

## Examining the Influence of Entrepreneurial Attributes on Self-reliance among Higher Education Students in Seychelles

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### Abstract

The study reveals the effect of entrepreneurial attributes on self-reliance across five institutions of higher education in Seychelles. Self-Reliance is said to be the true value of education. Using Emerson's words, "education is not about imitating others but a contribution to oneself and the society." Education should focus more on strengthening students' critical thinking skills and being productive while learning is a process that involves both environmental and personal experiences. Data for this study was obtained through descriptive correlation design on 294 individuals who participated in the survey, with 277 being students and 17 being lecturers and administrators. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 26) and NVivo 14 software were used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data respectively. In order to determine the statistical correlation between variables, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) method was utilised. The findings of the study indicate that Proactiveness, Creativity, and Risk-taking exert a significant influence on the development of Self-reliance. This study revealed that, students demonstrate a proactive approach but are less inclined towards creativity and risk-taking. This trend seem to be consistent among past cohorts. The aforementioned phenomenon has had a detrimental impact on students' ability to rely on themselves upon completion of their academic studies. The study posited three hypotheses demonstrating a significant positive relationship between the two variables. Further investigation is necessary to ascertain whether former students exhibit self-reliance or continue to rely on assistance from benefactors.

**Keywords:** Self-reliance, Proactiveness, Creativity, Risk-taking, Higher institutions, Vocational and Business Courses

Students need to be self-reliant to develop critical thinking and other important skills. Teachers have a critical role in shaping students' learning and future success through their input, decision-making, teaching strategies, and engagement with students (Jebson & Muraina, 2018). Seychelles is considered a top African nation for education due to its free and accessible education policy. This recognition is internationally acknowledged. Govinden (2021) stated that the country's rating is 69.3 points in education recognised by the World Education Forum. In 2014, Seychelles achieved the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) goal of "Education for All" (Amla, 2014). Govinden (2021) reported that the Seychelles education sector allocates between 9 and 19% of its annual budget to accommodate the 13 levels of schooling, ranging from crèche to secondary five. Although tertiary education institutions in Seychelles' received limited funding for training (Joubert-Lawen, 2021). This factor may hinder the development of self-reliance in students. Education Statistics in Seychelles (2023) recorded, primary level Gross Enrollment Rates (GER) for males and females were 113% and 112%. At the lower secondary level, the GER for males was 126% and for females was 124%. At the higher secondary level, the GER for males was 63% and for females was 75%. The Tertiary Gross Enrollment (TGE) in Seychelles from 2018 to 2020 was reported as the lowest. This represents a financial loss for the government, which allocates a lot of resources to education. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (n.d) asserts that when the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) exceeds 90% for a specific education level, it means that the overall student capacity is close to reaching the necessary number for universal access to that age group. The education system in Seychelles has not reached that level yet.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Seychelles Islands have a population estimated at 119, 000 (Nicette, 2023) ranking 200th out of 225 countries (Education Statistics in Seychelles, 2023). Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean, east of Africa (Lynch, 2023). The University of Seychelles is the country's sole highest education institution with 10 other higher education institutions (Joubert-Lawen, 2021 para. 7).

A modest reduction was noted among students who failed to complete their studies in 2019 and 2020. The Seychelles School Enrollment (n. d) reported low Tertiary Gross Enrollment (TGE) for the years 2018, 2019, and 2020 at 17.08%, 19.17%, and 14.72%, respectively. The data displays fluctuating Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) trends from 2018 to 2020. Joubert-Lawen (2021 para, 8) revealed that the percentage of access to higher education institutions in Seychelles remained within the range of 60 to 70% in 2020. In certain instances, a significant proportion of students, representing one-fifth or one-quarter, did not complete their academic programs within certain educational

institutions. On the other hand, Male and female students in higher education have significantly different Gross Enrollment Ratios.

In 2020, unemployment rate in Seychelles doubled to 4.8 percent compared to 2.3% reported towards the end of 2019 where males were reported to be more disadvantaged than females of 5.3% and 4.4% respectively. Most of the affected were the graduate youths from colleges and University within 15 years and 24 years of age (Laurence, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic caused challenges for many young individuals, including high unemployment, academic barriers, and job search difficulties causing crisis among young people (Alix, 2023). The lockdown closed schools and stopped education (The pandemic and its effect on children in the Seychelles, 2021). Many schools struggled with the shift to online learning due to limited resources and digital infrastructure. Low-income students faced internet access challenges for learning.

