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SOCIAL SUPPORT AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG GRADUATING STUDENTS IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA

Lukman T. Siraj
Business Education Department
Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kumbotso, Kano
lukmantsiraj@gmail.com +2348069433344

Jummai Mamman Jirgi
Department of Vocational and Technology Education
Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi

Hindatu Maigari Yerima
Department of Public Administration
Bauchi State University, Gadau

Mu'awiyya Bature Ibrahim
General Studies Education Department
Aminu Kano College of Legal and Islamic Studies, Kano

Abstract
There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that Kano society expects their educated youths to seek for paid employment in large private corporations, government companies or the traditional civil service. In other words, the social norm does not favor choice of an entrepreneurial career after graduation. This paper therefore, reports results of a cross-sectional study that focused on the effect of social support on entrepreneurial intentions to start a business by university students in Kano State. Data were collected from a sample of 197 graduating students. Regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The results show significant effect of social support on entrepreneurial intention. Parents need to motivate and support their children to opt for entrepreneurship as a first choice career and graduating students should try to generate a business idea before their graduation. That may enable them to start preparing their business plan in good time.
Key words: Entrepreneurial intentions, Social support, Business creation. Graduates

Introduction
Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions are producing thousands of graduates at the end of every academic session, and the number is too large for government and private organizations to absorb. In respond to this, federal government of Nigeria mandated the National Universities Commission (NUC, 2004) to include entrepreneurship education in the curriculum

of Nigerian universities with the hope of increasing potential entrepreneurs supply by making more students conscious and interested in choosing entrepreneurship as a career option.

However, it is important for entrepreneurial policy makers to note that if programs and policies are to be developed to enhance entrepreneurial behavior, then a keen understanding of the factors that influence and shape an individual's intentions to go into entrepreneurship is critical.

Ajzen‟s (1991) social psychology theory of planned behavior was one of the theories that were developed specifically for explaining what might lead to entrepreneurial behavior. Briefly stated, Ajzen‟s theory posits that three variables, namely (1) attitude towards a given behavior, (2) subjective norms and (3) perception of control over the behavior precede the formation of intention.

Some studies have concentrated on the influence of perceived desirability and feasibility on entrepreneurial intentions but neglected the role of subjective norms emphasized by Azjen (e.g. Sanchez, 2011). Subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure to perform a behavior (Tong et al; 2011). The presumption is that the more favorable the social norm, the greater will be the inclination to perform the behavior. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that Kano society expects their educated young to seek paid employment in large private corporations, government companies or the traditional civil service. In other words, the social norm does not favor choice of an entrepreneurial career after graduation. There does not appear to be any credible empirical study as yet in Kano State that has investigated the effect of such unfavorable social norms on the entrepreneurial intentions of university students about to enter the world of work. This study investigated the role of social norms in shaping attitudes that lead to entrepreneurial intentions.

Literature Review

Azjen‟s (1991) theory of planned behavior (TPB) maintains that there are three predictors of intention: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and the degree of perceived behavior control. Attitude towards a behavior is a reflection of the individual's appraisal of the behavior. The appraisal may be placed along a continuum running from favorable to unfavorable. According to the theory, the more favorable the appraisal the greater the intention.

The second predictor, subjective norms, refers to the degree to which family, friends, peers and society at large expect or pressure the individual to perform the behavior in question. In terms of the present study, the expectation is invariably linked to the prestige and respect accorded to entrepreneurship as a career choice by society (Sanchez 2011). The TPB model suggests that the greater the expectation or pressure, the greater the gravitation towards the behavior.

Perceived behavioral control refers to the extent to which the individual feels capable of performing the behavior. It is based on the individuals' know how and experience and his or her appraisal of likely obstacles to performing the behavior. The greater the feeling of behavioral control the stronger will be the intention to perform the behavior (Tong et al; 2011).

According to Tam (2009), TPB has been used with success both in research and in practical settings. Intentions have been shown to explain 30% of the variance in behavior; better explanatory power than trait measures which typically explain about 10% of the variance (Tong et al;). Attitudes variables have been shown (Kariv, 2012) to explain up to 50% of the variance in intentions.

Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention is defined as the awareness of the mind that precedes action and directs attention towards a goal such as starting a new business (Omolayo, 2006). Zhao et al (2005) refers to intention as to perform entrepreneurial behaviour; they similarly viewed it as the intention to start a new business (Zhao et al 2005). Crant (1996) simply put it as an intention to own a business while Tam (2009) defines entrepreneurial intention as "self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future". Ogundele et al; (2012) viewed it as an intention to be self-

employed, and hence, adopted in this study. Several researches have successfully used intent model so as to examine entrepreneurial intention. Developing an intention to form an entrepreneurial career is the initial step in the often long process of venture creation Zhao et al; (2005).

Scholars argued that entrepreneurial intention is influenced by individual differences such as attitudes, predispositions, traits, skills and abilities and cognitive differences (Kariv, 2010), exposure to entrepreneurship, accessibility of role models and social attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Hussain & Norashida, 2015). Other factors include exposure to information, the physical and the social environments as well as values and prejudice (Kakkonem, 2010). Toits (2010) argued that from a researcher perspective, it is not always feasible to wait a number of years to examine how many students ultimately establish a business. Using entrepreneurial intention as a measure of the impact of entrepreneurship education has the advantage of measuring the immediate effect of the entrepreneurship education.

Social Support

Thoits (2010) provided a comprehensive definition of social support that refers to "emotional, informational, or practical assistance from significant others, such as family members, friends, or coworkers; (and that) support actually may be received from others or simply perceived to be available when needed." Nurullah (2012) pointed out that social supports originate from members of the social network which an individual belongs to, the existence of social network, however does not assure the provision of social support. He added that social support comes from considerable help by others in the form of informational, emotional, material, or/and companionship needs, which is recognized as support by both the provider and the recipient. Peterman & Kennedy (2003) observed that research has suggested that measures of received support reflect social support more accurately than measures of perceived support.

Social Support and Entrepreneurial Intention

Social support constituted the second construct in Azjen"s (1991) TPB model. Several studies have been carried out to explore the effect of social norms on entrepreneurial intent. Studies such as, Liñán (2004), and Liñán and Chen (2009) all found that social norm has an insignificant effect on entrepreneurial intent. While on the contrary, studies such as Kolvereid & Isaksen (2006), and Kakkonen (2010) all found a significant effect of social norm on entrepreneurial intent.

Salgado-Banda (2005) investigated the effect of entrepreneurial experience, perceived social support networks and perceived social norms on perceived desirability and feasibility of starting a business in Kenya using the SEE model. The study adopted a convenience sample of 600 participants made up of 440 students and 160 nascent entrepreneurs. The finding revealed that perceived social support had a positive effect on perceived feasibility and perceived desirability, which in turn influence the intention to create a new venture. Similarly, Kakkonem (2010) pointed out that Entrepreneurial intent is dependent on the social valuation and closer valuation of entrepreneurship and perceived social support networks.

Moreover, contrary to TPB theory, Krueger et al. (2000) did not find subjective norms to have a significant influence on entrepreneurial intentions. On the other hand, Reitan (2008) found subjective norms to be an important moderating and mediating variable albeit difficult to separate from perceptions of feasibility. The contribution of subjective norms to entrepreneurial intentions are therefore not clear-cut and hence, the need for further research.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design applied in this study was cross sectional survey design. A Cross-sectional survey is a study that aimed at determining the frequency (or level) of a particular attribute, in a

defined population at a particular point in time. This study is a cross sectional survey design due to the fact that data was collected at one point in time from a sample to depict a population.

Population of the study

The population of this study were the graduating students of school of undergraduate studies, Sa'adatu Rimi College of Education, Kumbotso, Kano State amounting to 388. The present study focused on graduating students because their time to join the work market was eminent and thoughts about their future careers were more focused. Moreover, from a policy perspective, we believed that a group about to embark on new careers is more responsive to suggestion.

