

## Entrepreneurship Education and Self-employment Intentions among Fresh Graduates in Nigeria

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### Abstract

Over a decade, the Nigeria Federal government introduced entrepreneurship development programmes in the country's tertiary institutions with the primary objective of gearing entrepreneurship development of Nigerian graduates. However, the unemployment level in Nigeria has persistently been on increase level. This paper therefore examined the key determinants of entrepreneurship intentions and the link between entrepreneurship attitude orientations and business ownership intentions among Nigeria's fresh graduates. This study utilized a survey research design. Data used for this study were collected using questionnaire from 230 randomly selected National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) members serving in Ondo state. Appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to analyse the data collected. This study showed that entrepreneurship education ( $\beta = 0.165$ ;  $\rho = 0.038$ ), ability to take risk ( $\beta = 0.291$ ;  $\rho = 0.000$ ), and the influence of family, friends, and mentor ( $\beta = 0.305$ ;  $\rho = 0.00$ ) were the major determinants of entrepreneurial intentions the selected participants. Moreso, this study revealed that entrepreneurship education has a positive and significant ( $r = 0.313$ ;  $\rho = 0.000$ ) influence on fresh graduates' business start-up intention. This study concluded that establishment of more skills acquisition and innovation centers across Nigeria to equip the young graduates with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to be self-reliant will assist in making them job creators rather than job seekers, and in the long term effect, graduates unemployment and criminal activities among Nigerian youths will be reduced.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship Education, Self-employment Intentions, Fresh Graduates, Nigeria.

### 1. Introduction

All over the world, entrepreneurship has been widely acclaimed to be a panacea for sustainable economic growth and development, thus, it has been the major source of job growth and economic development in developed, emerging and developing economies in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to Farkas and Gubik (2016), a country's economic performance highly depends on successful entrepreneurship. Nigeria government had acknowledged this fact decades ago, thus, series of entrepreneurship development programmes had been introduced by federal government in the country's tertiary institutions with the primary objective of gearing entrepreneurship development of Nigerian graduates. However, the unemployment level in Nigeria has persistently been on increase level. As at April, 2018, the unemployment rate in Nigeria is 18.80%. This figure is relatively high if compared with countries like India (3.4%), Mexico (3.20%), Indonesia (5.50%), Turkey (10.40%), and Brazil (12.60%) (Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Unemployment among tertiary institution graduates has been a major concern in the country. Entrepreneurship development has been identified by Nigeria government and policymakers as one of the sustainable sources of job creation. Dixxon, Meier, Brown, and Custer (2005) argued that 'Entrepreneurship programs enhance graduates' entrepreneurial skills, and encourage them to create new businesses. Entrepreneurs have played a vital role in both poverty reduction and economic growth around the world over the past decades. Entrepreneurial activity creates new opportunities, increases employment, and provides access to new markets and services (Haftendorn & Salzano, 2003).

Review of literature revealed that the probability of starting their own businesses by students that had attended entrepreneurship programmes is very high (Umar & Abubakar, 2015; Akarue & Eyovwunu, 2014; Agbim, Oriarewo & Owocho, 2013; Oyewumi & Adeniyi, 2013). It is also a consensus among scholars that entrepreneurial activities increase productivity and available products, advance innovation and technological developments, generate job opportunities, and overall, makes significant contribution to economic development (Ambad & Damit, 2016).

This finding had continued to increase the clamors of the policy makers for the inclusion of entrepreneurship programmes in the country's higher institutions as a way of reducing the unemployment level. For instance, Nigeria governments and her agencies had introduced various intervention programmes to boost entrepreneurship development in Nigeria, notable among these are the introduction of entrepreneurship development courses as compulsory in the tertiary institutions by National University Commission (NUC) and

Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurial Development (SAED) established by National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). SAED is NYSC response to the youth unemployment challenge in Nigeria. Annually, the programme mobilizes and prepares over two hundred and fifty thousand (250,000) youths to become employable or startup their own businesses after completing their mandatory one-year service. The sole objective of these programmes is to encourage the Nigerians generally, and Nigeria youths particularly, to highly involve in entrepreneurial activities thereby creating jobs. However, the rapid growing of unemployment level in the country has underscored this scenario.

