

**Emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intentions of corps members in selected states  
in South-West Nigeria**

**Abimbola Foluso Ojapinwa,**

**Department of Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management**

**Lagos State University, Ojo,**

**&**

**Mojisola Opeyemi Alonge**

**Department of Public Administration, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic Owo, Ondo State.**

**Abstract**

This study investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions of corps members in selected states in south west, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research design was adopted and the study population comprises National Youth Service Corps members that are currently serving in three (3) selected states of Lagos, Ondo and Ogun in South-West, Nigeria. A total of 403 participants purposively selected participated in the study. Data were collected via structured questionnaires. Two hypotheses were proposed and tested using the linear regression and Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Result indicated a positive significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, there was a significant influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intentions ( $F(2,400)= 26.8$ ,  $p<.05$ ), with  $R^2$  of .118. It is recommended, among others, that the content of higher institutions curriculum over the years must be consistent, properly coordinated and in constant review. It should recognize the need of students to develop knowledge in handling relationships, skills on self-awareness, recognising emotions in others, self-motivation (emotional intelligence) which are attributes needed to achieve the intention of job creation upon graduation from school.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, Entrepreneurial Intention, Corps members

## 1. Introduction

The importance of entrepreneurship in the past decades in Nigeria and many other countries can never be over emphasised. Historically, scholars have supported the view that entrepreneurship is responsible for economic expansion based on its link with profit orientation, capital investment and the creation of new markets (Grace & Omar, 2012; Schumpeter, 1942). Entrepreneurship is one of the significant drivers of economic growth, development and job creation worldwide (Sarmah & Tripathi, 2022). Accordingly, entrepreneurship has become a concept of increased significance in the environment where uncertainty has emerged with globalization and advanced technology. It significantly contributes to economic survival and scientific advancement (Obschonka et al., 2017 cited in Lien, Anh, Truong, Tuan & Thao, 2022). Entrepreneurship is a solution to unemployment, poverty and many socio-economic challenges globally (Maseko & Manyoni, 2011). Zakareviius and Zuperka (2010) stated that development of entrepreneurship is associated with an individual's capacity to analyze his or her emotions and values. This is because an understanding of emotions is not only conducive for intellectual growth, but also holds a significant role in individual happiness (Foo, 2011) and in enhancing the potential success and performance of entrepreneurial ventures. Goleman (2005) conceptualised emotions as any feelings, thought, psychological or biological and a part of personal tendency to act accordingly. Baron (2008) supported the view of various scholars that positive emotions go a long way in promoting entrepreneurial intention, innovation and also enhance the capacity to recognize opportunity (Nuri,, Hisbullah & Ima, 2023).

Goleman (1995) stated that the ability to identify, assess, understand, manage and control the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups is being emotionally intelligent, which is very paramount towards the intention of jobs creation in an organisation. Emotional intelligence is a set of qualities and competencies that encompassed a wide range of individual skills and dispositions needed daily which has an impact on our conduct (Ajla, 2022). Based on the importance of emotional intelligence, UNESCO (2002) launched an international campaign to promote emotional learning in the classroom while U.N. body sent a statement of 10 basic emotional quotient (EQ) principles to education ministries throughout the world. Those principles drew heavily from Goleman's exposition of emotional intelligence. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) likewise posited that emotional intelligence is the subset of social intelligence

which involves the ability to monitor one's feelings/emotions, and others, discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.

Furthermore, Goleman (2015) stressed that emotional intelligence consists of five components: Knowing one's emotions (self-awareness), managing them, motivating self, recognising emotions in others (empathy), and handling relationships (social skill) which are very vital towards the intention of job creations. These components based on Ankita and Parwintar (2022) assertion, are very crucial in our daily activities as an individual and people with passion and positive emotions are found to be highly successful in entrepreneurship (Baum & Locke 2004). Negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, anger and hostility usually drain people's energy and lower morale, which in turn discouraged people from having intention of job creation. The ability of a person working towards his/her intention of starting a business/ respond favorably to working under pressure is greatly improved through high emotional intelligence (Yao, Wang, & Karen, 2009). Meanwhile, the role of feelings and emotions and how it affects entrepreneurial activities is a new field of research yet to be critically investigated (Kanonuhwa, Rungani & Chimucheka, 2018). Based on this fact, this study investigated the influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention of youth corps members in selected states in south-west Nigeria.

