



ROLE MODEL AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP: BEYOND THE CLASSROOM.

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Abstract

This research work examined role model as a panacea for arousing positive attitude toward entrepreneurship. The research considered undergraduates of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 24,282 students in their fourth year in federal universities in South-West Nigeria. A sample of 1673 students in their fourth year was used in the study. The study adopted stratified random sampling technique and a structured questionnaire with 6-point Likert scale was used for data collection. Result of the study showed that role model has a significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. ($R = 0.553$; $R^2 = 0.306$; $\beta = 0.721$; $F (1/1671) = 736.375$; $p < 0.05$). The study recommends that government through the federal ministry of education should aid the federal universities in South-West Nigeria in establishing stronger linkages with role models and business organizations nationwide and connect them with their students in order to help the undergraduates to establish greater exposure to the real world of business. Furthermore, academia through the faculty members should systematically incorporate the role model phenomenon into the curriculum

KEYWORDS: Role model, Attitude, Entrepreneurship, Economic growth.

Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a major factor in promoting economic virtues (Babangida & Judith, 2017). Prominent among its contributions are reduction of graduate unemployment, creation of a personal business, independence, having all the profits to oneself, complete control and decision-making power over the business. Independence would have a major effect on attitude, and therefore act as motivators on entrepreneurial decision. Learning of entrepreneurship has been identified as a valuable tool required for national development, and has being highlighted as a strategy for rapid changing world and fundamental aspect of promoting economic success, steadiness and wealth (Fenando, 2018). In the same vein, Stephen, Scott, Rafael, and Carolyn (2018) argued that entrepreneurial learning is a process by which people acquire, assimilate, and organize newly formed entrepreneurial knowledge. Learning of entrepreneurship can take place through observing of successful characters which can affect an individual's career choices and decisions (Zozimo, Jack, & Hamilton, 2017).

Generally, the behavior of an individual is greatly determined by his/her attitude. It is a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli and has also been defined as a feeling or evaluative reaction to an idea, objective or situation (Babangida & Judith, 2017) which depicts how positive or negative, favorable or unfavorable a person feels towards that particular idea, object or situation in question (Rashmi & Chennai, 2018). Recent development in the various fields of study on attitude, view attitude as multidimensional in nature as opposed to the uni-dimensional emphasis explain earlier. Attitude towards entrepreneurship has been seen as the extent to which one perceives entrepreneurial behavior and its consequences as beneficial and valuable. Therefore, individuals with positive attitude towards entrepreneurship has motivation and ability to get involved in entrepreneurial activities (Fasla, 2017) and perceive more opportunities where others consider the situation as a thread or risk, set more challenging goals, exert more effort and perseverance to achieve their vision and cope with challenges and crises associated with entrepreneurship (Zhai, Sun, Tsai, Wang & Zhao, 2018). It promotes achievement, in creating new venture, Innovation, acting upon business incentives, having perception of personal control, Perceived self esteem, perceived competence in operating business above all having positive

attitude towards entrepreneurship enables one to cope with uncertainties and challenges of the whole entrepreneurship process (Tao, Arturo, and Alexander 2017; Jale & Sadagopan, 2017). It is highlighted by different authors that entrepreneurs associate the creation of a personal enterprises with independence and economic rewards (Abraham, 2015; Lafortune, Jlio, & Tessada, 2017; Khursheed, 2017). The negative attitudes towards entrepreneurship of university undergraduates in Nigeria has brought about a persistent high rate of graduate unemployment (Adebayo & Kavoos, 2016). Unemployment statistics of university graduates from the National Bureau of Statistics shows that as at January 2015 to July 2017 the rate of unemployment of university graduates ranges from 11.7% to 33.1%. This was considered detrimental to Nigeria as a developing nation which is in need of a promising economic growth. In spite of being taught with different pedagogies of entrepreneurship, the different entrepreneurship pedagogies have failed to develop the attitude of graduate towards entrepreneurship because of the ambiguity of pedagogical entrepreneurship policy. This has led to the high rate of university graduates unemployment in Nigeria

