



## **Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Intention of University Students in Nigeria**

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**Abstract:** The rate unemployment and poverty in Nigeria is very alarming, thus policy makers resort to the development of entrepreneurship activities as the only way to address it. As a result, the importance of inspiring students on the prospects of being entrepreneurs was understood by both developed and developing countries. This study built on the assumptions of Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model to address the issues of entrepreneurship intention, with three independent variables i.e. attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, and entrepreneurial intention as the dependent variable. The study consists of 794 students who were taught an entrepreneurship education course in their third year. This study used samples of 293 that were drawn from the population for the purpose undertaking a survey. After data screening, 32 cases of univariate outliers with Z-score  $>3.29$  have been deleted, multivariate outlier was gauged using the Mahalanobis distance method and no case was recorded with  $>41.34$ . There was no incidence of Multicollinearity and the Cronbach's alpha for each of the variables is  $>0.70$ . The result of regression analysis indicates that only attitude had significant positive relationship with entrepreneurial intention of the Students, While Subjective Norms And Perceived Behavioural Control Are Not significantly related to entrepreneurial intention. Policy makers are to focus more on enhancing the entrepreneurial attitude of students in the undergraduate's entrepreneurship syllabus. Future researchers can use longitudinal studies to

determine the exact relationship between entrepreneurship intention and entrepreneurship behaviour over time.

**Keywords:** Theory of planned behaviour, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, entrepreneurship intention.

## **1. Introduction**

Unemployment and poverty among youth are the major socio-economic problems facing the developing countries especially the African sub-region (Emmanuel, Oluwakemi, Ewomazino & Mercy, 2017; Okikiola, 2017; Mahmoud & Muharam, 2014). Over the years, Nigeria is experiencing a decline in the general standard of living, largely due to poverty and unemployment among its citizens. The number of unemployed people stand at 20.9 million as at the third quarter of 2018 (Olawoyin, 2018). Moreover, graduate employability stands at 36% per graduate (Stutern, 2016). This is therefore indicating a serious problem to graduate employability in the Nigeria. Entrepreneurship is an act creating business and growing business (Obi, 2018). It is seen as an important tool for transforming the economy, stimulating development, creation of jobs and wealth and promotes the general economy (Obembe, Tesile & Ukpung, 2014). Empirical investigation supports the positive relations between entrepreneurship with economic growth (Van Praag & Versloot, 2007).

The relevance of youth in entrepreneurship cannot be underrated in any economy (Abubakar, Ibrahim & Yazed, 2018), since they are the future entrepreneurs who would determine the economic viability of every nation. When youth appreciate the

importance of entrepreneurship, the economy can experience an increase growth, while the rate of unemployment is expected to decline (Glinskiene & Petuskiene, 2011). Many developing countries are now investing heavily to support the prospective entrepreneurs at different levels to create new businesses.

Several entrepreneurship programmes have been developed by governments and universities (Mohamed, Reza, Shamsudin and Mahmud, 2012) to curtail unemployment. It is pertinent to find out if changing the orientation of students from employment to self-employment could help in addressing the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. Therefore, eliciting their entrepreneurship intention in the first place is of paramount important. The aim of this study is to examine the factors influencing entrepreneurship intention of University undergraduate students.

## **2. Literature Review**

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was suggested as a common framework to gauge entrepreneurship intention universally (Ajzen, 1991). This is due to differences in the use of frameworks across context, content, regions and institutions (Fayolle et al., 2006). This study is therefore based on the TPB, which holds that the relationship between intention and behaviour is a function of attitude,

subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen 1991). The TPB can be used to predict various kinds of human intentions and behaviour. Thus, a swap of interest was witnessed from studying the attributes of existing entrepreneurs in ex-post conditions to studying the elements that leads to new business development (Autio et al., 2001).

In the psychological literature, intention to start a new business is assumed to be the proxy that best described entrepreneurial behaviour (Souitaris et al., 2007). TPB is therefore, used to describe an individual's intent to execute a particular behaviour and this has been widely used to measure entrepreneurial intention by many researchers.