Fifty three (53) students deferred their higher education in 2020 due to pandemic-related financial constraints (The pandemic and its effect on children in the Seychelles, 2021). The Seychelles government offers career counseling and skill development programs for young people to build their entrepreneurial skills. The initiatives aim to support youths (My First Job Scheme, 2021). The government aims to prepare graduates for success, yet many still pursue office-based jobs. In 2021, 'My First Job' unit registered 631 youths. 65.9% (416) deemed ready for employment, 30% (189) were unwilling to work while 16 participants were actively job hunting, as confirmed by My First Job Scheme (2021).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to examining the influence of entrepreneurial attributes on self-reliance among higher education students in Seychelles. Other purposes of the study include to;

1. Determine the relationship between Proactiveness and Self-Reliance of higher institution students in Seychelles.
2. Determine the relationship between Creativity and Self-Reliance of higher institution students in Seychelles.
3. Determine the relationship between Risk-Taking and Self-Reliance of higher institution students in Seychelles.

## **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between Proactiveness and self-reliance among higher education students in Seychelles
2. There is no significant relationship between Creativity and self-reliance among higher education students in Seychelles
3. There is no significant relationship between Risk-taking and self-reliance of higher institution students in Seychelles

## **Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory**

The theory discusses self-efficacy which justifies this research findings. The social cognitive theory is concerned about human behavior and how environmental internal and external factors can affect humans. The cognitive theory views people as active agents who can both influence and are influenced by their environment (Nickerson, 2023).

## **2. Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The study employed Pragmatic Research Paradigm. A methodological approach that is most used in mixed methods research (Kaushik& Walsh, 2019). Sequential Quantitative and Qualitative (Mixed) Research Methods was employed, an approach where “researchers collect data at the same time and analyse through quantitative and qualitative within the same research study.” (Shorten and Smith, n.d). Data was analysed separately. A Descriptive correlational design (Bhat, n.d), was used to ascertain the effects of proactiveness, creativity and risk-taking on self-reliance among higher education students in Seychelles

### ***Population Sample and Sampling Techniques***

The study comprises of five out of ten higher learning institutions, from both private and public. Nine hundred eighty (980) elements were randomly sampled from the population. The sample size varied based on the institution's population. Two samples totaling 294 individuals were acquired. Stratified simple random sampling for **quantitative** study was used to sample 277 students studying business and vocational courses in their 2nd and 3rd year. **Qualitative** method was employed on the second sample which included 17 lecturers and administrators selected purposely and conveniently as participants. Five(5) to seven(7) staff participants were selected from each institution based on availability and size of each institution.

***Instruments Used***

The Web based 5-point Likert scale survey questionnaire which included demographics with five (5) sections of 46 items was administered to participants. The tools were accessed via various Face-to-face, self – administered questionnaire Online, i.e., via WhatsApp and email. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess the internal reliability of items in the quantitative data instruments. SPSS was employed to analyse quantitative research items and NVivo 14 was used to analyse qualitative research items. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to ascertain the significant relationship between variables. Data was displayed in tables

**3. Analysis, Discussion and Results**

***Data Analysis***

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical analysis was used to analyse the data.

**Results**

**The Hypotheses**

***Quantitative***

***Research Hypothesis One***

There is no significant relationship between self-reliance and proactiveness among higher education students in Seychelles.

**Table 1**

***The Summary Table Showing the Relationship between Proactiveness and Self-reliance (N=277)***

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Proactiveness</b>	23.62	10.80	275	0.841	.001	Significant P<0.000
<b>Self-Reliance</b>	23.30	10.66				

Table 1 above shows research hypothesis one (1) which statistically indicates that there was a significant relationship between Self-Reliance and proactiveness of higher education students in Seychelles ( $r=0.841$ ;  $P<0.000$ ). This means that proactiveness strongly influences Self-Reliance among higher education students in Seychelles.

