

Entrepreneurship Intention among Public Administration Students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria: Evidence from Theory of Planned Behaviour

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Abstract

This study assesses entrepreneurial intention of the 400 level Public Administration students in Ahmadu Bello University (A.B.U) Zaria with the evidence from theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen. (1991) Survey research design was employed in the study, which is cross sectional in nature. Primary data was collected through self-administered questionnaire to the respondents. The data was collected from a sample of 198 drawn from a population of 247 final year students using simple random sampling technique. The study used Descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse the data collected for the study with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study. The study found out attitudes towards entrepreneurship with Beta value of 0.264, t value= 4.400 and a p -value of 0.000 which is less than 5% level of significance and perceived behavioural control with a with Beta value=0.589, t = 9.885 and a p -value of 0.000 which is less than 5% level of significance have significant and positive effect on student entrepreneurial intentions of university students towards entrepreneurship while subjective norms with a Beta value= 0.022, t value=0.385 and P =0.701 have insignificant but positive effect on student entrepreneurial intentions of university students towards entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurship Education; Entrepreneurial Intention; Theory of Planned Behavior.

Introduction

Due to the persistence and sustained economic crisis, reduction in the oil price, high level unemployment and rising level of poverty in the country, individuals as well as governments increasingly set up and encourage entrepreneurship activities to salvage and possibly eradicate the economic depression in the country. For example, in April, 2006, the Federal government under the youth entrepreneurship support programs in collaboration with the Bank of Industry introduces 10billion Naira loan to aspiring entrepreneurs. The need to own a business and be an entrepreneur becomes more attractive and competitive due to the inability of the mass number of youth graduate to secure employment in the formal and informal sectors (Akanbi, 2013).

In line with the efforts to restructure the educational sector, the federal government under the leadership of late Umaru Musa instructed the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Education in 2007/2008 to institute entrepreneurship education as a compulsory component of tertiary education; higher institutions have since introduced entrepreneurship education and training to their students. Its inclusion into the education curriculum is perceived as an essential step towards educating and enlightening the Nigerian students on the benefits of entrepreneurship and preparing them for economic opportunities. It aims is to train them with innovative knowledge and skills required to identify business opportunities and create new ventures that can contribute positively to economic development there by creating jobs for themselves and others. The strategic intention of the government is to train students on how to become entrepreneurs right from their schools so that upon graduation they can be job makers not seekers. Having government with this goal and now that entrepreneurship courses have been mandated in the tertiary institutions of all categories, there is a need to understand the direction of the students on their future entrepreneurial decision.

Previous studies like (Fayolle and Gailly; 2013; Peterman and Kennedy, 2003). Indicated that entrepreneurship education is one of the factors that affect entrepreneurial intention, while others like (Malebana, 2015; Malebana, 2016) have identified education and training as one of the key factors influencing entrepreneurial behaviour. It is also argued by Li, (2006) that education influences young people's aspirations towards entrepreneurship and advocates the need to understand the predictors of

entrepreneurial intention (EI) in order to better nurture potential entrepreneurs during schools' programs. Intentionality therefore acts as a force that propels entrepreneurial actions and behaviour (Azjan, 1991). Despite the courses on entrepreneurship education in Nigerian Universities, many graduates still find it difficult to be self-employed after graduation leading to increasing level of unemployment in the country (Akanbi, 2013).

To such effect; there has been an increase in interest among entrepreneurship scholars regarding how new ventures emerge and what drives individuals to become entrepreneurs. Different models exist such as (Shapero and Sokol, 1982) model of entrepreneurial event and the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) by (Ajzen, 1991) which posited that new ventures emerge as a result of cognitive processes. These models are valuable in explaining individual entrepreneurs' inclination towards the entrepreneurial career option and how they ultimately engage in the entrepreneurial process. The most popular among them is the TPB which argue that, intentions are the immediate antecedent of behaviour. These intentions to act are determined by three variables; attitude toward the specific behaviour - only specific attitudes toward the behaviour can be expected to predict that behaviour; subjective norms - beliefs about how people, the decision-maker cares about the behaviour in question, and; perceived behavioural control -which refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 2011; Ajzen, 2012, Kolvereid, 1996:). In combination, attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norm, and perception of behavioural control lead to the formation of a behavioural intention (Ajzen, 2002).

