

1 **THE CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR YOUNG UNIVERSITY**
2 **GRADUATES IN BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, AND CHAD**

4
5 **ABSTRACT**

6 The unemployment of young graduates is a major concern for African states. To address the
7 unemployment resulting from repeated economic and political crises, the inability of the job
8 market to absorb successive waves of graduates, and the mismatch between training and
9 market demands, entrepreneurship emerges as a viable solution for young graduates. Our
10 study aims to examine the perception of entrepreneurship among graduates of higher
11 education institutions. Based on a survey conducted in thirteen universities in Burkina Faso,
12 Cameroon, and Chad, we distributed six hundred questionnaires to Master's and Bachelor's
13 degree students of all genders. The data collection was conducted by the firm The
14 results of this study show that, in general, perceptions and intentions of entrepreneurship, as
15 well as the evaluation of the predominance of advantages over disadvantages, are positive.
16 The results show that the establishment of training and the field of specialization positively
17 influence the respondents' decision to start a business.

18
19 **Keywords:** unemployment, young people, intention and perception, motivation and belief,
20 entrepreneurship, universities, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad.

21
22 **CONTEXT AND ISSUES**

23 Over the past two decades, repeated economic crises have led to job insecurity, resulting in
24 high unemployment rates in Africa. Young graduates are particularly vulnerable to
25 unemployment as a result of economic and political crises. Added to this are population
26 growth, the government's inability to implement a reliable employment policy, the inability
27 of the labor market to absorb successive cohorts of young graduates, and the inadequacy of
28 training to meet the demands of this market. Entrepreneurship is emerging as the
29 alternative proposed by several organizations and governments (World Bank, UNCTAD,
30 AfDB, OECD, and UNDP, 2014). . Indeed, economic entrepreneurship has become crucial, as
31 it is a factor in the growth and economic development of a nation, or even a sub-region. It
32 helps to strengthen a region's capacity to adapt by renewing its stakeholders.
33 Entrepreneurship creates jobs, stimulates economic growth and innovation, and improves
34 social conditions. This is why Schumpeter (1989) argues that it is the engine of economic
35 and social development. New businesses adapt to the new situation because, when they
36 enter a market for the first time, they offer products and services that did not previously
37 exist locally, thereby broadening consumer choice (Jarniou, 1999) by offering them tailored
38 product ranges.

39 According to statistics from African data production institutes, youth underemployment
40 represents a loss of economic growth. In this regard, youth employment issues are a
41 universal concern, but particularly pressing in Africa. The ILO (2013) argues that the global

42 youth unemployment rate has remained stable in recent years, falling from 12.7% in 2009 to
43 12.3% in 2011, then rising from 12.4% in 2012 to 12.6% in 2013. However, INSEE (2018)
44 notes that the global unemployment rate reached 12.8%, according to statistics that vary
45 from one subregion to another.

46 Furthermore, according to UNFPA (2011), 35% of the African continent's population is
47 unemployed. According to this organization, the main challenges facing young African
48 graduates are unemployment, underemployment, difficulty in linking training and
49 employment, poverty, and limited access to capital.

50 Faced with this situation, and in the broader context of the new socio-economic landscape
51 combined with unexpected crises that are prompting African countries to strengthen their
52 resilience, a consensus is emerging: African governments must more actively promote socio-
53 economic development by putting entrepreneurial mechanisms in place. The latter have the
54 task not only of creating favorable conditions for workforce skills development and
55 infrastructure, but also of improving the investment climate by identifying and supporting
56 start-up SMEs and entrepreneurial projects. This hypothesis is confirmed by the existence of
57 new emerging economic models that challenge established principles and open up new
58 avenues (Tounès, 2006). However, it seems clear on the ground that the number of new
59 businesses created by young graduates is low.

60 The purpose of this study is to improve and disseminate knowledge about entrepreneurship
61 among young people by testing their desire and belief in the subject. It also provides public
62 authorities with appropriate responses to support graduates in their thinking and decision-
63 making about entrepreneurship.

64 The aim of our article is to contribute to a better understanding of entrepreneurship and to
65 establish a profile of economic entrepreneurs in order to identify the conditions for the
66 emergence and development of entrepreneurial spirit, which is a source of ideas and
67 projects. It also aims to present the environmental opportunities that favor creation and the
68 factors that stimulate entrepreneurial spirit (Bamba et al., 2021). It is therefore essential to
69 explore and examine entrepreneurial climates, entrepreneurial perception, and the
70 contribution of higher education, support, and programs aimed at young African
71 entrepreneurs with degrees. This theoretical framework gives rise to the following
72 questions:

73 What obstacles prevent them from doing so? To what extent can entrepreneurship be a
74 solution to unemployment? While support for entrepreneurial initiatives is crucial, the
75 question of the contribution of higher education institutions to youth entrepreneurship is a
76 delicate one.

77 In the first part, we present the theoretical and conceptual framework of entrepreneurship.
78 The second part is devoted to methodology and models of entrepreneurship. The third part

79 presents and analyzes the results. The fourth part is devoted to interpreting the results and
80 discussion, followed by conclusions and implications.

81 **I. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

82 Numerous writings on entrepreneurship have given rise to a wide range of publications
83 (Filion, 1997). Outside the field of economics and social sciences, topics related to
84 entrepreneurship extend to various other areas. In their various works, some authors
85 examine the diverse behaviors of entrepreneurs (Alexandre, 2016; Manchesnay, 1934).
86 According to the latter, these include behaviors, activity systems, entrepreneurial processes,
87 corporate entrepreneurship, ethnic entrepreneurship, etc. Independent disciplinary
88 approaches are no longer sufficient to explain this increasingly difficult field of study
89 (Fayolle, 2002; Bruyard, 2001). When it comes to entrepreneurship, approaches and
90 methods have often varied from one country to another and from one continent to another
91 (Filion, 1997). In this context, our study examines the theories underlying entrepreneurship
92 in order to explain the different models in use.

93 **Entrepreneurial theories and behaviors of entrepreneurs**

94 Several theories underpin the field of entrepreneurship and attempt to define
95 entrepreneurial behavior. We are witnessing the emergence of several training models,
96 including those of Shapero and Sokol (1982) and Ajzen (1991), which are supported by
97 numerous researchers (Krueger, 1993; Krueger and Carsrud, 1993).

98 **Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991)**

99 The theory of planned behavior gives the individual's intention a central role in the genesis
100 of behavior (Tounès, 2003; Fayolle et al., 2006). It proposes a reference model that can be
101 used in all situations where behavior is intentional, as it is based solely on external variables
102 that are immediate determinants of behavior (Emin, 2003). Intention is in fact the result of
103 three conceptual determinants: attitude towards behavior, perceived social norms, and
104 perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).