**Research Hypothesis Two**

There is no significant relationship between self-reliance and Creativity among higher education students in Seychelles

**Table 2**

**The Summary Table Showing the Relationship between Creativity and Self-reliance (N=277)**

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	r	Sig	p
Creativity	23.06	10.74	277	0.790	.001	Significant $P<0.000$
Self-Reliance	23.30	10.66				

Research hypothesis two (2) reveals that there was a significant relationship between Self-Reliance and Creativity of higher education students in Seychelles ( $r=0.790$ ;  $P<0.000$ ). This indicate that Creativity influences Self-Reliance among higher education students in Seychelles.

**Research Hypothesis Three**

There is no significant relationship between Self-reliance and Risk-taking among higher education students in Seychelles

**Table 3**

**The Summary Table Showing the Relationship between Risk-taking and Self-reliance (N=277)**

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	R	Sig	p
Risk-taking	22.43	10.66	277	0.671	.001	Significant $P<0.000$
Self-Reliance	23.30	10.66				

Research hypothesis three (3) found a correlation between Self-Reliance and Risk-taking among students in Seychelles ( $r=0.671$ ;  $p<0.000$ ). This suggests that risk-taking modestly impacts the self-reliance development of higher education students in Seychelles. Engaging in risky behaviors impacts students' self-reliance in higher education.

### *Qualitative Hypotheses*

The NVivo 14 was employed to analyse qualitative data

1. There is no significant relationship between Proactiveness and self-reliance among higher education students in Seychelles

**Table 4**

*The Summary Table Showing the Relationship between Proactiveness and Self-reliance*

Theme	Description and Responses	Case Counts	Code Counts
<b>Relationship between proactiveness and self-reliance of higher Education students</b>	<b>To measure the relationship between Creativity and self-reliance of higher institution</b>	7	29
Effects of Proactiveness on the level of self-reliance among higher education students	Affects the future, Being truly proactive is difficult, Helps plan for students opportunities, highly underrated, proactive enhances the capability to be self-reliant, A predictor of self-efficacy, Certainly so, proactive enhances the capability	5	15
Level of proactiveness with its relationship on self-reliance among students	Proactiveness leads to critical thinking which in turn can lead to self-reliance, the government is, Students aren't proactive	1	2
Does intelligence have any impact on students' proactiveness for self-reliance?	I think so, prepares someone to be ready for unexpected surprises, Yes because they think more and deeper, rare, Impacts intelligence on students' proactiveness for self-reliance, Proactiveness leads to critical thinking	4	12
<b>N=17</b>			

Table 4 above sums up the relationship between the two variables proactiveness and self-reliance. The table shows quite low responses of (29) code counts. Most participants admitted to proactiveness influencing self-reliance. Responses like, 'certainly so, proactive enhances the capability, Proactiveness affects the future, helps plan for opportunities, enhances the capability to be self-reliant, a predictor of self-efficacy' show agreement and strong relationship between the variables. Intelligence having the frequency (12) also indicates one of the major influences on self-reliance. On the other hand, members of staff thought, students were not proactive enough and they found it so challenging to tell if their students understood what being proactive meant. Some of the responses recorded were 'being truly proactive is difficult, highly underrated by students' such sentiments showed low levels of proactiveness which stand at (2) in most of the institutions where research was conducted.

2. **There is no significant relationship between Creativity and self-reliance among higher education students in Seychelles**

**Table 5**

*The Summary Table Showing the Relationship between Creativity and Self-reliance*

Theme	Description and Responses	Case Count	Code Counts
<b>Relationship between Creativity and self-reliance of higher Education students</b>	<b>To measure the relationship between Creativity and self-reliance of higher institution</b>	5	29
Correlation of Creativity with self-reliance on students	Yes 65%, on students, influences creativity in some cases, Moderately, no, not always, received support from the sponsors, self-motivated to do better, somehow, Well-funded institution is likely to develop their creative skills unlike wise, well sponsors child and Yes those who put in more efforts	4	12
Creativity influence level on self-reliance	50 %, a bit, a bit, I would rate it to be at 50 %, lack practice, No, Not much	4	8
Creativity with self-	Absolutely, absolutely, creative mind tends to be	4	9



reliance on students	innovative, Yes, Creativity leads to self-reliance, No, self-improvement, Yeah definitely and self-establishment		
N=17			

