

Entrepreneurship Education and Career Intention among Undergraduates in Nigeria: A Case Study of University of Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Recently, entrepreneurship has been a compulsory course of study in all Nigerian universities. This is with a view to encouraging the students to choose careers that will make them entrepreneurs/self-employed rather than looking for paid-employment. This study examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on career intention among final year students in the University of Lagos. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted and 368 questionnaires were analysed. Descriptive statistics and Ordinary Least Squares were used to analyse the data. The result showed that entrepreneurship education has no significant impact on career intention of students. Rather, students who desired to be entrepreneurs/self-employed have their parents, friends or family members who had motivated them or they have a will power to do so.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneur; Self-employed; Education; Career; Intention.

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INTRODUCTION

Unemployment has been a major problem that the Nigerian government has been tackling for decades. To this end, programmes and policies at different times had been put in place to reduce unemployment especially graduate unemployment. Entrepreneurship has long been recognized as an important engine of economic growth and wealth creation [1]. Hence, Federal Government issued a presidential directive through the ministry of education that entrepreneurship education is compulsory in all higher education institutions in the country from 2007/2008 academic session (www.vanguardngr.com 14/11/2017).

The growth in entrepreneurship education across the country and increasingly around the world has been well recognized [2-4]. Over the past two decades, a proliferation of entrepreneurship programs, credentials, experiential and co-curricular activities have been made accessible to undergraduate students in a wide variety of academic disciplines beyond those enrolled in business schools [5]. The exposure of students to entrepreneurship education irrespective of their course of study has given them an opportunity to choose to be entrepreneurs or self-employed rather than looking for a paid employment that may increase unemployment in the country.

This study envisaged that the intention of the federal government of Nigeria to make entrepreneurship attractive to student may or may not meet the students' career intentions as many students have their dream jobs immediately they are admitted into higher institution. Hence, the study examined the impact of entrepreneurship education on career intention in Nigeria, using a case of University of Lagos. Section 2 discussed the review of related literature while section 3 discussed data and methodology. Findings were discussed in section 4 and conclusion was made in section 5.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In reviewing literature scholars of entrepreneurship have made effort to define what entrepreneurship is and who is an entrepreneur? According to Hisrich and Peters [6], entrepreneurship can be defined as "the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort assuming the accompanying finance psychic and social risk, and reserving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence". Also according to Nieman and Nieuwehuizen [7] an "entrepreneur as one who sees an opportunity in the market, creates, gather

resources and grows a business venture to meet needs”. Similarly, entrepreneurship has been viewed as “the willingness and ability of an individual to seek for investment opportunities, to establish and to run an enterprise successfully” [8, 9]. The benefits of Entrepreneurship to any nation cannot be overemphasized. Particularly, because of the advantages it holds for job creation and economic well-being [10].

Entrepreneurship education according to Isaac, Visser, Friedrich and Brijlal [11] is the purposeful intervention by an educator in the life of the learner to survive in the world of business. It has as its focus an action orientation primarily embodied in teaching students how to develop a business plan [12]. Entrepreneurship education develops and stimulates entrepreneurial process, providing all tools necessary for starting up new ventures [13]. It is commonly believed that entrepreneurship education is an imperative that would make a positive contribution to improving the entrepreneurship orientation of people, leading to the acquisition of skills, creativity, confidence, drive and courage, in order to create employment for self and others.

Entrepreneurship education has come to denote all forms of knowledge delivery that seek to empower the individual to create real wealth in the economic sector, thereby advancing the cause of development of the nation as a whole. According to Bassey and Archibong [14], the goal of entrepreneurship education is intended to empower our graduates irrespective of their areas of specialization with skills that will enable them to engage in income yielding venture, if they are unable to secure jobs in the public sector. It is a reorientation from job seekers to job creators.

Entrepreneurship education method of learning entrepreneurship is referred to as a traditional and repetitive method. Applying the traditional and repetitive method of entrepreneurship pedagogy makes students to get bored and distracted easily. The students are bored because they are not actively and fully engaged in the process of learning [15]; hence, the emergence of entrepreneurial learning. Rae [8] defined entrepreneurial learning as a dynamic process awareness, reflection, association and application that involves transforming experience and knowledge into functional learning outcomes. Macmillian and McGrath [16] asserted that entrepreneurial mindset can be developed through experience rather than the traditional methods of entrepreneurship education.

A person’s employment status choice intentions can be predicted using the theory of planned behaviour [17]. Katz [18] defined employment status choice intentions as the vocational decision process in terms of the person’s decision to enter an occupation as a salaried or self-employed person. Kolvereid [19] argued that the greater the person’s perceived behavioural control, the stronger the person’s intention to become self-employed. The perceived behavioural control which is one of the key factors of self-efficacy will in-turn corresponds to perceived feasibility. Self-efficacy has been found to greatly influence and enhance entrepreneurial behaviour and entrepreneurial intentions [20, 21]. Entrepreneurial intentions are typically considered to be formed by a person’s attitude toward entrepreneurship and the prevailing social norms attached to entrepreneurship in the future [22, 20]. Thus, entrepreneurial intention is a conscious state of mind that directs attention (and therefore experience and action) toward a specific object (goal) or pathway to achieve it (means) [23].