105 ➤ **The perceived social norm**

106 It refers to perceived social pressures to engage in or refrain from a certain behavior (Ajzen,
107 1991). In other words, perceived social norms correspond to an individual's perception of
108 social pressure regarding the opinions of their loved ones, family, and friends about what
109 they would like to do (Tounès, 2003; Fayolle et al., 2006). Attitudes towards behavior and
110 perceived social norms refer to the concept of desirability proposed by Shapero and Sokol
111 (Fayolle, 2005).

112 ➤ **Attitude toward behavior**

113 It refers to a person's favorable or unfavorable assessment of it (Ajzen, 1991). This variable
114 represents the attractiveness of the behavior (Emin et al., 2005). For example, attitude
115 toward risk leads a person to view risk-taking in a positive or negative light. Similarly,
116 attitude toward the success and failure of entrepreneurship influences an individual's
117 decision to start a business.

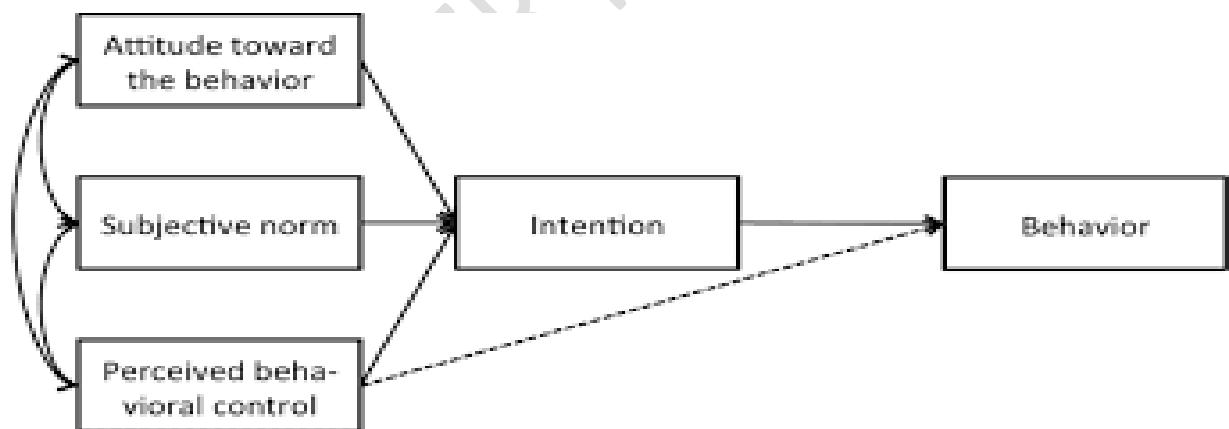
118 ➤ **Perceived behavioral control**

119 In general, behavior is defined as an individual's characteristic attitude. According to Ajzen
120 (1991), perceived behavioral control corresponds to the perceived ease or difficulty of
121 performing a behavior. It refers to a person's perception of their own ability to perform the
122 behavior in question (Emin et al., 2005). The concept of perceived behavioral control is very
123 similar to that of personal efficacy in Bandura (1977) and feasibility in Shapero and Sokol
124 (1982). Attitudes toward behavior, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control
125 are expressed in terms of beliefs (Tounes, 2003). These correspond to the true or false
126 information that a person has about the world around them.

127

128 **Figure 1: Diagram explaining the theory of planned behavior**

129 This diagram shows that attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived
130 behavioral control constitute intention. Intention lies between these variables and behavior.
131 Intention and perceived behavioral control therefore drive behavior.



132
133 **Source:** Theoretical model of planned behavior adapted from Ajzen (1991)

134 **1.1.1 Theoretical model of the entrepreneurial event (Shapero and Sokol, 1982)**

135 The theoretical model resulting from their work encourages individuals to turn to
136 entrepreneurship rather than other professions. Based on the concepts and dimensions
137 of entrepreneurship, they define entrepreneurial intention as the result of a positive or
138 negative perception of the desirability and feasibility of entrepreneurship in a social,
139 political, and cultural environment.

140 Shapero's (1975) entrepreneurial model aims to explain the entrepreneurial event, i.e., to
141 study the factors that explain the choice of entrepreneurship over other career paths. This
142 entrepreneurial event, resulting from a combination of four variables (Emin, 2004), could be
143 translated into entrepreneurial action, the perception of desirability, the perception of
144 feasibility, and the propensity to act.

145 **❖ Entrepreneurship**

146 The situation that precipitates entrepreneurial action can be negative (divorce,
147 emigration, dismissal), positive (influence of family, existence of a market or potential
148 investors) or intermediate (leaving the army, school or prison) (Tounès, 2006).

149 **❖ Perception of the desirability of the act**

150 Desirability refers to the social and cultural factors that influence an individual's value
151 system. Previous experiences and failures in entrepreneurial ventures, for example,
152 reinforce these perceptions (Aboubakari and Feudjo, 2020).

153

154 **❖ Perception of the feasibility of the act**

155 One final remark concerns the fact that Shapero's model does not explicitly refer to the
156 intention to start a business. In line with Shapero, Krueger (1993) developed a model of
157 entrepreneurial event formation that incorporates the concept of intention (Emin, 2004, p.
158 3). All of these variables must work together and interact to lead to the entrepreneurial
159 event.

