



Societal norms and desire for independence as determinants of entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma Accountancy students in North-Eastern Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined Societal Norms and Desire for Independence as determinant of Entrepreneurial Intention among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives, with corresponding research questions and null hypotheses. Relevant literature related to the study was reviewed. The design for the study was descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised 24,625 National Diploma II students of Schools of Business studies of all the Polytechnics in North-Eastern Nigeria. The researcher sampled 379 subjects using proportionate random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was adaptation from the existing instruments. The instrument was validated by 4 experts. The instrument was tested and reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) while the hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. The study revealed that Societal norms; has to a moderate extent influenced students' entrepreneurial intention. Desire for independence; has large extent influence on students' entrepreneurial intention. Based on the results, it was recommended, that Stakeholders like community leaders, Parents, government, Non-Governmental Organization, and scholars should create public awareness programmes that will help to promote societal norms, values, and beliefs that encourage business creations; The students should be encouraged to embrace entrepreneurship education or training in order for them to become self-reliant and wealth creators.

Key words: Societal Norms, Desire for Independence, Entrepreneurial Intention, National Diploma Students, Accountancy.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship intention has been extensively researched in the past decades and continues to be of interest to researchers due to its importance to the development for many countries (Zain, 2019). 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 2019, unemployment rate was 42.4 %, 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, (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). 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.

Desire for Independence; researchers like Douglas and Fitzsimmons (2015) observed that nascent entrepreneurs are motivated with the desire to be their own boss. Desire for independence is one of the main features of entrepreneur traits, it enables an individual to make plan for the future and take all the decisions himself. Lee, Wong and Ho (2014) pointed out that students possessing high desire for independence have better chances to be entrepreneurs.

Ajzen (2012) attributes the engagement in a particular behavior as a result of peer influence of societal norm. Engle, Dinitriadi, Schlasegel, Delanoe and Alvarado (2013) revealed that social norms influence can come from parents, friends, or partners. It relates to a person's belief on whether peers and people of importance to the person think he or she

should engage in the behavior. Societal norms are a person's own judgment of the social forces to execute target behaviour.

This empirical study determines the link between the above mentioned two independent variables and students' Entrepreneurial Intention. Thus, the study is conducted on the population of ten polytechnics in North-Eastern Nigeria to explore the level of entrepreneurial intentions of the students and the elements which facilitate students to choose entrepreneurial intention in future. The study is highly significant for Government and academic institutions to develop such policies and normative aids to harvest a suitable environment and conditions to attract students' intent for the intention of an entrepreneur.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Although efforts have been made to create entrepreneurs among graduates, their number is still relatively low (Ab-Rahman and Ghani, 2016). The question arises is that if the students are ready to enter the business world upon graduation, the issue of unemployment among these graduates should not arise since they have the alternative to start their own businesses rather than working for others. On other hand, lack of National Diploma students involvement in entrepreneurial field is mainly due to family, society, individual and government commitments such as needing time for making policy, parenting and family seriousness on the matters (Ab-Rahman, Ghani, Ismail, & Mohammed, 2016). The problem of redundancy of tertiary institutions graduates has been on the increase and affecting the Nigerian society in many ramifications. Problems of poverty, stealing, robbery, kidnapping, insurgency, violence in Nigeria have been associated with unemployment (Sani, 2016). Aghazamani and Akossou (2010)

explains the reasons family background, society and government involving in business as economic environments changing, lack of household income, internal family and society events, and a change in family/society structure changing. Thus, motivation and encouragement aspects based on students need to be considered for entrepreneurship and training in higher learning institutions (Ismail, 2010).

Consequently, the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students includes societal norms; desire for independence; of the graduates has been observed as the determining factors for entrepreneurial intention by many researchers (Engle, 2013; Turker & Sonmez 2015). This has been topics of discussion among experts in the fields of entrepreneurship intention across the globe. However, the present study intends to determine entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in business studies particularly in North-Eastern Nigeria.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the Entrepreneurial Intention among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the influence of societal norms on entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria.
2. Assess the influence of desire for independence on entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the influence of societal norms on entrepreneurial intention

among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria?

2. What is the influence of desire for independence on entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria?

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the course of the study:

HO₁: Societal norms have no significant influence on entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria.