Although several studies have been made by different researchers on the field of entrepreneurial intention but most of them are on either business or business related courses, and few are on non-business related courses, where, each and every student is mandated to take and pass at least two entrepreneurship courses regardless of their major course of study. Based on the stated problem this study aims at determine the entrepreneurial intention among public administration (PA) students in ABU Zaria with the reference to Ajzen Theory of Planned Behaviour. The researcher chooses this segment based on the assumption that; before introduction of entrepreneurship education their courses are more of civil service carrier development not much more of entrepreneurship like business administration students.

Review of Related Literature and Hypothesis Development

Concept of Entrepreneurial Intention (EI)

Generally, intention is the cognitive state immediately prior to executing behaviour (Krueger, 2005). Thus, an entrepreneurial intention is concerned with the inclination of a person to start an entrepreneurial activity in the future (Davidson, 1995). It is a key determinant of the action of new venture creation moderated by exogenous variables such as family background, position in one's family, parent(s) occupation, education and training (Bird and Jelinek, 1988)

According to Bird (1988), intentionality is a state of mind directing a person's attention, which leads to experience and action in order to achieve something. Entrepreneurial intention is a state of mind that people wish to create a new firm or a new value driver inside existing organizations (Bird and Jelinek, 1988). Intentionality therefore acts as a force that propels entrepreneurial actions and behaviour. It gives direction to someone attention and determines experience one gets in life.

Attitude toward the Behaviour and Student Entrepreneurial Intention

According to Ajzen TPB (1991) an attitude is a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli. Here stimuli may be object, individual, idea or anything else that an individual can react negatively or positively to it (Pulka, Rikwentishe and Ibrahim, 2014). Kolvereid and Tkachev (1999); Dohse and Walter (2010); Paço, Ferreira, Raposo, Rodrigues and Dinis (2011); Muhammed and Haruna, (2016) found that the attitude toward the behaviour has direct and positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions. Thus, the study hypothesizes that:

H₀₁: Attitudes towards becoming an entrepreneur have no significant effect on student intention to become an entrepreneur.

Subjective Norms and Students Entrepreneurial Intention

According to TPB individual's opinion could be influenced by social normative pressures due to environmental factors and other relevant belief to perform certain behaviour or not. This can also be subjective as result of the inferences influenced by the immediate community (e.g. parents, spouse, friends, religious leaders, and teachers). Ebewo, 2013; Karali, 2013; Malabena, 2016 found that the subjective norms have direct and positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions. Thus, the study hypothesizes that:

H₀₂: Subjective norms have no significant effect on student intention to become an entrepreneur.

Perceived Behavioral Control and Student Entrepreneurial Intention

Perceived behavioural control refers to people's perceived ease or difficulty to perform a given behaviour. It is assumed to reflect the past experiences of people and anticipated the obstacles (Ajzen, 1991). Muhammad, Aliyu and Ahmad. (2017) found that; entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norm and power of behavioural control are all significant predictors of Entrepreneurial Intention. Ebewo, 2013; Karali, 2013; Malabena, 2016; Malabena, 2015 found that the perceived behavioural control has direct and positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions. Thus, the study hypothesizes that:

H₀₃: Perceived behavioural control have no significant effect on student intention to become an entrepreneur.

Theoretical Review

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The theory of planned behaviour was developed by Icek Ajzen in 1991. TPB is an improved version of theory of reasoned action after adding perceived behavioural control (PBC). According to the theory, human action is guided by three kinds of beliefs: beliefs about the likely outcomes of the behaviour and the evaluations of these outcomes (behavioural beliefs) which produce a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the behaviour; beliefs about the normative prospects of others and motivation to obey with these prospects (normative beliefs) result in perceived social pressure or subjective norm; and beliefs about the presence of factors that may facilitate or impede performance of the behaviour and the perceived power of these factors (control beliefs) give rise to perceived behavioural control (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1973). The blend of the three constructs i.e. attitude toward the behaviour, subjective norm, and perception of behavioural control are assumed to lead to the formation of a behavioural intention.

