

# Factors influencing the youth at a selected township in Gauteng Province to start businesses.

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## Keywords

Attitude Towards Behaviour;

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Instrumental Readiness;

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## Abstract

There are many young individuals in Sebokeng township in the Southern Region of Gauteng Province who are not working. Some of these young people have lost hope of being employed anytime soon. According to Statistics South Africa, the youth unemployment rate is currently at an alarming 45,5 per cent. The most probable solution to this problem is having them trained to start their own businesses. This prompted the undertaking of this study to determine the influence that Instrumental Readiness (IR), Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) and Attitude Towards Behaviour (ATB) might have on the Entrepreneurial Intentions of the youth in this township. The study followed a quantitative research approach using a purposive sampling method. The sample size was pegged at 150, but only 118 usable questionnaires were analysed. To analyse data, the SmartPLS version 4 was utilised. The analyses performed for this study were descriptive, correlations and path model analysis. The results revealed that only ATB significantly influences the EI of the youth, with IR having influence on the ESE. The ESE, in turn, had a significant influence on the ATB. In terms of managerial implications, the study provided insights into which factors are significant for the authorities to focus on in trying to help the youth become entrepreneurial.

## 1. Introduction

Sebokeng Township is one of the townships in the Southern Region of Gauteng Province. In this township, there are many young individuals who are unemployed and not engaged in any form of entrepreneurial activities. Some of these young people have no hope of getting employed soon. If these youth could get training in entrepreneurship, they could rescue themselves from this challenging

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monster of unemployment. This observation prompted the researcher to conduct the study to determine the influence of the factors identified in this study on the entrepreneurial intentions of these youths.

This paper first provides the background of the study, followed by the problem statement. Thereafter, the objectives of the study are presented,, followed by a literature review of the factors investigated in the study. The research methodology employed in this study is then discussed. The results of this study are presented with the path model used to evaluate the hypotheses formulated for the study. The study concludes by providing the managerial implications of the study, the conclusion, and future research.

## **1.1. Background**

Entrepreneurship is crucial for any country, for the well-being of its citizens, and for economic growth, as it is one of the major instruments by which authorities try to combat the unemployment rate. Despite its importance, there is no generally accepted definition for entrepreneurship yet (Steenkamp, Van Der Merwe & Athayde, 2011; Nieuwenhuizen, 2014; Vosloo, Vosloo & Antonites, 2018). Nonetheless, the most appropriate definition considered in this study is that entrepreneurship is “the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence” (Urban, 2015). Well-being can be explained from both the hedonic and eudaimonic approaches. From a hedonic approach, well-being is defined in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2015), while from a eudaimonic approach, it is a derivative of personal fulfilment and expressiveness (Wiklund, Nikolaev, Shir, Foo & Bradley, 2019). Economic growth, on the other hand, is regarded as the growth of a country's real production over a certain period (Dragoi, 2020). The aforementioned phenomena can be achieved through entrepreneurship.

To keep entrepreneurship active for the long-term, as the older generation wanes, the new generation should come in and continue with the same. This cycle will ensure that entrepreneurship is sustainable over time. It is, therefore, crucial to determine the willingness of the youth to participate in entrepreneurship and the factors that might influence it. This will enable the authorities to develop strategies that could ignite such, should there be some indication of sluggishness in that area. Inactiveness of a country in entrepreneurship might have profound implications on its economic growth. Based on these insights, the South African government developed the Youth Enterprise Development Strategy (YEDS) 2013 – 2023 with the main objective of helping youth to establish their own businesses. In light of this, this study aims to investigate the influence that instrumental readiness (IR), entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) and attitude towards behaviour (ATB) have on the intentions of the youth to start businesses in Sebokeng township in Gauteng Province.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

Youth unemployment in South Africa has become a serious challenge that the authorities are grappling with in bringing solutions for. According to Statistics South Africa (2024), the youth unemployment rate stood at 45,5 per cent in the first quarter of 2024. This is in line with the opinion of Akileswaran, Mazumdar and Albertos (2023), who postulate that in developing countries, there are simply inadequate jobs for all the youth entering the labour market every year. This problem can thus be addressed through entrepreneurship.