Sample size

Using Sloven's formula, a sample size of 197 was reached.

$$n=\frac{N}{1+N(\alpha^2)}$$

Where N= Number of target population = 388

n= sample size

α=Significance level (0.05 in this case).

Therefore

$$n=\frac{388}{1+388(0.05\times0.05)}$$

= 197

Sampling technique

Stratified sampling was used in this study because the respondents were from different departments. Therefore, since the departments (strata) that were investigated in this study have different number of students, a random sampling by proportional allocation was then used to ensure adequate representation of all the sub-sectors. The final respondents of the study were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents of the Study

	Target population	**Sample size**
Department		
Geography	55	28
English	101	50
Biology	40	20
Islamic Studies	98	49
Chemistry	44	22
Physical and Health Education	24	11
Arabic	11	05
Total	**388**	**197**

Source: School of Undergraduate Studies' Admission office (2020)

Data collection method

The study employed quantitative method of data collection using a researcher devised Likert-scale questionnaire. Likert scale is preferred in this study as it allows the respondents to respond in a degree of agreements, makes questions easier to answer by the respondents and it is quick, efficient and inexpensive. Likert scale has been used satisfactorily by a number of empirical studies (e.g. Linen and Chen, 2009; Tung, 2011; Siraj et al, 2016).

Validity of the research instrument

Convergent validity was assessed by examining the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each latent construct, as suggested by Creswell(2003). To achieve adequate convergent validity, Veal(2005) recommends that the AVE of each latent construct should be .50 or more. The instrument question items were tested for convergence, to ascertain its validity. According to Veal (2005), convergent validity refers to the extent to which items truly represent the intended

construct and indeed correlate with other measures of the same construct. Following Veal(2005), all the AVE values (see Table 2) exhibited high loadings (above 0.50) on their respective constructs, indicating adequate convergent validity.

Table 2 Average Variance Extracted for testing convergent validity of the study instrument

Constructs	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Social support	0.57
Entrepreneurial intention	0.67

Source: Results of data analysis (2020)

Reliability Test

The Cronbach's reliability test was performed to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Classification on quality of Cronbach's Alpha value by Crewell (2003), state that value of 0.9 to 1 is excellent, between 0.8 and 0.899 is good, 0.7 to 0.799 is acceptable, 0.6 to 0.699 is questionable and 0.5 to 0.599 is poor, and below 0.5 as unacceptable. The results obtained from this analysis are depicted in Table 3. The results show that Cronbach's Alpha values were all well high, indicating a high reliability of social support and entrepreneurial intention measures.

Table 3 Cronbach's Alpha Value for Variables

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha
Social support	0.71
Entrepreneurial intention	0.82

Source: Results of data analysis (2020)

Data analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was performed to establish relationship between the variables. 5% level of significance was used in this study.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Level of Social Support to Entrepreneurship

The independent variable (IV) social support was measured using three elements, namely parents' support, friends' support, and news media support. Each of the three elements was measured using a four-point Likert scale. The response modes for the social support instrument were 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree and 4 = Strongly Agree. To indicate the extent to which respondents rated social support to entrepreneurship, the responses were summarised using means and standard deviations as indicated in Table 4. To interpret the means, the following mean ranges were used;

Mean range	*Response range*	*Interpretation*
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly agree	Very high support
2.51 - 3.25	Agree	High support
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree	Low support
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly disagree	Very low support

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Social Support to Entrepreneurship

Constructs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Parents' support	2.31	.982	Low support
Friends' support	2.30	.010	Low support
News media support	3.16	.674	High support
Overall Mean for social support	**2.60**	**.546**	High support

Source: Results of data analysis (2020)

Table 4 indicates that respondents showed that they were not well supported by their parents and friends to embark on entrepreneurship rather than paid job after graduation despite the high news mediaefforts to create awareness of the relevance of entrepreneurship. The standard deviation of 0.982, 0.010 and 0,674 suggest that responses are not much dispersed and so the mean position is most likely the true position of these respondents.

