



AN ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTION: A CASE OF KANO STATE POLYTECHNIC, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to examine students' entrepreneurial intentions. A survey was conducted at School of Management Studies, Kano State Polytechnic. The population of the study composed of final year HND students in various managerial or administrative programmes. The study selected 312 samples using purposive sampling techniques. The study used theory of planned behavior and Shapero's model to explain entrepreneurial intentions of the student as used in other study. Regression method was used to examine factors influencing entrepreneurial intention of the students. More so, in order to determine how students differ on their entrepreneurial intention, analysis of variance (ANOVA) has been employed. The results show that perceived desirability has statistically significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention, while the perceived feasibility has no significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention. The result also indicates that both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility are not determinants of students' entrepreneurial intentions. It is also reveals that there is no statistical difference among the students on their entrepreneurial intention. There is need for future researchers to compare students from entirely different fields on their attitude and entrepreneurial intentions. It is important to policy makers to understand the need to have a variety of entrepreneurship course modules that will enable students to choose areas on their own rather than having same course for every student.

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Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention, Planned behavior, Perceived desirability, Perceived feasibility.

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship has been recognized as one of the necessary condition for economic development. Many developing countries have evolved policies to support people at different levels to embark on entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial activities create further business opportunities for exploitation in the economy. In other word entrepreneurship breed more entrepreneurial activities.

The most difficult challenge confronting leaders in Africa and other developing countries is the problem of poverty and high unemployment among youth. The unemployment trend in Nigeria is ever increasing since 1980. In 2012, unemployment rate was 23.4 %, which creates a source of concern by the government and policy makers on how to reverse the trend and its negative implications in the country. It is also observed that over the years the number of students graduating from tertiary institutions is rapidly skyrocketing. It is alarming that the number available vacancies or openings do not in any way correspond with the number of graduates. This is perhaps due to the harsh economic conditions and unfriendly business environment that forced many businesses to close. The competition for job in labor market becomes very intense to the extent that employment in most cases is no longer secured on equal opportunity basis.

It is further observed that the oil boom has affected people's attitude to work and the psychology of an average Nigerian prefers to avoid investments that require special expertise and creativity. In addition, the school curriculum was not initially geared towards equipping students with skills required for self-employment. Consequently, thousands of graduates from tertiary institutions are roaming in the streets in search of jobs that are not readily available.

The government despite its numerous efforts failed to provide the necessary impetus for private sector to create the required vacancies. In recent development, the federal government directed tertiary institutions in the country to establish centre for entrepreneurship study and entrepreneurship should be taught across all institutions of higher learning. 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 start up their own venture rather than looking for a paid employment. Having government with this goal and now that entrepreneurship courses have been mounted in the institutions, it is important to understand the direction of the students on their future entrepreneurial decision. In a nutshell, it is desirable to know their entrepreneurial intention to be able to assess the impact so far of the entrepreneurship education in the institutions. Therefore, the objective of the study is to examine the students' entrepreneurial intention.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