Intention is believed to prognosticate a deliberate behaviour for the reason that behaviour can be planned (Abdul Kadir et al., 2012). Hence, entrepreneurial behaviour may not occur without entrepreneurial intention (Owoseni & Akambi, 2010; Garba, Kabir & Nalado, 2014). Therefore, intentions can accurately predict behaviour particularly when the behaviour incorporates some capricious lags (Otuya, Kibas, Gichira & Martin, 2013). As soon as the intention is formed, the actual action is projected (Bae et al., 2014). Intention in TPB is influenced by three components which are attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. It is expected that entrepreneurship intention will explain or influence the intensity of these three components.

## **2.1 Hypotheses Development**

Intention is regarded the best predictor of behaviour (Oluwafunmilayo, Moses, Olokundun & Grace (2018) and therefore, it can predict the new business creation process (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsrud, 2000). Intention represents the individual motivation to choose among alternative courses of action (Astuti & Martdianty, 2012). According to Gerba (2012) entrepreneurship intention is a state of mind that leads a person to favourably select a self-business rather than a paid job. In previous studies, entrepreneurship intention appeared as a reference to possess a business venture or become self-employed by establishing a new business or buying an existing one (Thompson, 2009). Moreover, actions are unlikely in the absence of intention (Owoseni & Akambi, 2010). According to TPB, there are three conceptual determinants of intention, these are attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.

Attitude refers to the positive or negative valuation of an individual towards a specific behaviour which is influenced by the total behavioural beliefs (Astuti & Martdianty, 2012). It is also the magnitude to which an individual is enticed to a particular behaviour (Bakotic & Kruzic, 2010). Attitude is form by the evaluative implications of the relevant information or beliefs that are kept in the memory (Owoseni & Akambi, 2010). Entrepreneurial attitudes hence, refer to the degree of one's positive valuation to develop a new business (Linan et al.,

2013). Entrepreneurship attitude was found to have a significant positive relationship with entrepreneurship intention in many studies (see for instance; Mahmoud, 2015; Mahmoud and Muharam, 2014; Kuttim et al., 2014; Otuya et al., 2013; Malebana, 2014; Linan et al., 2013; Isah & Garba, 2015). Thus, on this relationship a hypothesis is formulated as stated below;

H1: There is positive relationship between entrepreneurship intention and attitude of undergraduate students.

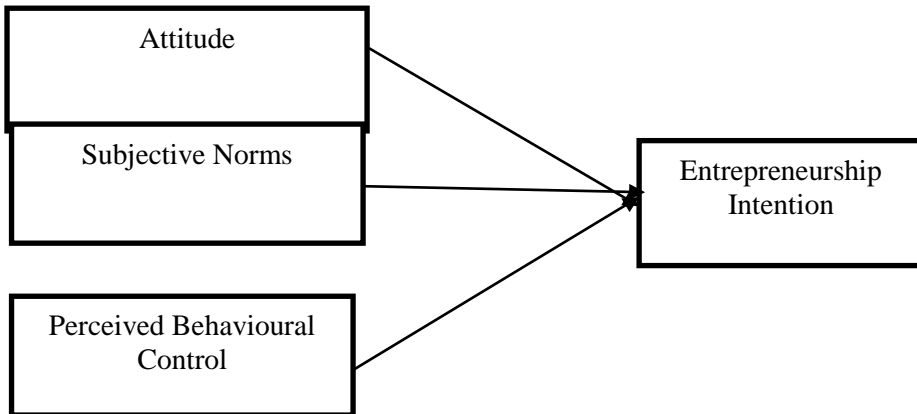
Subjective norm is the intense social pressure to perform a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). It is the perspicacity of friends, family and colleagues on the particular behaviour in question. Subjective norm is otherwise called perceived social desirability (Owoseni & Akambi, 2010). The greater the number of people that favour entrepreneurship decision in a person's social network, the greater the expectation will be for such person to engage in entrepreneurship activity (Angriawan et al., 2012). Some previous studies found a positive significant relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention (Angriawan et al., 2012; Engle et al., 2010; Kautonen Marco, & Erno, 2012; Mahmoud, 2015; Mahmoud and

Muharam, 2014; Malebana 2014; Mueller, 2011). Hence, the second hypothesis formulated for this study is stated below;

H2: There is positive relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention of undergraduate students.

