

Influence of the development of entrepreneurial skills on the confidence to undertake in university students

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Abstract: This study aimed to explore the influence of entrepreneurial skills development on entrepreneurial confidence in university students. Using an empirical approach, a structured questionnaire was administered to 322 students at a university in Lima, Peru, to assess participants' perceptions of self-awareness and self-assessment, problem solving, communication and presentation of ideas, as well as their entrepreneurial confidence. The data collected were analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM), which allowed for the identification of significant relationships between the variables. The results revealed that self-awareness, problem solving and effective communication have a positive and determinant influence on the development of entrepreneurial skills, which in turn significantly strengthen students' entrepreneurial confidence. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating the promotion of entrepreneurial skills in university education, as this can increase students' readiness and willingness to successfully start and manage their own entrepreneurial projects.

Keywords: entrepreneurial skills; confidence; students; communication; problem solving

1. Introduction

In today's university context, the development of entrepreneurial skills is crucial in order to prepare students skills is crucial to prepare students for the entrepreneurial environment. However, there is a gap in the understanding of how these skills influence entrepreneurial confidence. This study addresses this gap by examining this relationship in depth, seeking to provide empirical data to guide the implementation of more effective educational strategies in fostering university entrepreneurship.

In today's dynamic world, entrepreneurial confidence has become a key factor driving entrepreneurship and innovation (Aceituno-Aceituno et al., 2018; Ben, 2024). For university students, entrepreneurship represents a unique opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, develop essential skills and prepare for future professional careers (Bullón-Solís et al., 2023; Chávez et al., 2023). However, this process can be challenging and requires a combination of specific skills and competences. In this context, the development of entrepreneurial skills emerges as a crucial element that can significantly influence students' confidence to start and strengthen a venture (Aceituno-Aceituno et al., 2018; Alshebami et al., 2024).

In the Peruvian context, entrepreneurship has gained relevance as an engine of economic and social development, driving employment generation, innovation and

productive diversification (Chávez et al., 2023; Vásquez-Pauca et al., 2022). Universities play a fundamental role in this scenario, being spaces where students can cultivate their entrepreneurial spirit and acquire the necessary skills to face the challenges of the business world (Bretones and Radrigán, 2018; Pacheco-Ruiz et al., 2022). However, despite the growth of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country, challenges persist regarding the training and preparation of future entrepreneurs (Aceituno-Aceituno et al., 2018; Chávez et al., 2023). With respect to these circumstances in Peru, it is crucial to understand how the development of entrepreneurial skills can influence students' confidence to undertake entrepreneurship, providing valuable knowledge that contributes to strengthening entrepreneurial education and promoting a stronger and more resilient entrepreneurial culture in Peru.

The study of the relationship between the development of entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial confidence in university students represents a highly relevant area of research in education and business (Alshebami et al., 2024; Thawesaengskulthai et al., 2024). As entrepreneurship establishes itself as an increasingly attractive career option, it is crucial to understand how the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills can influence students' perceptions of their ability to initiate and manage entrepreneurial projects (Thawesaengskulthai et al., 2024; Valenzuela-Keller et al., 2021). This analysis seeks to explore how strengthening entrepreneurial competencies can boost university students' confidence, preparing them more effectively to face the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary entrepreneurial world.

Entrepreneurial skills are essential competences that enable individuals to identify opportunities, innovate, take risks and create value in the business environment (Cabana-Villca et al., 2013; Pagán, 2022). These skills are not only essential for starting and managing a successful business, but also for adapting to a dynamic and competitive business environment (Clemente-Vázquez and Torres-Gordillo, 2021; Sánchez and Ortega, 2023). Among the most prominent skills are self-awareness and self-assessment, problem solving and effective communication. Moreover, they play a crucial role in the personal and professional development of university students, preparing them to face the challenges of the business world and take advantage of the opportunities presented to them (Martín-Gutiérrez, 2023; Sánchez and Ortega, 2023).

Self-knowledge and self-assessment are fundamental skills for university students who wish to become entrepreneurs, as they enable them to understand their strengths, weaknesses, interests and values, which helps them to make informed decisions about their entrepreneurial career (Fernandez et al., 2022; Méndez-Picazo et al., 2021). Problem solving is another crucial skill, as entrepreneurs face numerous challenges and obstacles on their way to success (Fernandez et al., 2022; Pagán, 2022).