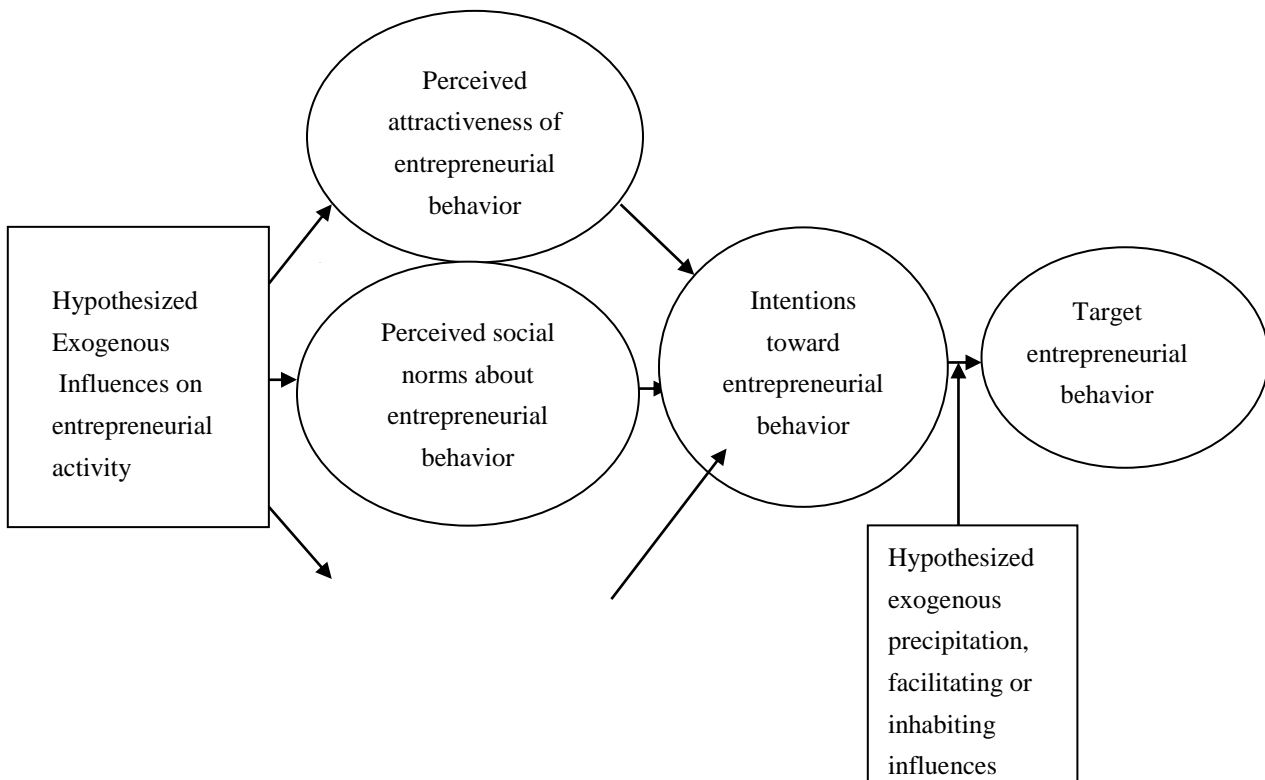
Starting a business requires gradual processes which involve intention to start, conception of business idea and the actual formation of the business. Entrepreneurship activity should be a planned behavior which is intentional and usually affected by individual's attitude (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993). Intention involves cognitive process that has to do with belief, perception and action (Ajzen, 1991). Some scholars argued that attitude are closely related to entrepreneurial intention (Shapiro and Sokol, 1982). Students at tertiary institutions (Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities) may have different attitudes largely as a result of other exogenous factors such as entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial experience, present of role model, demographics etc.

Although attitudes changes with time, it can provides the basic explanation or predictions of future action of individuals (Carlson, 1985). Knowing the intention and subsequent decision to create a new venture is an interesting issue to explore (Katz and Gartner, 1988). More so, understanding the intention and attitudes of the students could help in developing more robust and effective entrepreneurship education (Gibson *et al.*, 2011). Intention is an important factor in determining the emergence of new organization.

In some occasion, socio-economic factors exert great influence in altering attitude of the students. For instance, with high competition in the labour market for vacancies, a student may not choose to wait until the end of his/her study to start looking for a job. The student may be compelled to think proactively and develop the intention of starting their business after graduation rather than struggling for employment. The reality of starting a business requires overcoming many challenges such as start-up capital constrains, penetrating into the market and sustainability of the business. Many people have a clear intention of starting a business, but they failed to start because they could not overcome some of these challenges.

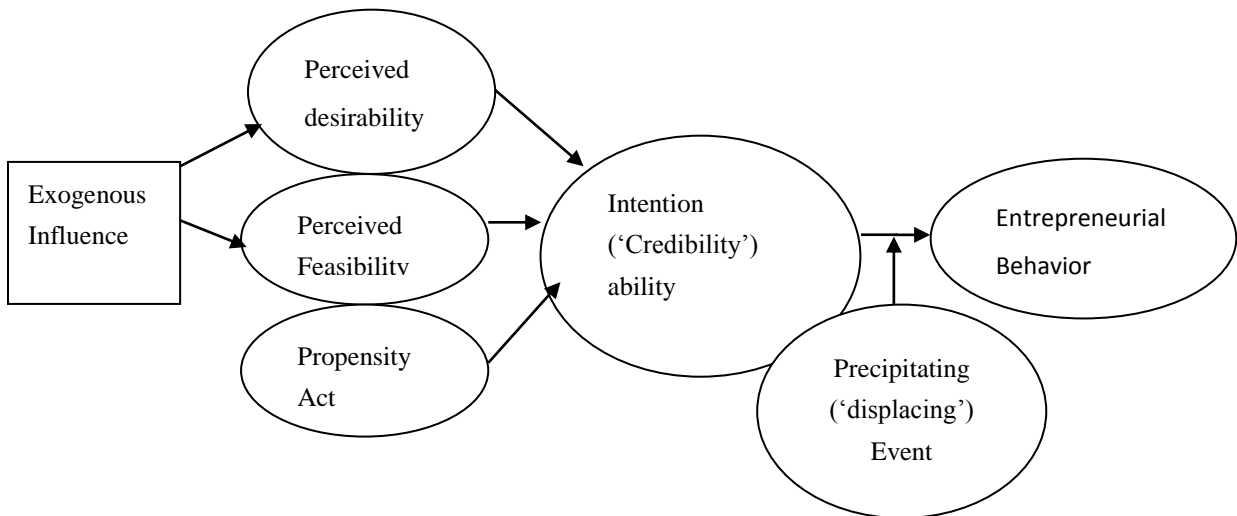
Both Ajzen’s intention- centered ‘theory of planned behaviour’ and ‘Shapero’s model of entrepreneurial event’ provides a well grounded explanation and predictions of variety of planned behavior. The theory of planned behavior contains three different attitudinal antecedents of intention (i.e perceived attractiveness of target behavior, perceived social norms and perceived behavioral control). However, this model was simplified or modified to capture entrepreneurial behavior (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993).