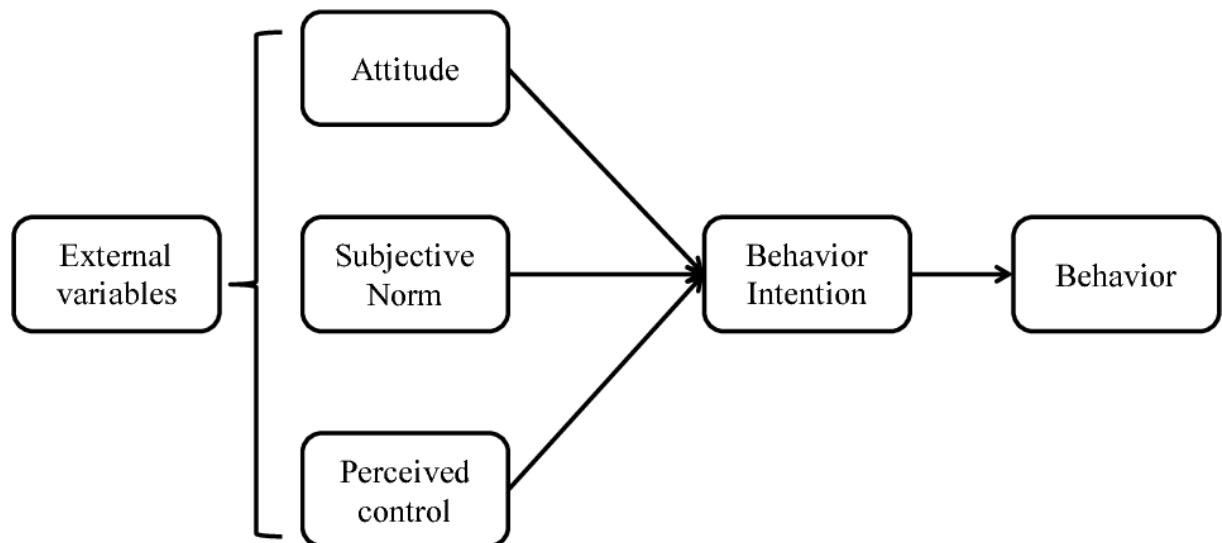
160 Furthermore, Boissin et al. (2008) define perceived desirability as the degree of attraction a
161 person feels toward starting a business. It refers to the perceived appeal of starting a
162 business, taking into account the influence of beliefs, principles, fears, cultural and social
163 factors, as well as the presence of entrepreneurial role models in one's social circle (Audet,
164 2004). Based on the notion of perceived sustainability, perceived feasibility symbolizes the
165 degree to which a person believes they can successfully start a business (Boissin et al., 2005).
166 The latter results in particular from the presence of support to acquire the resources
167 necessary to start a business (Tournes, 2003; Omrane, 2015). Desirability and feasibility
168 interact to give a clear attitude and vision of entrepreneurship (Benata, 2016; Aboubakari
169 and Feudjo, 2020).

170 The theory of reasoned action is a model developed in social psychology to study the field of
171 entrepreneurship (Fishbein, M., and Ajzen, 1975). These authors point out that the basis for
172 the decision to engage in entrepreneurial action is the hope of achieving a certain result
173 following the execution of the behavior. The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) posits
174 that human behavior must first be decided and planned in order to be concrete. For an
175 entrepreneur to decide on their actions, they must take into account three types of

176 interacting factors: attitudes toward behavior (desirability of entrepreneurship), social
177 norms (influence and opinion of loved ones), and determination or self-efficacy, i.e., beliefs
178 about their ability to succeed (Boufeldja, 2014).

179 **Figure 2: Theoretical model of formation**

180 This figure shows us that intention is formed by perceived experience and desirability, as
181 well as perceived feasibility. The latter tends toward the initiation of the act.



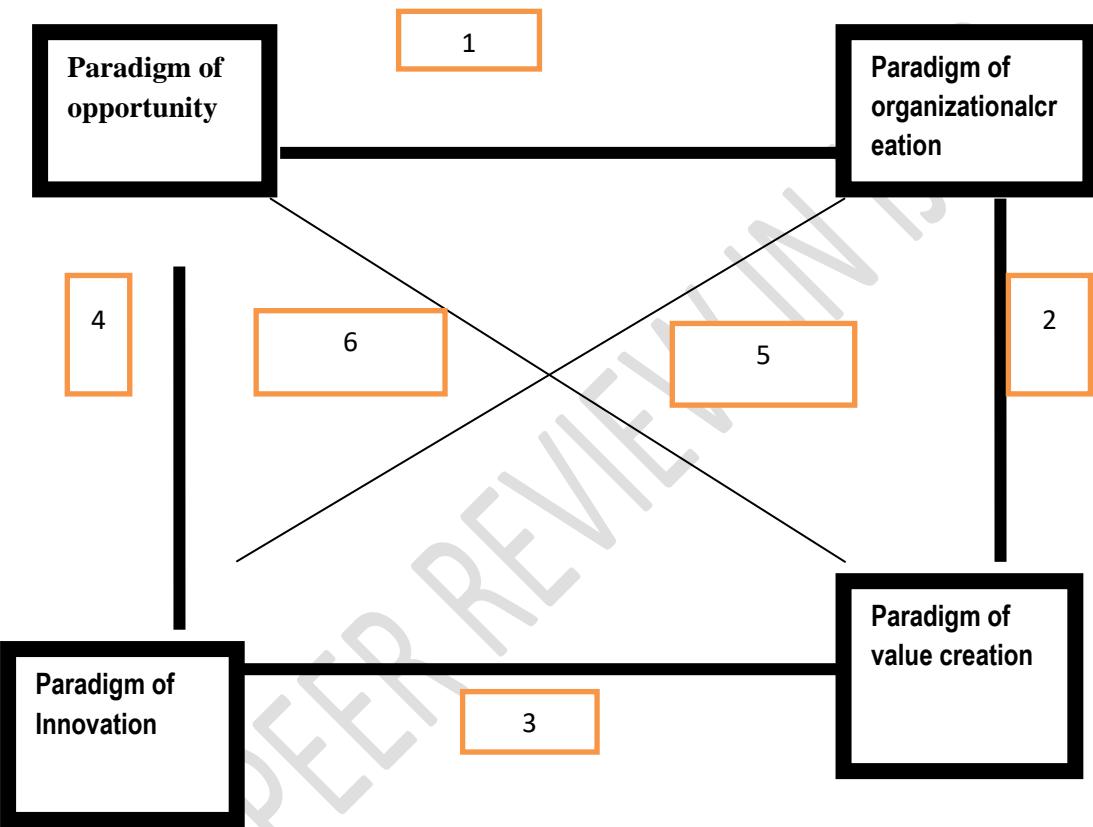
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183 **Source:** Entrepreneurial event model adapted from Shapero and Sokol (1982)

184 **1.1.2 The complementarity of different paradigms**

185 In their definition of entrepreneurship, Paturel and Arasti (2006) refer to four
186 complementary paradigms. According to them, entrepreneurship is “an idea for exploiting
187 an opportunity within the framework of an organization that is driven, created from scratch
188 or initially taken over, then developed by an individual or a team undergoing a significant
189 change in their lives, according to a process that leads to the creation of new value or the
190 elimination of waste of existing value.” According to Hernandez (2001), “the entrepreneur is
191 the one who initiates a complex process.” Hisrich and Peter (1989) propose a table that
192 summarizes two concepts: innovation, favored by Schumpeter and Drucker, and the creation
193 of organization, favored by Gartner (1993). Verstraete (2000) presents entrepreneurship as a
194 heterogeneous phenomenon involving multidimensional and complex tasks that cannot be
195 reduced to a simple definition or a single paradigm.