This skill enables them to deal effectively and creatively with problems that arise, find innovative solutions and adapt to changing situations. In addition, effective communication is essential to establish strong relationships with customers, collaborators and business partners, as well as to clearly convey the vision and value proposition of their venture (Fernandez et al., 2022; Sánchez and Ortega, 2023).

Given the growing interest of students in entrepreneurship at a private university in Lima, Peru, it has been decided to conduct a comprehensive study. It seeks to learn

about the development of skills that contribute to the general confidence of young people to become entrepreneurs (Chávez et al., 2023; Davey et al., 2016). Through surveys, it is hoped to obtain valuable information that will inform both university and national-level policies on entrepreneurship promotion. Based on the above, the following question arises: How does the development of entrepreneurial skills influence entrepreneurial confidence in university students?

The central objective of the research was to explore how the development of entrepreneurial skills influences entrepreneurial confidence in university students. To do this, entrepreneurial skills were broken down into different components, which allowed us to answer the question posed. The specific objectives of this study are: to understand how (a) self-awareness and self-assessment; (b) problem solving and (c) communication and presentation of ideas influence the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students.

The importance of conducting this study lies in the need to understand how the development of entrepreneurial skills can positively influence the entrepreneurial confidence of university students. Fostering these skills would not only enhance students' ability to identify and seize business opportunities, but also strengthen their self-confidence and resilience in the face of entrepreneurial challenges.

Furthermore, improving students' confidence promotes a proactive attitude and a greater willingness to take calculated risks, which are crucial factors for success in entrepreneurship. Therefore, this study aims to provide valuable recommendations that will contribute to designing more effective educational programmes and fostering entrepreneurship among university students.

Despite the growing importance of entrepreneurship in the university context and its key role in Peru's economic and social development, there is a lack of empirical research analysing in detail how the development of specific entrepreneurial skills influences students' entrepreneurial confidence. This gap in the literature limits the ability of educational institutions to design effective training programmes that enhance both entrepreneurial skills and self-confidence of future entrepreneurs. This study seeks to fill this gap by providing empirical data and analysis that can guide the implementation of more precise and effective educational strategies in fostering university entrepreneurship.

2. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

This section is divided into two parts. The first presents the relationship between: self-awareness and self-assessment, problem solving and communication and presentation of ideas with the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students and the second part shows the relationship between the development of entrepreneurial skills and the entrepreneurial confidence of university students.

Self-awareness and self-assessment are fundamental entrepreneurial skills that play a crucial role in the holistic development of university students towards an entrepreneurial mindset (Fernandez et al., 2022; Martínez et al., 2019; Méndez-Picazo et al., 2021). Its development enables students not only to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, but also to understand their intrinsic values, interests and motivations (Fernandez et al., 2022; Finke et al., 2021). By cultivating a deep understanding of

themselves, students are empowered to effectively align their personal skills and aspirations with the demands and opportunities of the business world (Mejía, 2023; Pacheco-Ruiz et al., 2022).

This strategic alignment facilitates informed and informed decision-making, enabling students to identify and seize market opportunities, as well as navigate confidently through challenges and adversity (Calanchez et al., 2022; Hebles et al., 2019). In addition, self-awareness and self-assessment foster adaptability and resilience, essential qualities for any entrepreneur seeking to innovate and thrive in a dynamic and competitive business environment (Fernandez et al., 2022; Méndez-Picazo et al., 2021).

Additionally, these skills promote a more inclusive and collaborative entrepreneurial culture at university level, where students learn to value and respect diversity of perspectives and approaches, and to work constructively in multidisciplinary teams (Finke et al., 2021; Pujol et al., 2018). This entrepreneurial mindset cultivated through self-knowledge and self-assessment not only benefits individuals in their career path, but also contributes to the development of more innovative, creative and positive social and economic impact-oriented university communities (Fernandez et al., 2022; Martín-Gutiérrez, 2023).

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Self-knowledge and self-assessment influence the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students.

Problem-solving skills are an essential entrepreneurial competence that plays a determining role in the integral formation of university students towards a robust entrepreneurial mindset (Gallegos et al., 2024; Pagán, 2022). This skill enables students to identify, analyse and address complex challenges effectively and creatively, using a systematic and evidence-based approach to find innovative solutions (Bosma et al., 2012; Fernandez et al., 2022).

By developing strong problem-solving competencies, students acquire the ability to confront entrepreneurial obstacles with confidence and determination, proactively adapting to changing market dynamics and taking advantage of emerging opportunities (Clemente-Vázquez and Torres-Gordillo, 2021; Sánchez and Ortega, 2023). This ability to manage and overcome entrepreneurial challenges contributes significantly to students' ability to make informed strategic decisions, optimise resources and maximise the value generated in their ventures (Al-Qahtani et al., 2022; Pagán, 2022).