According to Krueger, Reilly, and Carsrud (2000) individuals will only initiate entrepreneurial activities when the conviction level is high relative to the requirements perceived for a particular opportunity. Many factors such as personal attitude toward behavior, perceived behavioral control, person's conviction, background factors, current situation, personal attitude, perceived relational support, personality measures, self-esteem, innovation and economic resources in the household have been identified in literature as determinants of entrepreneurial intentions (Ambad & Damit, 2016; Buli & Yesuf, 2015; Norhazlin, Nahariah & Tan, 2013; Per, 1995; Rajjman, 2001). Understanding of the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions is germane because entrepreneurial behaviour is an outcome of intention (Buli & Yesuf, 2015).

The empirical link between entrepreneurship attitude orientation and entrepreneurial intention had been widely investigated by scholars in developed and developing countries. Majority of the researchers had reported a positive and significant relationship (Richmell, Acheampong & Owusu, 2018; Sultan, 2017; Adamu, 2017; Oguntimhin & Olaniran, 2017; Thomas, Ambrose, Denis & Kennedy, 2016; Setuza, 2016; Umar & Abubakar, 2015; Muhammed & Ahmed, 2015; Akarue & Eyovwunu, 2014; Garba, Kabir, & Nalado, 2014; Wee-Liang, Wayne & Robinson, 2013; Ramos, 2014; Norhazlin, Nahariah, & Tan, 2013; Emrah, Ali & Ibrahim, 2013; Agbim, Oriarewo & Owocho, 2013; Oyewumi & Adeniyi, 2013; Izedomi & Okafor, 2010; Wang & Wong, 2004) However, their focuses have been on tertiary institution students with the belief that their knowledge of entrepreneurship are most likely to shape their inclination to start their own businesses in the future, while only little or no studies focused on fresh Nigerian graduates that are more concerned with employment. Besides, studies that investigated the key determinants of entrepreneurial intentions and the influence of entrepreneurship education on self-employment intentions among fresh graduates across academic disciplines in Nigeria are scanty. There is therefore the need to empirically examine the key determinants of entrepreneurship intentions and the link between entrepreneurship education and self-employment intentions among fresh graduates in Nigeria across academic disciplines at this period when employment problem among fresh graduates in Nigeria is taking a dangerous dimension; hence this study.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

#### **2.1.1 Entrepreneurship**

In recent years, entrepreneurship is gaining more popularity in the developed, emerging, and developing countries. Entrepreneurship has been widely acknowledged as the driving force behind any economy. This is because a large supply of potential entrepreneurs is critical to a well-functioning economy besides, they have the capacity and ability to convert a new idea into a successful innovation (Schumpeter, 1934). The concept of entrepreneurship is generally viewed as a multi-dimensional construct thus, it has been defined differently in literature, for instance, Tamizharasi & Panchanatham (2010) in their work titled 'entrepreneurial attitudes among entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises' defined entrepreneurship as "the capacity in an individual to innovate, to bear risks, to foresee the prospects of the project, confidence and competence to meet unforeseen and adverse conditions". Also, Odunaiké, Ijaduola and Amoda (2013) cited in Teshome (2014) coined the word entrepreneurship as the art of setting up and running an enterprise in a profitable and sustainable manner.

#### **2.1.2 Entrepreneurial Intent**

Entrepreneurial intention is the driving force which people utilise to create a new ground of business (Wu and Wu, 2008). The entrepreneurial intention is seen by the action of an individual's attitudes toward the outcomes of that actions and individuals self efficacy (Douglas & Fitzsimmon, 2013). Existing literatures have suggested relationship between the entrepreneurial intention and the perceptions of desirability as well as the reaction toward the opportunities and the abilities to leverage on the available opportunities (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003). Entrepreneurial intentions are central to understanding the entrepreneurial process because they form the underpinnings of new organizations and are equally viewed as the first step in an evolving long term process (Van Gelderen *et al.*, 2008). Behavioural intention results from attitudes and becomes an immediate determinant of behaviour (Zal, 2009). Entrepreneurial activity can be predicted more accurately by studying intention rather than personality traits, demographic characteristics, or situational factors (Krueger, *et al* 2000).