As a common rule, the theory advocates that individuals with more positive attitude and subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the stronger would be the person's intention to perform the entrepreneurial behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). Precisely, one's Entrepreneurial intention is designed with the mixture of positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control of entrepreneurial behaviour. The postulation is that the more positive the subjective norms, the greater the PBC and the more positive the Attitude toward Entrepreneurship and the stronger would be the entrepreneurial intention and vice versa.

In line with the assumptions of the theory discussed above, the conceptual framework is formulated below;

The Conceptual Model of the Entrepreneurship Study

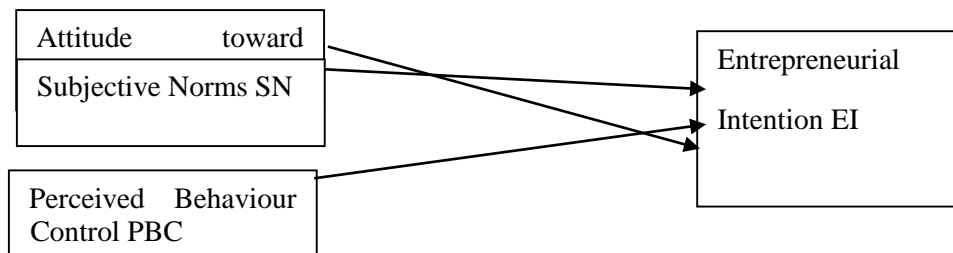


Figure 1: Developed for the Study (2017)

Methodology

The study adopts survey research design which is cross-sectional in nature. This type of research design is adopted because the information about the variables represents what is going on at only one point in time. Primary data was collected from the population of the study using self-administered questionnaire adapted from (Linan and Chen, 2009). The population of the study consists of 247 final year students in the Public Administration Department (PAD) during the 2016/2017 session. The sample size of 152 was obtained from the population using Yamane formula and 30% was added to the sample size as recommended and this change the sample size to 198. These University students are ideally suited for the study as they about to engage in the actual entrepreneurial behaviour. The researcher chooses PAD final year students not by priority rather because the entrepreneurship education curriculum is considering the same across all the universities in the country and all the students took the courses in their 200 and 300 level respectively. Simple random sampling technique was adopted given the fact that the population is homogeneous in nature. Out of the 198 questionnaires distributed 185 filled and returned, 8 had more than 10% missing values and thus they were all deleted. However, 171 were valid and useful for analysis based on (Hair, Balck, Babin, Anderson and Tatham, 2006) recommendation.

However, the validity of the instrument was obtained by a panel of two experts; each scale item was rated in terms of the relevance of its constructs. In an attempt to determine the accuracy of the measurement, the test for reliability was conducted by the researcher prior to data collection. A total of 42 questionnaires were administered to a segment of the population. The result revealed that attitude towards entrepreneurship has a reliability scale of 0.808, subjective norms has a reliability scale of 0.843 behavioural control has a reliability scale of 0.766 and entrepreneurial intention has a reliability scale of 0.826. Alpha reliabilities for all the scales were above 0.70, therefore meeting acceptance standards for research (Nunnally, 1978). Finally, the researcher analysed the data, first by using descriptive statistics to determine the level of entrepreneurial intention. Then, multiple regression analysis also used to test the hypotheses of the study with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The decision to use regression analysis was informed by the fact that the researcher’ objective is to establish the extent of relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Analysis of Data and Presentation of Results

To achieve the underlying assumption of the multiple regression analysis, the variables were examined with the aim of establishing normality, multicollinearity, linearity and homoscedasticity. The normality test result revealed that the data has normal distribution as evidenced in the histogram and residual plots, where all the bars of the histogram are close to a normal curve. The Durbin-Watson value of 1.813 in this study met this requirement and did not violates the assumption of independence of error terms. To check for linearity, the residual scores are concentrated at the Centre along the zero (0) point, thus, suggesting the linearity assumption was not violated. The correlation analysis was conducted prior to hypotheses testing in order to determine the extent to which the variables are related and to test for multicollinearity. The result in table 1 shows the absence of multicollinearity since the Pearson correlation indicators for all variables are less than 0.8 (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). Thus, multiple regression analysis is considered suitable in testing the hypotheses.