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) is the seeming ease or obstruction for the execution of a particular behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In this study, PBC is therefore, the perceived ease or difficulty to establish a new business (Linan et al., 2013). Those that judge themselves as competent are more likely to classify founding new business as attainable (Krueger et al., 2000). A number of entrepreneurship studies revealed that perceived behavioural control is a strong significant factor that influence entrepreneurship intention (Ekpe & Mat, 2012; Iakovleva, Kolvereid, & Stephan, 2011; Linan et al., 2013; Mahmoud, 2015; Mahmoud & Muharam, 2014; Malebana 2014; Otuya et al., 2013; Sesen 2013). Thus, the third hypothesis is formulated as stated below;

H3: There is significant positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurship intention of undergraduate students.



Research Model Adapted from Ajzen (1991)

### 3. Methodology

This study utilised a quantitative survey method with questionnaire as the main study instrument for data collection. The population of study consists of 794 third year undergraduates of the then Northwest University Kano (now renamed Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano). The choice of third year students is due to their exposure with the entrepreneurship education. Sample of 350 of respondents were drawn from various faculties namely; Faculty of Education, Faculty of Social and Management science, Faculty of Science and Faculty of Humanities. The sample size is considered sufficient and representative according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling technique. However, 293 respondents returned the questionnaires which indicates 84% response rate. Nevertheless, 32 responses have been deleted in the process of data screening for having  $\geq \pm 3.29$  z-scores, this is because they pose

a threat of becoming outliers. Thus, 261 responses were left for the final analysis.

This study has 3 independent variables, namely; attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, with entrepreneurial intention as the only dependent variable. There are 7 questions for demographic background in the first part and a total of 28 questions in the second part of the questionnaire. Attitude has 5 questions, subjective norms 3 questions, perceived behavioural control 7 questions and 6 questions for entrepreneurial intention. The questions were adapted from Linan and Chen (2009), except the last questions for perceived behavioural control which were adapted from Autio et al., (2001).

The data was screened to satisfy the requirements for multivariate analysis, and the analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.

**3.1 Reliability and Validity of the Instrument**

To test the instrument reliability and validity, a pilot study was conducted prior to the full scale study. The internal consistency of the variables was computed using the Cronbach coefficient Alpha (Sandhu et al., 2011). Cronbach Alpha shows the reliability coefficient that ascertains the degree to

which the items positively correlate to each other, and the internal consistency is better when the Cronbach alpha is nearer to 1 (Sekaran, 2003). The entire variables for this study have a Cronbach Alpha coefficient that is beyond 0.70, which indicates reliability of the instrument. Table 4.2 below shows the coefficients of Cronbach Alpha for each variable.

Table 4.2 Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Result

S/No	Variables	Items	Cronbach Alpha Values
1	Entrepreneurial Intention	6	0.714
2	Attitude	5	0.745
3	Subjective Norms	3	0.743
4	Perceived Behavioral Control	7	0.872

**4. Results of the Study**

**4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Table 4.0 discloses that out of the 261 respondents, 153 are male (58.6%), 108 are female (41.4%), however, 251 (96.2%) of them are between the ages of 15-35 years, 10 (3.8%) are between the ages of 36-55 years. The Faculty of Education has the highest number of respondents 102 (39.1%), Faculty of Sciences 58 (22.2%) followed by the Faculty of Social and Management Science 54 (20.7%) and lastly the

Faculty of humanities with 47 (18.0%). Work experience among respondent’s accounts for 150 (57.5%) while respondents with no work experience accounts for 111 (42.5%). Respondents that once owned a self-business are 126 (48.3%) and those that do not are 135 (51.7%). Respondents whose family members run a business are 230 (88.1%) and those that have no any31 (11.9%). Those with self-business role model are 201 (77%) those with no role model are 60 (23%).