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

### 2.2.1 Trait Theory

Personality traits are the stable qualities that a person shows in most situations (Coon, 2004). To trait theorists there are enduring inborn qualities or potentials of the individual that naturally make him an entrepreneur. Some of the behaviors associated with entrepreneurs are that they tend to be more opportunity driven and have propensity to take calculated risk as well as demonstrating high level of creativity and innovation (Simpheh, 2011). They have also been found to be optimistic, emotionally resilient and have mental energy, show intense commitment and perseverance, thrive on competitive desire to excel and win, tend to be dissatisfied with the status quo and desire improvement (Coon, 2004) entrepreneurs are also transformational in nature, who are lifelong learners and use failure as a tool and springboard.

### 2.2.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour was postulated by Azjen (1991) and adopted by Krueger and Carsrud (1993). According to Planned Behaviour Theory, Entrepreneurial Behaviour (EB) is a function of Entrepreneurial Intentions (EI). Krueger and Carsrud (1993) depicted this relationship as follows:

Attitudes = Motivation (Behavioural control) = Intentions = Behaviour.

Entrepreneurial intentions are aimed at either creating a new venture or creating new values in existing ventures. This theory as argued by Thandi and Sharma (2003) suggests that a person's attitude towards becoming an entrepreneur, subjective norms (perception of others), and behavioural control are antecedents of intention. Meaning that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control act (motivation). Thus, the more favourable the attitudes and subjective norms is and the greater the perceived behavioural control is, the stronger the intention to perform the behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour has been used successfully to predict intentions in various applications (Krueger & Carsrud, 2000). This study therefore relied on this theory because the propensity to take risk under the influence of individual locus of control is well captured which is the focus of this study.

## 2.3 Review of Related Studies

Jinying and Pelagie (2014) in a study investigated the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among African students studying various disciplines in China base on the theory of planned behavior. The entrepreneurial intention model was tested and its verified hypothesis and descriptive statistics was used for empirical analysis. The study was conducted through a survey on 148 students and the results revealed the Africa economic environment, gender and fields of study are main determinants of African students' entrepreneurial intention. These results revealed the importance of African students' training in the fields of economics and engineering sciences to develop their entrepreneurial spirit and the need for African governments to create a suitable economic environment to further stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit of these students when they return to Africa.

Ambad and Darmit (2016) identify the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among undergraduate students using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a theoretical framework of the study. The independent variables of this study consisted of perceived educational support, perceived relational support, perceived structural support, personal attitude, and perceived behavioral control. The sample size of the study was 351 undergraduate students in one of the Public University in Malaysia. The results found that personal attitude, perceived behavioural control, and perceived relational support are the predictors to entrepreneurial intention.

Tarus, Kemba, Kemboi, Okenwa and Otiso (2016) investigated the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among business undergraduate students with a view to establishing the effect of education, social network, innovativeness and self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention. The study was guided by Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior that views behavioral intent as an immediate determinant of planned behavior. Explanatory research design was adopted and the study targeted 1,649 undergraduate business students drawn from Moi, Mount Kenya and Catholic universities in Uasin Gishu County. Stratified sampling was used to select a sample size of 321. The results indicated that innovativeness among students was highly and positively correlated to entrepreneurial intention at ( $r=0.650$ ). Self efficacy was the second characteristic among students to positively associated with entrepreneurial intention ( $r = 0.618$ ), education had significant and positively correlated with entrepreneurial intention ( $r=0.564$ ). Finally, social network showed a positive and significant relationship with entrepreneurial intention ( $r = 0.507$ ).

Popescu, Bostan, Robu, Maxim and Diaconu (2016) analyze how much the entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by certain psycho-behavioral traits of the individual (creativity, locus of control, need for

achievement and risk taking propensity) and to evaluate the influence of different types of education on these intentions, in order to see if the entrepreneurial education significantly influences the entrepreneurial intentions of Romanian young people. Survey research design was used. Questionnaire was distributed to 600 students from the undergraduate (bachelor) and master programs within the large state universities of Romania who have entrepreneurship courses in the content of their curricula. Six research hypotheses were tested. Data analysis including Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and General Linear Models (GLM) were used for the study. Results of the study indicated that the need for achievement and the propensity towards taking risks play an important role in determining the entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, graduates of the high schools with an entrepreneurial field are less inclined to engage in businesses compared to the graduates of the high schools that offer general education.

