

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL SUPPORT AS PREDICTORS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AMONG WOMEN IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated emotional intelligence and perceived social support as predictors of social entrepreneurial intentions among women in South East, Nigeria. 309 women were chosen from the five states in the zone through purposive random sampling. Three psycho-social measurement scales were used namely: the Social Entrepreneurial Antecedents Scale the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form, and the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. The study adopted a cross-sectional design. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to analyze emotional intelligence and perceived social support as predictors of social entrepreneurship intentions among women. The findings of the study reveal that emotional intelligence (well-being ( $r = .19, p < .05$ ), self-control ( $r = .40, p < .001$ ), emotionality ( $r = .34, p < .001$ ), sociability ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ) and perceived social support (family social support ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ), friends social support ( $r = .31, p < .001$ ), and significant order ( $r = .19, p < .05$ ) significantly and positively predict social entrepreneurial intentions among women. The practical implication of the findings is that women who develop high emotional intelligence and perceived social support are likely to engage in social entrepreneurship. It is recommended that policymakers and development partners should provide strategies to assist women to build high emotional intelligence in order to enhance their perceived social support and greater engagement in social entrepreneurship for national development.*

**Keywords:** Social Entrepreneurial Intentions, Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Social Support.

## INTRODUCTION

Interest in social entrepreneurship has heightened globally following the devastating effect of the Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) pandemic on the lives and means of livelihood of millions of people around the world especially in low-income countries International Monetary Fund (IMF). Rapid studies on the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on household poverty show that households where a member of the family especially a woman is engaged in social entrepreneurship fared much better during the pandemic (Ogden & Bull, 2020; Hadid, 2020; Banerjee et al., 2020; Abi-Habib et al., 2020).

In view of the popularity of Covid-19 research around the globe, the extant research has overwhelmingly sidestepped the issue of women's involvement in social entrepreneurship and its wider implications for poverty alleviation and women empowerment. Although the current literature on Covid-19 and poverty alleviation is replete with studies on the Covid-19 and its impact on the lives and means of livelihood of millions of people, to date, scholars have largely

circumvented examining the role of women and social entrepreneurship and what factors can predict entrepreneurial intention among women as an outcome of the wider research on Covid-19 and social entrepreneurship as countermeasures to the devastating effect of the pandemic on lives and means of livelihood.

Against this backdrop, this research seeks to address this paucity of scholarly works by examining how emotional intelligence and perceived social support could be used as predictors of entrepreneurial intentions among women. Theoretically, whilst there is a growing body of research on women's involvement in social entrepreneurship, thus far scholars in these two research domains have operated almost in silos and thereby hampering scholarly advancements. This research addresses this lacuna by identifying and examining how emotional intelligence and perceived social support could predict entrepreneurial intentions among women. The cross-fertilization envisaged in this study will help to enrich our understanding of this emerging phenomenon in social entrepreneurship research.

The study further contributes to the discourse on the Covid-19 pandemic and how social entrepreneurship could mitigate its effect on the lives and means of livelihood of women around the world. In addition, although many scholars have contributed to the discourse on the Covid-19 pandemic and social entrepreneurship, there have been limited insights into the psycho-social factors that drive women's intention to social entrepreneurship. By examining the role of emotional intelligence and perceived social support on women's involvement in social entrepreneurship, our study extends and outlines the pathway towards enhancing and encouraging women's involvement in social entrepreneurship as a poverty alleviation strategy. In this direction, an integrated framework that elucidates the role of emotional intelligence and perceived social support on entrepreneurial intention among women is advanced.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. First, a brief review of relevant literature is presented in section 2. The methodological approach to the study is presented in section 3, followed by the results generated through hierarchical multiple regression (HMR), which were presented in section 4. The broader implications of the findings are also discussed in section 4.

## A BRIEF REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

In this section, we briefly review relevant literature on social entrepreneurial intentions, emotional intelligence, and perceived social support as predictors of entrepreneurial intentions among women.