Figure-1. The theory of planned behavior (simplified)



The model (figure 1) shows how an intention toward entrepreneurial behavior was determined by three factors as earlier mentioned. It is the intention that in turn determines future entrepreneurial behavior which is moderated by some exogenous factors. The modified Ajzen's model is similar to Shapero's model of entrepreneurial event (see figure 2). The model also consists of three factors determining intentions (i.e perceived desirability, perceived feasibility and propensity to act) toward entrepreneurial behavior. In both models, intention is considered as antecedent for entrepreneurial behaviour. Therefore, the two models are regarded as intentionality based models. In Ajzen's model, it is clear that intention is a precondition for target entrepreneurial behavior (new business initiation). While Shapero's model requires that individual perceived entrepreneurship as being credible career option (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993). Believing entrepreneurship as a career option is dependent on how an individual see it (i.e whether feasible and desirable or not).

Figure-2.Shapero's model of the entrepreneurial event.



The role of exogenous factors in influencing the intentions and entrepreneurial behavior is important in discussing how people initiate new business. The intentions of the students in schools can be aroused based on how they feel about entrepreneurial behavior. If the students feel venture creation is something desirable and feasible, they may likely have intention for entrepreneurial behavior. Behaviour can be best predicted by the individual intention which is normally derived from his/her attitudes. The initial intention of the founders may have far reaching implications on the characteristics of the organization. The intention of the founder reflects the critical assumptions about the venture's concept and its social context (Carsrud, 1989; Carsrud and Sapienza, 1993; Bird, 1998).

Some of the exogenous factors affecting intention may include unemployment, unstable and predictable business environment, personality traits etc. Similarly, students may form an intention to engage in entrepreneurial activity depending on some motivational factors such as desire for success, risk taking ability, desire for independence etc. Those students, who perceived that their future in the labour market is uncertain, may decide on their fate by forming an intention to initiate business and ensure realization of their dreams upon graduation.

3. METHODOLOGY

This section explains the methodology for the study which includes model, research design and sampling procedure, defining and measuring of variables and techniques for data analysis.

3.1. The Model and Hypotheses

The intention based model in this paper is derived from Ajzen's and Shapero's model of entrepreneurial events. The model consists of two factors determining relationship and effects on entrepreneurial intention.

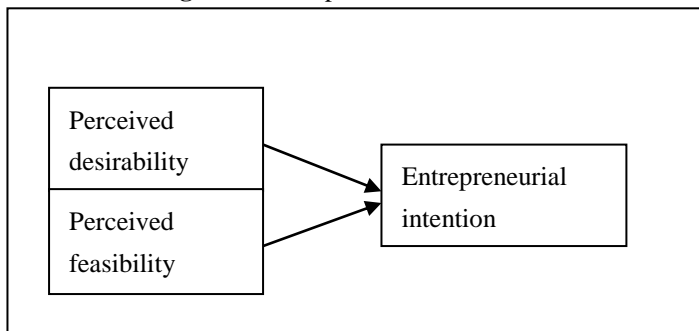
The following hypotheses were formulated to test the entrepreneurial intention model developed for this paper.

H1: There is positive relationship between students' perceived desirability and entrepreneurial intention.