Table 1: Hypothesis Test

Variables	Standard error	Beta value	T statistic	Significance
Constant	.172		-.276	.783
AT	.057	.264	4.400	.000
SN	.065	.022	0.385	.701
BC	.070	.589	9.885	.000
R			α	.769 ^a
R2				.592
Adj R2				.584
F statistic				80.637

Significance	.000 ^b
Durbin Watson	1.813

Discussion of findings

Table above provides the hypotheses results of the influence of attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control factors on public administration students' entrepreneurship intentions. Attitude towards entrepreneurship is positively related ($B = 0.264, p < 0.05$) to entrepreneurial intention. This finding opposed our hypothesis 1 that there is no positive relationship between attitude and entrepreneurial intentions of ABU Public administration students. The result supports the findings of scholars (Pulka, Rikwentshe and Ibrahim, 2014; Kolvereid and Tkachev, 1999; Dohse and Walter 2010; Paço, Ferreira, Raposo, Rodrigues & Dinis, 2011; Muhammed and Haruna, 2016). However, the revealed that; subjective norms have insignificant but positive effect on EI (Beta= 0.022, $P > 0.05$). It is on this basis that we accept hypothesis two (H_{02}) which stated that subjective norms have no significant effect on student entrepreneurial intention. This result is contrast with the previous findings of scholars (Ebewo, 2013; Karali, 2013; Malabena, 2016) who's reported that subjective norms have strong influence on entrepreneurial intention. This may perhaps due to the nature of respondent's course of study. Finally, H_{03} indicated a positive and significant relationship ($B = 0.589; p < 0.05$), hence is rejected. This goes to show that the direct effect of perceived behavioural control on entrepreneurial intention of ABU public administration students. This supported the scholars like (Ebewo, 2013; Karali, 2013; Malabena, 2015; Malabena, 2016) who found that the perceived behavioural control has direct and positive effect on entrepreneurial intentions.

Conclusions

The study examines entrepreneurship intention among public administration students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria using theory of planned behaviour. The finding revealed that attitude towards entrepreneurship is positively related to entrepreneurial intention. This finding also upheld our alternative hypothesis i.e that there is positive and significant relationship between attitude and entrepreneurial intentions of ABU Public administration students. On the other side the study revealed that subjective norms have no significant and positive effect on student entrepreneurial intention among public administration in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria this enable us to accept hypothesis two which stated that there is Subjective norms have no significant effect on student intention to become an entrepreneur.

Recommendations

Thus, the study recommends as follows:

1. The examination of entrepreneurial intention as a moderator in other contexts especially in studies where Theory of planned behaviour (TPB) served as underpinning theory. The study contributed to the TPB by integrating the moderating effect of individual entrepreneurial orientation which, to the best of the researchers' knowledge has not been studied in the extant literature.
2. The policy makers should put more emphasis on entrepreneurial orientation in youth empowerment policies in Nigeria. This recommendation is for reasons that; the findings revealed that entrepreneurial orientation not only have a direct influence on entrepreneurial intention but also it interacts strongly with entrepreneurship education in explaining entrepreneurial intention. And also, within the model presented in this study entrepreneurial orientation which serves as a moderator has the highest effect size on entrepreneurial intention, describing its relevance for policy formulation.
3. The government should ensure not only enriching students with entrepreneurship education but also well-built entrepreneurial orientation among youths as it has a direct effect as well as strong interaction with other factors in explaining entrepreneurial intention.

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