## **2.0 Literature Review.**

This section comprised of conceptual clarifications and empirical literatures on emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention. Finally, the competencies model of EI as a guide to this study was reviewed.

### **2.1 Conceptual Clarifications**

#### **Emotional Intelligence**

The word emotional intelligence (EI) has recently been considered as one of the hottest buzzwords in today's world because it has become a topic of brisk interest for general public, practitioners, researchers, academicians. It has overshadowed other less spectacular classical concepts such as Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and personality. EI have been strongly associated with dynamic leadership, satisfying personal life experiences and success in the workplace. The term Emotional Intelligence (EI) is made up of two words - emotion and intelligence.

Cabanac (2002) defined emotion as any mental experience with high intensity and high hedonic content (pleasure/displeasure). Salovey and Mayer (1990) opined that intelligence involved the ability to carry out abstract reasoning. EI as a concept was first introduced into the scientific psychological literature by Salovey and Mayer based on Gardner's theory of multiple bits of intelligence. Gardner noted that one of the seven bits of intelligence possessed by humans is personal intelligence, which involved intrapersonal intelligence and interpersonal intelligence (Petrides, 2010). Intrapersonal intelligence pertains to the ability to know and access one's feeling about life, range of emotions, distinguish between emotions and to rely on them as a guard towards one's behaviour. Intrapersonal intelligence involved the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself, including one's desires, fears, and capacities, and to use such information effectively in regulating one's own life (Harms & Crede, 2010). Interpersonal intelligence refers to one's ability to work with others by accurately interpreting their emotions and using one's own emotion to relate them effectively. It included a person's capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people and, consequently, to work effectively with others (Gardner, 1999; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Mohammad & Hanane, 2012).

According to Dehkordi, Sasani, Fathi and Ehsan (2012) the distal roots of emotional intelligence (EI) can likewise be traced back to the concept of social intelligence coined by Thorndike (1920) which refers to the ability to understand and manage people and to act wisely in human relations. Baron (2008) affirmed that positive emotions might enhance entrepreneurial creativity, including opportunity recognition. Entrepreneurs who display passion - positive, intense feelings about their ventures tend to be more successful than those who do not display passion (Baum & Locke, 2004). Kenneth (2018) asserted that positive emotions also influence an entrepreneur's ability to turn past experiences into present solutions through heuristic processing and to deal effectively with the persistent stress that often plagues entrepreneurs (Carver & Scheier, 2001). Recent research on emerging businesses indicated that the ability to effectively manage the human side of the business played a critical role in the success of a new venture (Graham, Murray, & Amuso, 2002; Chandler & McEvoy, 2000).

Similarly, Amy (2010) posited that emotional intelligence is the capacity to understand and manage one's emotions as well as the emotions of others. It helps in the identification, definition, and processing of emotions (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002). The ability to recognize and regulate emotions served as a tool that helped in perceiving contextual clues easily, managing our relationships more effectively and motivating ourselves and others to achieve stated goals and objectives (Mohammad & Hanane, 2012). Furthermore, EI focuses on the ability to know your own emotions, how to manage them, as well as the ability to detect emotional cues, and how to react accordingly (Fakhreldin & Hattab, 2015). It improves an entrepreneur's talent, capability, and social effectiveness (Khatoon, 2013). The integration of explicit knowledge and tacit emotional abilities leads to greater entrepreneurial success (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts, 2009). For instance, Wong and Law (2002) argued that EI played an important role in determining a person's ability to succeed and individuals, who recognize their emotions and that of others, possessed the skills and capabilities to improve their performance and to achieve better success. Individuals with higher than average EI are more successful in meeting environmental demands and pressures. Conversely, a deficiency in EI can mean a lack of success (Bar-On, 1997). People are sometimes successful not because of their knowledge of the tasks, but due to their ability to manage people socially and emotionally, and this ability is embodied in EI (Fakhreldin & Hattab, 2015).