H2: There is positive relationship between perceived feasibility and entrepreneurial intention.

H3: There is difference among students on their entrepreneurial intention.

Figure-3. Entrepreneurial Intention Model



3.2. Research Design and Sampling Procedure

A survey was conducted in School of Management Studies, Kano State Polytechnic. The population of the study composed of final year students of Higher National Diploma (HND) programme. Students who are about to complete their studies from eight different programmes in the school were selected for data collection. The students were selected on the ground that they will soon join the labour market, hence they are more likely engage in thinking of what to do next considering the difficulties in getting a paid employment in the country. 312 samples were selected using purposive sampling method. Questionnaires were distributed to the selected samples. Out 312 questionnaires distributed, only 244 questionnaires were returned and 239 were filled correctly and found useful. Therefore, the response rate was 78%.

3.3. Defining and Measuring of Variables

i) Dependent variable

Entrepreneurial intention (ENTINT): is defined as the intention of individual to engage in entrepreneurial activity or become an entrepreneur. It is measured with 5 items using likert scale. This measure is adopted from [Linan et al. \(2006\)](#) which was modified to suit the research purpose.

ii) Independent variables

Perceived desirability (PD): is defined as the degree to which individual feels attracted to become an entrepreneur. The scale for measuring this variable is adopted from Krueger (1993).

Perceived feasibility (PF): is defined as the extent to which individual consider himself/herself fit to carry out certain entrepreneurial behavior. The scale for measuring this variable is adopted from Krueger (1993).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The intention of the students for entrepreneurial activity is presumed to be depended on the perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. Therefore, understanding the antecedence for entrepreneurial intention requires analyzing not only demographics of the students but to look at other factors such as entrepreneurial family background and entrepreneurial experience of the students. From table 1, the data shows that the respondents (74.1%) aged between 19 to 29 years. This indicates that they are young and the age range is typical for undergraduates in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It is also found from the previous studies that young people are more prone to entrepreneurial activity. The ages of people found in entrepreneurial activity fall between 25 to 45 years (Van Es and Vuuren van, 2010; Verheul and Van Stel, 2010). The younger people find entrepreneurial activity more interesting than older people because of some factors such as health, risk propensity etc. Young people are presumed to be healthier and they can engage in a riskier deal in comparison with old people. The younger people have lower opportunity cost for foregoing paid employment.

Table-1. Descriptive data

Variables	Frequency	%
1. Gender		
Male	170	71
Female	69	29
2. Age		
≤ 18	3	1
19 -29	177	74
30 - 39	50	21
40 and above	9	4
3. Entrepreneurial experience		
No		
Yes	74	31
4. Parents' entrepreneurial background	165	69
No	102	43
Yes	137	57

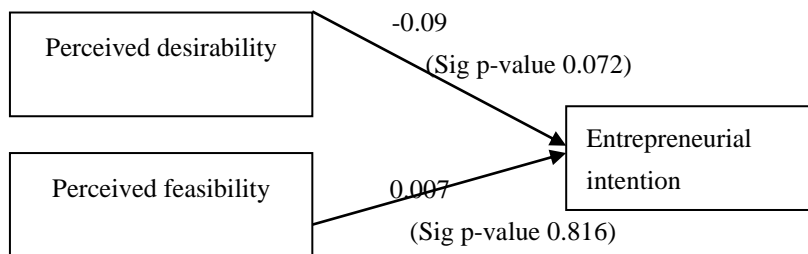
Source: Field work, 2013

The table also shows that most of the respondents (69%) have certain experience in entrepreneurial activity and some (57.3%) of their parents are entrepreneurs. Parents' entrepreneurial background plays a critical role in entrepreneurial decision. Usually the parents become role models especially to younger people who are about to make a career choice. There are many studies that established a strong relationship between the presence of role model and decision to become an entrepreneur (Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Cooper and Dunkelberg, 1984; Cooper, 1986; Mathews and Moser, 1995; Fairlie and Robb, 2004; Mathews *et al.*, 2009)

The respondents composed of male (71%) and female (29%). The proportion of male and female in the data is a fair representation of the distribution of students in the school. There are arguments in the literature as whether entrepreneurship is a male domain (Gray and Finley, 2005). There are some empirical studies that examined the determinants for entrepreneurial involvement among male and female from their country perspective. In any social context where people believe that entrepreneurship is mainly for male, there every possibility that female may show negative attitude and in turn will affect their entrepreneurial intention.