Furthermore, problem solving fosters critical and analytical thinking, allowing students to evaluate different scenarios, foresee possible risks and design effective mitigation strategies (Pagán, 2022; Valenzuela-Keller et al., 2021). This proactive and solution-oriented mindset not only strengthens individual entrepreneurial skills, but also enriches the university environment by promoting a culture of collaboration, continuous learning and constant improvement (Fernandez et al., 2022; Vásquez-Pauca et al., 2022).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Problem solving influences the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students

Communication and presentation of ideas are vital entrepreneurial skills that play a fundamental role in the formation of university students with a strong and effective entrepreneurial mindset (Bae et al., 2014; Sánchez and Ortega, 2023). These skills

enable students to clearly articulate their thoughts, share information effectively and persuade diverse audiences, from potential customers to investors and work teams (Backes et al., 2022; Fernandez et al., 2022).

By developing advanced communication and presentation skills, students can convey their entrepreneurial vision in a compelling way, generating interest, trust and support for their entrepreneurial initiatives (Awad and Salaimh, 2023; Bataineh et al., 2023). This ability to communicate ideas clearly and persuasively is crucial for establishing meaningful connections, building lasting relationships, and collaborating effectively in dynamic and competitive business environments (Bernhofer and Li, 2014; Fernandez et al., 2022).

In addition, effective communication and presentation of ideas enhance students' ability to listen actively, understand the needs and concerns of others, and adapt their message to resonate with different audiences (Baquero and Monsalve, 2023; Pagán, 2022). This ability to communicate empathetically and adaptively strengthens students' ability to work in multidisciplinary teams, resolve conflicts constructively, and foster an inclusive and collaborative entrepreneurial culture (Fernandez et al., 2022; Flores-Pérez and Gutiérrez, 2023).

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Communication and presentation of ideas influence the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students

Entrepreneurial skills development has a transformative impact on university students' entrepreneurial confidence, acting as a fundamental pillar that empowers them to successfully navigate the complex and dynamic world of entrepreneurship (Al-Qahtani et al., 2022; Awad and Salaimh, 2023). By cultivating core competencies such as innovation, adaptability, strategic decision-making and resource management, students acquire a solid foundation on which to build and develop their entrepreneurial projects with confidence and determination (Fernandez et al., 2022; Lopez et al., 2023).

This training in entrepreneurial skills not only strengthens students' individual self-confidence, but also fosters a sense of collective and collaborative empowerment, encouraging students to work together, share knowledge and support each other's entrepreneurial initiatives (Cunha et al., 2024; Fauziah et al., 2023). This collaboration and networking enrich the university environment, creating a vibrant and diverse entrepreneurial culture where creativity, innovation and continuous learning are celebrated and valued (Gavilanes et al., 2022; Pérez et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the development of entrepreneurial skills boosts students' ability to face and overcome obstacles, failures and adversities with a resilient and proactive attitude (Pagán, 2022; Prieto et al., 2023; Savall et al., 2020). This growth and self-improvement mentality allows them to learn from their experiences, adapt to market changes and evolve their ideas and projects in an iterative and customer-centred manner, thus maximising opportunities for success and sustainable growth in their ventures (Litardo and Cortés, 2021; Pagán, 2022; Palomares-Montero et al., 2019).

Hypothesis 4 (H4): The development of entrepreneurial skills influences the entrepreneurial confidence of university students

Based on the exhaustive analysis of the existing literature, the structural model proposed in **Figure 1** has been developed and is presented. This model seeks to comprehensively and systematically represent the relationships between the key variables identified in the study, providing a robust theoretical framework for

understanding and analyzing the factors that influence the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students.

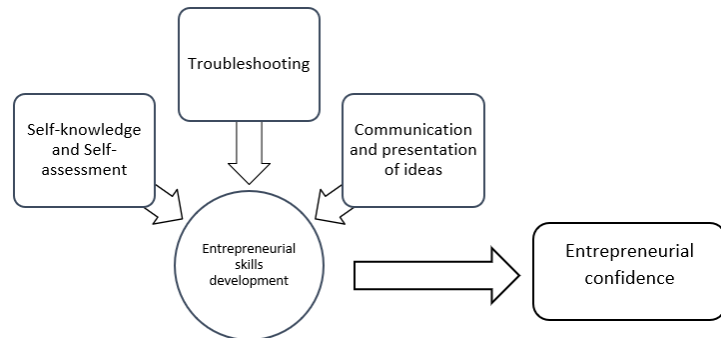


Figure 1. Proposed structural model.