For social entrepreneurial intentions, we reviewed the theory of Planned Behaviour, the Model of Social Entrepreneurial Intentions (Mair & Noboa, 2006), the Entrepreneurial Event Model, the Entrepreneurial Potential Model. For emotional intelligence, we reviewed the Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory (Pertrides & Furnham, 2001), Mixed-Models of Emotional Intelligence: Emotional Intelligence performance model (Goleman 1995, 1998). For perceived social support, we reviewed the Stress and Coping Theory of Social Support.

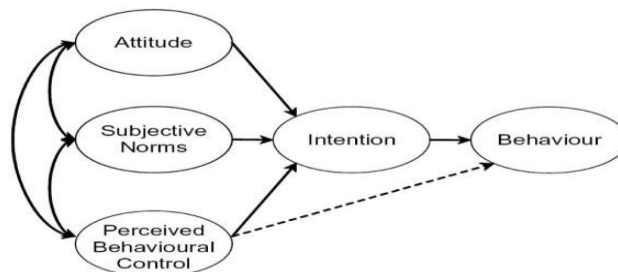
## SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS

**Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991):** In his seminal work in 1991, Ajzen (1991) propounded the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The theory essentially predicts that intentions will usually precede behaviour. Studies carried out to test the theory have largely produced robust outcomes (Kazmi et al, 2019). In consequence, various fields of study have

adapted the theory to predict intentional behaviours in broad areas and disciplines. The main tenet of the TPB is that an individual's intention to perform a particular behaviour usually results in its actual performance. In earlier work, Ajzen, had conceptualized the predictors of intention to perform behaviour, namely: Attitudes Towards the Behaviour (ATB), Subjective Social Norms (SSN) and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) which could be internal or external. However, it was in his seminal work in 1991 that Ajzen provided the empirical foundation for these predictors of intention to perform behaviour.

According to Ajzen (1991), attitude towards behaviour is the extent to which the performance of the behaviour is positively or negatively valued. Attitudes in this context, are one's beliefs about the outcomes of performing a given behaviour and are weighted by the individual's evaluations of those outcomes whether favourable or unfavourable. Subjective social norm, on the other hand, refers to the judgment a person makes due to perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour. It is thus, an individual's opinion of social pressure to engage behaviour which depends on support expected from others. A subjective social norm is determined by an individual's behavioural normative beliefs about whether important referent individuals approve or disapprove of them performing the behaviour, mediated by that individual's motivation to comply with those specific referents.

As noted earlier, studies in extant literature seem to provide strong support for the predictive validity of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and its ability to successfully predict and explain a wide range of behaviours and intentions. It is thus, more likely from empirical modelling, that intention to participate in social entrepreneurship will ipso facto, result in participation in social entrepreneurship provided the intention is accompanied by skill, resources and opportunities. Analytical framework based on the theory of planned behaviour is shown in Figure 1.



**FIGURE 1 :**  
**THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (TPB)**

**Model of Social Entrepreneurial Intentions (Mair & Noboa, 2006):** The robust outcomes from the empirical modelling of Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour encouraged Mair & Noboa (2006) to develop the theoretical framework of social entrepreneurial intentions. According to their thesis, empathy, moral judgment, self-efficacy, and social support are predictors of Social Entrepreneurial Intentions (SEIs). According to them, empathy serves as a substitute for attitude towards behaviour, self-efficacy as a substitute for perceived internal behavioural control, social support as a substitute for perceived external behavioural control and judgment as a substitute for the subjective norm - Mair & Noboa (2006) argued that these antecedents of SEI are mediated through perceived feasibility and perceived desirability. Perceived feasibility in this context, refers to the extent to which people believe they have the

capacity to start a new venture while perceived desirability refers to how appealing it is to an individual to generate an entrepreneurial event such as starting a venture.

Empirical works based on the model show that the model provides a significant predictive explanation of social entrepreneurial intent (Olawale, 2019). According to Wilton & Venter (2016), although the model of social entrepreneurial intentions has robust predictive power on social entrepreneurial intent, it nonetheless fails to recognize that entrepreneurial decision is not limited to the decision to establish a new venture as intent could also relate to whether to grow the business or not.

