models can play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between theory and practice, showing young girls that entrepreneurship is not only attainable but also a path to success. Exposure to successful female entrepreneurs and leaders can inspire girls to develop confidence in their abilities and pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Institutional heads and other stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and community leaders, can contribute significantly to this effort by creating opportunities for mentorship programs, workshops, and entrepreneurial activities specifically aimed at empowering female students. By fostering a supportive environment and providing the necessary resources and guidance, these stakeholders can help bridge the gender gap in entrepreneurship, ensuring that girls have equal opportunities to succeed and contribute to economic growth.

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