### **Entrepreneurial Intentions**

Intentionality as perceived by Bird (1988) is a state of mind directing a person's attention, experience, and action towards a specific goal or a path to achieve something. Therefore, entrepreneurial action can be classified as intentional behaviour (Bird, 1988; Shapero, 1982) the intention is a predictor of planned entrepreneurial behaviour (Krueger, 1993). Shapero (1982) indicated that the entrepreneurial intention stems from the perception of feasibility and desirability of a person, and this path is affected by the cultural and social context. Entrepreneurial intention is a conscious state of mind that directs attention experience and action toward a specific object (goal) or pathway to achieve it (Bird, 1989). It is the commitment to start a new business (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000). Intentions influence behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and predict entrepreneurial action (Krueger *et al.*, 2000). The intention to behave in a

certain way depends on the person's attitude towards that behaviour. Attitude can increase or decrease the level of intention to engage in any activity (Ajzen, 1991). Similarly, Afolabi, Kareem, Okubanjo, Ogunbanjo and Aninkan (2017) defined entrepreneurial intention as an expression of the willingness and deliberate plan to start-up a business. A person's intention to become an entrepreneur directs the person's attention to the network for the needed resources to establish the business.

Furthermore, Zaidatol and Afsaneh (2013) posited that entrepreneurial intention is a subjective attitude of potential entrepreneurs, engaged either in or not business activities and a general description of the people with entrepreneurial traits, attributes, and ability. It is a sort of individual mental state that leads individuals to be willing to devote a lot of their time, energy, and action to take an opportunity or to achieve a goal (Mudashir, 2015). Entrepreneurial intention is a kind of mental model that guides an individual to take intentional action, make a decision, reflects the motivation and the goal of the individual behaviour and likewise used to effectively predict entrepreneurial behaviour (Shinnar, Hsu & Powell, 2014). Sondari (2014) conceptualised entrepreneurial intention as a state of mind of people who wish to create their own business and as an intention to start a new business. It can be seen as a person's self-acknowledged conviction to establish a new business venture and the conscious planning to do so in the future, and also refers to a conscious state of mind that directs a person's attention to fulfilling the goal of venture creation (Bandura, 2012).

## **Empirical Literature Review**

### **Emotional Intelligence and Entrepreneurial Intention.**

Emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor and control ones emotions/other people's emotions, and the use of these emotions to guide thoughts and actions. Emotional intelligence is the link between emotions and performance that drives corporate interest and likewise someone's ability in managing and controlling his/her emotions and that of others (Makhmudah, 2018). Leonidas, Konstantinos, Nancy, Todd, Vassilis (2007) studied the relationship between emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial attitudes, and intentions. The study examined and empirically tested a theoretical model on the relationships among emotional intelligence (EI), creativity, pro-activity, and attitudes towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intent. The results

provided strong support for the proposition that students' creativity and pro-activity fully mediated the positive effect of trait and EI on attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Attitudes towards entrepreneurship fully mediated the effects of creativity and pro-activity on entrepreneurial intent. The study demonstrated that EI is positively related to three antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions. George (2000) investigated the consequences of EI on work outcomes and found out that, individuals with high EI seem to be more aware of how outcomes influence their behaviour and are more adept at regulating their emotions.

The work of Mohammad and Hanane (2012) titled emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial orientation: The moderating role of organizational climate and employees' creativity examined the effect of managers' emotional intelligence, organizational climate and employees' creativity on industrial small to medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs') entrepreneurial orientation. Findings confirmed that managers' emotional intelligence, organizational climate and employees' creativity had a positive direct effect on industrial SMEs' entrepreneurial orientation; managers' emotional intelligence had a positive direct effect on organizational climate and an indirect positive direct effect on employees' creativity through organizational climate. Kenneth (2018) focused on emotional intelligence and immigrant entrepreneurship development: a correlation analysis of the Lebanese family entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The scholar examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and immigrant entrepreneurship development. The study adopted a mail questionnaire survey design. The generated data through questionnaire were analyzed using Pearson's correlation. It was found that emotional intelligence is significantly related to the dimensions of immigrant entrepreneurship development, that is, entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial capabilities, entrepreneurial networking and entrepreneurial success. Based on the results, the study recommended that new immigrants and immigrant entrepreneurs should be exposed to training and programmes that will improve their emotional intelligence, entrepreneurial behaviour, capabilities, networking attitude, and success mindset.