**Entrepreneurial Event Model (Shapero & Sokol, 1982):** The entrepreneurial event model (EEM) developed by Shapero & Sokol (1982) identifies desirability, feasibility, and a propensity to act due to displacement as major predictors of an individual's intention to create a new venture. According to Shapero & Sokol (1982), displacement which could either be positive or negative is what triggers behavioural change while desirability and feasibility are concerned with the extent to which people believe they have the capacity to start a new venture and how appealing it is to an individual to generate an entrepreneurial event such as starting a venture respectively.

Studies based on the entrepreneurial event model show that perceived feasibility, perceived desirability, and propensity to act were found to be significant predictors of entrepreneurial intentions. Bayabashija & Katono show that the model can be applied within different cultural contexts and remains significant in predicting entrepreneurial intentions. However, a study by Rai et al., argued that individuals who have experience in a social and cultural environment of entrepreneurship may take entrepreneurship as a career option without encountering any displacement in life. The implication of their argument is that model may not capture the resultant behaviour of entrepreneurship in the absence of any significant displacement in the life of the subject. In other words, the decision to start and run a social enterprise will be dependent on changes in the conditions and situations of individuals coupled with how desirable and feasible they consider their action.

**Entrepreneurial Potential Model (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994):** Krueger & Brazeal (1994) developed the Entrepreneurial Potential Model which for all intents and purposes, is an amalgam of the concept of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Entrepreneurial Event Model. In the entrepreneurial potential model, Krueger & Brazeal (1994) matched perceived desirability to attitude and social norms and perceived feasibility to perceived behavioural control. They further contend that the choice of a certain behaviour will depend on the relative credibility of alternative behaviours supported by the propensity to act. The model suggests that social entrepreneurial intentions are the product of perceived desirability (attractiveness of starting a social enterprise), perceived feasibility (individual's perception of the capability of starting a social enterprise) as well as propensity to act (displacement).

According to the Krueger & Brazeal (1994), although the theory of entrepreneurial potential model combines the strengths of the theory of Planned Behaviour and entrepreneurial event models, it fails to identify factors that influence the perception of feasibility and perception of desirability.

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THEORY

**Trait Emotional Intelligence Theory (Pertrides & Furnham, 2001):** The theory of trait emotional intelligence (Trait EI) was propounded by Pertrides & Furnham (2001) as an emotional disposition and an individual's perception of how they accurately perceive, understand, manage, and use their emotion and the emotion of others. Essentially, the theory posits that individuals' personalities consist of emotional self-perception and emotional traits. In other words, the focus of the trait of emotional intelligence is on individuals' perception of their own and others' feelings and emotional abilities.

There are four dimensions of trait emotional intelligence according to the authors. These include; well-being, represented by happiness, optimism, and self-esteem; self-control, represented by emotional regulation, impulse control and stress management; emotionality, represented by empathy, emotion perception, emotional expression and relationship; sociability, represented by emotional management, assertiveness and social awareness. The theory affirms that individuals with high trait EI can cope with sudden emotional demands, react appropriately under pressure, control impulses under stress and are self-motivated and adaptable.

Such individuals are also able to correctly assess their own emotions and that of others can enhance their ability to identify and engage in activities such as social entrepreneurship which could add social-economic values.

Studies on Trait EI theory shows that the theory is robust as it offers a comprehensive scientific framework which can be used to interpret individual differences in personality and emotion throughout the life span. Even at that, the theory is often criticised for its inability to recognise that self-perception is not stable over time and that it could be altered by life events.

**Mixed-Models of Emotional Intelligence: Emotional Intelligence performance model (Goleman, 1998):** It is to the credit of Goleman (1998) that a mixed model of emotional intelligence is being discussed on the pages of emotional intelligence. According to him, emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. In his later work, Goleman (1998) considers emotional intelligence as a mixed intelligence that involves cognitive ability and aspects of personality. According to Mayer (1999), the mixed models of emotional intelligence combine mental ability with personality characteristics such as optimism and well-being.