Source: Chávez et al. (2024).

3. Materials and methods

This section details the methodological guidelines guiding the present study. The research is based on an empirical approach, with the aim of contrasting the relationships and hypotheses proposed for the constructs. To achieve this purpose, a structured questionnaire was designed and administered to students at a university in Lima, Peru.

The research process began with the development of the questionnaire, which consisted of 39 items. Of these, 5 were intended to collect descriptive data and identify the characteristics of university students. In addition, the remaining 34 questions were designed to assess students' perceptions of the constructs analysed, using a 7-point Likert scale (1: Strongly disagree to 7: Strongly agree). This scale allows the application of specific data analysis methods for this type of assessment (Hernández et al., 2018; Singh et al., 2018).

Then, the survey was conducted with the participation of 322 students from the faculty of business sciences of a university in Lima, Peru. The sample was selected using a convenience sampling method and exceeding the minimum size of 200 subjects for any type of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

The convenience sampling method was selected due to the accessibility and availability of students at the university's business school in Lima, Peru. Since access to the full population of 827 students could be difficult or impractical, especially in terms of resources and time, convenience sampling was considered a viable option to obtain a representative sample of the target population. Furthermore, with a sample of 322 students, it was expected to obtain meaningful and generalisable results for the student population under study, especially considering that this sample size exceeds the minimum requirement for structural equation modelling (SEM). Although convenience sampling may have limitations in terms of representativeness, it was considered adequate for the purposes of this study given the limited access to the entire population and the ability to obtain meaningful data within a reasonable resource and time frame.

Once the data was collected, data processing and analysis was carried out using

the statistical software SmartPLS version 4 Professional. The use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) has gained popularity in recent decades in social science studies, due to its ability to perform multivariate analysis. These models offer the advantage of combining latent (unobserved) variables, which represent theoretical concepts, with measured data (indicators or manifest variables), which are used to examine hypothesized relationships through statistical analysis.

Its application was divided into two stages: 1) The evaluation of the measurement model, which describes the relationship between the different constructs (latent variables) and their respective indicators (manifest variables), in order to test the hypotheses and assess the predictive level; and 2) The evaluation of the structural model, which describes the interrelationship between the constructs (structural relationships).

4. Results

In this section, the findings of the study are presented in two parts. The first section deals with the results obtained through the descriptive statistical analysis of the sample, while the second focuses on the statistical findings that validate the hypotheses proposed in the study.

4.1. Descriptive results

The results derived from the descriptive analysis applied to the study sample are presented in detail in the following table. This information constitutes an essential starting point for understanding the nature and context of the data collected, thus establishing a solid basis for subsequent interpretations and analyses in the research study.

Table 1. Sample characteristics.

Characteristics	Categories	n	(%)
Sex	Male	125	38.68
	Female	197	61.32
Age	<18 years	51	15.83
	18–21 years	167	51.79
	>22	104	32.38
Course related to entrepreneurship	yes	278	86.34
	no	44	13.66
Entrepreneurship initiative/development	yes	192	59.63
	no	130	40.37
Extracurricular training on entrepreneurship	yes	185	57.45
	no	137	42.55

Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics and entrepreneurship-related experiences of the sample studied. Firstly, there is a female predominance, representing 61.32% of the participants. In terms of age, the largest group is in the 18–21 age range, with 51.79%, followed by those over 22 with 32.38%.

In relation to education and experience in entrepreneurship, it is notable that an

overwhelming majority of the participants (86.34%) have taken courses related to entrepreneurship in their academic training. This high percentage suggests a growing interest and recognition of the importance of entrepreneurship as a skill and an avenue for professional development. In addition, more than half of the participants (59.63%) have shown initiatives or development in the field of entrepreneurship, indicating a proactive attitude and a level of commitment to the exploration and practical application of entrepreneurial skills.

On the other hand, in terms of extracurricular training on entrepreneurship, 57.45% of the participants have received this type of training, which could imply a wide availability and access to learning opportunities outside the traditional curriculum. However, the 42.55% who have not had such training suggests the existence of a gap that could be addressed through the expansion of entrepreneurship education programmes and resources.

4.2. Statistical results

In this section, statistical findings derived from structural equation modelling analysis using Smart PLS version 4 software are presented. This modelling approach allows examining the complex relationships between latent and observed variables, providing insights into the underlying structure and dynamics between the dimensions studied in relation to entrepreneurship.