Though, there is no consensus on the effect of role model on attitude towards entrepreneurship (Fellnhöfer & Puumalainen, 2017; Lafortune, Jlio, & Tessada, 2017; Rafela & Hector, 2018) but literature have it that role models may lead to a successful career choice (Abdullatif, Sawsen, Sami, & Younes, 2016). Role models in this context are imperative because they provide individual with training and support needed (Ranwala, 2016). Furthermore, the study of Marian, Milos and Peter (2013) identified that various advantages of role models lies in three interrelated means: to provide learning; to provide motivation and inspiration and to help individuals define their self-concept. Assessing the influence of role models on students' academic and vocational decisions, Zozimo, Jack, and Hamilton (2017) add a support component, arguing that role models not only provide individuals with inspiration and modeling, but also with support and guidance. In congruence, Lafortune, Jlio, and Tessada, (2017) identified the following as advantages of the presence of a role model. A role model helps to construct an identity which is important in a social and psychological manner. An entrepreneur that is exposed to other innovative entrepreneur may himself become more innovative; having good role models may lead to a successful career and failure is due to a lack of role

models; provide individual with training for socialism (Niel Jolanda, Veronique, Mirjam & Indrig, 2014) they provide observational learning experience. The reasoning is that by directly seeing successful persons in business an individual will wish to imitate in order to become similarly successful. It has been identified by Amouril, Sidrat, Boudabbous and Boujelbene (2016). Despite the advantages of role model it has some disadvantages which are as follows, in the process of imitating others one can will lose him or herself (David & Donna, 2015) one will wonder why things are not really working out as expected or as it has worked out for ones role model, from there one can possibly lose momentum regarding his original intentions.

In spite of the exposure of students to role models like their lecturers, successful entrepreneurs from different categories still university undergraduates are not connected to these role models and the place of role model for the development of positive attitude towards entrepreneurship has been counted irrelevant (Abdullatif, Sawsen, Sami, & Younes, 2016). Consequently, their attitudes towards entrepreneurship have been unfavorable hence university graduates' unemployment has been on the high side. A report of the study conducted on a sample size of 269 final year students by Nnditshen and Williem (2011) indicates that 162 (60.2%) which counted the place of role model irrelevant while 107(39.8%) aligned with the importance of role modeling entrepreneurship. It is therefore important to establish the effect of role model on attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Literature Review

Role Model

The definition of a role model can be divided into two basic components; it is a combination of role and modeling (Zozimo, Jack, & Hamilton, 2017). Role is a form of behavior and test of activities with part of status position such as a manager, a leader or a teacher. While model is a human construct that one looks up to (Ranwala, 2016). That is, two prominent theoretical constructs: The concept of role which is the tendency of individuals to identify with other people and the concept of modeling, the psychological matching of cognitive skills and patterns of behavior. Fellnhofner & Puumalainen, (2017) in their submission suggest that role model is a person who an individual perceives to be similar to

some extent, and because of that similarity, the individual decides to emulate the person's attribution or behavior. This implies that individuals are attracted to role models who are perceived to be similar in terms of their characteristics, behavior or goals (the role aspect), and from whom they are able to learn certain abilities or skills (the model aspect). This definition is deficient to an extent in the sense that one does not need to be similar to another before he/she can be ones role model.