Level of Entrepreneurial Intention

The dependent variable (DV) entrepreneurial intention was measured using five elements as indicated in Table 5, Each of the five elements was measured using a four-point Likert scale. The response modes for the entrepreneurial intention were 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree and 4 = Strongly Agree. To indicate the extent to which respondents rated their entrepreneurial intention, the responses were summarised using means and standard deviations as indicated in Table 5. To interpret the means, the following mean ranges were used;

Mean range	***Response range***	***Interpretation***
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly agree	Very high intention
2.51 - 3.25	Agree	High intention
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree	Low intention
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly disagree	Very low intention

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics on the Level of Entrepreneurial Intention

Elements	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**Interpretation**
Contemplation of starting a business	2.81	.962	High
Entrepreneurial ambition	2.62	.846	High
Saving for business creation	2.39	.090	Low
Having business idea in mind	2.37	.844	Low
Business plan	2.31	0.883	Low
Overall mean for entrepreneurial intention	**2.48**	**0.471**	**Low intention**

Source: Results of data analysis (2019)

Table 5 indicate that respondents rated their venture creation intention to be generally low (Overall mean = 2.48). Their entrepreneurial intention was rated highest on the aspect of contemplating to start a business after their graduation, with a mean of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 0.962, which is generally, suggesting that responses are not much dispersed and so the mean position is most likely the true position of these respondents. The results suggest that respondents agreed that they were currently looking for all chances of becoming self-employed, whether they had a job or not, which means there are high chances that many of them will create ventures. Nevertheless, some key aspects of business creation like business idea generation, business plan and saving for business were rated low. This indicates that respondents were yet to have a business idea in their minds, nor do they started saving or preparing business plan to start business.

Effects of Social Support on Entrepreneurial Intention

The effect of social support on entrepreneurship was tested using regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression Analysis showing the Effect of Social Support on Entrepreneurial Intention

Variables regressed	**B**	**R^2**	**Beta**	**Sig**	**Interpretation**	**Decision on Ho**
(constant)	2.287			.000	Significant effect	Rejected
Entrepreneurial Intention	0.178	.040	.200	.018	Significant effect	Rejected

Source: Results of data analysis (2020)

Table 6 shows that the sig value (0.018) was less than 0.05, indicating that social support was a significant predictor of entrepreneurial intention, and therefore, validating the hypothesis that says social support has a significant and positive effect on entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2= 0.040) explains that social support was responsible for 4% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention.It's also indicated that an increase in social support by one unitwould increase entrepreneurial intention by 0.178 (B = 0. 178).

Discussion

As a key objective of the study, we posited that societal social support influence entrepreneurial intention. Past research has not been consistent on the relationship between social suppport and entrepreneurial intention. While Kakkonem (2010) and Kolvereid & Isaksem (2006) found social support to be an important factor on intentions, Krueger et al (2000) and Linen & Chin (2009) did not find social support to have a significant influence on entrepreneurial intentions. The direct relationship between social support and entrepreneurial intentions was statistically significant but explained only 4% of the variation in intentions. This suggests that there were many other factors responsible for entrepreneurial intention.

For a long time, anecdotal evidence in Nigeria has indicated that entrepreneurship was not an esteemed career option for individuals with college education. We expected this negative societal bias to manifest itself in the relationship between social support and of entrepreneurship. According to Azjen‟s (1991) theory of planned behavior, the greater the expectation or pressure from society, the greater the gravitation towards the behavior in question. Indeed, in the current study, the relationship was positive meaning that positive social support enhances perceived desirability of entrepreneurship as a career.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the higher the social support, the more the College students would develop entrepreneurial intention. This means that the greater the expectation or pressure from society, the greater the gravitation towards entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

Parents need to motivate and support their children to opt for entrepreneurship as a first choice career.

Graduating students or their parents should embark on early savings for future business finance.

Graduating students should try to generate a business idea before their graduation, so as to enable them start preparing their business plan in good time.

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