Table 2. Reliability and construct validity.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Self-knowledge and Self-assessment	0.811	0.817	0.888	0.725
Communication and presentation of ideas	0.825	0.842	0.894	0.738
Entrepreneurial confidence	0.732	0.731	0.848	0.651
Entrepreneurial skills development	0.936	0.938	0.951	0.796
Troubleshooting	0.883	0.884	0.919	0.740

Table 2 presents the results related to the reliability and validity of the constructs used in the study, assessed by various indicators such as Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho_a and rho_c), and Average Extracted Variance (AVE). These indicators are fundamental to determine the internal consistency and convergent validity of the constructs measured.

The results indicate acceptable levels of reliability and validity for all constructs assessed. Cronbach's Alpha, which assesses the internal consistency of the items within each construct, shows values above 0.7 for all constructs, suggesting good internal consistency of the scales used. In addition, the Composite Reliability (rho_a and rho_c) and Average Extracted Variance (AVE) values also exceed the recommended threshold of 0.7 and 0.5 respectively, confirming the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs as reported by (Hair et al., 2013).

These results support the robustness of the scales used to measure the different

aspects of entrepreneurship studied, including self-awareness and self-assessment, communication and presentation of ideas, entrepreneurial confidence, entrepreneurial skills development, and problem solving. These results strengthen confidence in the data collected and in conclusions derived from the study, ensuring that the measurement instruments are consistent and valid for assessing the entrepreneurial skills of the participants.

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio matrix is included below to assess the discriminant validity of the proposed structural equation model. The HTMT ratios calculated for each pair of variables indicate whether they represent distinct constructs, ensuring the reliability and robustness of the model.

Table 3. Discriminant validity-Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio matrix (HTMT).

	Self-knowledge and self-assessment	Communication and presentation of ideas	Entrepreneurial confidence	Entrepreneurial skills development	Troubleshooting
Self-knowledge and self-assessment					
Communication and presentation of ideas	0.636				
Entrepreneurial confidence	0.399	0.274			
Entrepreneurial skills development	0.416	0.362	0.360		
Troubleshooting	0.498	0.525	0.280	0.416	

Table 3 presents the matrix of Heterotrait-Monotrait ratios (HTMT) used to assess the discriminant validity between the constructs of the study. The values outside the main diagonal represent the heterotrait ratios, while the values on the main diagonal are the monotrait ratios (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The values of the heterotrait ratios are less than 0.85 for all comparisons, suggesting adequate discriminant validity between the dimensions assessed: Self-Awareness and Self-Assessment, Communication and Presentation of Ideas, Entrepreneurial Confidence, Entrepreneurial Skills Development and Problem Solving. This supports the interpretation that each dimension represents a unique and distinct construct in the model. The inclusion of the Fornell and Larcker matrix complements the discriminant validity assessment provided by the HTMT matrix. While the HTMT compares the relationships between distinct variables and the same variables, Fornell and Larcker assesses the shared variance between variables and their error measures, strengthening the validity of the proposed model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The combination of both matrices strengthens the robustness of the discriminant validity assessment and the confidence in the model results.

Table 4. Discriminant validity-fornell and larcker matrix.

	Self-knowledge and self-assessment	Communication and presentation of ideas	Entrepreneurial confidence	Entrepreneurial skills development	Troubleshooting
Self-knowledge and self-assessment	0.852				
Communication and presentation of ideas	0.523	0.859			
Entrepreneurial confidence	0.313	0.214	0.807		
Entrepreneurial skills development	0.365	0.326	0.300	0.892	
Troubleshooting	0.399	0.439	0.227	0.368	0.897

Table 4 represents the Fornell and Larcker Matrix, which was used to assess the discriminant validity between the constructs in the research model. In this matrix, values on the main diagonal represent the square root of the variance extracted from each construct, while values outside the main diagonal represent the correlations between the constructs. A typical interpretation of this matrix is that the values outside the main diagonal are expected to be smaller than the values on the main diagonal. This indicates that the variance explained by each construct is larger than the variance shared with other constructs, which confirms discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2013). In this case, the values outside the main diagonal are smaller than the values on the main diagonal, suggesting good discriminant validity between the constructs. Therefore, the results support the integrity of the proposed model, indicating that each construct is adequately distinguished from the others in the model.

After verifying the reliability and validity of the constructs, and confirming that they meet the established criteria, we proceeded to the analysis of the relationships between the proposed variables. The aim was to determine the degree of prediction in the structural model and to validate the hypotheses formulated in the study.