196 In line with these different perceptions, Gartner has argued for three decades that “the
197 complementarity of the different schools of thought is quite evident in several respects.” To
198 explore this concept further, Verstraete and Fayolle (2005) propose a model combining four
199 key dimensions of entrepreneurship: value creation, organization creation, innovation, and
200 opportunity detection. The first two paradigms focus on the outcome of the process, while
201 the latter two focus on the resources involved in the process.



This diagram shows us that the paradigms of entrepreneurship are the cross-relationship between the paradigm of opportunity, the paradigm of innovation, the paradigm of organizational creation, and the paradigm of value creation.

Link 1: To exploit a business opportunity, it is necessary to organize in some way. Various resources crystallize into an organization (process and/or result).

Link 2: The organization cannot exist in the long term (and the entrepreneur cannot maintain his status with respect to this organization) without providing its stakeholders with the value they expect and from which it draws the resources necessary for its operation.

Link 3: When the value added is significant, it is often the result of an innovation, whether organizational, technical, or commercial.

Link 4: An innovation corresponds to the introduction of an opportunity to the market. Innovation can be considered a process of socializing a new technique or commercial method. It also involves providing a new product or service, or the emergence of a new organization in a given market or sector.

Link 5: Like an opportunity, exploiting an innovation requires organization, and the existence of the latter fosters the creative interactions necessary for innovation.

237 **Link 6:** An opportunity is only exploited if it is perceived as capable of generating value, at
238 least for the person who identified it.

239

240 **1.2 Entrepreneurial motivation and intention**

241 A classic approach to entrepreneurship attempts to highlight the differences between
242 entrepreneurs and ordinary citizens. For Schumpeter (1934), entrepreneurs are innovators
243 who develop new technologies. Indeed, several practitioners, such as Casson (1982), believe
244 that entrepreneurs' personal characteristics are tools for understanding the motivation
245 behind their behavior.

246 **1.2.1 Types and sources of entrepreneurial ideas**

247 Entrepreneurship is considered a dynamic and complex process, as it results from
248 psychological, sociocultural, political, and economic factors (MujingaKapemba et al., 2023). It
249 manifests itself through attitudes, perceptions, norms, intentions, and behaviors in a given
250 context (Tounes, 2007, p. 74). According to the author, business creation is the most visible
251 manifestation of entrepreneurship. It can be broken down into four phases: propensity,
252 intention, decision, and action. Business creation is a complex phenomenon that can be
253 approached from many angles. Hernandez (2001) emphasizes that the intention or desire to
254 be an entrepreneur is the first element necessary for the creation of an organization, and
255 manifests itself in the search for information useful for action.

256 Entrepreneurial intent is indeed at the heart of the process (Bird, 1988), which is of definite
257 interest. Alexandre (2016) highlights the existence of other categories of entrepreneurs,
258 including senior entrepreneurs, students, and immigrants, but also, more recently, social
259 entrepreneurs, "mampreneurs," and "web entrepreneurs." Lagarde (2006) concludes that
260 most of the entrepreneurial typologies developed are adaptations or extensions of Smith's
261 (1967) concept, such as the innovator-explorer and the follower-reactor (Miles and Snow,
262 1978), the entrepreneur and the owner (Gartner, 1989), and the risk manager and the family
263 artisan (L .afuente and Salas, 1989).

264 Based on these typologies advocated by Lagarde (2006), we find that despite the abundance
265 of literature on the subject, no single classification truly dominates. Several factors may
266 explain this situation: the multidisciplinary and heterogeneous nature of the field of
267 entrepreneurship, the objectives and conditions of research, and the context of the study.
268 That said, overall, common specificities emerge in this transdisciplinary literature.
269 Researchers observe entrepreneurs as human beings endowed with various qualities, such
270 as a taste for risk, management skills, and business acumen (Boudabbous, S., 2011).

271 The profile of entrepreneurs has been the subject of extensive research (Gasse, 2004), as the
272 success of a business is attributed to its founder and entrepreneurship is an important factor
273 in economic development (Benata, 2016). In addition, Van Stel, Storey, and Thurik (2007)
274 observed that the characteristics of the entrepreneur had an impact on the development of
275 his or her business. The personality of the entrepreneur plays a central role in the success of
276 his or her project (Bruyat, 1993).

277 Describing the profile of entrepreneurs who have successfully started a business in greater
278 detail would enable interested individuals to determine whether they have the required
279 profile and would allow funding agencies to select candidates with a high probability of
280 success. This entrepreneurial profile would also provide a better understanding of the
281 modes of action, attitudes, and activity choices of organizational actors, as well as their
282 modes of reaction to their environment (Filion, 2000). As a result, numerous complementary
283 and contradictory typologies have emerged in the literature on entrepreneurship.

284 Research on entrepreneurship has established causal links between the variables
285 "entrepreneurial motivations" and "impacts on business creation" (Davidson, 1995;
286 Morrison, 2001). However, it is possible to question whether entrepreneurs' motivations
287 may differ from one individual to another. Indeed, these motivations could be altered by
288 certain conditions such as culture, environment, type of businesses present, remoteness,
289 family situation, and education (Sangué-Fotso and DidaNgouane, 2023).

290

1.2.2 Research on entrepreneurial motivations

291 Research on entrepreneurial motivation draws on theories of motivation shared by
292 psychologists and managers (Estay et al., 2011). However, motivation is based on reflections
293 on the origins of business creation (Gartner, 1988). Fillon (1997) proposes a definition of
294 entrepreneurship that highlights the link between individual motivation and this
295 characteristic. According to the author, this definition encompasses the scope of
296 entrepreneurship, the practices of entrepreneurs, their activities, their characteristics, the
297 socio-economic effects of their behavior, and the support provided to them to facilitate the
298 expression of their entrepreneurial activity.

300 Sarah (2023) defines entrepreneurial motivation as the desire to fulfill certain specific needs.
301 Motivation is therefore based on needs, followed by values, goals, desires, intentions, and
302 rewards. Added to this is a conception of entrepreneurship advocated by Ahmad and
303 Hoffman (2008), according to which it is the result of human actions aimed at undertaking
304 and generating value through the creation or development of an economic activity.

305 The creation or expansion of activities involves identifying and exploiting new products,
306 processes, and markets. Based on these definitions, it is clear that entrepreneurship is the
307 result of several factors, among which motivation plays a key role. Like intention, culture,
308 and perception of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial motivation is supported by theories,
309 particularly psychological and managerial ones.

➤ McClelland's research on entrepreneurship (1961)

310 This author's work is considered to be among the most highly regarded in entrepreneurship,
311 as his research focuses on entrepreneurial motivation, which includes the need for
312 achievement as a key motivating factor (McClelland, 1991). However, Shapero (1975) has
313 criticized this theory and proposed an alternative theory that is better suited to changing
314 times.