Although Goleman's (1998) model primarily focused on self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social (relationship) management, the theory is still extended to explore the competencies that determine how to handle oneself. These are self-awareness, or knowing and recognizing individual emotions; self-regulation, which involves managing individual emotions; and motivation, which involves self-motivation and the drive for achievement. The final two competencies are based on how to handle others (i.e., relationships). These are empathy, or the awareness of other's emotions and feelings; and social skills, which involve managing others' emotions.

The mixed model of emotional intelligence is generally accepted as the one of the most comprehensive and scientifically legitimate theories for its efficiency to integrate ability and trait models, thereby circumventing the shortcomings of each of these models. According to Zeidner, the beauty of the mixed model lies in its applicability to the framework of emotional intelligence and its greater focus on personality-like dimensions, which the ability-based model discounts.

## Perceived Social Support

**Stress and Coping Theory of Social Support (Cohen & McKay, 1984):** Cohen & McKay's (1984) stress and coping theory hypothesized that social support theoretically reduces the effect of stressful life events on health and therefore, enhances an individual's coping mechanisms. In other words, people associate with one another to reduce stress and be able to cope with life's challenging events. To this end, social support by family members, friends, and significant others or even the mere belief that social support is available when needed acts as a stress buffer. An individual who perceives this social support tends to have less stress and perceives potentially threatening situations as less stressful (McKay & Cohen, 1984). Supportive actions, Cohen and McKay (1984) alluded that social support explicitly promotes coping style and reduces the effect of stressors for a healthy lifestyle.

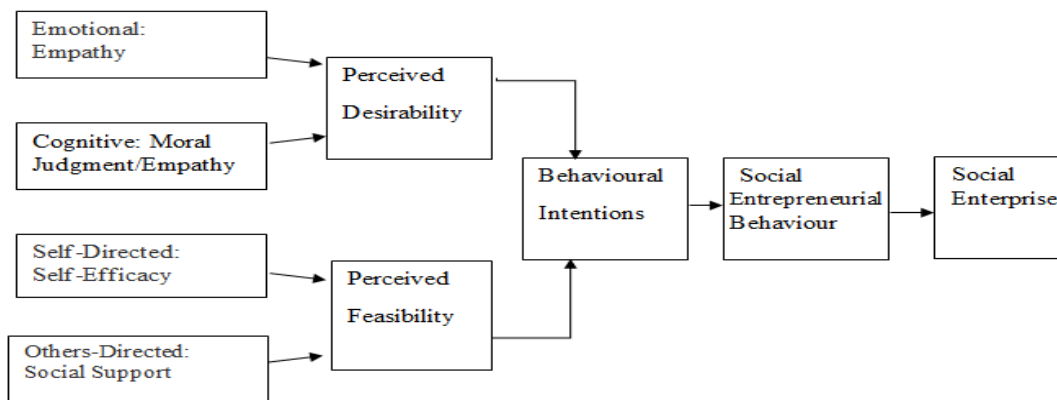
According to Leavy, the stress and coping theory of social support provide the theoretical framework for making informed decisions when analysing measures of perceived social support. The theory provides the analytical framework for understanding that the perception that others can and will provide necessary resources boosts one's perceived ability to take action. However, Leavy was unable to indicate explicitly whether social support operates through buffering or a main effect process.

The theory is, however, a significant predictor of social entrepreneurial intentions of women because women generally interrogate likely supportive social actions that may be available for them by the family, friends, and significant others as boosters for their social entrepreneurial intentions. Individuals who perceived unemployment as a huge stress will perhaps develop a positive entrepreneurial intention as a priority once there are social supports from family members, friends and significant others.

## Hypothesis

In the light of the outcome from the theoretical and empirical reviews, the study hypothesized, following a conceptual framework below, that:

The conceptual framework based on the model of social entrepreneurial intentions is shown in Figure 2.