After verifying the reliability and validity of the constructs, and confirming that they meet the established criteria, we proceeded to analyse the relationships between the proposed variables. The aim was to determine the degree of prediction in the structural model and to validate the hypotheses formulated in the study.

In the study, the bootstrapping technique was used to assess the statistical significance of the relationships between the study variables and to validate the hypotheses formulated. Using this resampling methodology, multiple samples were generated from the original data, which facilitated the calculation of *p*-values for the relationships analysed. By applying the technique, multiple bootstrap samples were generated from the original data, which allowed for the calculation of *p*-values for the analysed relationships (Hair et al., 2013; Rigdon, 2016).

In addition, the path coefficient, also known as path coefficient, refers to the coefficients used in structural equation analysis (SEM) to represent the causal relationships between latent and observed variables in a model. These path coefficients indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables in the proposed model.

In the context of structural equation modelling, path coefficients are used to

specify how independent (or exogenous) variables influence dependent (or endogenous) variables. Each path coefficient represents a hypothesised causal relationship between the variables and is estimated from the study data (Hair et al., 2011; Rigdon, 2016).

Path coefficients close to 1 or -1 indicate strong relationships between variables, while values close to 0 indicate weak relationships. A *p*-value of less than 0.05 suggests statistical significance in the relationship. In addition, theoretical consistency and comparison with previous studies are critical for the proper interpretation of path coefficients (Hair et al., 2011; Rigdon, 2016).

Table 5. Statistical significance for validation of hypothesis.

	Path coefficient	Student's t	p-values	Hypothesis
Self-knowledge and Self-assessment → Development of entrepreneurial skills	0.214	5.589	0.000	Accepted
Communication and presentation of ideas → Entrepreneurial skills development	0.111	2.866	0.004	Accepted
Problem solving → Entrepreneurial skills development	0.234	6.702	0.000	Accepted
Entrepreneurial skills development → Entrepreneurial confidence	0.300	10.152	0.000	Accepted

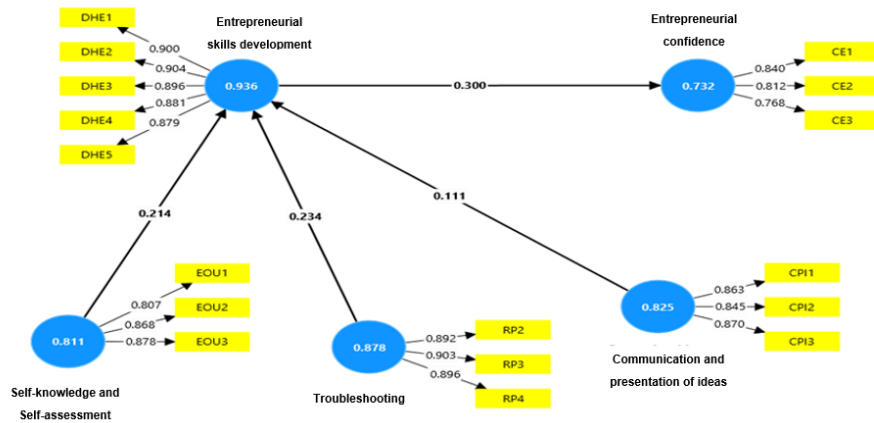


Figure 2. Model of the influence of entrepreneurial skills development on entrepreneurial confidence in university students.

Source: Chavez et al. (2024).

Table 5 and **Figure 2** present the results of the path coefficient analysis, revealing positive and statistically significant relationships between the dimensions assessed. Path coefficients represent the direct relationships between the variables in the model and provide crucial information on how they relate to each other.

Specifically, Self-Awareness and Self-Assessment were found to have a strong positive relationship with Entrepreneurial Skills Development (path coefficient = 0.214, *t* = 5.589, *p* = 0.000 for Self-Awareness and Self-Assessment; path coefficient = 0.234, *t* = 6.702, *p* = 0.000 for Problem Solving). This suggests that students with higher self-knowledge and evaluation skills tend to develop stronger entrepreneurial skills. Similarly, Problem Solving shows a positive and significant relationship with Entrepreneurial Skills Development, indicating that the ability to effectively address

and solve problems is associated with stronger entrepreneurial skills development.

On the other hand, Communication and Presentation of Ideas also show a significant relationship with Entrepreneurial Skills Development, although weaker compared to the other dimensions (path coefficient = 0.111, $t = 2.866$, $p = 0.004$). This implies that the ability to communicate effectively and present ideas clearly and persuasively may contribute to the development of entrepreneurial skills, but to a lesser extent than self-awareness and problem solving.