➤ Shapero's displacement logic (1975)

315 Shapero's model (1975) explains entrepreneurial activity by examining the factors that
316 influence an entrepreneur's choices. According to Shapero, in addition to psychological
317 characteristics, entrepreneurs must also take into account contextual factors of a
318 socioeconomic nature. The author argues that these factors are at the root of
319 entrepreneurial behavior in individuals and result in negative, positive, or intermediate
320 shifts.

321 In this regard, Kirkwood (2009) and Mucchielli (2001) refined Shapero's research by
322 distinguishing between necessity entrepreneurship and opportunity entrepreneurship, and
323 by taking into account the nature and specificities of entrepreneurship in the study of
324 motivations.

➤ Logic of intergenerational motivations

325 Neider's research (1987) focuses on intergenerational entrepreneurial motivations and their
326 effects on age groups, and has been corroborated by the work of Andria and Gabarret

330 (2016). This research highlights changes in circumstances depending on the age of
331 entrepreneurs, whether they are first or second generation.

332 Indeed, Gbaguidi (2017) believes that an entrepreneur is first generation when they make
333 decisions rigorously, without being influenced by their entrepreneurial peers. Regarding
334 second-generation entrepreneurs, the author argues that they are at the beginning stage
335 and that their decision to start a business is influenced by the entrepreneurial experience of
336 a relative, which gives them a minimum level of business creation skills (Wagner, 2005;
337 Giacomin et al., 2007).

338 **1.2.3 Standards relating to contractors**

339 Subjective norms are expectations regarding the behavior to adopt during a socialization
340 process (Vallerand, 1994). They refer to the influence of the behavior of those close to us on
341 our own behavior (Gergen et al., 1992). Ajzen (1991) argues that if individuals seek to act in
342 accordance with their reference group, this can positively influence behavioral intention.

343 Conversely, if the individual is not conformist, subjective norms can have a negative effect
344 on behavioral intention. In the context of these students nearing the end of their studies,
345 these norms translate into a need for achievement, a search for autonomy, a desire to
346 conform to family expectations, a propensity for risk-taking, and a desire to emulate
347 entrepreneurial role models (Tounes, 2006).

348 ➤ **The need for fulfillment**

349 Although it is rarely linked to intention, McClelland (1961) directly associated the need for
350 achievement with entrepreneurship. This concept is rooted in values, beliefs, and culture.
351 Tchagan and Tchankam (2018) demonstrate that the need for achievement is a
352 discriminating variable for business creation. Thus, the need for achievement enables
353 students, at the end of their training, to decide on the career path that will allow them to
354 fulfill themselves (Tounes, 2006).

355 ➤ **The quest for autonomy**

356 Motivation is a variable that distinguishes students who express an intention to become
357 entrepreneurs (Tounes, 2006), i.e., a desire for autonomy. This can be explained by the fact
358 that individuals need to be their own boss and work according to their own will. The quest
359 for autonomy is also a determining factor in several studies on the motivations that lead to
360 entrepreneurial action.

361 **1.3 University education in the traditional system to the paradigm of the 362 entrepreneurial university**

363 An analysis of these universities in light of the entrepreneurial university paradigm highlights
364 several problems that undermine them and proposes solutions.

365 **1.3.1 Structural and governance issues**

366 The entrepreneurial university is a strong central decision-making body capable of
367 responding quickly to changes and expansion in the labor market. However, most academic
368 institutions south of the Sahara operate in a context of bureaucratic governance, extreme
369 poverty, and underfunding. This situation limits the room for maneuver of the various
370 actors involved in human and technical resource management.

371 Indeed, it is difficult to find external partners willing to cooperate with universities, as they
372 lack the necessary knowledge or are unwilling to do so. In this regard, Gjerding (2006)
373 argues that it is up to traditional universities to train external users and offer them
374 opportunities they cannot refuse. Furthermore, if alumni play no role and pressure groups
375 are ineffective, the university may miss out on certain entrepreneurial opportunities
376 (Gjerding, 2006).

377 The question that needs to be answered is that of academic conservatism in traditional
378 universities. This system results in a tendency among certain university departments to
379 systematically reject any initiative that seeks to assign the university a non-academic mission
380 (Dia, 2011). This goes beyond its traditional missions, which are the transmission,
381 preservation, and creation of knowledge (Dia, 2011).

382

383 **1.3.2 Contribution and opportunity of the entrepreneurial university**

384 The traditional mission of the university is increasingly being questioned, particularly in
385 terms of its practices, but sometimes also in terms of its objectives (Gasse, 2011). While
386 most universities have gradually begun to adapt their role to society's new expectations,
387 teaching and technology in entrepreneurial universities are now a key factor in economic
388 success. Based on the thesis of the transition from the traditional university system to the
389 entrepreneurial university, Dia (2011), Goy (2012), and Konaté (2022) argue that these
390 universities are gateways to a knowledge-based economy and society in which
391 entrepreneurship is at the center of the transition.

392 The entrepreneurial university model has greatly influenced recent developments in the
393 university system (Lyu et al., 2024; Schaeffer, 2019). As such, we see that public authorities
394 and researchers are committed to replicating this model in their countries. However, the
395 results are not the same, as success depends on the cultural, economic, political, and social
396 specificities of each country. Rather than seeking to imitate, contingency or factual elements
397 must be taken into account in order to build entrepreneurial universities specific to each
398 country or region. Different approaches to the role of universities in the socio-economic
399 world allow for different types of entrepreneurial strategies, depending on whether
400 universities draw their resources from international-level research and the potential of their
401 students to carry out entrepreneurial projects and contribute to the economic development
402 of their regions (Schaeffer, 2019). After providing an overview of entrepreneurship in Africa,
403 we present the methodology used for the study, describing the sample, the data collection
404 method, and the processing tools.

405

406 **II. METHODOLOGY**

407

408 Our research aims to be both innovative and complementary to existing work on
409 entrepreneurial perception, motivation, culture, and intention, particularly graduate
410 students' beliefs about entrepreneurship (Bamba et al., 2021). Unlike previous research
411 conducted by several authors (Seidou, 2022; Aboubakari and Feudjo, 2020), we use a
412 measurement tool specifically designed to characterize entrepreneurial perception,
413 intention, climate, and motivations.

414 Drawing on various theories, including entrepreneurial motivation theory (Gbaguidi, 2017;
415 Gabarret, 2016), planned behavior theory (Ajzen, 1991), and entrepreneurial event theory
416 (Shapero and Sokol, 1982),

417 Our methodology encompasses everything from data collection to statistical analysis. Data
418 collection is carried out using a questionnaire designed and adapted to the context of the
419 countries studied (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and Chad). This questionnaire was distributed to
420 graduates from thirteen universities in sub-Saharan Africa, including two in Cameroon, ten in
421 Chad, and one in Burkina Faso.