Cano and Tabares (2017) determined the factors of entrepreneurial intention in Colombia university students from GUESSS study data. The determinants of entrepreneurial intention were studied from the theory of planned behavior (TPB) through the variables of perceived desirability, perceived behavioral control and perceived social norms. The results of the findings showed that personal motivations to be an entrepreneur, the strength of entrepreneurial intention, as well as the influence of family, and social context of university students were identified to influence entrepreneurial intention in Colombia.

Ismail, Ahmad, Gadar and Yunus (2012) examines the factors stimulating women to choose entrepreneurship as their career. Hypothesis of the study was personality and cultural factors directly related to intention in choosing entrepreneurship as a career. Respondents are 170 women entrepreneurs in district of Kinta, Perak. A structured 47 closed ended items questionnaires are used to collect data. The study used quantitative method such as correlation analysis and multiple regressions to test the variables. The result shows that women's personality correlated weakly with cultural factor. However the study strongly shows that women entrepreneurs' career choice of entrepreneurship is significantly influenced by cultural factor rather than personality factor.

Noel (2015) analyses factors influencing entrepreneurial intent and studies the relationship between an individual's preliminary entrepreneurial intention of starting a business and the factors driving the same, in India. Using a large sample of individuals, it investigates what variables are significantly correlated with the initial decision to start a business. It used a binomial logit model to test how individual characteristics, subjective perceptions, demographic and economic characteristics are correlated to the decision to start a new business. The results of the study suggest that part-time work experience and social network effects are the strongest in shaping entrepreneurial intentions.

Mair and Noboa (2006) identify four antecedents which they suggested could predict social entrepreneurial intentions. The study extends the model by including prior experience with social problems as an additional variable. Findings show that prior experience predicts social entrepreneurial intentions. This effect is mediated by the antecedents suggested by Mair and Noboa. Social entrepreneurial self-efficacy has both the largest impact on intentions as well as being itself most responsive to prior experience. Lastly, the study shows that the amount of optional social entrepreneurship electives students enroll in is predicted by social entrepreneurial intentions. Also, Yeboah, Ernest & Awuah (2013) assessed the entrepreneurial intention among students of Sunyani Polytechnic and determined the motivators and obstacles to entrepreneurial intention using a quantitative exploratory survey design with a sample size of 136 comprising of 94 males and 42 females, who were selected by convenient sample method. Primary data were obtained using self designed questionnaire which were administered by the researchers. Data were analysed using percentages, One-way ANOVA. Results indicated that there is high entrepreneurial intention among the respondents. It was also revealed that there are important motivators for intention as well as obstacles to setting up ones' firm. The finding also indicated that demographic variables such as gender, age, religion affect responses given by respondents.

Muhammed and Ahmed (2015) examined the entrepreneurial intention among University students in Nigeria in order to gauge entrepreneurial awareness among the respondents. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) with modification was adopted. A sample size of 205 was drawn from Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU). Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The findings show that, entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norm and power of behavioural control are all significant predictors of EI. In addition, other indirect relationships were also found to be significant.

Isah and Garba (2015) in a study analyzed students' attitudes toward self-employment intention. Survey design was used to collect data from final year student of Higher National Diploma (HND) across four schools of Kano State Polytechnic. Correlation analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to examine the

relationship among the selected variables and to know the difference among the students on their self-employment intentions. It was found that the relationship between self-employment intentions with the students' self-efficacy, innovativeness and risk taking propensity are positive, whereas self-employment intention negatively relates with the students' locus of control. The study also reveals that there is no significant difference among students on their self-employment intentions.

Adamu (2017) in a study used factors such as entrepreneurship education, environmental factors and societal entrepreneurship attitude to explore the student's entrepreneurial intention. These factors were adopted based on past theoretical and empirical studies which covered the gap and contributed to the body of knowledge in the field of literature. The study concluded that researchers and Ministry of Education should examine this proposition on how to design a more comprehensive and benefice entrepreneurship courses and curriculum to these Nigerian universities. This would aim at preparing these students to be self-employed (entrepreneurs) which would reduce and assist the government in overcoming the problem of youth poverty and unemployment in Nigeria.

