



# Entrepreneurship intention among students. The antecedent role of culture and entrepreneurship training and development



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## ABSTRACT

With a depleting national economy which has no answer to the increasing rate of unemployment put at 23.4% in the year 2012 alone and coupled with a consistent increase in the number of University graduates, put at 3 million on yearly basis, out of which only 10 percent have the opportunity to join the formal sector, the federal government of Nigeria has mandated that a compulsory entrepreneurship training program (ETP) be observed in higher institutions of learning in order to enhance students with the skills and resources that will enable them to become self employed after graduation. However, no empirical evidence is presently in existence regarding the ability of this program in achieving this stated objective. This study examined the influence of entrepreneurship training program and cultural orientation on the intention of students to engage in entrepreneurial practices. A self administered and structured questionnaire which measures three cultural predictors: perceived appropriateness, perceived consistence and perceived effectiveness, entrepreneurial training and entrepreneurial intention was employed in eliciting responses from three hundred and fifty seven (357) randomly selected final year students of Bayero University Kano. From the total 357 copies of questionnaire distributed, 310 copies were recovered, 24 copies were excluded due to exclusion criteria, 31 copies were discarded for improper completion, and the final 255 copies were used for analysis indicating a usable response rate of 71.4%. The result from the regression analysis conducted indicates that perceived appropriateness, perceived effectiveness and entrepreneurial training, with the exception of perceived consistence have a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial intention. Based on these findings, it was recommended that school authorities and relevant stake holders should engage the use of mass communication in disseminating information that fosters perceived appropriateness and perceived effectiveness in addition to improving the quality of entrepreneurial training facilities in schools. The study's limitation is its focus on the students of only one higher institution of learning which makes the results uncovered, fall short of being generalized to all the students in Nigerian higher institutions of learning.

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## 1. Introduction

The critical role being played by entrepreneurship in the economic growth and development of developed economies such as USA, Britain, Japan, Canada and others have made most developing economies to adjust their developmental concept and plans to accommodate entrepreneurship and thus set the stage for new enterprise development which in their opinion, will serve as a panacea to tackling their economic problems (Nwankwo, Kanu, Marire, Balogun, & Uhiara, 2012). Put in another way, entrepreneurship is now seen as an engine room for economic growth and important indicator in the area of job creation, revenue generation, poverty alleviation and wealth creation (Romer, 1994). For instance an entrepreneur is expected to scan the environment for viable business opportunities (which might be in form of unsatisfied needs), arrive at an appropriate formula for satisfying the needs, source for the required resources: land, labor and capital, make provision for such need, with the aim of generating profitable outcome. Hence an entrepreneur is widely considered beneficial in creating enterprises and jobs (Gordon, 2000).

Garba, Kabir, and Nalado (2014) are of the opinion that the most difficult challenge confronting leaders in Africa and other developing countries is the problem of poverty and high unemployment. They pointed that the unemployment trend in Nigeria is ever increasing and that in 2012 alone, unemployment rate was 23.4% thereby creating a source of concern for the government and policy makers on how to reverse the trend and its negative implications on the country. Within these armies of unemployed are the young graduates who are churned out of the Universities, Polytechnics, and other tertiary institutions yearly to join the labor market which has already become saturated and clueless in providing answers to their yearning for economic participation (Garba et al., 2014). According to Fatelink (2007) in any given year over three million Nigerians become qualified to join the labor market out of which about 10% of these have the opportunity to join the formal sector.

As argued by Muktar (2013) despite the fact that the country has many natural and human resources, its achievement in entrepreneurial practices is still very low. Hence there has been growing interest in undertaking and intensifying actions to promote and support the idea of entrepreneurship as an attractive alternative to wage unemployment particularly among students around the globe (Gelard & Saleh, 2011). It is against this backdrop that the federal Government of Nigeria directed tertiary institutions of learning in the country to establish centers for entrepreneurship study where courses in entrepreneurship should be taught in order to equip graduates with the requisite skills that can enhance their self employment after graduation rather than looking for white collar jobs, which are not readily available. However, such gesture might not be fully complemented if the effectiveness of this skill acquisition program is not determined. In other words, it is necessary to investigate the role of the training program on the intentions of the students to engage in entrepreneurial practices after graduation, in the nearest future.

Another factor that has been highlighted by Hayton and Cacciotti (2014) as a factor that can excise an influence on entrepreneurial intention is cultural characteristics and values. Culture includes some social, moral ethical values norms and beliefs that must be socially acceptable within a group of people (Hofstede & Geert, 1980). According to Hayton and Cacciotti (2014) when cultural values is in supportive of uncertainty and risk taking, they are expected foster the creativity and innovation that underlies entrepreneurial activities. To press home the effect of culture in this regard, Mitchell et al. (2002) observed that for starting a new business many factors influences entrepreneurial intention. They highlighted the factors as perceived desirability, feasibility, and entrepreneurial experience. As observed by them, these factors vary from culture to culture and nation to nation. Put in another way, a widely held consensus among these authors is that culture can be a moderator in the relationship. Within the student's population segment, startup capital, family background, gender group, and age have been highlighted by Shane (2003) and Salami and Samuel (2007) as having effect on the intentions of students to become entrepreneurial in nature. Further, personality traits, self-concept, and perceived opportunity have all been found to predict this intention to some extent (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2004; Segal, Borgia, & Schoenfeld, 2005). However, to the knowledge of the researcher, little is known on the role being played by the cultural characteristics of students on their intention to engage in the practice of entrepreneurship after graduation and there seems to be lack of concrete empirical evidence in this regard.

The link between intentions and behavior is very well explained in psychology (Nwankwo et al., 2012). For instance the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991) posits that intentions reflect the motivational factors that influences behavior and are a reliable indicator of how hard a person is willing to try and how much effort he/she makes to perform a behavior. Furthermore, intentions are widely seen as powerful predictor of behaviors especially in the case of purposive, planned, and goal oriented behaviors (Bagozzi, Baumgartner & Yi, 1989). Thus, since the tasks involved in venture creation deals with needs identification and making provision for such needs for profitable gains, it can be classified as a purposefully and goal directed behavior which can be reliably predicted by entrepreneurial intention. This position is in coherence with Krueger, Reilly, and Carsrud (2000) who maintains that entrepreneurial action can be classifies as an intentional behavior or intention is a predictor or planned entrepreneurial behavior.

To this end, this paper is aimed at examining the effect of cultural orientation and entrepreneurship training on the intention of students to engage in entrepreneurial behavior. The scope of the paper is narrowed to the final year students of Bayero University, Kano who are currently observing the mandatory entrepreneurship training program (ETP) of the university. Its findings will be of great importance for policy makers and academic institutions that are concerned with promoting entrepreneurial behavior and activities. The paper is organized into five sections: introduction, literature review and theoretical issues, methodology, results and discussion, concluding remarks and recommendations.

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