HO₂: Desire for independence has no significant influence on entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

The Theory of planned Behavior is the most widely used theory to research on entrepreneurial intention (Linan & Cheng, 2012). There are three conceptually independent determinants of intention towards entrepreneurship, namely attitudes towards entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavior control (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude towards performing behaviour refers to perceptions of personal desirability to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It depends on the exceptions of personal impacts of outcomes resulting from the behaviour. A person's attitude towards entrepreneurship refers to the personal desirability in becoming an entrepreneur (Kolveried, 2016). As a result, the more expectations and belief towards self-employment reflect a favorable attitude entrepreneurship.

Financial security was the most outstanding variable that made up for the attitude towards entrepreneurial intention (Van Gelderen, et al., 2014). Many studies

confirm a positive relationship between attitude and behaviour intention (Kolveried, 2016; Autio, Keeley, Klofsten, Parker, & Hay, 2017; Tegtmerier, 2012; Yang, 2013; Nguyen, 2017). Yang (2013) confirms that attitude represented the most effective's predictive predictor of entrepreneurial intention. In contrast, Zhang et al., (2015) confirms a surprise result from a study conducted in United State that attitude fails to generate a significant impact on entrepreneurial intention. In addition, Nguyen (2017) confirms that subjective norms fail to generate significant impact on entrepreneurial intention in a research conducted in Viet Nam.

2.1 Societal Norm

Societal norm is the view of an individual who influenced one another. According to Williams (2016), societal views are the views that are considered important by individuals who advise the individual to perform or not perform certain behaviours and motivation accompanied by a willingness to do or not do something that was considered important. Societal norms or refer to a person's beliefs on how and what to think about people who are considered important and are motivated to follow that thought (Moore, 2015). Societal norm is a norm which departs from the inner element or the human conscience (Salami, 2015). Societal norms are the views considered important by individuals who advise the individual to perform or not perform certain behaviours and motivation accompanied by a willingness to do or not do something that is considered important (Williams, 2016). Moore, (2015), revealed that Societal norms or socially refers to a person's beliefs on how and what to think about people considered important and motivated to follow the thought. Societal norm is a norm which departs from the inner element

or the human conscience (Salami, 2015). In entrepreneurship, individual views derived from the belief and support of family, friends or people that are considered important for such individuals.

2.2 Desire for Independence

The Desire for Independence theory of McClelland (2011) is one of the most applied theories on entrepreneurship. According to its traditional definition, the desire for independence is the impetus that forces the person to struggle for success and perfection (Sagie, 2014). Individuals who have a strong need to achieve are among those who want to solve problems themselves, set targets and strive for these targets through their own efforts, demonstrate a higher performance in challenging tasks and are innovative in the sense of looking for new and better ways to improve their performance (Unpaz, 2015). While Madumere-Obike, (2011) identified the Desire for Independence as a basic need that influences behavior, McClelland first established the construct in the entrepreneurship literature by positing that a high Desire for Independence predisposes a young person to seek out an entrepreneurial position to attain more achievement satisfaction that could be derived from other types of positions (Entrialgo, 2015). With numerous comparative studies conducted among entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, it appears that the desire for independence has a more significant relation with entrepreneurship than other characteristics mentioned in the literature (Hansemark, 2011).

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The Area of the study was conducted in the North-East Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The population of the study was 24,625 (ND II) 2018/2019

academic session final year students (Office of the Heads of Departments of the Various Institutions), School of Business Studies of all the Polytechnics in North-Eastern Nigeria. The sample was 379 students as suggested by The Research Advisors (2006) Table of sample Size. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was self-administered to 379 ND II students using a proportionate random Sampling technique across the polytechnics in the North-East, Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. Out of the 379 distributed, 356 copies were duly completed and returned. The data collected were analyzed in two stages as follows: In the first stage, the research questions for the study were analyzed using Mean and standard deviation. In the second stage, the formulated hypotheses of the study were

tested at 5% significance level using simple regression analysis.

4. Results

Research Question One

The descriptive statistics of the Societal Norms documented in Table 1 revealed that the mean score of respondents in all the measurement items of Societal Norms are greater than 3.50. That is, all the items are having the mean score of above 3.0 with a grand mean of 3.85. This implies that the respondents agreed that Societal Norms determine the entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students in business studies.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Societal Norms on Entrepreneurial Intention