The result shows that the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and perceived desirability is negative (-0.14), hence our hypothesis (H1) is rejected. While the relationship between entrepreneurial intention and perceived feasibility is positive (0.034). Therefore, the result supported our hypothesis (H2). The regression analysis shown that the coefficient of determination (r^2) is reported as 0.30. This low coefficient is understood to be typical of cross section data. Sheppard *et al.* (1985) also reported the same value of average r^2 using the theory of reasoned action which preceded the theory of planned behavior. The effects of both perceived desirability and perceived feasibility on students' entrepreneurial intention are statistically insignificant at 5% level. The insignificant result in not consistent with the recent test of Shapero's model which shows that perceived feasibility, perceived desirability and propensity to act are all significant determinants of entrepreneurial intention (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993). The inconsistency could be traced to the exogenous factors which in turn explain perceived feasibility and perceived desirability of the students. In essence the result shows that both perceived feasibility and perceived desirability are not significant determinants of students' entrepreneurial intentions in the institution.

Figure-4.Regression on entrepreneurial intention model



Some studies have also indicated that prior entrepreneurial experience and involvement in family business have positive impact on perceived feasibility and perceived desirability of individuals' intentions in forming new ventures (Reitan, 1997; Peterman and Kennedy, 2003). Similarly, understanding students' attitude may help significantly in tracing their entrepreneurial intentions. There are past studies that established a link between entrepreneurial attitudes with intentions (Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Krueger, 1993; Krueger and Brazeal, 1994; Gibson *et al.*, 2011).

Table-2. ANOVA result

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	23.300	7	3.329	1.472	.178
Within Groups	522.424	231	2.262		
Total	545.724	238			

The results in table 2 indicate that there is no statistical difference between all the students drawn from eight programmes. There is no evidence to support our null hypothesis (H3). Since it is indicated that intention predicts possible behavior of a person and attitude predicts intention (Sheppard *et al.*, 1988), it may be possible that the students have the same attitude toward entrepreneurship. This is perhaps the reason why their intentions toward entrepreneurship are the same. Having students in different managerial or administrative programmes/courses is not enough to make difference among students in terms of their perception, desirability, ability and self efficacy for entrepreneurial activity. It could be a different case if the students are entirely from different unrelated field such as engineering, medicine or even humanities. In the same vein, it was Understood that entrepreneurship courses offered to students in the entire programmes are the same. Therefore, since the students are taught in the same way and manner, it is expected that their motivation and orientation toward entrepreneurship should also be alike.

Mentorship or role modeling could be an important factor in molding the students to have positive attitude toward entrepreneurship. It is argued that teaching students about the realities of entrepreneurship may enhance their entrepreneurial self efficacy, but at the same time it decreases their perceived desirability for starting a new business (Krueger and Carsrud, 1993). It is important to understand different motivational factors for the students and effective training modules that will influence their attitude.

5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION

The most difficult socio-economic problem facing leaders particularly in Africa is the growing number of unemployed youth. There are teaming youth without jobs, thereby affecting their socio-economic status. The introduction of entrepreneurship education in the school curriculum is a welcome development. It will be helpful in training, reorienting and motivating students toward entrepreneurial activity. The intentions of the students may be aroused and geared toward forming a business at the end of their studies. The theory of planned behavior and Shapero's model are to be found suitable in explaining the antecedence of entrepreneurial intentions and the subsequent behavior. The study rather proves that perceived desirability and feasibility are not determinants of the students' intentions for entrepreneurship.

Students at Colleges, Polytechnics or Universities may have different attitudes which can be attributed the exogenous factors such as entrepreneurial education, entrepreneurial experience, present of role model and other demographics. Attitude can be a good antecedent of intentions that provides the basic explanation or predictions about future action of individuals. Knowing the students intention and subsequent decision to create a new venture is an interesting issue to explore by researchers. More so, understanding the intention and attitudes of the students could help in developing more robust and effective entrepreneurship education.

Since it is found that the students have the same mode of training using the same course materials, it may be possible that they will have the same attitude toward entrepreneurship. And this will eventually make the students to look and think the same way. More so, the respondents were drawn from related managerial or administrative programmes/courses and that is why it is not surprising that the students do not differ in terms of their perception, desirability, ability and self efficacy for entrepreneurial activity. There is need for future researchers to use students from entirely different courses or background to examine their attitude and entrepreneurial intentions. It is important to policy makers to understanding the need to have a variety of entrepreneurship course modules that will enable students to choose areas on their own rather than having same course for every student.

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