Creativity as well recorded (29) code counts, having a Correlation of Creativity with self-reliance on students at (12) with responses like Yes 65%, Family influences creativity in some cases, Moderately, no, not always, received support from the sponsors, self-motivated to do better, somehow, Well-funded institution is likely to develop their creative skills unlike wise, well sponsors child and Yes those who put in more efforts. The responses indicate mixed feelings about the relationship. Creativity influences levels of self-reliance (8) and Creativity with self-reliance on students at (9) code counts. However, most respondents gave specific percentages in the range between 50% and 65 % which shows a significant average to high relationship between the two variables

3. **There is no significant relationship between Risk-taking and self-reliance of higher institution students in Seychelles.**

**Table 6**

*The Summary Table Showing the Relationship between Risk-taking and Self-reliance*

Theme	Description and Responses	Case Count	Code Counts
<b>Relationship between Risk-Taking and self-reliance of higher Education students</b>	<b>To measure the relationship between Risk-Taking and self-reliance of higher institution</b>	4	21
Correlation between risk-taking behaviour and self-reliance	closely related, Adolescence, behaviours, not always,	3	4
Ways learning environment affected students to take risk for self-reliance	I Can't tell exactly, knowledge they have acquired, Many are coming far from their homes, motivate learners, researching more, sacrificing leisure times, the need not to be left behind, has led to take risk, In areas where their needs are not fully met, sacrificing leisure times	5	10
Self-reliance through Proactivity, Creativity, and Risk-	Always try on any opportunities, Always try to improve and do better than others, creative ideas,	5	7

taking.	critically think, Exposing learners to more real life situations, giving tasks that challenge learners, intelligence rules the world, learn new skills, self-reliance arises out of a particular need, use every opportunity		
N=17			

Ways learning environment affected students to take the risk for self-reliance gave the code counts (10) where responses like 'I Can't tell exactly, the knowledge they have acquired, Many are coming far from their homes, motivate learners, researching more, sacrificing leisure times, the need not to be left behind, has led to taking a risk, In areas where their needs are not fully met, sacrificing leisure times' were recorded. Seconded by Self-reliance through Proactivity, Creativity, and Risk-taking with (7). And Correlation between risk-taking behavior and self-reliance at (4). Correlation between risk-taking behavior and self-reliance results show a low risk-taking relationship with self-reliance caused by various factors quoted such as the learning environment, homes students come from, and exposure to certain things and activities.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that in addition to Proactiveness, Creativity and Risk-taking, having a significant influence on self-reliance, the results revealed other factors within the three independent variables causing major influence on the students, frequent traits being:

- Students' personality
- Belief
- Environment,
- Intelligence levels
- Exposure to good and bad Behavior at school and home
- Adolescence
- Family influences

The low training funding for educational institutions in Seychelles (Joubert-Lawen, 2021), could be another contributing factor. Kim (2021) mentioned that, lack of

funding would encourage teachers to overload their students with theory, narrowing their minds and leaving little time for reflection.

The first research hypotheses indicate a significant relationship between proactiveness and self-reliance among Seychelles students ( $r=0.841$ ;  $P<0.000$ ) this shows that proactiveness had a strong impact on students' self-reliance in higher education. This is consistent with Li et al. (2022) who, in their findings on self-efficacy, indicate that self-reliance plays a full mediating role in the relationship between proactive personality and academic performance. Snyder (2017) found that a preference for autonomy is a common phenomenon from adolescence to adulthood. Snyder continued saying, self-reliance happen at different levels, with different outcomes and relationships. Certain personality traits were more conducive to self-reliance, and the provision of social support had important consequences during critical periods, such as the college application process (Snyder, 2017). Other indicators of the relationship between the two variables, according to the results, were "proactivity influences the future, helps plan for possibilities, is a predictor of self-reliance, increases the ability to be independent," although there were also indicators of individuals who did not understand what proactive meant, they did not understand what it means to be proactive, they thought it was difficult to become proactive and were greatly underestimated.