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Tradition might influence my capability to generate new ideas	3.74	1.190	Agreed
2	I do influenced by the opinion of my close people	3.87	1.127	Agreed
3	My family would agree with my decision to start a business on my own	3.83	0.962	Agreed
4	My colleagues would agree with my decision to start a business on my own	3.84	1.001	Agreed
5	My friends would agree with my decision to start a business on my own	3.84	0.950	Agreed
6	Societal orientation experience may influence my zeal for new venture creation	3.86	0.880	Agreed
7	Belief has encouraged me to become an entrepreneur towards self-employment	3.80	1.004	Agreed
8	Culture/belief influence my capability to exploit business opportunity	3.90	.944	Agreed
9	Your religion will allow a trade you think you can do.	3.83	0.957	Agreed
10	Worship leaders encourage you to become an entrepreneur for being jobless	3.89	0.912	Agreed
11	Societal values support local product	3.90	0.924	Agreed
12	Culture encourages youths to become entrepreneurs	3.91	0.890	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.85	0.718	Agreed

Source: Field work (2020)

Research Question Two

The descriptive statistic was carried out to ascertain the mean response of the respondents concerning the influence of the desire for independence on entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students. The statistical evidence documented in Table 2 showed that the

mean scores of all the twelve items are above 3.0 while the grand mean of desire for independence was found to be 3.80. This implies that the desire for independence determine entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students in Accountancy.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the influence of Desire for Independence on Entrepreneurial

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	For me, stability and safety in work is very important	3.84	0.950	Agreed
2	I want to be my own boss/ to be independent	3.86	0.880	Agreed
3	I would love to have a challenging, interesting and exciting job	3.80	1.004	Agreed
4	For me, it is very important to be autonomous in any work	3.90	0.944	Agreed
5	I really like to have authority and decision power	3.83	0.957	Agreed
6	I would rather make my own mistake than to take orders from someone else	3.89	0.912	Agreed
7	I enjoy making my own decision	3.90	0.924	Agreed
8	I would rather have a great deal of responsibility than be under somebody	3.91	0.890	Agreed
9	I will try hard to improve on past performance	3.59	1.113	Agreed
10	To start my own business would be the best way for me to take advantage of my education	3.73	1.089	Agreed
11	I am confident that I can succeed if I start my own business	3.73	1.121	Agreed
12	I am ready to withstand any challenges in creating new business	3.68	1.164	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.80	0.844	Agreed

Hypothesis One

Societal norms have no significant influence on entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in Accountancy in North-Eastern Nigeria. Evidence from the statistical outcome documented in Table 3 indicated that the determinant of societal norms on entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students was positive and significant with a standardized coefficient

beta value of 0.498, p -value = 0.000. However, this result does not support the prediction of null hypothesis one H_{01} that societal norms is not a determinant on entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students in business studies. Furthermore, the result implies that entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students in business studies is also determined by their societal norms.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Societal Norms on Entrepreneurial Intention

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
Societal Norms	0.498	8.071	0.000	Rejected

Source: Field work (2020)

Hypothesis Two

Desire for Independence has no significant influence on entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in business studies in North-Eastern Nigeria. The result of simple linear regression documented in Table 4 revealed that the desires for independence had a standardized coefficient beta value of 0.515, p -value = 0.000. The result therefore, showed the significant positive determinant of desires for independence on

entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students. Nevertheless, this result does not support the prediction of null hypothesis two H_{02} that desires for independence is not a determinant of entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students. The result further implies that desires for independence is a strong determinant of entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students in business studies.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of Desire for Independence on Entrepreneurial Intention

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
Desires for Independence	0.515	8.444	0.000	Rejected

Source: Field work (2020)

Summary of Major Findings

This section highlighted the major findings of the study:

The finding of research question one disclosed that societal norms was a determinant of determine the entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in business studies. the findings was re-enforced by result of the test of null hypothesis one which revealed that influence of societal norms on entrepreneurial intention of National Diploma students in business studies was positive and significant.

The results of research question two provides a strong evidence that the desire

for independence determine entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in business studies. Similarly, the test of hypotheses is also that, desires for independence are a strong determinant of entrepreneurial intention among National Diploma students in business studies.

5. Discussion of the Findings

The result of research question one and test of null hypothesis one suggested that the influence of societal norms on entrepreneurial intention for self-reliance of national diploma students in North-Eastern Nigeria was significant. This implied that societal norms influence the entrepreneurial intention of national

diploma students in North-Eastern Nigeria. The result of the study was found to be similar with that of Steven (2015) which shows that a socially supportive culture is associated with entrepreneurial activity, higher entrepreneurial self-efficacy beliefs and social desirability of entrepreneurship. Researchers have indicated that entrepreneurship is a social activity that is influenced by the social environment of individuals (Reynold 2013). Therefore, entrepreneurial activity can be facilitated or hindered by certain socio-cultural practices, values and norms (Krueger, 2013). Similarly, the study conducted by Krueger, (2013) revealed that perceived social norms has positive determinant on entrepreneur intention of youths. The beliefs of relevant groups and actors, such as family, friends, colleagues and customers, will affect the intentions of the entrepreneur (Davidsson, 2014).