Entrepreneurial intentions have been found to be influenced by three general factors [20]. First, entrepreneurial intention is triggered by a person’s attitude towards entrepreneurship. This is seen as the weighted sum of perceived consequences and the likelihood of different outcomes of the behaviour, including intrinsic rewards. The second factor is perceived social norms. This means that the beliefs of relevant groups and actors, such as family, friends, colleagues and customers, will affect the intentions of the entrepreneur [24]. The third factor is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has been found to greatly influence entrepreneurial behaviour and increase entrepreneurial intention [20]. Self-efficacy is a person’s cognitive estimate of his/her capabilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise control over events in his/her life [25].

Another strong positive predictor of entrepreneurial intention is whether a person has some earlier exposure to entrepreneurship [26]. It has been found that persons who have a close relationship with someone with entrepreneurial experience are more likely to be self-employed. For instance, large proportion of entrepreneurs have parents who themselves were entrepreneurs. The two explanations for this pattern are that parents can act as role models [22], and that there is a transfer of entrepreneurial skills from parents who expect their children to eventually take over the firm [27].

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Primary source of data was used for this study through a survey method. Multistage sampling technique was used for the study. University of Lagos comprises of twelve faculties in which four faculties were randomly selected. Faculties of Education, Engineering, Arts and Social Sciences were selected and 100 questionnaires were administered to each of the selected faculties. Since entrepreneurship was taught in year three and four, the questionnaires were stratified into 50 for year three and 50 for year four students for each faculty. Also, the questionnaires were then administered to each student through accidental sampling technique.

400 questionnaires were administered in all, after removing the incomplete, 368 questionnaires were used for the analysis in this study.

The Ordinary Least Squares estimated by this study is specified thus:

$$car = f(eedu, fam, desw, empc, cgpa)$$

$$car = a_0 + a_1eedu + a_2fam + a_3desw + a_4empc + a_5cgpa + \epsilon$$

Where, car is career intension (1for entrepreneurship and 0 for paid employment), eedu is entrepreneurship education, fam is family or friends who is an entrepreneur, desw is desire or will to be an entrepreneur, empc employment condition of the country (the high rate of graduate unemployment) and cgpa is their current cumulative grade points average. a_0 is the intercept and ϵ is the error term.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Firstly, the study tested the student's entrepreneurial awareness by asking if the student had taken a course in entrepreneurship. 92% of the students had taken a course in entrepreneurship. Also, about 81% of the students can describe the concept of entrepreneurship while about 87% can describe the concept of self-employment. With these responses, we are certain that a large percentage of our respondents are aware of what entrepreneurship entails.

Table-1: Entrepreneurship Awareness

1. Have you taken a course in entrepreneurship in your department?		
Answer:	Yes	No
	339 (92%)	29 (8%)
2. Describe the concept of entrepreneurship		
Answer:	Correct	Incorrect
	298 (81%)	70 (19%)
3. Describe the concept of self-employment		
Answer	Correct	Incorrect
	320 (87)	48(13%)

The result of the OLS is presented in table 2 below. Entrepreneurship education is positive but not significant implying that taking a course in entrepreneurship does not make students willing to be future entrepreneurs. CGPA of the students has not significantly influenced the career intentions of students to become entrepreneurs. Likewise, employment situation of the country is positive but statistically not significant; this means that despite the increasing level of unemployment in the country, many students still desire a paid employment rather than being entrepreneurs. However, influence of a family member or friends is positive and statistically significant at 5% implying that a student will love to be an entrepreneur if a family member or friend has influenced them to do so. This result is in conformity with the finding of Muhamad *et al.* [28]. Also, the students' desire or will to become entrepreneur has a positive and statistically significant relationship with their career intension to become an entrepreneur. This result is in conformity with the work of Duval-Couetil and Long [5]; in which the found that students become entrepreneur when they plan to become one. R-square is 0.5188 implying that about 52% variations in career intention of students are explained by the model specified in this study. Durbin Watson statistic is approximately 1.9, close to 2; this means the model is free from autocorrelation.

Table-2: OLS Result

Variables	Coefficients	t-ratio	p-value
eedu	0.0558	1.5829	0.1283
fam	0.0244	2.5856	0.0463*
desw	1.3402	3.4550	0.0202*
empc	2.7048	0.3790	0.7085
cgpa	0.0237	1.8521	0.5773
R-squared 0.5188 Adjusted R-squared 0.4474 Durbin-Watson 1.8529			

*indicate 5% significance. Source: Authors computation (2017)

CONCLUSION

The study examined the impact of entrepreneurial education in higher institution on career intention of students. It was found that family influence and a will to become an entrepreneur significantly influence student to be willing to become future entrepreneurs. The study concludes that despite the compulsory teaching of entrepreneurship in Nigerian

higher institutions, family background and will to become an entrepreneur makes students choose a career in entrepreneurship.

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