Attitude towards entrepreneurship

Attitude is the overall behavior or act of an individual's body and mind before a certain fact or situation (Rechber, Isikasal, & Koc, 2018). This definition is more valid than that of Norasmah and Siti (2017) because it laid emphasis on overall attitude (body and mind) of an individual which is seen to be a function of the strength of each of a number of beliefs the person hold about the various aspects or attributes of an idea, object or situation; the evaluation the person gives to each belief as it relates to the idea or object in question. Moreover, Khursheed (2017) submit that attitude is the way a person or an individual's behavior is determined and the degree to which an individual has favorable or unfavorable assessments of the behavior in question. The position of these authors lays emphasis on feeling or a reaction in response to an idea or objective on the part of an individual to respond positively or negatively to some object, situation, concept or another person. Whereas Pulka, Rikwentishe, and Ibrahim (2015) defined attitude as predisposition learned to respond in a consistent manner to a social object furthermore in Social Psychology, attitude constitute valuable elements for the prediction of behavior. The authors went further that attitude can be cognitive, affective and behavioral. The definition of these authors supersedes that of the foregoing because of the inclusion of all the constructs of attitude into the definition. Cognitive component of attitude is all about an individual's belief thought and knowledge. Belief is a reflection of an individual's knowledge and assessment of the context of discuss while affective component of attitude are feeling and emotion towards the context of discuss and behavioral component explains behavior, response and willingness which is the way individuals react to a specific set of context. Attitude plays important roles in determining learning behaviors of students in universities which calls for continued effort by the researchers/teachers to make sure that students develop positive attitude towards the construct at hand (Nishat & Nadeem, 2016). In consistence

attitude play an important role in establishing entrepreneurial activity within a population. The attitude relevant to entrepreneurship includes willingness to bear the level of risk that individuals might be willing to bear and individual's perceptions of their own skills, knowledge, and experience in business creation. Attitude towards entrepreneurship are important because they express the general feelings of an individual toward entrepreneurship.

Role model and Attitude towards entrepreneurship

Role model and attitude towards entrepreneurship is a recurring theme in the literature which established have divergent results (Munawaroh, 2017; Saeid, Harm, Biemans, Thomas, Mohammad, Martin & Karim, 2015). Empirically, the nexus between role model and attitude towards entrepreneurship has been documented in literature such as Abdullatif, Sawsen, Sami, & Younes, 2016; Alexander, Francis, Hudu, Goddana & Elvis, 2015; Amouri, Sidrat, Boudabbous, & Boujelbene, 2016; Chlosta, 2015; Fellnhofner & Puumalainen, 2017; Jean, Beneditcte, Servane, & Veronica, 2015; Katharina & Kaisu, 2017; Lafortune, Jlio, & Tessada, 2017; Niels, Jolanda, Veronique, Mirjam, & Ingrid, 2014; Nnditsheni & Willem, 2011; Rafaela & Hector, 2018; Rahman & Dag, 2014 Saeid, Harm, Biemans, Thomas, Mohammad, Martin & Karim, 2015; Phillip, 2015; Zozimo, Jack, & Hamilton, 2017). According to the study of Fellnhofner and Puumalainen (2017) who investigated role model and attitude toward entrepreneurship there is a positively significant effect of role model on attitude towards entrepreneurship. Niels, Jolanda, Veronique, Mirjam, and Ingrid (2014) also found that role model enhances entrepreneurship attitude development in students. Among the predisposing factors that influences students' attitude towards entrepreneurship Nnditsheni and Willem (2011) confirmed that students with entrepreneurial role model have stronger attitude towards entrepreneurship than students without entrepreneurial role model moreover, they found a positive relationship between between role models and attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Contributing to the discourse, from the perspective of gender, Saeid, Harm, Biemans, Thomas, Mohammad, Martin and Karim (2015) assessed understanding role models and gender influences on attitude towards entrepreneurship among college students in Botswana. The study revealed that entrepreneurial role models indirectly influenced entrepreneurial. This issue is supported by the study of, Abdullatif,