**FIGURE 2**  
**MODEL OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS**

1. *Emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of social entrepreneurial intentions of women in Nigeria*
2. *Perceived social support is significant in predicting the social entrepreneurial intentions of women in Nigeria.*

## METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS

### Participants

Participants in this study comprised 309 women selected from the five states in South East, Nigeria. The participants were drawn from four Local Government Areas (LGAs) randomly drawn from each of the five states in South-East, Nigeria. Participants' age ranged from 21 to 49 years with a mean age of 25.65; an SD of 1.05. A multistage sampling technique was adopted in the study in which a cluster sampling technique was used to select the four LGAs from each of the five states in South East, Nigeria. The women selected were from diverse religious, ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds. Hence, information on participants' demographics was equally obtained.

### Instruments

A questionnaire comprising of demographic information (participant's age, gender, and religion) and three psycho-social entrepreneurial intention measurement scales were used for data collection for the study. The scales include the Social Entrepreneurial Antecedents Scale; Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form (TEIQue-SF, Linan & Chen, 2009); and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS, Zimet, et al. 1988).

**Social Entrepreneurial Intent Scale (Hockerts, 2015):** The social entrepreneurial intention scale was developed by Hockerts (2015). It comprised a 9-item scale developed to measure people's inclination to start a social entrepreneurial venture. The items capture an individual's willingness, readiness, and interest in starting a social entrepreneurial business or venture. The response options were scaled in an inverted 5-Likert format, namely: Strongly Agree (1) Agree (2) Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree (5). Sample items on the scale include "I am ready to do anything to be a social entrepreneur", and "My professional goal is to be a social entrepreneur". "I will make every effort to start and run my own social enterprise". The items are directly scored, with the score ranging from 9 (minimum) to 45 (maximum). High scores imply high intention to start up a social entrepreneurial venture. The scale according to Hockerts (2015), had a Cronbach's alpha of .77, indicating that it is reliable and valid. A pilot test to re-ascertain the reliability of the scales was conducted using a sample of women from Enugu State, one of the five (05) States in South East, Nigeria. The Cronbach's alpha result is .73, confirming that the instrument is reliable.

**Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form (TEIQue-SF):** The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form (TEIQue-SF) is a 30-item measurement scale that evaluates global trait EI, though it can also be used to assess the four trait EI factors: Well-Being, Self-Control, Emotionality, and Sociability. As indicated by the TEIQue-SF scoring key, obtained from Pertrides' university laboratory website, items 3, 14, 18, and 29 only contribute to global trait EI, and not to any of the four factors. Therefore, these items were only used to calculate global trait EI scores. Participants responded to items using a 7-point Likert scale

ranging from 1 (completely disagree or strongly disagree) to 7 (completely agree or strongly agree).

It should be noted that for the Chinese sample, the TEIQue-SF was translated into Mandarin following the recommended steps by Hambleton & Lee (2013). Care was taken to maintain content and lexical equivalence. The translation was done by faculty and graduate students who were native Chinese speakers as well as being highly fluent in English. Back translations were performed to ensure equivalence of the meaning for each item. Specifically, two psychology graduate students independently translated the English version into Chinese, and the two translations were examined for differences. Any differences were discussed, and final decisions for the scale were made by one of the Chinese authors in the paper. The Chinese version of the TEIQueSF was then translated back into English by a professor at a Chinese university who has taught English for over 30 years. The translation process confirmed proper translation of the TEIQue-SF into Mandarin, allowing for the distribution of the TEIQue-SF to Mandarin-speaking participants. The Canadian participants completed the English version of the TEIQue-SF as published by Pertrides.

For our study, a pilot test to re-ascertain the reliability of the scales was conducted using a sample of women from Enugu state, one of the five (05) States in South East, Nigeria. The result yielded a reliability coefficient of .71, .65, .61 and .71 for the social-wellbeing, self-control, emotionality, and sociability subscales of the TEIQueSF respectively confirming the reliability of the instruments.

**Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS, Zimet, et al. 1988).** Perceived social support was measured using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSSPS) by Zimet *et al.* (1988). The scale was developed to address the subjective assessment of social support adequacy from the three specific sources: family, friends, and significant others (Zimet et al, 1988). The MSPSS is a 12-item scale with 4 items each measuring perceived social support from family, friends, and significant others. The scale is rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with scores ranging from very strongly disagree (1) to (7) very strongly. Zimet *et al.* (1988) obtained a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.88 and a test-retest reliability of 0.85. Smallheer reported Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .95, .94, and .89 for the Significant Other (SO), Family (Fam), and Friends (Fri) subscales respectively and .93 for the total MSPSS.

The pilot test to the present study was conducted using a sample of women from Enugu state, one of the five (05) States in South East, Nigeria. The result yielded Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .85, .71, and .65 for Family (Fam), Friends (Fri), and Significant Other (SO), (subscales of MSPSS) respectively and this indicates that the instrument is reliable.

## Design and Methods of Data Analysis

The study applied a cross-sectional survey design as data were collected to make inferences about the population. According to Setia, a cross-sectional study design enables the investigator to measure outcomes and exposures in the study participants at the same time. The Hierarchical Multiple Regression was the main statistic for the study due to its predictive ability and generalization functions. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was employed in data analysis.



## RESULTS

S/N	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	M	SD
1	SEI	-	.50*	.20*	.22**	.19*	.40**	.34**	.14*	.32**	.31**	0.13	42.95	9.72
2	Age		-	.22*	.68**	.17*	0.09	0.01	.13*	.03*	.09*	.13*	25.65	11.05
3	Gender			-	.35**	.11*	.05**	.21**	.35**	.17*	0.08	0.11	1.39	0.49
4	Religion				-	0.06	.22**	.16*	0.04	.23**	0.08	0.07	1.17	0.37
5	Wellbeing					-	.16*	.04*	.12*	.01*	.03*	.23**	8.02	0.14
6	Self-Control						-	.80**	.23**	.44**	.39**	.37**	8.53	3.11
7	C-Emotion							-	.01**	.39**	.40**	.39**	5.82	3.88
8	T Sociability								-	.21**	.08**	.11**	9.91	2.55
9	D-Family									-	.32**	.37**	13.29	4.8
10	E-Friends										-	.31**	14.2	3.76
11	D Sig. Order											-	17.02	4.29

The of the correlation in Table 1 shows that social entrepreneurial intentions was significantly related to age ( $r = .50$ ,  $p < .01$ ), gender ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .05$ ), religion ( $r = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ ), wellbeing ( $r = .19$ ,  $p < .05$ ), self-control ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ), emotionality ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sociability ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ), family social support ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ), friends social support ( $r = .31$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and significant order ( $r = .19$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The implication of these results is that an increase in the dimensions of both emotional intelligence and social support is associated with increase in social entrepreneurial intentions among women in Nigeria.

Age was significantly related to gender ( $r = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ ), religion ( $r = .68$ ,  $p < .001$ ), wellbeing ( $r = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ ), sociability, ( $r = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ), family social support ( $r = .03$ ,  $p < .05$ ), friends social support ( $r = .09$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and significant orders ( $r = .13$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Gender is significantly related to religion ( $r = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ), wellbeing ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .001$ ), self-control ( $r = .05$ ,  $p < .01$ ), emotionality ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ), family social support ( $r = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and sociability ( $r = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Furthermore, the result shows that religion is significantly related to self-control ( $r = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ ), emotionality ( $r = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and family social support ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Wellbeing is significantly related to self-control ( $r = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ), emotionality ( $r = .04$ ,  $p < .05$ ), sociability ( $r = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ ), family social support ( $r = .01$ ,  $p < .05$ ), friends social support ( $r = .03$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and significant order social support ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Again, the result shows that self-control is significantly related to emotionality ( $r = .80$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sociability ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ), family social support ( $r = .44$ ,  $p < .001$ ), friends' social support ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and significant order social support ( $r = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Emotionality is significantly related to sociability ( $r = .01$ ,  $p < .001$ ), family social support ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ), friends social support ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and significant order social support ( $r = .39$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Sociability is significantly related to family social support ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ), friends' social support ( $r = .08$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and significant order social support ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Finally, the result in Table 1 shows that family social support is significantly related to friends' social support ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and significant order social support ( $r = .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Friends' social support is significantly related to significant order social support ( $r = .31$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