At the selected township, the researcher noticed a large population of youth roaming the streets, and this prompted an interest in investigating the extent to which these young individuals are interested in starting businesses. Some of these youths are on the verge of giving up on seeking employment and are also not participative in any form of entrepreneurial activities.

## **1.3. Research objectives**

The primary objective of this study is to determine the influence that IR, ESE and ATB have on the EI of the youth in Sebokeng township in Gauteng Province. To achieve this, secondary objectives, which comprise the theoretical and empirical objectives, have been determined.

### **1.3.1 Theoretical objectives**

The theoretical objectives were formulated to aid in achieving the primary objective of the study and are as follows:

- To explore and analyse literature on IR, ESE and ATB.
- To review the literature on EI.

### **1.3.2 Empirical objectives**

The empirical objectives were formulated to aid in achieving the primary objective of the study and are as follows:

- To assess the perception of the youth on IR, ESE, ATB and EI.
- To assess the effectiveness of IR on ESE, ATB and EI.
- To examine the influence of ESE on ATB and EI.
- To investigate the impact of ATB on EI.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Instrumental Readiness**

Environmental factors such as access to capital, information and social networks is considered to have a direct impact on EI (Mat, Maat & Mohd, 2015a; Darmanto, & Yuliari, 2018). These three factors

are known as “instrumental readiness” (Mat et al. 2015b; Nabil, 2020; Al-Qadasi, Zhang, Al-Awlaqi, Alshebami & Aamer, 2023.). Capital refers mainly to financing the new venture, which could be by the entrepreneur’s savings or other peoples’ money (Bezuidenhout, 2014; Venter, 2015). Financial capital is one of the fundamental resources required for a new venture to form and operate (Cassar, 2004; Qadasi et al., 2023). The second element, information, refers to data endowed with meaning, relevance and purpose (Van der Walt & Fox, 2015). It is only through information that people make sound decisions (Child, Ihriq & Merali, 2014). Social networks are individuals’ abilities to develop and maintain relationships with potential instrumental altars (Kim, 2013). According to Martinez and Aldrich (2011), the social networks entrepreneurs create enable them to identify business opportunities and establish innovative ventures. Fernandez-Perez, Alonso-Galicia, Fuentes-Fuentes and Rodriguez-Ariza (2013) argue that social networks consist of actors that could be individuals or organisations, and the relationships between these actors provide important channels for the acquisition of important information. Fernandez-Perez et al. (2011) further mention that social networks as information providers can trigger business interest.

## **2.2. Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy**

ESE is a factor that is perceived as critical for emerging entrepreneurship (Brändle, Berger, Golla & Kuckertz, 2018). ESE addresses whether prospective entrepreneurs see themselves as having the capacity to adequately respond to particular challenges brought by the envisaged entrepreneurial venture (Brändle et al., 2018). Several previous studies have found a positive relationship between ESE and intentions to start a business (for instance: Zhao, Hills & Seibert, 2005; Wei, Chen, Zhang & Zhang, 2020; Saoula, Shamim, Ahmad & Abid, 2023 ;Ferreira-Neto, de Carvalho Castro, de Sousa-Filho & de Souza Lessa, 2023). Zhao et al. (2005) thus defined ESE as the confidence in one’s ability to perform entrepreneurial roles and tasks successfully. Several studies have found a positive link between ESE and the intentions to start new businesses (Piperopoulos & Dimov, 2015; Newman, Obschonka, Schwarz, Cohen & Nielsen, 2019; Nowiński, Haddoud, Lančarič, Egerová & Czeglédi, 2019).