In addition, Entrepreneurial Skills Development was found to be strongly related to Entrepreneurial Confidence (path coefficient = 0.300, $t = 10.152$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that students who have developed strong entrepreneurial skills tend to have greater confidence in their ability to be entrepreneurial.

These results support the idea that there is an interconnectedness between the different entrepreneurial skills assessed in this study and underline the importance of each in the development of entrepreneurship. Detailed explanations of these statistical findings can help a wider audience to better understand the relationship between the variables and the relevance of the results for the context studied (Hair et al., 2011; Norabuena et al., 2020).

Table 6. Model adjustment.

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.053	0.068
d_ ULS	0.484	0.782
d_ G	0.246	0.258
NFI	0.858	0.853

Based on **Table 6** it is established that the saturated model presents more favourable values in several fit metrics compared to the estimated model. Specifically, the SRMR is lower in the saturated model (0.053) than in the estimated model (0.068), indicating a better reproduction of the observed correlations. Furthermore, the lower values of d_ ULS (0.484 vs. 0.782) and d_ G (0.246 vs. 0.258) in the Saturated Model suggest a better fit in terms of unweighted and generalised residuals, respectively. Finally, the NFI is slightly higher in the Saturated Model (0.858) compared to the Estimated Model (0.853), which also supports a better fit of the Saturated Model relative to a null model.

The results suggest that the Saturated Model provides a better fit to the observed data compared to the Estimated Model, suggesting that the Saturated Model may be more appropriate for representing the relationships between the observed variables in the study.

5. Discussion

The study findings highlight the influence of entrepreneurial skills development on entrepreneurial confidence in university students, which is in line with previous research that has highlighted this crucial link (Al-Qahtani et al., 2022; Fernandez et al., 2022). These studies have consistently shown that entrepreneurial skills not only equip individuals with practical knowledge, but also strengthen their self-efficacy,

providing them with the confidence to start and manage a business successfully.

Moreover, the strengthened personal autonomy derived from the development of entrepreneurial skills acts as an essential motivator, prompting students to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities with a proactive and resilient mindset (Cunha et al., 2024; Lopez et al., 2023). This highlights the importance of integrating the teaching of entrepreneurial skills into the university curriculum, not only to prepare students for the entrepreneurial world, but also to empower and motivate them to actively pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.

These findings are in line with previous research that has highlighted the vital role of entrepreneurial skills as an essential precursor in the formation of confidence in university students (Awad and Salameh, 2023; Fauziah et al., 2023). The convergence among the elements addressed suggests that well-designed entrepreneurship education can be a powerful catalyst in preparing students for today's fast-paced and complex world of business change (Chávez et al., 2023; Fernandez et al., 2022).

These findings corroborate the conclusions of previous research that has highlighted the fundamental importance of strengthening entrepreneurial skills in university students, which emerge as a critical educational component. Not only does it help students acquire the competencies needed to identify and seize opportunities, but it also provides them with the confidence and readiness to face challenges with a proactive and problem-solving attitude (Fernandez et al., 2022; Gavilanes et al., 2022). This combination of skills and confidence is essential to equip students with the necessary tools to thrive in the current and future business environment (Pérez et al., 2022; Valenzuela-Keller et al., 2021).

The results highlighted the importance of self-knowledge and self-assessment as crucial factors in the development of entrepreneurial (Bosma et al., 2012; Pagán, 2022). This involves identifying and understanding strengths, weaknesses, interests and values, as a fundamental pillar for making strategic decisions aligned with students' capabilities, thus enhancing the likelihood of success in entrepreneurship (Fernandez et al., 2022; Gallegos et al., 2024).

This personal understanding is enriched and strengthened by self-knowledge and continuous self-assessment, it becomes a tool that allows entrepreneurs to reflect and critically analyse their experiences (Bosma et al., 2012; Vásquez-Pauca et al., 2022). Through this practice of self-reflection, they can identify areas for improvement, learn from previous mistakes and cultivate a resilient mindset. Together, self-knowledge and self-assessment promote the holistic development of entrepreneurial skills, enabling entrepreneurs to face challenges with confidence, adaptability and creativity, which are crucial to remain competitive and innovative in the dynamic business world (Al-Qahtani et al., 2022; Fernandez et al., 2022; Valencia-Arias et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the results indicated that problem-solving skills are a determining factor in the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students (Bosma et al., 2012; Fernandez et al., 2022). The ability to identify, analyse and address challenges effectively is essential to face the challenges inherent in the business world and to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset (Davey et al., 2016; Méndez-Picazo et al., 2021).