The results also revealed that personality is an influencing factor as well as intelligence (12), which clearly shows a greater effect on student initiative in these areas. Self-reliance influences the desire to prepare for the unexpected, which promotes critical thinking. Gharetepeh et al. (2015) also confirm that emotional intelligence and self-efficacy play an important role in academic success. The above components had a significant impact on initiative. However, the results showed that the Seychelles government through the Ministry of Education had been proactive, unlike the students. Further supporting these findings is that a qualitative study shows a significant correlation between proactiveness and self-efficacy (29), which indicates high self-efficacy (15) and intelligence (12). Furthermore, Egan and colleagues (2017) concluded that, creativity is promoted as an important skill in institutions, but is not fully recognised as central to the development of higher education. There are many ways that students resist being proactive.

The second research hypothesis statistically show a significant relationship ( $r = 0.790$ ;  $P < 0.000$ ) between the creativity and self-efficacy of Seychelles high school students and Reference (29). This means that creativity has an impact on students' self-efficacy

in higher education in Seychelles. Han and Abdrahim (2023) found in their study that teachers' creativity plays a crucial role in the development of students' skills and teachers' professional development. They discussed that teachers' creativity is the result of the interaction between personal characteristics and the surrounding social environment. Han and Abdrahim's findings are consistent with engaging teachers and administrators in creative activities using different teaching methods such as brainstorming. However, results show an average level of creativity among students. This may be due to low training funding for educational institutions in Seychelles (Joubert-Lawen, 2021). Kim (2021) argued that, a lack of funding would encourage teachers to overload their students with theory, narrowing their minds and leaving little time for reflection. However, the themes made it possible to understand the characteristics of creativity.

The results of the third research hypothesis indicate significant relationship at a low-moderate level ( $r=0.671$ ;  $p<0.000$ ) and (21), between self-reliance and risk-taking in Seychelles showing a low level of risk-taking among students. This is consistent with the findings of Kim (2021) who states that students are risk averse for fear of doing the wrong things. This means that risk-taking affects students' self-reliance in higher education. In the context of sustainable development, self-reliance refers to production practices that have been developed based on community resources (Kurtz, 2022). The results of the interviews revealed a lot of information about risk-taking, such as: students always try to take advantage of every opportunity, always try to become better and do better than others, creative ideas, critical thinking, and students' exposure to real situations. Tasks that challenge students, teach them new skills and make the most of them. Recent research findings have identified several factors that influence risk taking, including behavior. Tull (2023) explains that risky behavior consists of harmful actions that may be caused by social influences, mental health or substance abuse. Moreover, the findings provide valuable information about a very strong relationship with proactiveness, a moderate relationship with creativity, and a weak relationship with risk-taking among Seychelles tertiary students.

## 5. Recommendations

The discipline seeks to understand and prepare for upcoming challenges and opportunities, providing valuable insights for decision-makers and policymakers. This study provides valuable insights into how entrepreneurial attributes impact self-reliance in Seychelles' higher education students. The study findings suggest that several limitations should be considered by future researchers. Possibly some limitations could have been reduced. Further research is recommended to include a cohort of graduated students to gain insight into their self-reliance levels in personal

and professional lives. This will provide a full understanding of the ongoing self-reliance of the past group.

## 6. Conclusion

The study findings raised many questions. The findings revealed that Proactiveness, Creativity, and Risk-taking greatly influenced Self-reliance, and other factors were also linked to these variables. The investigation found that multiple factors, including students' personality, beliefs, environment, intelligence, academic and non-academic performance, behavior, and influence of adolescence and family dynamics, played a significant role. The study revealed a strong correlation between Proactiveness, Creativity, and Risk-taking with self-reliance among Seychelles students. The researchers discovered that self-reliance affects the connection between proactive personality and academic performance also common autonomy preference from adolescence to adulthood which reliance occurs at different levels and result in varying outcomes and relationships. Certain attributes could be more beneficial for self-reliance, and social support. The results indicate that proactivity influences the future, aids in planning, predicts self-reliance, and increases independence. Some people struggled to understand and embrace being proactive, underestimating its importance. The investigation reveals that, despite the low risk, the students demonstrated moderate creativity and proactivity. Students got significant help from lecturers and administrators. Some student placements were unsupportive, and family situations affected their academic performance. Staff interviews also indicated suspicions of student substance abuse. The findings of this investigation support Bandura's socio-cognitive theory, which suggests that self-efficacy impacts performance, effort, and emotional responses in the workplace. The theory is being challenged in response to the investigation's results. Students often think that completing their studies will bring them independence. It appears there is a lack of understanding about the hindering factors.

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