## **2.3. Attitude Towards Behaviour**

An attitude can be defined as a “psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Esfandiara, Sharifi-Tehrani, Pratt & Altinayd, 2019; Fishman, Yang & Mandell, 2021). There are several conceptual models used in an attempt to understand “attitude”. Maio and Haddock (2009) assert that the most influential attitude model is that of Zanna and Rempel (1988). According to their multicomponent attitude model, attitudes are a summary of evaluations of an object with cognitive, affective and behavioural components (Hewstone, Stroebe & Jonas, 2015; Nazirova & Borbala, 2024). Esfandiara et al. (2019) argue that the global measure of attitude towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial

activities reflects people's beliefs of how desirable or undesirable entrepreneurship outcomes can be. Shook and Bratianu (2010) postulate that if the outcomes of a behaviour are largely desirable, then the intent to perform the behaviour becomes stronger. In this regard, if the perceived outcomes of starting a business are largely desirable, then EIs will become stronger.

## **2.4. Entrepreneurial Intention**

EIs can be defined as the state of mind directing a person towards the involvement in or the intention to start a business venture as opposed to organisational employment (Souitaris Zerbinati & Al-Laham, 2007; Nabi, Holden & Walmsley, 2010; Sesen, 2013:626). EI is consequently seen as a rational process that intends to implement a business plan (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007; Sesen, 2013; Dao, Bui, Doan, Dao, Le & Le, 2021). It is the first step in a sustained long-term process of starting a new business venture, thus making it central to understanding entrepreneurship (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007). Understanding the influence of behavioural and psychological factors of EIs increases our understanding of intended entrepreneurial behaviour (McStay, 2008; Nabil, 2020). Hence this study explores the influence of IR, ESE and ATB on the EI of the youth in Sebokeng to start businesses.

## **3. Research Methodology**

The study followed a quantitative research approach. The rationale behind adopting this approach is its suitability in examining the relationships between different variables (Maree & Pietersen, 2016). The quantitative research approach is the research that explains phenomena according to numerical data from a selected research unit, which can then be analysed through mathematically based methods (Yilmaz, 2013; Maree & Pietersen, 2016). In terms of the sampling method employed in the study, the purposive sampling method, which falls under the non-probability sampling methods, was followed. This was due to the unavailability of the sampling frame. To minimise the sampling biases inherent to the purposive sampling method, the data were collected in various sections of the township. This helped to capture ideas from the respondents' varying backgrounds. To analyse the data collected, SmartPLS version 4 was utilised. Due to the capability of the data analysis package used to properly analyse even small sample sizes, the researcher set the sample size at 150 (n=150). Out of the 150 questionnaires issued for data collection, only 118 were usable. The rest had a lot of information that was missing.

### **3.1. Hypotheses**

Based on the literature review in Section 2, the following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant positive relationship between IR and ESE.
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is significant positive relationship between ESE and EI.

- H<sub>3</sub>: There is significant positive relationship between ESE and ATB.
- H<sub>4</sub>: There is significant positive relationship between IR and ATB
- H<sub>5</sub>: There is significant positive relationship between IR and EI
- H<sub>6</sub>: There is significant positive relationship between ATB and EI

### 3.2. Ethics

According to Creswell (2014), ethical issues that need to be considered when conducting a quantitative research study could be protecting the anonymity of the participants, getting permission to collect the data, no disruption on-site operations and communicating the main purpose of the study. To adhere to these guidelines, the researcher attached a letter to the questionnaire indicating the study's main purpose. The letter also assured the respondents that their anonymity would be maintained and protected. It also indicated that the respondents have the right to withdraw at any given time should they wish. Since the participants were individuals from the community, permissions were thus only requested from the participants or parents in a case of a minor. The letter had to be signed as proof that permission had been provided.

### 3.3. Measuring instrument

The measuring instrument utilised in this study comprised three sections. Section A gathered the demographic information of the respondents. It gathered information on the respondents' gender, age groups, races and highest qualifications. Section B was further divided into three sub-sections, with the first one measuring the Attitude Towards Behaviour (ATB) of the respondents comprising five items, but only four of the items were used since the first one had low factor loading and was deleted. The second sub-section measured the perception of the respondents on Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) and comprised twelve items. Nonetheless, only six items were used since the other six had low factor loadings that had to be discarded. The third sub-section measured the Instrumental Readiness information of the respondents comprising five items. Section C was the last section of the measuring instrument and comprised five items. All five were used to gather data on the respondents' intentions to start their businesses. The scale used to measure the data gathered was a Seven-point Likert scale with: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Somewhat agree, 6 = Agree and 7 = Strongly agree. Refer to Annexure 1 for the whole measuring instrument.