Table 4.1 Profile of the respondents

S/No	Items	Frequency (N=261)	Percentages (%)
1	Gender		
	Male	153	58.6
	Female	108	41.4
2	Age		
	15-35	251	96.2
	36-55	10	3.8
	56 and above	0	0

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3	Faculties		
	Social and Management		
	Science	54	20.7
	Education	102	39.1
	Sciences	58	22.2
	Humanities	47	18.0
4	Work Experience		
	Yes	150	57.5
	No	111	42.5
5	Self-business Ownership		
	Yes	126	48.3
	No	135	51.7
6	Family members run a business		
	Yes	230	88.1
	No	31	11.9
7	Self-business role model		
	Yes	201	77.0
	No	60	23.0

Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine whether or not there is a multicollinearity among the variables. Multicollinearity takes place when the Pearson correlation values of the independent variables is 0.9 or beyond (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In the presence of multicollinearity, the results of analysis become weaker because the variables interrelationships would

increase the error terms size due to the needless information that the interrelated variables would encompass (Mahmoud, Ahmad & Poespowidjojo, 2018). Thus, the solution is to delete one of the variables that has multicollinearity problem (Gorondutse & Hilman, 2014; Mahmoud, Mahmoud, Muharam & Mas'ud, 2015).

Table 5.1 Correlation Result

S/No	Variables	1	2	3
1	ATT	1		
2	SN	.480**	1	
3	PBC	.658**	.374**	1

\*\*p<0.001 (1-tailed); ATT= Attitude, SN= Subjective Norms, PBC= Perceived Behavioral Control.

From table 5.1 above, none of the study variables has  $\geq 0.9$  correlation value, thus, multicollinearity is ruled out (Hair et al., 2010; Tabachnick & Fidell 2007).

Moreover, multicollinearity cases can also be screened by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and the tolerance level which can be computed

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through SPSS (Gorodontse & Hilman, 2014; Mahmoud et al., 2015; Mahmoud et al., 2018). To have a multicollinearity free data, the value of tolerance must be >0.10, while the VIF must not be <10

(Hair et al., 2010). When the VIF is <10 and tolerance >0.10 the result is considered acceptable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 5.2 VIF and Tolerance Values for Multicollinearity test

S/No	Variables	Tolerance values	VIF
1	Attitude	.488	2.048
2	Subjective Norms	.724	1.381
3	Perceived Behavioral Control	.535	1.868

From table 5.2, it is concluded that the multicollinearity is absent since the tolerance values are >0.10 and the VIF are not up to 10 for all the variables.

Regression analysis reveals the proportion to which the independent variables (i.e. attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control) predict the intention of students to start entrepreneurship activities. The result shows that the R<sup>2</sup> = 0.396 which is approximately 0.40 and the significant F value was 41.993. Thus, it can be concluded that attitude, subjective

norms and perceived behavioral control all together predicts 39.6% or about 40% of the variance in entrepreneurial intentions of the students. The R<sup>2</sup> is considered satisfactory when compared to preceding studies such as: Krueger et al., (2000) 35%; Ogundipe et al., (2012) 31.5%; and Souitaris et al., (2007) 35% variance in intention.

Table 5.3 Regression analysis

Model	Beta (Standardized)	t value	Sig.
(Constant)		3.518	.001
Attitude	.580	8.339	.000***
Subjective Norms	-.079	-1.392	.165
Perceived Behavioral Control	-.013	-.192	.848

Note that \*\*\*p < .001 \*\*p < .05 and R<sup>2</sup> = .396, F = 41.993 (p < 0.001). Entrepreneurial Intention = Dependent Variable.

