

An in-depth Analysis of Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial as a carrier option among Nigerian Accounting Students

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ABSTRACT

This study titled, “An in-depth Analysis of Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial as a carrier option among Nigerian Accounting Students” offer a good framework for understanding issues relating to factors that are consider as determinant of entrepreneurship intention (EI). The main aim of this study is to examine the factors that influences EI with particular references to Nigerian Accounting students. Guided by the literature, theory of plan behaviour (TPB) was adopted as the study theoretical framework. Quantitative research method was employ and data were sought from the participant through survey questionnaire. 360 questionnaires were distributed to the appropriate respondents using simple random sampling, 203 were found to be complete. Data gathered was analyzed using multiple regression and descriptive analysis. This study reveals that perceived behavioural control and subject norms are good determinants of entrepreneurial intention. Essentially, this provide empirical and referential evidence of the link between entrepreneurial education and intent. The study recommends to government, agencies, and academic institutions more robust higher- level education programs that can promote entrepreneurial mindset of our graduates.

Keywords: Entrepreneurs, behavior, intention, perception, carrier.

I. INTRODUCTION

The role of Entrepreneurship in nation's wealth creation, job creation and poverty reduction has become of great interest to policy makers and other stakeholders (Du & O'Connor, 2018). It is regarded as a solution to some of the socio-economic challenges by many countries, such as unemployment, extreme poverty (Kew et al 2013). Essentially, stakeholders including policy makers, educators, international organizations and

researchers alike have accord about these prolific effects of entrepreneurship, and as such, they offer considerable efforts on how to make it more recognized, valued, and desired by young graduate. One fundamental approaches to describe entrepreneurial intention is the theory of planned behavior which is mainly focused on intention for planning to launch a business (Linan and Santos 2007). There are some studies suggesting that individuals' intention to become an entrepreneur can be a positive implying that the person is prone to involve in entrepreneurial activities in the future. Hence, Trying to understand the behavior associated with the intention provides a base for modeling and explaining why and how many entrepreneurs, including graduate student, set up their businesses and why others have not. As such, TPB approach can be applied to study the factors that are assumed to serves as obstacle to entrepreneurial activities among graduate student.

The condition of unemployment in many countries of the world has remained a central issue. Essentially, Countries across the globe are increasingly realizing the significance of entrepreneurship and promoting it as a mean to increase employment and economic development (GEM, 2011). Hence, policy makers are devising all efforts to underpin entrepreneurship creation as a means of curtailing unemployment and other social problems amongst its teeming graduates. Nigeria for example, through National University Commission (NUC) introduces entrepreneurship course as Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) to be offer by all public universities in Nigeria. The general idea behind the introduction of entrepreneurship courses is the assumption that, it will assist in developing undergraduates' minds, by imparting both theoretical and practical skills and knowledge needed to enable them develop self-confidence, innovation and self-reliant (NUC, 2014). However,

despite the growing effort by government through various policies and initiatives designed to promote graduate entrepreneurship among Nigerian graduates, the level of graduate unemployment is still alarming. Accordingly, it is assumed that there are some personal and inherent factors which hinder graduates from venturing in self-employment and entrepreneurship which call for an investigation.

The aim of the current study is to test the application of Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB) amongst final-year Accounting students in Nigerian Universities with the view to explain the contribution of the TPB and how it applies to students of higher education. Furthermore, using the TPB will enable comparison of current study with prior studies on entrepreneurial intention. Moreover, findings from this study could serve as empirical and referential evidence of the link between entrepreneurial education and intent. This would inform the government, agencies, and academic institutions about the potential of providing assistance, guidance and dedicated higher-level education programs. The main aim of the present study is to examine factors influencing Entrepreneurship intention as a career option among Nigerian Accounting Students. In order to achieve this aim, three (3) specific objectives will be examined:

To examine the influence of attitude toward accomplishing a behaviour on Entrepreneurial Intention;

To determine the influence of perceived behavioural control on entrepreneurship intention; and

To examine the influence of subjective norms on entrepreneurship intention

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Entrepreneurship is the act of creating and managing a business venture with the view of making profit. Ma and Tan (2006) defined entrepreneurship as a generator of national prosperity and competitiveness. Similarly, Bilic et al. (2011) sees entrepreneurship as a process of establishing a business undertaking aimed at providing goods and services and jobs creation which contribute to economic development. Consistent with Bilic's assertion, Kew et al. (2013) stated that promoting entrepreneurship amongst young people would substantially reduce unemployment in the labour market where formal employment opportunities are limited. Sata (2013) in his contribution on the subject matter, states that entrepreneurship creates a significant opportunity for individuals to achieve financial independence