422

423

424 **2.1. Sampling and scope of the surveys**

425 In this study, we examine perceptions based on the desirability of starting a business
426 (Shapero, A. and L. Sokol., 1982). In order to better explain these perceptions, as well as
427 entrepreneurial beliefs and motivations, we have compiled a sample of graduates from
428 different specializations at public and private universities following various courses or
429 programs.

430 The sample consists of 13 universities and training institutes in three countries. The
431 questionnaire was administered to 400 students from universities and institutes in Chad, 100
432 students from universities in Cameroon, and 100 students from the University of Burkina
433 Faso. The data collected was processed using SPSS software. The tools used were simple and
434 cross tabulations.

435 **2.2. Period for administering questionnaires and their return**

436 The final version of the questionnaire was administered to 600 respondents between mid-
437 July and the end of August 2024 by us (three teachers and a consulting firm). The study
438 sample was selected using non-probability sampling, i.e., by selecting respondents in public
439 spaces, on campuses, and in university residences at public and private universities.

440 We added a random dimension to our sampling technique by distributing the questionnaires
441 across five sites and collecting data over several days. We used Excel and Stata software to
442 test the relationship between each of the variables through cross-tabulation analyses.

443 **III. Presentation and interpretation of results**

444 Section (3) of our research focuses on the presentation and analysis of the results.

445 **3.1. Respondent profiles**

446 The 600 respondents are on average 30 years old and of mixed gender. In the sample, the
447 percentage of male respondents (51%) is almost equal to that of female respondents (49%).
448 The 600 respondents are on average 30 years old and of mixed gender. In the sample, the
449 percentage of male respondents (51%) is almost equal to that of female respondents (49%).
450 The areas of specialization are economics (20.8%), management (50.2%), and other
451 specializations (29%). Sources of income at the time of the survey were family (71%) and
452 other (29%). Respondents came from various universities and schools in the three African
453 countries, including universities in Chad (65%), Cameroon (24.5%) and Burkina Faso (10.5%).

454 **3.2. Intention to start a business by institution and gender**

455 We asked respondents if they were considering starting a business.

456 The scale had five levels: very poor, poor, neutral, good, and very good.

457 Table 1: Intention to start a business by educational institution and gender

	% UniversityStudents	% Privateschoolstudents	women	men
Chad	65%	35%	30,85%	69,15%
Cameroon	100%		60,50%	39,50%
Burkina-Faso	100%		59,30%	40,70%

458 **Source:** Surveys conducted by ourselves and processed using Excel

465 **Table 1:** shows that, across all public and private universities in our sample, students
 466 approve of the idea of starting a business. The difference lies between Cameroon (60.5%)
 467 and Burkina Faso (59.3%) for women, and between 39.5% and 40.5% for men. For Chad, the
 468 table shows a low percentage of women (30.85%) compared to 60.15% of men with regard
 469 to starting a business.

470

471 **3.3. Influence of the educational institution on the perception of the advantages and**
 472 **disadvantages of starting a business**

473 We also asked them to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of starting a
 474 business. While overall perceptions of entrepreneurship and the assessment of the
 475 prevalence of advantages over disadvantages are positive, significant differences exist based
 476 on two variables: educational institution and field of specialization.

477 **Table 2:** Advantages and disadvantages of entrepreneurship according to institution and
 478 training

TRAINING FIELDS AND INSTITUTIONS						
Chad			Burkina Faso		Cameroon	
FIELD and ETS	Advantages	disadvantages	Advantages	disadvantages	Advantages	disadvantages
FIELD and ETS	72%	28%	80%	20%	90%	10%
FIELD and ETS	60%	40%	60%	40%	55,50%	44,5%
FIELD and ETS	50%	50%	70%	30%	60%	40%
FIELD and ETS	38%	62%	68%	32%	55,45%	44,55%

479 **Source:** our surveys processed by Excel

480 **Table 3:** shows that graduates surveyed in Chad believe that the government's legal,
 481 regulatory, and security measures relating to entrepreneurship are unreliable, as the
 482 disadvantages outweigh the advantages. Except for competition in entrepreneurship, the
 483 assessment is 50% advantages and 50% disadvantages.

484 With regard to Burkina Faso, the students surveyed stated that laws, regulations,
 485 competition, and security are advantageous to a degree of 70%, compared to 30% who
 486 stated they are disadvantageous.

487 Cameroon also has an advantageous situation in terms of laws, regulations, tax systems,
 488 competition, and security, with a benefit rate of over 60%. On the other hand, the
 489 disadvantages of entrepreneurship in this country represent less than 40%.

490 **3.5. Influence of gender in the implementation of a project or business venture**

491 After conducting a gender survey, the study reveals a significant difference between men
 492 and women when it comes to starting a business.

493 A higher percentage of young Chadian men (70.2%) than women (39.8%) strongly agree with
 494 the idea of starting a business, compared to 80% of young people in Burkina Faso and
 495 Cameroon. However, only 18.3% of men and just over a third of women (20%) moderately
 496 agree with this idea.

497 **Table 4: Influence of business creation by gender**

	Chad	Cameroon	Burkina Faso
Starting a business	% Responses from the respondents	% Responses from the respondents	% Responses from the respondents

		the respondents	
men	70,20%	50%	80%
women	39,80%	50%	70%

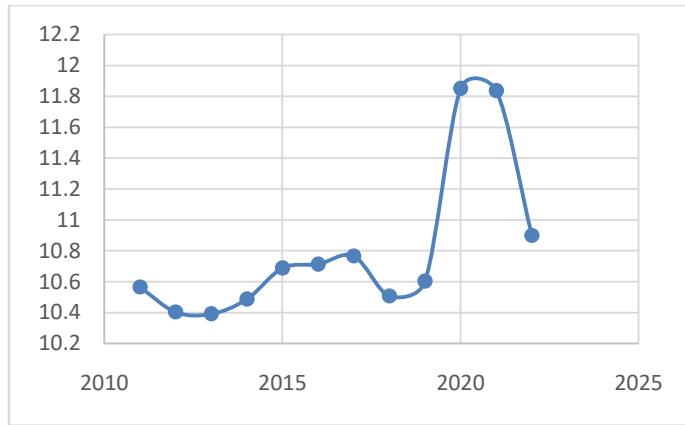
498 **Source:** Surveys conducted by ourselves and processed using Excel

499 **3.6. Growth in entrepreneurial activities among young people from 13 universities in**
500 **three countries for the period 2010-2022**

501 Looking at this graph, we can see a change in the entrepreneurial activities of young
502 university graduates in these three countries. The graph shows that the growth rate fell from
503 10.6% in 2010 to 10.4% in 2018, then rose to 11.8% in 2020, before falling back to 10.8% in
504 2022.