From table 5.3 below it can be settled that there is a significant positive relationship between attitude and the entrepreneurial intention ( $\beta = 0.580$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). The result is reassuring to preceding studies that employed the TPB as entrepreneurship intention model for diverse groups (Angriawan et

al., 2012; Engle et al., 2010; Mahmoud & Muharam, 2014; Mahmoud et al., 2015; Mueller, 2011; Otuya et al., 2013).

This study revealed a significant positive link between attitude and entrepreneurial intention ( $\beta = 0.580$ ;  $t = 8.339$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), which is in line with



many findings in the literature (Angriawan et al. 2012; Kautonen et al., 2012; Kuttim et al., 2014; Linan et al., 2013; Malebana, 2014; Mahmoud & Muharam, 2014; Mueller, 2011; Sahindis et al., 2012). Thus, H1 is accepted (i.e. there is a significant positive relationship between attitude and entrepreneurial intention). On the contrary, the relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurship intention was insignificant ( $\beta = -0.079$ ;  $t = -1.392$ ;  $p = 0.165$ ) which is consistent to some research findings (Paco et al., 2011; Sommer & Haug, 2011). Likewise, the relationship between perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurship intention was also insignificant ( $\beta = -0.013$ ;  $t = -0.192$ ;  $p = 0.848$ ). Therefore, hypothesis two and three were rejected.

## 5. Discussion

The result of this study is supportive to the TPB in entrepreneurship, and partly supportive to previous literature on entrepreneurship intention. The present study revealed that TPB is valuable theory in measuring entrepreneurship intention, but only the attitude can significantly influence entrepreneurship intention of students in the study context. Perceived behavioural control and subjective norms are therefore, insignificant to entrepreneurship intention among students in the context of this study. While previous studies indicate a strong significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurship intention (Mahmoud, 2015; Mahmoud & Muharam, 2014; Malebana 2014), this study revealed a contrary result, which

may likely be attributed to the study context setting, culture and quality of entrepreneurship education they received. Hence, the university need to reorganize the entrepreneurship education program to kindle the perceived behavioural control and subjective norms of students by the introduction of other moderating factors.

As a valuable theory and model in determining entrepreneurial intentions of different groups (Angriawan et al., 2012; Engle et al., 2010; Otuya et al., 2013), the TPB model instrument used in this study was proposed to serve as a global uniform instrument in measuring entrepreneurship intention in order to limit the discrepancies witnessed in the measurement of TPB in entrepreneurship across countries and cultures (Linan & Chen, 2009). This study therefore, contributes to the theory by confirming the applicability of TPB in the context of Nigeria and further revalidating the proposed standard instrument of measurement as developed by Linan and Chen (2009).

The revelation of attitude as the only factor that contributes to entrepreneurial intention among Northwest University students is an important contribution that may facilitate the development of entrepreneurship curricular to reflect and directly stimulate entrepreneurial attitude which will subsequently influence entrepreneurial intention of among the students. Student entrepreneurial attitude should therefore be given proper consideration in the existing entrepreneurship incentive programmes in the study context.

## 6. Conclusion, Policy Implications & Suggestions for Future Studies

Since the result showed attitude has a significant positive relationship with the entrepreneurial intention, this study suggests that the entrepreneurship syllabus for university undergraduates should focus more on enhancing the entrepreneurial attitude of students. However, the syllabus need to focus on how to enhance the proficiency of students in setting entrepreneurial ventures and improve their subjective norms through students' club and group business idea development.

This study enriches the entrepreneurship intention literature by indicating the role of TPB on entrepreneurial intention in

the context of Nigerian undergraduates. Policy makers should focus more on developing entrepreneurship attitude in education programs to spur entrepreneurship intention.

For the study limitations, the responses of this study might be prejudiced by subjectivity due to the self-assessment method of data collection used in this study. Hence, future studies need to consider other data collection methods that may reduce subjectivity of responses. Future studies may also use longitudinal method of data collection to verify the link between entrepreneurship intention and entrepreneurship behaviour.

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