Sawsen, Sami, and Younes (2016) who investigated the effects of role models on developing attitude towards entrepreneurship among undergraduate students in Tunisia the study found that the roles of parents, gender, family, and reference group important in fostering Tunisian students' attitude towards entrepreneurship. In the same context, (Amouri, Sidrat, Boudabbous, and Boujelbene, 2016; Jean, Beneditcte, Servane, & Veronica, 2015) looked into role model from family entrepreneurial role models and the result of their studies show significantly higher attitude to become entrepreneur than the students without family entrepreneurial role models. This was re-investigated by (Alexander, Francis, Hudu, Goddana & Elvis, 2015; Zozimo, Jack, & Hamilton, 2017; whose studies revealed that students with family entrepreneurial role models show significantly higher attitude to become an entrepreneur than those without family entrepreneurial role model. This position is not different from that of Chlosta (2015) who investigated the influence of parental role models, attitude towards entrepreneurship, and the decision to become self employed. The study shows that influence of role model is positively significant to attitude to attitude towards entrepreneurship. According to Katharina and Kaisu (2017) who investigated how role models boost attitude towards entrepreneurship the study found that role model has a significant positive influence on attitude towards entrepreneurship through perceived entrepreneurial desirability and feasibility. Furthermore, Rafaela and Hector (2018) investigated role model from the perspective of teachers.

The study on teachers as entrepreneurial role models: The impact of a teacher's entrepreneurial experience and students learning styles in attitude towards entrepreneurship. The study found that major constructs of role model are teachers furthermore teachers as role model have influence on attitude towards entrepreneurship of students. On the contrary some scholars (Lafortune, Jlio, & Tessada, 2017; Phillip, 2015; Rahman & Dag, 2014) emphasized examined the involving effect of the entrepreneurial role model a possible development for entrepreneurship education. The studies show major constructs of parents, entrepreneur and teachers have influence on attitude towards entrepreneurship of students. Lafortune, Jlio, and Tessada, 2017; Phillip, 2015) found that role model has negative effect on attitude towards entrepreneurship.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted survey research design which facilitated the use of a structured research instrument in obtaining data for the analysis that is to collect detailed and factual information that describes an existing phenomenon. The adoption of this design is consistent with the studies of Alexander, Francis, Hudu, Goddana & Elvis, 2015; Amouri, Sidrat, Boudabbous, & Boujelbene, 2016; Chlosta, 2015; Fellnhofner & Puumalainen, 2017; Jean, Beneditcte, Servane, & Veronica, 2015; Katharina & Kaisu, 2017). The population of the study was 400 level students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria which was 24,282 as at 2018 February. The study employed table of sample size determination developed by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970 and obtained from Research Advisor (2006). At 0.05 margin error and 95% confidence level for each of the universities for the study. This table helps the researcher to determine the required sample size for this study which amounts to one thousand six hundred and seventy three (1673) respondents as the sample size. Stratified random sampling techniques has been chosen for this study because it brings categorization into focus and it is more superior to other random sampling and for good representation and yields more efficient result. Primary data was collected through questionnaires. The justification of using questionnaire is for its high response rate and minimum intervention bias from the researcher also for an efficient and accurate accessing of information. The results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measures (KMO) on the instrument for the variables were found to be greater than 0.5 and not above 1, hence acceptable indices. On the other side, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity had p-values = 0.000 for all the variables which are less than 0.05. From the results of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, it can be concluded that the factors were valid and suitable as there would be high significant correlation between the variables in the study. KMO and Bartlett's Test is a condition for carrying out. Data treatment as a pre-diagnostic test shows that no collinear relationship exist among the explanatory variables, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test conducted shows that the series was normally distributed, and there is a linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Model Specification

Following the objectives of this study the dependent and independent variables were factored into a functional equation. Attitude toward entrepreneurship is the dependent variable while role model is the

independent and the following equation was established and tested.

$$ATTENT = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 RM + \mu_i \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where: ATTENT-Attitude toward entrepreneurship

α_0 = Intercept

β_1 = Coefficient of the explanatory variable

RM = Role Model

μ = Error Term

MEASURES

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: In this present study the appropriateness of role model used a scale to measure of the work of Dryler (2016) which are as follows pedestal for business start up, sources of business related information, successful career choice, provision of motivation, provision of support, and psychological positioning. The six-item scale has six-point likert-type response scale of very high (6) to very low (1).