## 4. Results and Findings

The demographic profile of the youth who participated in the study is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
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Gender	Male	58	49.2
	Female	60	50.8
	Total	118	100
Age group	16-20 years	9	7.6
	21-24 years	14	11.9
	25-29 years	36	30.5
	30-34 years	59	50.0
	Total	118	100
Race	Black	117	99.2
	White	0	0
	Indian	0	0
	Coloured	1	0.8
	Total	118	100
Highest qualification	Grade 1-7	0	0.0
	Grade 8-12	85	72.0
	Diploma/Degree	29	24.6
	Other	4	3.4
	Total	118	100

**Source:** Own compilation

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents were black, constituting 99,2 per cent and only 0,8 per cent of the coloured group. Since the data were collected from a township, the results reflect an accurate picture of the composition of the population in the selected township. Regarding gender, females were slightly more than males since they constituted 50,8 per cent and males 49,2 per cent. Table 1 also shows that most of the youths available at the selected township to fill out the questionnaires were from 25 years to 34 years. In terms of qualification, most of these youth have a grade 12 as highest qualification.

**Table 2. Reliability, mean scores, average variance extracted and standard deviation of the measuring instrument**

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha coefficient	Mean	AVE	Standard deviation
Instrumental Readiness (IR)	0.839	4,26	0.591	1,838
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE)	0.850	5,25	0.571	1,359
Attitude Towards Behaviour (ATB)	0.846	5.79	0.686	1.340
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.939	5.69	0.804	1.536
Scale: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Somewhat agree, 6 = Agree and 7 = Strongly agree.				

**Source:** Own compilation

Table 2 shows the descriptive results of the study in terms of the assessment of the reliability and validity of the study, as well as the mean of the constructs, average variance extracted (AVE) and standard deviation. The table shows that all the constructs are reliable since they show values of Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) that are above 0.7. In terms of the respondents' perception regarding the importance of individual constructs, which were respondents' perceptions regarding the importance of individual constructs investigated in the study, the overall perception of IR took a neutral stance,

whereas on ESE, they somewhat agreed. Regarding the respondents' perceptions of ATB and EI, it shows that the youth's attitude towards starting business is high and also showed interest in starting businesses.

**Table 3. Correlation results**

Factors	IR	ESE	ATB	EI
IR	1.000			
ESE	0.432**	1.000		
ATB	0.421* *	0.702**	1.000	
EI	0.329**	0.532**	0.677**	1.000