505 This situation, shown in the graph, requires interpretation in order to understand the causes
506 of this growth and decline in activity. Figure 4 shows the evolution of entrepreneurial activity
507 among recent graduates from 13 universities.

508 Figure 4: Evolution of entrepreneurial activities among recent graduates from 13
509 universities



510

511 **Source:** surveys conducted by us and processed by Stata

512

513 **3.7. Students' perceptions of entrepreneurship education**

514

515 This graph (5) shows that graduate students' conception of entrepreneurship is at point 7
516 (optimistic definition), followed by points 1 and 2, which explain "entrepreneurship
517 concepts" and "entrepreneurship advantages," respectively.

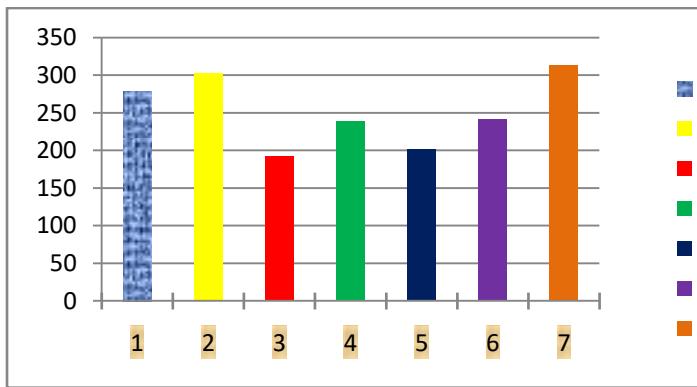
518 This means that more than 300 respondents agree that entrepreneurship brings added value
519 to young graduates, more than 300 people express satisfaction with entrepreneurship, and
520 more than 250 people approve of the benefits of entrepreneurship. This means that
521 respondents see a significant advantage over disadvantage.

522

523 **Figure 5 highlights the response rates of respondents.**

524

525 **Figure 5:** Optimistic design, added value, and understanding of entrepreneurship according
to the response rate of respondents from 13 universities in three countries



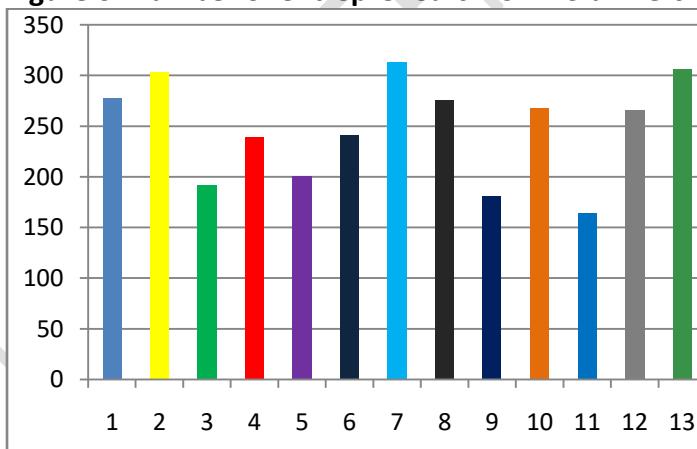
527 **Source:** survey conducted by ourselves and processed using Excel

528

529 **3.8. Promotion of entrepreneurs from 13 universities in three African countries**

530 The surveys conducted highlighted the proportion of graduates from 13 universities in three
 531 African countries who have embarked on entrepreneurship. During the 13 years of training,
 532 from 2010 to 2022, the University of N'Gaoundéré in Cameroon and Adam Barka University
 533 in Abéché, Chad, provided the largest number of entrepreneurs to their nations, with 310
 534 entrepreneurs have produced the largest number of entrepreneurs for their countries,
 535 namely 310 entrepreneurs. They are followed by the University of Moundou (2), the
 536 University of N'Djamena (8), and HEC-Chad University (1), which have each trained
 537 approximately 280 operational entrepreneurs. During the same period, i.e., 13 years of
 538 training, the graph shows that Joseph-Kizerbo University in Burkina Faso (12), the University
 539 of Maroua (10), the University of Sarh (6), and the École normale supérieure de N'Djaména
 540 (4) also trained professional entrepreneurs, with more than 250 students each. Figure 6
 541 below highlights the increase in the number of students engaged in entrepreneurial
 542 activities in the 13 universities in the three countries.

543 **Figure 6: Number of entrepreneurs from 13 universities in three countries**



545 **Source:** Survey conducted by us and processed using Excel

546

547 **IV. INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

548 In light of the various results mentioned in the graphs and tables above, it is necessary to
 549 conduct an interpretation and discussion consistent with the concepts used and subsequent
 550 work on entrepreneurship.

552 **4.1. The influence of motivation, intention, culture, and gender on the entrepreneurial**
553 **perception of young graduates.**

554

555 Unlike other African countries, where a decline in activity was observed during the 2020-
556 2021 period, Figure 4 shows that entrepreneurial activity at the 13 universities in Chad,
557 Cameroon, and Burkina Faso grew, reaching a growth rate of 12% among operational
558 entrepreneurs. This shows that the Covid-19 epidemic did not affect the entrepreneurial
559 activities of these young graduates in these three countries. This growth can also be
560 explained by the resumption of oil operations in Chad and the change of political regime in
561 Burkina Faso.

562 With regard to culture, our results reveal that 38% and 62% of graduates from public and
563 private universities, respectively, approve of its benefits, compared to the studies conducted
564 by Fotso and DidaNgouane (2023) in Cameroon.

565 When it comes to the influence of gender on entrepreneurship, we see that the level of
566 approval is higher among men in Chad, who are more likely to approve of the idea of starting
567 a business or entrepreneurial project. The percentage of men and women who approve of
568 entrepreneurship is 70.2% and 29.8% among young Chadians. Unlike Cameroon and Burkina
569 Faso, Table 4 shows almost identical percentages of men and women, both above 80%. It
570 should be noted that the issue of gender in entrepreneurship is a complex field of study that
571 evolves over time (Bamba et al., 2021). Many cultural and religious variables can influence
572 the results (Pacito et al., 2014).

573 Regarding the influence of educational institutions on entrepreneurial beliefs, the study also
574 reveals that 72.0% of respondents from universities say they are in favor of starting a
575 business. Finally, educational institutions influence the assessment of the predominance of
576 advantages over disadvantages inherent in starting a business by 70%.