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Dependent variable of the study is attitude towards entrepreneurship. Three items will be used at six point Likert scale to measure the attitude of undergraduates towards entrepreneurship using the scale of the model of Adapted from Bonnie, Dianne, Yuchin, and William (2015) using 6 likert scale with three constructs which are cognitive attitude, affective attitude and behavioral attitude.

APRIORI EXPECTATION

In this study negative or positive effect is expected between role model and attitude toward entrepreneurship.

Linear Regression Results on the Effect of Role model on Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship among students of Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria

| Coefficients | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 23.116 | .754 | | 30.674 | .000 |
| | Role Model | .721 | .027 | .553 | 27.136 | .000 |

$$R = 0.553; R^2 = 0.306; F (1/1671) = 736.375$$

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards Entrepreneurship

Source: Researcher's Field Results (2019)

Results of regression analysis conducted on the effect of role model on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. According to Table above, role model has a significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria ($\beta = 0.721$, $t = 27.136$, $p < 0.05$). The t-statistic and corresponding p-value are 27.136 and 0.000 respectively implying that role model has a significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The results also shows that role model explains about 30.6 percent of the variations in attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria ($R^2 = 0.306$, $p < 0.05$), which is also statistically significant. However, regression model did not explain 69.4 percent of the variation in attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria, signifying that there are other factors associated with attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria, which were not captured in the current model. From the results, the established linear regression equation is as follows:

$$ATTE = 23.116 + 0.721RM \dots\dots\dots (Eq. 1)$$

Where:

ATTE = Attitudes towards entrepreneurship

RM = Role Model

The regression equation indicates that taking all factors constant at zero, attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West was 23.116. From the result, the regression coefficient of role model was 0.721, which implies that for every unit change in role model actions and attitude, there is a 0.721 increase in attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. This implies that attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West increase significantly when role model of the students increased. The level of confidence for the analysis was set at 95%.

Discussion of Results

The objective five was to investigate the effect of role model on attitudes of students towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South West Nigeria. The study revealed that role model has significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South West Nigeria. There are a lot of studies that supported our finding that role model has positive and significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Abdullatif, Sawsen, Sami & Younes, 2016; Fellnhofner & Puumalainen, 2017; Niels, Jolanda, Veronique, Mirjam & Ingrid, 2014; Saeid, Harm, Biemans, Thomas, Mohammad, Martin & Karim, 2015). In the same context Amouri, Sidrat, Boudabbous, and Boujelbene, 2016; Zozimo, Jack and Hamilton (2017), Zozimo, Jack, and Hamilton (2017), Chlosta (2015) and Rafaela and Hector (2018) revealed that role model has a significant positive influence on attitude towards entrepreneurship through perceived entrepreneurial desirability and feasibility. On the contrary some scholars (Lafort, Jlio, & Tessada, 2017; Phillip, 2015; Rahman & Dag, 2014) found that role model has negative effect on attitude towards entrepreneurship.

Majority of empirical findings supported our study finding that role model has significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students. Consistently, Social learning theory also supported our finding as it explains the relationship between entrepreneurial learning and attitude towards entrepreneurship because observation in the environment where individuals are and interact will affect individual learning. If the individuals are exposed to role model the individuals have tendencies to start-up businesses later in life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the effect of role model on attitude towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West Nigeria. The study provides theoretical and statistical evidences that role model affects attitude toward entrepreneurship. Following the findings of the research the study concluded that role model has positively significant effect on attitude towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West Nigeria. The study therefore recommended that government through the federal ministry of education should aid the federal universities in South-West Nigeria in establishing stronger linkages with role models and business organizations nationwide and connect them with their students in order to help the undergraduates to establish greater exposure to successful role models and to the real world of business. Furthermore, academia through the faculty members should systematically incorporate the role model phenomenon into the curriculum of entrepreneurship. This is because, through better understanding of entrepreneurial phenomenon and acquisition of necessary, skills and knowledge students with entrepreneurial role models will demonstrate stronger attitude towards entrepreneurship and hence venture creation.

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