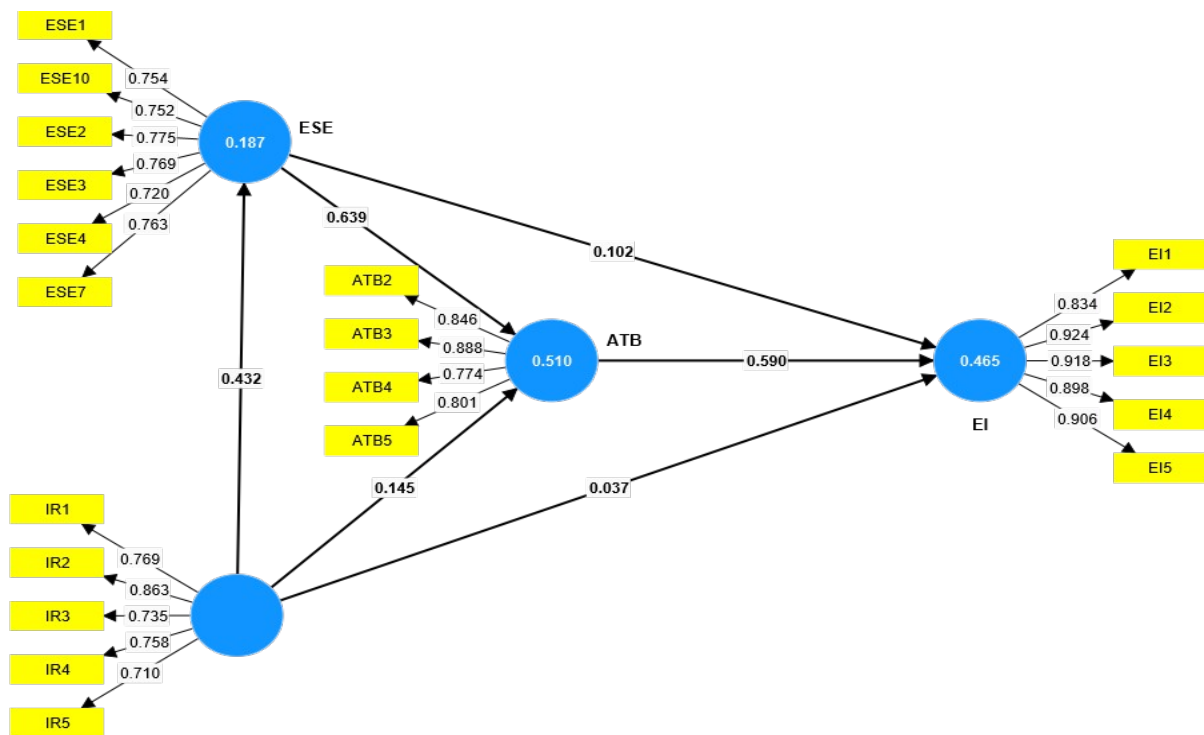
IR=instrumental readiness; ATB=attitude towards behaviour; ESE= entrepreneurial self-efficacy; EI=entrepreneurial intention

**Source:** Own compilation

Table 3 presents the Correlation analysis that was performed for this study. The interpretation of the correlation coefficient values was as follows: +1 and -1= perfect; +0.9 and -0.9 = strong; +0.8 and -0.8 = strong; +0.7 and -0.7 = strong; +0.6 and -0.6= moderate; +0.5 and -0.5= moderate; +0.4 and -0.4= moderate; +0.3 and -0.3= weak; +0.2 and -0.2= weak; +0.1 and -0.1= weak and 0=none (Akoglu, 2018). The values that are positive show that the association between the variables is positive, thus taking the same direction, whereas those that are negative show that the direction of the association would be opposite.

The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 3. The results show a positive and weak correlation between IR and EI ( $r=0.329$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). The results also show a moderate correlation between IR and ESE and IR and ATB with ( $r=0.432$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) and ( $r=0.421$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), respectively. There is also a moderate correlation between ESE and EI ( $r=0.532$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). A strong correlation exists between ESE and ATB of ( $r=0.702$ ;  $p=0.000$ ) and between ATB and EI of ( $r=0.677$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). These results indicate that should there be a change in any of the variables considered in the study, the associated variable will also change in accordance with the amount of impact shown on the results.





**Figure 1: Path Model Analysis**

Source: Own compilation

Figure 1 presents the path model analysis of the study. The analysis reveals that IR is a significant and positive predicting factor for ESE ( $\beta=0.432$ ;  $t=6.593$ ;  $p=0.000$ ). These results support hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>. In terms of the predictiveness of IR on EI ( $\beta=0.037$ ;  $t=0.608$ ;  $p=0.543$ ), IR has been proven to have no predictive power on EI, thus rejecting hypothesis H<sub>5</sub>. IR has also proven to be statistically insignificant in predicting ATB ( $\beta=0.145$ ;  $t=1.834$ ;  $p=0.067$ ), thus rejecting H<sub>4</sub>. Regarding ESE significance on EI, the results show that ESE is statistically insignificant in predicting EI with ( $\beta=0.102$ ;  $t=1.013$ ;  $p=0.311$ ), thus rejecting hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>. Furthermore, ESE has been proven to be statistically positively significant in predicting ATB with ( $\beta=0.639$ ;  $t=10.465$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), thus supporting H<sub>3</sub>. Lastly, ATB was shown to be statistically positively significant in predicting EI ( $\beta=0.590$ ;  $t=5.445$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), thus supporting H<sub>6</sub>.