	<b>R</b>	<b>R2</b>	<b>R2Δ</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Beta(β)</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Model 1</b>	.21***	.19***	.17***			
Age				0.39	.45**	2.73
Gender				2.02	.10**	0.88
Religion				5.59	0.21	1.29
<b>Model 2</b>	.34***	.20***	.15***			
Wellbeing				1.6	.51***	3.43
Self-control				0.78	.31***	1.82
Emotionality				0.11	.05***	0.03
Sociability				0.41	.21**	1.28
<b>Model 3</b>	.40***	.25***	.09***			
Family				0.52	.60**	2.4
Friends				1.27	.56***	3.84
Significant Order				0.12	.41**	1.27

The regression result in Table 2 above indicated that amongst the control variables only age ( $\beta = .45$ ,  $t = 2.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and gender ( $\beta = .10$ ,  $t = .88$ ,  $p < .01$ ) significantly predicted social entrepreneurial intentions. But religion ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $t = 1.29$ ) did not significantly predict social entrepreneurial intentions. The control variables accounted for a 21% significant variance as predictors of social entrepreneurial intentions ( $R = .21$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The dimensions of emotional intelligence were entered in model 2 of the equation; and the result indicated that well-being ( $\beta = .51$ ,  $t = 3.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ), self-control ( $\beta = .31$ ,  $t = 1.82$ ,  $p < .001$ ), emotionality ( $\beta = .05$ ,  $t = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and sociability ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $t = 1.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ) significantly predicted social entrepreneurial intentions. The dimensions accounted for a 15% significant variance as predictors of social entrepreneurial intentions ( $R2\Delta = .15$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, an increase in the dimensions (well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability) tends to increase social entrepreneurial intentions among women in Nigeria.

The dimensions of social support were entered in model 3 of the equation and it was shown that family social support ( $\beta = .60$ ,  $t = 2.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ), friends social support ( $\beta = .56$ ,  $t = 3.84$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and significant orders ( $\beta = .04$ ,  $t = 1.27$ ), significantly predicted social entrepreneurial intentions among women in Nigeria. Thus, an increase in the dimensions (family

social support, friends' and significant order) tends to increase social entrepreneurial intentions among women in Nigeria. They accounted for a 9% significant variance as predictors of social entrepreneurial intentions among women in Nigeria ( $R^2\Delta = .09, p < .001$ ).

### Summary of Findings

1. Social entrepreneurial intentions were significantly related to age, gender, religion, well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, family social support, friends' social support, and significant order.
2. Age and gender positively and significantly predicted social entrepreneurial intention.
3. The dimensions of emotional intelligence were found to be significant and positive predictors of social entrepreneurial intention.
4. Social support dimensions were significant predictors of social entrepreneurial intention.

### Discussions of the Findings

The main objective of this study was to determine whether emotional intelligence and perceived social support would predict social entrepreneurial intentions among women in Nigeria. To achieve this, the study hypothesized that: emotional intelligence is significant in predicting the social entrepreneurial intentions of women in Nigeria and that perceived social support is significant in predicting the social entrepreneurial intentions of women in Nigeria.

The result of the hierarchical multiple regression showed that all the dimensions of emotional intelligence particularly dimensions of Trait Emotional Intelligence (well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability) were significant in predicting the entrepreneurial intentions of women in Nigeria. This suggests that the higher an individual's emotional intelligence is, the higher the degree to which an individual can accurately perceive and uses their own and other feelings and emotions and the higher the intentions to engage in social enterprise. This is in line with the findings of previous studies which demonstrated the importance of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions. The findings of our study are also consistent with that of Contreras-Barazza *et al.*, which show that well-being (a dimension of Trait EI) mediated by subjective social norms has a significant indirect effect on social entrepreneurial intentions. In the same vein, Gelderen *et al.*, showed that self-control positively and significantly predicted entrepreneurial intentions and actions. Hence, perceiving, understanding, managing, and using their own and others' emotions enable individuals to understand the importance of change in a self and social context. According to Goleman & Boyatzis (2017), these types of individuals are usually more successful at driving change and gearing towards new directions and thus, willing to undertake social enterprises.