Societal norms are the views considered important by individuals who advise the individual to perform or not perform certain behaviors and motivation accompanied by a willingness to do or not do something that is considered important (Wedayanti, & Giantari, 2016). Matlay (2008) revealed that Societal norms or socially refers to a person's beliefs on how and what to think about people considered important and motivated to follow the thought. Societal norm is a norm which departs from the inner element or the human conscience (Segal, 2015). Societal norm is the belief of the individual to comply with the direction or suggestion of people around to participate in entrepreneurial activity (Cruz, 2015). Study by Ottih (2016) shows that ethnicity influences perceptions towards entrepreneurship. Autio et al. (2017) illustrating in his entrepreneurship model shows that intentional elements, such as expectations, attention, and belief, appear

to have a strong impact on our behaviour. Contrary to the result, White, Terry and Hodgetts (2014) in their study found weak correlations between descriptive norms and social norms; the underlying intuition is that their meanings are different.

The results of research question two and test of corresponding null hypothesis two suggested that the desire for independence significantly influenced the entrepreneurial intention for self-reliance of Polytechnic students in North-Eastern Nigeria. The result further affirmed that earlier submission of Shapero (2010) who maintained the intention to start a business depends both on the 'credibility' of alternative behaviours and the propensity to act upon opportunities. This 'credibility' requires that the behaviour towards self-reliance. Furthermore Shapero (2010) stresses how potential entrepreneurs are often discovered when a displacement in their attitude of independency. Varieties of intention models have also showed that entrepreneurial intention focus on the pre-entrepreneurial event and make uses of attitude and behaviour for self-reliance (Ajzen, 2012).

Krueger et al. (2013) who earlier reported that entrepreneurial intention can be triggered by a person's attitude towards entrepreneurship. The need to be self-reliant is considered to be the link between intention and action (Carsrud & Brännback, 2013). Similarly, significant relationship was found between the need to be self reliance and entrepreneurial intention of young entrepreneurs (Sagie, 2014). Kuratko and Hodgetts (2017) suggest that the effort exerted in creating a new venture and the willingness to sustain that venture is associated with the need for independency. McStay (2014) proposes that level of student's previous entrepreneurial experience will influence students' perceived desirability of self-employment. Students' perceived

desirability of self-employment will influence self-employment intentions.

Contrary to the finding, Lüthje and Franke (2014) state that: a student might be willing to find a company, regardless of his or her comparatively bad attitude towards entrepreneurship, because he perceives the conditions as very favourable. This consequence is called the trigger-effect and can be achieved through for instance a business incubator programs, entrepreneurship education and research, or other academic entrepreneurship activities.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

Entrepreneurial intention is one of the major contributing determinants to the formation, growth, and development of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship promotes self-reliance and brings about initiatives. Entrepreneurship has also been considered as an engine of growth for economic growth and development of developed and emerging economies. Academic discussions and policy initiatives are increasing nowadays on the vital role of entrepreneurial development in a society. This has been buttressed by the recent increasing unemployment across the globe. Using the data from ten (10) polytechnics in the North-Eastern, Nigeria, and employing simple regression for the analysis, it was found that, family background, societal norms, desire for independence, financial status and entrepreneurship training are all significant predictors of Entrepreneurial intention (EI). Overall, the result shows the model fits the data well, which has significant implications for policy makers and other stakeholders that wanted to enhance entrepreneurial ability among National Diploma students in business studies in North-Eastern Nigeria.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

Stakeholders, such as community leaders, government, NGOs, scholars, should create public awareness programme that will help to promote societal norms, values, and beliefs that encourage business creations and sustainability among students in North-Eastern, Nigeria.

The students should be encouraged to embrace entrepreneurship education or training in order for them to become self-reliant and wealth creators.

7. Contributions to Knowledge

The study has contributed to existing knowledge in the following ways:

The study contributed to existing literature on the determinants of entrepreneurship intention of students. The study has contributed to the existing knowledge that entrepreneurship training alone without parental support, desire for self-reliance, societal norms and finance cannot lead to the realization of the objectives of entrepreneurship education. Strong entrepreneurship zeal can only be achieved through collaboration of other factors outside the schools.

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