## 5. Managerial Implications

The study provides theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study provides new information regarding which factors are more important in igniting the youth's entrepreneurial intentions in Sebokeng. The study further provides information to the authorities, guiding them as to what factors to focus on to help the youth engage in entrepreneurship. By so doing, the unemployment rate might be kept at low rates. This, in turn, will improve South Africans' standard of living and well-being.

## 6. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

The study focussed on determining the influence of the Instrumental Readiness (IR), Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy (ESE) and Attitude Towards Behaviour (ATB) on Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI). The study revealed that IR is only significant in influencing ESE. On the other hand, ESE was shown to be the only significant factor for ATB, which in turn is statistically significant in igniting the intentions (EI) of the youth to start businesses. This study also revealed that most of the youth who were readily available to participate in the study were between the ages of 24 and 34 years. Also, the study showed that the participants mostly possessed only a high school grade between grades 8 and 12. The limitations of this study could be outlined as follows: firstly, the study was only quantitative; a mixed methods approach would have provided more insights into the experiences of the youth regarding entrepreneurship at the township. Secondly, the study was conducted only in one township in the Southern Gauteng Province. This renders the results inconclusive, especially since the purposive sampling method was used to gather data. Lastly, many other factors were not considered in this study. Increasing the number of factors in determining the EI of the youth might provide a bigger and more precise picture of the actual intentions of the youth to start businesses.

Recommendation for future research is that research needs to add factors to determine the stance of the youth in starting businesses. Also, a mixed methods approach could be an ideal approach to gather data from the youth.

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## **Annexure 1**

### **Measuring instrument used**

## Section B: independent factors

This section requests your views regarding the influence of Attitude Towards Behaviour, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Instrumental Readiness on intentions to start your own business. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by ticking the corresponding number between 1 (Strongly disagree) and 7 (Strongly agree). A rating of (4) points towards a neutral view of the statement.

Independent factors		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
<b>Attitude Towards Behaviour</b>								
ATB1	A career as an entrepreneur is attractive to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ATB2	If I had the opportunity, I would start a business	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ATB3	If I had the resources, I would start a business	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ATB4	Being an entrepreneur would lead to great satisfaction for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ATB5	Among various options, I would rather be an entrepreneur	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy</b>								
ESE1	I have the ability to identify opportunities for new ways to conduct activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE2	I have the ability to be alert to proactively discovering new information of value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE3	I have the ability to determine a competitive price for a new product or service	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE4	I have the ability to get others to identify with and believe in my vision and plans for a new venture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE5	I have the ability to deal with sudden changes and surprises	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE6	I have the ability to manage the financial assets of my venture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE7	I have the ability to supervise employees and/or team members	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE8	I have the ability to make correct inferences from data	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE9	I have the ability to apply active listening skills to communicate with others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE10	I have the ability to generate and evaluate multiple alternatives for novel customer problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE11	I keep focused on tasks I need to do even if I do not like them	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ESE12	I make sure to track my progress regularly when I am working on a goal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Instrumental Readiness								
IR1	I have access to capital required to start ea business	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
IR2	I have access to supporting information to start to be an entrepreneur	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
IR3	I have good social networks that can be useful when I decide to be an entrepreneur	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
IR4	I have access to property that can be useful when I decide to be an entrepreneur	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
IR5	I have access to equipment that can be useful when I decide to be an entrepreneur	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Section c: Entrepreneurial Intentions

This section requests your views regarding your intentions of starting a business. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by ticking the corresponding number between 1 (Strongly disagree) and 7 (Strongly agree). A rating of (4) points towards a neutral view of the statement.

Entrepreneurial Intentions		Strongly agree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat	Agree	Strongly agree
EI1	My professional goal is to become an entrepreneur	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EI2	I have seriously thought of starting a business	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EI3	I am determined to create a business in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EI4	I will make every effort to run my own business	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EI5	I am ready to do anything to be an entrepreneur	1	2	3	4	5	6	7