Nuha and Fazana (2018) reviewed emotional intelligence and its impact on entrepreneurial intention using psychological capital as a mediator with special reference to entrepreneurial undergraduates of Sri Lanka. The respondents include 160 undergraduates of four main entrepreneurship degree programmes. Universities were selected based on stratified sampling.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Simple linear regression and correlation was used for analysis. It was found that, there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention, and a significant positive relationship between psychological capital, emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention. The study recommends that, entrepreneurial undergraduates should be properly exposed to activities that will enhance their emotional intelligence and psychological capital as this will create a mental stability to cope with challenges and to pursue their entrepreneurial intentions. Breanna (2018) investigated the emotional intelligence of successful African American entrepreneurs in Houston. The aim of this study was to gain a strong perceptive of what strategies African American entrepreneurs can adopt to increase emotional intelligence, which can assist them in remaining in business beyond the first 5 years. Emotional intelligence theory was used as a conceptual framework for the study. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews with a sample size of 15 African American entrepreneurs from Houston, TX who have been in business for a minimum of 5 years. The interviews involved open-ended questions. A thematic analysis was conducted on the 15 interviews. Eight themes were developed from the data analysis: emotional intelligence, leadership styles, emotional reactions, maturity level, training, business sustainability, communication, and flexibility. It was found that, consistent emotional intelligence training will promote African American entrepreneurs' business sustainability.

Rohana and Zarina (2015) posit that the role of emotional intelligence in stimulating entrepreneurs' innovativeness is yet to be explored in the entrepreneurial research and base on this, they decided to investigate the emotional intelligence, innovativeness and entrepreneurial success of entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The study was pilot tested on 51 young entrepreneurs who attended various training of entrepreneurship. Survey was conducted through online and face to face interview. The results pointed out that, positive emotional intelligence can boost innovativeness that may lead to entrepreneurial success. Likewise, regulation of emotion in others seems to be the most important dimension and other emotional intelligence elements seem to be less relevant to innovativeness and entrepreneurial success. Moreover, there is no difference between the emotional intelligence and innovativeness of both male and female entrepreneurs but reverse is the case on entrepreneurial success. Based on the above, the findings highlighted the importance of emotional intelligence especially on other elements of emotional



intelligence in promoting innovativeness among entrepreneurs. Furthermore, Saira and Asvir (2016) investigated the influence of emotional intelligence tools (self emotional appraisal; others' emotional appraisal; use of emotions and regulation of emotions) on entrepreneurial orientation. The respondents involve 300 graduating students of business studies departments from HEC recognised public sector universities of Lahore. Data was analysed using regression analysis on SPSS. It was found that, there is a significant influence of emotional intelligence tools on entrepreneurial orientation.

Kanonuhwa, Rungani and Chimucheka (2018) examined the effects of emotional intelligence on the development of entrepreneurial intentions of university students. The scholars want to verify whether emotional intelligence is an essential antecedent of entrepreneurial intention that encourages entrepreneurial behaviour. The study involves a positivist paradigm research design. A quantitative approach with self-administered questionnaires to assess the respondents' emotional intelligence and their intentions to start businesses was used. Multiple regressions and correlations were used to test the hypotheses. It was found that, there is a direct relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention. There is strong significant relationship between regulation of emotion and entrepreneurial intention and lastly, there is a weak relationship between use of emotion and entrepreneurial intention.

Nuri, Hisbullah and Ima (2023) investigated the effect of self efficacy, tolerance risk, and emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention of students of Tridinanti University Palembang. The method of data analysis involves simple and multiple regression. The researchers found a positive and significant effect of self efficacy on entrepreneurship intention, a positive and significant effect of tolerance risk on entrepreneurship intention, also a positive and significant influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurship intention and lastly, there is a positive and significant influence of self efficacy, tolerance risk, and emotional intelligence on entrepreneurship intention.

Yusuf, Syahputra and Lubis (2022) examined self-efficacy, adversity quotient and need for achievement in building entrepreneurial intentions of students in economics and business faculty, Labuhanbatu, University. Data was collected using a quantitative method through questionnaires. This research uses descriptive analysis, multiple linear regression test and partial test is the method of data analysis. Respondents involve 65 students of the Faculty of Economics

and Business, Labuhanbatu University. It was found that self-efficacy, adversity quotient and need for achievement have a positive and significant effect on building entrepreneurial intentions in students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Labuhanbatu University.