By understanding their own capabilities, strengths and areas for improvement, students are better prepared to face and overcome obstacles, which increases their

confidence to become entrepreneurial. Problem-solving skills play a fundamental role in the development of entrepreneurial skills and in strengthening university students' confidence to become entrepreneurs (Gallegos et al., 2024; Pagán, 2022). This combination enhances their ability to identify opportunities, make informed decisions and manage projects successfully in the entrepreneurial environment (Backes et al., 2022; Fernandez et al., 2022).

Finally, the results obtained emphasised the importance of effective communication and the ability to present ideas as fundamental aspects in the development of entrepreneurial skills among university students (Bae et al., 2014; Fernandez et al., 2022).

Effective communication allows students to convey their ideas in an impactful way, establish meaningful connections with others and build strong relationships in the entrepreneurial world (Añasco and Bacilio, 2022; Backes et al., 2022). On the other hand, the ability to present ideas in a convincing way provides students with the opportunity to capture the interest of potential investors, customers and collaborators, thus facilitating the implementation of their entrepreneurial projects (Bae et al., 2014; Fariña Sánchez and Suárez Ortega, 2023).

These two elements play a crucial role in the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students (Baquero and Monsalve, 2023; Bullón-Solís et al., 2023). These competencies enhance their ability to connect with the public, persuade key stakeholders and conduct successful negotiations, which are fundamental elements for success in entrepreneurship and for strengthening students' confidence to become entrepreneurs (Awad and Salameh, 2023; Baquero and Monsalve, 2023).

The findings highlight the relevance of entrepreneurial skills development on university students' confidence to undertake entrepreneurship, showing that these skills go beyond the acquisition of practical knowledge by strengthening individuals' self-efficacy. This provides a deeper understanding of how these skills influence students' readiness to start and manage successful businesses, highlighting their key role in fostering entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the research revealed that personal autonomy derived from the development of entrepreneurial skills acts as an essential motivator, prompting students to explore entrepreneurial opportunities with a proactive and resilient mindset. This perspective adds an important dimension to the understanding of how these skills not only empower students, but also motivate them to actively pursue entrepreneurial opportunities.

The results highlighted the importance of integrating the teaching of entrepreneurial skills into the university curriculum, underlining how these skills not only prepare students for the entrepreneurial world, but also empower and motivate them to actively pursue entrepreneurial opportunities. This finding contributes to the development of more effective educational practices that promote a strong and resilient entrepreneurial culture in the university context.

6. Conclusion

Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between the development of entrepreneurial skills and the

entrepreneurial confidence of university students. Strengthening these skills may be key to increasing their willingness to start entrepreneurial projects in the future, which could have a positive impact on their professional and entrepreneurial success. Universities can use mentoring and participation in practical activities and real projects, fostering a collaborative and creative learning environment can enhance the development of these skills in students.

Self-awareness and self-assessment were found to play a significant role in the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students. These practices enable students to better understand their capabilities, strengths and areas for improvement, which in turn strengthens their confidence and willingness to be entrepreneurial. By fostering a greater awareness of themselves and their potential, self-knowledge and self-assessment prepare students to successfully face the challenges of the entrepreneurial world, thus facilitating the realisation of their entrepreneurial projects.

The relevance of achieving problem-solving skills in the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students was observed. The ability to address and overcome challenges is shown to be a determining factor that boosts students' confidence in entrepreneurship. By developing effective problem-solving skills, students acquire practical and strategic tools that enable them to identify opportunities, make informed decisions and adapt to a dynamic business environment. This competence strengthens their readiness for entrepreneurship, providing them with the necessary skills to successfully manage projects and lead with confidence in the business world.

The study highlights the influence of effective communication and the ability to present ideas on the development of entrepreneurial skills in university students. These skills not only allow them to convey their ideas clearly and persuasively, but also enable them to make effective connections with other individuals in the business environment. By mastering these skills, students are better prepared to face the challenges of the business world, gain the support of investors and collaborators, and carry out their entrepreneurial projects with confidence and business success.

The study suggests the need for future research on how to enhance entrepreneurial skills in order to foster entrepreneurship and business success in the university context. Such research could explore innovative pedagogical strategies, specific educational programmes or practical interventions that enhance the development and application of entrepreneurial skills among university students, thus opening up new areas of study and contributing to the advancement of the field.

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