and benefit the economy by contributing to job creation, innovation, and economic growth. People that venture into entrepreneurship are known as entrepreneurs and are said to be enterprising individuals. Essentially, the forces which motivate an individual to become an entrepreneur may be the desire to acquire wealth, create job opportunities, and earn a living, among others. Entrepreneurship is an essential driver of societal health and wealth. It promotes the innovation required in addressing some of the society's toughest challenges (GEM 2020). Suffice to say, government across the globe, think tanks, international organisations, to mention but few, opine that entrepreneurship is part and parcel of the solution to ending poverty and social inequity, promoting women's empowerment, and implementing business solutions to the world's environmental challenges, including climate change.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Development of literature on entrepreneurial intention could be linked to the successful consolidation of theories from a neighboring field (social psychology) namely, cognitive theory into the study of entrepreneurship, for instance, the concept of self-efficacy (Bandura 1982), and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen 1991). Hence, the explanation of entrepreneurial intentions (EI) is an area of research where a significant body of similar studies has emerged. For example Meta-analyses show that intentions are strong predictors of actual behaviour in other applied settings (Sutton, 1998; Armitage and Conner, 2001; Gelderen et al. 2008). To this end, two models dominate the literature. The first is Ajzen's (1988, 1991) theory of planned behaviour. This theory explains intentions by means of attitudes, perceived behavioral control (PBC), and subjective norms (SN). The other model is Shapero and Sokol (1982) model which explains EI on the basis of perceived desirability, perceived feasibility and the propensity to act. Previous studies, (Krueger et al. 2000), have it that, the two models of EI are competing models, however, they have some common features, as Shapiro's perceived desirability and perceived feasibility correspond to Ajzen's attitudes and perceived behavioral control, respectively. Essentially, intention in both models are explained by willingness and capability. Even though both models have consistently received empirical support, this study is adopting the Ajzen's TPB in predicting students' intention to become entrepreneurs. Ajzen's TPB is adopted in this study because of its popularity in explaining intention towards performing a particular behaviour

(Ajzen and Driver, 1992; Krueger, Reilly, and Carsrud, 2000) in various fields such as health, leisure choice, psychology, sociology, information technology and education. An essential factor in the theory of planned behavior is the individual's intention to perform a given behavior (Ajzen 1991). Hence, Intention is assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behavior, which include the indications of willingness and capability they are planning to employ, in order to perform the behavior. TPB has in it three independent determinants of intention towards entrepreneurship, namely attitudes towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). Accordingly, this section discusses the three variables in Ajzen's TPB and subsequent development of the research hypotheses.

Attitude towards accomplishing a behaviour:

This defines individual personal aspiration towards performing the behaviour (Ajzen, 1987). It gives an explanation on the expectations and beliefs about personal impacts of outcomes resulting from the behaviour. According to Harrell (2005), attitude is paramount in personal self-fulfillment, hence it consists of the evaluation of behaviour and its outcome in terms of risk and return. With regards to entrepreneurship intention, Kolvereid (1996) opined that, attitude towards entrepreneurship represents personal desirability in becoming an entrepreneur. Hence, positive expectations and belief towards self-employment mirror favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship. Furthermore, Ajzen (1991) stated that, the stronger the intention to engage in a behavior, the more likely should be its performance. Previous studies (Autio et al., 2001; Douglas and Shepherd, 2002; Gelderen et al., 2008; Gird and Bagraim, 2008) have found a positive association between attitude and behavioural intention.

Perceived behaviour control: As contained in Ajzen's (1991), TPB relates to the perceived ability to achieve behaviour of interest (Ajzen, 1987). Hence, ability to execute target has to do with an individual's perception on the level of easiness and difficulties in performing such behaviour, and it is assumed to incorporate past experience as well as anticipated difficulties (Ajzen and Driver, 1992). The resources and opportunities available to a person to some extent dictate the likelihood of behavioral achievement. By and large, the construct is affected by individual perceptions on access to required skills, availability of resources and other opportunities to perform the behaviour. Thus, on one extreme, if an individual perceived that he or

she has control over the situational factors, he or she may develop the intention to perform the particular behaviour. While on the other hand, if an individual does not have control over the circumstances, he or she may not have or less intention to perform the particular behaviour. Given the situation on ground, thus students that have undergone series of training on skills acquisition since from level two up to graduation is expected to show high level of readiness. Therefore, we can say that perceived behavioural controls influences intention to perform a behaviour.

Subjective norms: It defines the perceived influence of social pressure on choices as to whether to perform certain behavior or not. In other words, it relates to the subjective perception of other people's opinions such as family, friends or other pair group and influential individuals about a special behavior such as engaging in business activities. (Lent et al., 2000; Souitaris et al 2007; Veciana, et al 2005). Ajzen (1991), posit that subjective norms have two types of beliefs: normative and motivation to comply. The normative component reflects whether those influential personality would approve or disapprove their behavior such as starting a business. The second component reflects the motivation to comply with such norms and willingness to behave in accordance to the expectations of those influential individuals and adhere to the norms (Krueger et al., 2000). Hence subjective is expected to predict or influence undergraduate accounting students to become self-employed.

III. METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to answer the research question and identify whether there is a relationship between entrepreneur intention and elements of TPB such as attitude, behavioral control and subjective norms. The unit of analysis for this study comprises of all final year accounting students in the North-East region Universities' students. The rationale for choosing these students was the assumption that, the region is economically backward and seriously affected by insurgency and that, the chosen population have the requisite practical training and are the most likely ones to make their career choice in entrepreneurship rather than relying on the government employment which is already saturated. To accomplish this task, survey method was employed with a view to collect adequate data. The use of questionnaire is the most widely used data collection technique in a survey research design and so, in this study. The questionnaire instrument was developed based on

scale constructed from previous studies. Specifically, construct on entrepreneur intention is adapted from Autio et al (2001), Linan and Chen (2006), and Kolvereid (1996). While constructs on attitude was adapted from the study conducted by Kolvereid (1996) and the constructs on Subjective norms and perceived behavioural control will be adapted from Autio et al. (2001). A Likert scale was used to measure attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intention. Data gathered were accordingly analyzed using special package for social sciences.

Model Specification

$$EI = a + \beta_1 SN + \beta_2 PBC + \beta_3 PA + \mu$$

Where:

EI stands for entrepreneurial intention

a is the intercept

β_1 SN represent subjective norms of the respondents

β_2 PBC represent perceived behavioural control

β_3 PA represent personal attitude

μ error term

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The aim of this paper is to examine factors influencing Entrepreneurship intention as a career option among Nigerian Accounting Students, hence, this section of the study presents the results and the main findings.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables used in the study. Arguably, the mean score for the variable lies between 4.5 to 4.9, which means there is generally good intention on the part of the studied population and intention to become entrepreneurs after graduation. Similarly, the analysis reveals non dispersion of the data as the standard deviation is almost stable.

Table 1
Descriptive statistic

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
EI	4.5911	.67143	203
SN	4.3744	.76283	203
PBC	4.8473	.42372	203
PA	4.9901	.14037	203

Source: SPSS output

The correlation results in table 2 below shows a positive relationship between entrepreneurship intention and the variables of the study. However, with the exception of perceived behavioral control which reveals a positive and

significant relationship, other variable (subjective norms and personal attitudes) shows that the relationship is not significant. Overall, the result is consistent with correlation and regression output.

Table 2

Correlation	E I	SN	PBC	PA
E I				
SN	.310 (0.000)			
PBC	.667(0.000)	.270(.000)		
PA	.167(0.009)	.127(0.035)	.141 (0.022)	

Source: SPSS output

From table 3 below, it can be observed that the t-value for subjective norms is 2.489 and the p-value of 0.014 which is significance at 5%, implies that subjective norms is positively influencing intention to become entrepreneurs by accounting student. It further implies the significance of decision of pair group, family and friends in influencing the decision of accounting students in becoming entrepreneurs. the result is consistent with some finding from the literature...

this may have stemmed from the argument put forward that subjective norms presents two types of beliefs thus, normative and motivation to comply. The normative component has to do with influence of influential personalities in whether they approve or disapprove someone's behavior. While other component reflect motivation to comply with such norms and willingness to behave in accordance to the expectations of those influential individuals (Krueger et al., 2000).

PBC as shown in table 1 above has a t-value of 11.496, a beta value of .667 and a p-value of 0.000, which is significant at 1% significance level. This is consistent with the findings in the literature and the reality of opportunities and confidence that the students have obtained during their undergraduate studies. Ajzen(1987) has it that, a person's behavioral achievement is determined by his or her perception of the degree of easiness or difficulties in undertaking such task. Hence a student that undertook entrepreneurial courses has all the resources and opportunities to become an entrepreneur.

Consistent with Previous studies such as (Autio et al., 2001; Azjen 1991; Douglas and Shepherd, 2002; Gelderen et al., 2008; Gird and Bagraim, 2008) have found a positive association between attitude and behavioural intention, this study has also found association between PA and EI but the relation is not significant see table 3. Sometime, people would have all the opportunities including resources availability, but when he or she perceived the outcome to be unfavorable, that person might be motivated to undertake such task.

Table 3
 Summary of Regression Result

	B	Std. Error	beta	t-Statistics	P-value
Constant	-2.191	1.257		-1.744	.083
SN	.118	.048	.134	2.489	.014
PBC	.985	.086	.622	11.496	.000
PA	.298	.251	.062	1.187	.236
R				0.683	
R ²				0.467	
Adj. R ²				0.459	
F-Statistics				58.075	
F-Significance					0.000
Durbin Watson					1.831

Source: SPSS output

V. CONCLUSION

This study focused on the influence and application of Ajzen's (1991) TPB amongst final-year Accounting students in Nigerian Universities with the view to explain the contribution of the TPB and how it applies to students of higher education, the finds TPB to be worthy in determining factors that influences decision by to become entrepreneurs by Nigerian accounting students with particular reference to northern eastern universities. Specifically, the study found two variables (Perceived behavioural control and subject norms) in TPB to be the determinants of EI. Findings from this study leads to the following recommendations. Education policy makers need to intensify effort sensitization of undergraduate students on the important of acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge as well as providing a kind grant to students after graduation for business venturing. Similarly, universities curriculum to be more tailored towards skills acquisition and practical so as to enable students acquire relevant knowledge. It is also a recommendation of this

study that further studies of this nature to be conducted of all universities in Nigeria.

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