Lien et.al, (2022) accessed the influence of selfish personalities of Dark Triad on startup intention and motives of 400 university students in Vietnam. The study covered mixed effects of narcissism, psychopath, and Machiavellianism. Based on the scholars, high level of narcissism and Machiavellianism leads to high start-up intention. The study also found a negative relationship between Machiavellianism and pro-social motive, and positive relationship Machiavellianism and selfish entrepreneurship.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is hinged on Bar-On's EI Competencies Model (1997). It's a mixed model that described EI as a collection of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and behaviours that influence people's performance, behaviour and intention towards taking intelligent actions. According to BarOn & Parker, this model deals with Intrapersonal abilities .e.g. emotional self-awareness: the individual's ability to recognize and understand their own emotions, assertive behavior: the ability of the person to express his feelings, his beliefs, his thoughts and to defend his rights which is a good indicator and attributes that aids entrepreneurial intention. Self confidence in personal capabilities: involves the ability to perceive the individual's abilities and to be able to achieve what he desires which is one of the qualities of an entrepreneur. High EI leads to self confidence and this is a good predictor of entrepreneurial intention (Irene & Athanasios, 2022). Furthermore, Bar-On argued that emotional intelligence tends to determine how we understand and express ourselves, how we understand others, how we relate with people around us, and how we cope with daily emotional challenges (Odukoya, Omonijo & Oraetue, 2020). Emotional intelligence is very crucial in our daily activities as an individual and people with passion and positive emotions are found to be highly successful in entrepreneurship (Baum & Locke 2004). Besides, individuals with well developed emotional intelligence are able to identify and control their emotions and those of others, they are less likely to be hindered by negative emotions, paralyzed by fear, or

inhibited by anxiety all of which have negative effects on their intention of being employers of labour at the labour market.

### **3.0 Methodology**

This study adopted the descriptive research design which encompassed the use of cross-sectional design and quantitative approach. The study population includes NYSC Corps Members that served in the three (3) purposively selected states (Lagos, Ondo and Ogun) in Southwest, Nigeria. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, a sample of 403 was selected to form the sample size using the convenient sampling technique. A justification for employing the convenient sampling technique is that the researcher intends to pick participants that are willing to take part in the study without compulsion. The study adapted two scales for data collection. The construct emotional intelligence (EI) was measured using a scale developed by George and Zhou (2001). The scale was chosen because it has been found to possess a sound psychometric index. The scale produced good reliability estimate of .76. For the Entrepreneurial Intention construct (EI), 10-item scale developed by Asmara, Djatmika and Indrawati (2016), to measure entrepreneurial intention was adapted for measuring recent graduate's entrepreneurial intention in this current study. The scale is set in the 5-point Likert's type rating scale; ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), undecided (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). Asmara et al., (2016) stated a good internal consistency of the cronbach alpha coefficient of .83 for the scale. Likewise, Ojapinwa et al., (2018) found a reliability coefficient of .79. Copies of the questionnaires were administered to selected participants at the orientation camp. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; section A is concerned with demographic data, that is, personal information of respondents such as sex, age, department, and tertiary institution. While section B, contains the scales on the variables under-study. Also, the copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researcher with the help of NYSC camp officials. A total of four hundred and fifty copies of questionnaire were distributed, four hundred and thirty was retrieved while four hundred and three questionnaires were found fit and used for final analyses, with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Collected and collated quantitative data were analysed using the descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics was used to examine the demographic variables while inferential statistics was used to test the stated hypotheses. Simple linear regression analysis Pearson Product Moment correlation

coefficient (PPMC) was used to test relevant stated hypotheses which was done with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

#### 4.0 Presentation and Analysis Results

This section presents statistical results of the tested hypotheses and the discussion of results.

**Table 1: Sex of the Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	172	42.7	42.7	42.7
Female	231	57.3	57.3	100.0
Total	403	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2020)

Table 1 reveals that 172(42.7%) of the respondents are male, 231(57.3%) of the respondents are female, and the number of respondents is 403. This indicates that the majority of the respondents are female.

#### 4.1 Hypothesis one

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention.

**Table 2: Results of bi-variate correlation between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention with descriptive analysis**

Variables	N	Means	Std. Deviation	<i>r</i>	<i>P</i>
1 Emotional intelligence	403	3.82	.53		
2 Entrepreneurial intention	403	3.38	.61	.32**	.00

\*\*.*p* is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Evident in table 2 above, is the result of the bi-variate Pearson's correlation analysis between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention of the respondents. The result indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between the variables ( $r=.32, p<.05$ ). Thus, in line with the rule of thumb, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate was accepted.

## Hypothesis 2

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant influence emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention.