The study further hypothesised that perceived social support will be significant in predicting the social entrepreneurial intentions of women in Nigeria. The result of the study showed that perceived social support (family, friends, and significant others) was a significant predictor of social entrepreneurial intentions of women in Nigeria. This finding is supported by earlier studies (Olawale, 2019). The result of our study suggests that the higher the perception of social support from family members, friends and significant others, the more likely women are to identify social opportunities and create social enterprises for sustainable development. This indicates that a sense of acceptance, appreciation, sense of belongingness and availability of material resources from family, friends and significant others influence the social entrepreneurial intentions of women in Nigeria.

## Implications of the findings

The findings of this study have good implications for practice. A practical implication is that women in Nigeria who develop high emotional intelligence and perceived social support are more likely to have intentions to engage in social entrepreneurship. Studies have indicated that social entrepreneurship reduces unemployment and social problems, therefore, intentions and eventual participation of women in Nigeria in social entrepreneurship will reduce unemployment and other social problems in Nigeria. Hence, policymakers and development partners interested in empowering women through social entrepreneurship need to provide strategies that build high emotional intelligence among women in Nigeria. This could be achieved by the inclusion of educational programmes on social entrepreneurship and emotional intelligence into the Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development (SAED) program targeted at women in Nigeria.

The study equally provides empirical evidence that perceived social support from family members, friends and significant others increases social entrepreneurial intentions. Perception of women in Nigeria that material, psychological and overall social support will be received from family members, friends and significant others will boost their intentions to participate in social enterprise. Therefore, family, friends and significant others need to provide supportive actions to women in Nigeria in times of difficulty to enhance their perceived social support. Building high emotional intelligence and perceived social support among women will encourage entrepreneurial intentions and eventual engagement of more women in social entrepreneurship for individual and national development.

## Limitations of the study

This study has some remarkable limitations. The design of the study was a cross-sectional survey, and this could potentially limit the result from being generalized as the survey focuses on perception. An individual's perception and opinions could be influenced by a variety of situations and could change depending on the existing situation of the individual.

Furthermore, self-report measures were used to assess entrepreneurial intentions, emotional intelligence and perceived social support and there is usually an issue of social desirability biases with such measures. Another challenge of the study was the sample size. The research covered only the five states in South East, out of the 36 states in Nigeria. Expanding the study to other geopolitical zones of Nigeria would be necessary to determine the stability of the results.

## Directions for Future Research

Further studies in this area can use a longitudinal approach so that the variables are studied for a longer time for a more robust outcome of the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived social support on entrepreneurial intention among women in Nigeria. A longitudinal study could reduce the challenges and limitations of survey design.

Moreover, further studies could incorporate other variables such as creativity, self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, social intelligence, goal orientation, and social entrepreneurship exposure to determine their predictive power on social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, future studies could also apply qualitative means such as interviews and focus group discussions

alongside self-report quantitative measures to elicit quality data to address the objectives of the study better.

## CONCLUSION

The contribution of this study to knowledge cannot be overestimated. The study considered emotional intelligence and perceived social support as predictors of social entrepreneurial intentions among women in Nigeria. It was found that emotional intelligence and perceived social support predicted social entrepreneurial intentions among women in Nigeria. Considering that emotional intelligence and perceived social support are veritable predictors of social entrepreneurial intentions, it is therefore recommended that policymakers and development partners interested in women empowerment should promote emotional intelligence and perceived social support among women in Nigeria to boost their intentions to participate in social entrepreneurship for improved quality of life for women themselves and sustainable national development.

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