577 In fact, more than 60% of respondents approve of entrepreneurship as an advantage,
578 compared to less than 40% who see it as a disadvantage. It should be noted that
579 respondents' field of study and specialization influence their perception of
580 entrepreneurship. However, only 30% of respondents do not associate entrepreneurship
581 with belief.

582 The results of the survey on entrepreneurial mechanisms suggest that these vary from one
583 country to another and according to the perceptions of graduates from these thirteen
584 universities. Table 3 shows that, in terms of legal, regulatory, and security measures,
585 respondents in Chad say that all government measures relating to entrepreneurship are
586 unreliable, as the disadvantages outweigh the advantages by more than 50%. With regard to
587 competition in entrepreneurship, the assessment is 50% advantages and 50% disadvantages.
588 As for Burkina Faso, the surveyed students claim that laws, regulations, competition, and
589 security are advantageous by a margin of 70%, compared to 30% who say they are
590 disadvantageous.

591 Cameroun also has a favorable situation regarding laws, regulations, the tax system,
592 competition, and security, with an advantage rate of over 60%. Conversely, the
593 disadvantages of entrepreneurship in this country represent less than 40%.

594

595 **4.2. Discussions about the evolution of entrepreneurial activities of a number of**
596 **entrepreneurs from 13 universities in three countries.**

597

598 Figure 6 shows that the promotion of entrepreneurs from 13 universities varies by field of
599 specialization and educational institution. It can be seen that universities 2, 8, and 13 have
600 produced the greatest number of entrepreneurs according to their area of specialization.
601 The University of Moundou (2) specializes in economic and social sciences, as do the
602 universities of Abéché (8) and N'Djamena (13). This situation confirms that the field of
603 specialization and the educational institution create differences in terms of entrepreneurial
604 intention and desirability. These young graduates are driven by perceived desirability and
605 feasibility to create entrepreneurial activities or businesses.

606 Figure 4 shows the evolution of entrepreneurial activities among young graduates from 13
607 universities for the period 2010-2022. These results show that the growth rate of these
608 activities increased to 11-11.5% during the period from 2020 to 2021. This indicates that the
609 growth rate increased by 4.5% in ten years.

610 Although the world survived the Covid-19 epidemic, it did not affect entrepreneurial
611 activities or the creation of businesses by young graduates in these three countries. In Chad,
612 this growth rate can be explained by the evolution of oil and mining activities.

613 In Burkina Faso, government transition policies have taken precedence over entrepreneurial
614 activities among young college graduates. In Cameroon, this increase is due to the
615 government's political situation in the Adamaoua region (N'Gaoundéré).

616 Our results therefore confirm in part those obtained by Aboubakari and Feudjo (2020), who
617 predicted a significant advance in terms of the desirability of entrepreneurship among young
618 graduates in Cameroon.

619

620 **Conclusion and Implications**

621 Entrepreneurship has long been used as a development lever around the world, particularly
622 in Nordic and Asian countries, while the African continent seems to be unexplored.

623 In France, the field of entrepreneurship has evolved, even if it is not yet entirely marginal.
624 Isn't it surprising that research on entrepreneurship is so underdeveloped in developing
625 countries like Chad, Burkina Faso, and Cameroon?

626 Our research focused on entrepreneurship among young graduates from 13 universities in
627 three African countries. The variables considered are entrepreneurial intention and
628 perception, motivation, and the state's policy toward entrepreneurship, which significantly
629 influence the creation of entrepreneurial activities by young graduates.

630 In this context, the work involves energizing entrepreneurial research by encouraging young
631 graduates from African universities. These contributions focus on entrepreneurial aspects, as
632 well as on models of intention and formation. This research provides information on the
633 profiles of students considering creating a business and on the state's support programs
634 before creating one. This research addresses one of the gaps in young graduate
635 entrepreneurship in the context of these three countries.

636 We also considered the positioning of intentional approaches, beliefs, gender, and
637 perception at the intersection of different approaches to entrepreneurship. Furthermore,
638 this research sheds light on the dynamics and complexity of the entrepreneurial process.
639 Indeed, excluding cultural and gender factors, our research was based on socio-economic,
640 cultural, institutional, and legal factors (Tounès, 2003).

641 The studies of Shapero (1975), Sokol and Shapero (1982), and Ajzen (1975), on which these
642 studies were based, had not yet been sufficiently tested empirically in these three countries.
643 The theory of planned behavior had not been fully validated among the respondents.

644 The intention of these graduate students depends partially on entrepreneurial desirability
645 and motivation, as well as their area of specialization. Thus, although intention depends on
646 desirability and motivation, it depends less on perceived feasibility.

647 Finally, we explored the relative contribution of the various variables influencing
648 entrepreneurial behavior. Our research showed that, in the particular context of graduate
649 students, the degree of desirability contributed more to predicting entrepreneurial intention
650 than perceptions of feasibility. This result is all the more interesting because it contradicts
651 those obtained by Krueger (2009) when testing the Shapero model in the United States on a
652 population of graduate students.

653 In addition, our contribution is based on an in-depth study of desirability and feasibility. At
654 the level of the intention model, the research model is based on different disciplines, such as
655 entrepreneurship (Shapero and Sokol's entrepreneurial event model, 1982) and the theory
656 of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

657 Our model combines three theories: the theory of planned behavior, the entrepreneurial
658 event theory, and the theory of motivation. It respects the specificity of each variable
659 included in the questionnaire.

660 We find that these theories are complementary and form the basis of entrepreneurial
661 intentions and perceptions through perceived desirability and feasibility. This approach
662 contradicts the results of several authors, such as Emin (2003), Tounès (2003), Boissin et al.
663 (2009), and Fayolle (2004). These authors argue that these theories are similar. Our research
664 aligns with the results obtained by Aboubakari and Feudjo (2020).

665 In terms of practical implications, the main conclusions of this research propose instruments
666 that facilitate the practices of the various actors involved in the process of creating a
667 business.

668 Our research aims to provide knowledge that supports the thesis of the shift from traditional
669 systems to entrepreneurial universities, whose pedagogical investments should be a priority
670 for African states, particularly Chad, Cameroon, and Burkina Faso. Practical interests also
671 include developing the entrepreneurial potential of young graduates, specifically through
672 entrepreneurship as a professional career. Our research suggests that states should support
673 these young people with incentives and entrepreneurial support programs.

674 The creation or transition from the traditional system to the entrepreneurial university must
675 be the priority of our three states to promote the development of an entrepreneurial culture
676 within the academic community, through teaching and trainers who rely on entrepreneurial
677 concepts, the creation process, and motivation to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial
678 universities must create training programs and networks of contacts with managers to
679 improve the perception of entrepreneurship among young graduates

680

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