**Table 3: Results of simple regression analysis on the influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention.**

Variable	B	SE(B)	$\beta$	T	Sig. ( <i>p</i> )
Emotional Intelligence	.32	.041	.32	6.8	.000
$R^2 = .103$					
$R = .321$					
Note: $F(1, 398) = 46$					

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional\_Intelligence

b. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial\_Intention

### Source: Field Survey (2020)

Table 3 shows the result of a linear regression that was estimated to predict the entrepreneurial intention of NYSC Members that served in the three (3) selected states (Lagos, Ondo and Ogun) in Southwest, Nigeria. A significant regression coefficient was found ( $F(1, 398) = 46, p < .05$ ), with  $R^2$  of .103. This presupposed that 10.3% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention is based on emotional intelligence level of the recent graduates. Also, the beta value under the standardized coefficients showed that emotional intelligence has a significant variance in the dependent variable ( $\beta = .32, p < .05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected because results showed that emotional intelligence influenced entrepreneurial intention.

## 4.1. Discussion

Based on hypothesis one, there is a positive significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention of NYSC Members that served in the three (3) selected states (Lagos, Ondo and Ogun) in Southwest, Nigeria while hypothesis two, showed a significant influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention of the participants. It can be deduced from these findings that, high emotional intelligence leads to entrepreneurial intention. This implies that entrepreneurial intention is influenced and motivated when a person is intelligent emotionally in terms of ability to feel, recognize, regulate, control, manage,

understand and evaluate his/her emotions and that of others. Besides, individuals with well developed and high emotional intelligence are able to identify and control their emotions and those of others. They are less likely to be hindered by negative emotions, paralyzed by fear, or inhibited by anxiety all of which have negative effects on their intention of being employers of labour at the labour market. Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2016) argued that individuals with high EI had certain emotional abilities and skills related to appraising and regulating emotions in themselves and others. Accordingly, it was argued by Mayer et al., (2016) that individuals high with EI could accurately perceive certain emotions in themselves and others (e.g., anger, sadness) and also regulate emotions in themselves and others in order to achieve a range of adaptive outcomes or emotional states (e.g., motivation, creative thinking) that leads to entrepreneurial intention.

These findings are supported by the work of Tufall, Aziz and Aman (2019), Chien, Sun, Yang, Zheng and Li (2020) that found a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention and also an influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention. Likewise, Nuha, and Fazana (2018) found that, there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention. These findings implied that, if undergraduates are given proper exposure to engage themselves in activities that will enhance their emotional competence/intelligence it will create a mental stability to cope with challenges and to pursue their entrepreneurial intentions. Based on the above discoveries, emotional intelligent individuals are more likely to engage in innovative entrepreneurial activities, and tend to have higher affection, informing creative dispositions and facilitating innovation, which are key aspects of entrepreneurship. This research outcome is further buttressed by Bar-on's model of emotional competencies that has to do with emotional- social intelligence which involves a connection of interrelated emotional and social competencies that determine how we understand and express

ourselves, how we understand others, how we relate with people around us, and how we cope with daily emotional challenges. Once an individual is able to achieve this, it will give room for creative thinking, likewise, encourage and promote the intention of job creation. According to Goleman (2001) consideration needs to be given to alternative life-success factor such as emotional intelligence, which is carried through an organization like electricity through wires as it drives performance in an organisation. Low levels of emotional intelligence create climates rife

with fear and anxiety and this in-turn does not motivate entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, Bar-On (2006) presented the view that, people with high emotional intelligence are more likely to handle stress and frustration, gain success based on their various intentions and get along with other people than less emotionally intelligent people. Therefore, effective transfer of emotional intelligence depends on the adopted entrepreneurship pedagogy that drives and motivates entrepreneurial intentions. Moses and Akinbode (2014) proposed the need to design a captivating entrepreneurship development pedagogy that can increase the emotional intelligence of students in order to draw students' intentions into entrepreneurship in Nigeria.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

This study examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention and influence of emotional intelligence on entrepreneurial intention. The study found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and entrepreneurial intention and likewise found that emotional intelligence influenced entrepreneurial intention of NYSC members that served in the three (3) selected states (Lagos, Ondo and Ogun) in Southwest, Nigeria. Based on these findings, this study concludes that emotional intelligence influenced entrepreneurial intention. High emotional intelligence is relevant to recent graduates as it motivates and increases their interest and intention towards creating jobs for themselves upon graduation from school.

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