Oguntimihin and Olaniran (2017) in a study investigated the relationship between students' exposure to Entrepreneurship Education and their career entrepreneurial intentions in Ogun State-owned universities. Six hypotheses were generated for the study. The population comprised all final year undergraduates, with a sample of six hundred and nine. Three research instruments were used. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, T-test and ANOVA. Findings revealed that Entrepreneurship Education significantly influences students' Entrepreneurial intentions.

Oyewumi and Adeniyi (2013) investigated attitude and knowledge of secondary students with hearing impairment towards entrepreneurship. The main goal was to know the depth of their knowledge and attitude in becoming entrepreneurial in line with millennium development goals. A sample of 124 students with hearing impairment was selected through purposive sampling from Ijokodo High School and Methodist Grammar School in Ibadan. Three research questions were raised and one hypothesis tested. A questionnaire tagged Entrepreneurial Inventory (EI) was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics and chi-square were the major statistical tools employed in data analysis. The findings revealed high entrepreneur knowledge and positive attitude among the participants, no significant influence of knowledge on attitude of the participants and no significant difference in entrepreneurship knowledge and attitude of students with hearing impairment to entrepreneurship.

Ramoni (2016) in a study evaluated the joint effects of entrepreneurship education and two selected entrepreneurship traits, namely, innovation, risk taking propensity on entrepreneurial intention among first degree graduates of Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria. Two hundred and twenty nine (229) copies of self-administered questionnaire were administered to these graduates through a combination of stratified and systematic sampling techniques. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed in the analysis of data. It was found that 20.8 percent in the variation found in the entrepreneurial intention has been explained by entrepreneurial education, innovativeness and risk taking propensity.

Izedomi and Okafor (2010) examine the effect of entrepreneurial education on students' entrepreneurial intentions. Also the study sought to determine whether such intention usually give rise to entrepreneurial start-up among students. Design/methodology/approach-Primary data comes from 250 students who currently have entrepreneurship as one of their courses in their institution of higher learning within the south west of the country. A model of regression analysis was used for the study to analyse the data collected. The regression analysis results showed that entrepreneurial education had influence on student's entrepreneurial intentions

Sultan (2017) conducted a study to find out the entrepreneurial intention of undergraduate Agricultural students in Ethiopia taking Jimma University college of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine as a study area. Descriptive and inferential design was employed in the study. The stratified sampling techniques were applied to select respondents and in order to collect data, pretest self-administered questionnaires were distributed to 212 participants. Descriptive and inferential analysis such as mean and Spearman correlation were employed. The study found that the entrepreneurial intention of under graduating agricultural students as students had strong desire to pursue entrepreneurial career. Majority of the respondents were ready to assume risk while pursuing entrepreneurial career. However, the study result showed that availability of infrastructure, premises and utility were not satisfactorily available to be self-employed.

Thomas, Ambrose, Denis and Kennedy (2016) investigated the effect of education, social network,

innovativeness and self-efficacy on entrepreneurial intention among university students in Kenya and anchored the study on the Theory of Planned Behavior. The research design was exploratory and had undergraduates of Moi, Mount Kenya and Catholic Universities as the area of study. The population of the selected universities was 1,649. Stratified sampling was used to select a sample size of 321. The results from the correlation analysis showed that innovativeness, self-efficacy, education and social network were highly and positively significant to entrepreneurial intention. This study's limitation stems from the research design used which is exploratory. In exploratory research design, the sample size is small and not representative.

Richmell, Acheampong and Owusu (2018) explore the factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions among students in Ghana. The research was carried out by a survey method. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 731 undergraduate students pursuing regular and part-time programmes in a Ghanaian public university. Data were analysed using correlation and multiple regression analysis through the SPSS. Results of study showed that six out of the 23 factors explored in the study significantly influenced student entrepreneurial intention. Students' exposure to other entrepreneurs and experienced network are the most significant predictor of student entrepreneurial intentions followed by dissatisfaction with previous job and utilization of better opportunity in the market predicted student entrepreneurial intention.

Setuza (2016) assesses the entrepreneurial intentions among university students in East African Community countries of Rwanda and Kenya. The sample size consists of 275 students from Kigali Independent University (ULK) and University of Nairobi. The data were collected through structured questionnaire. The Theory of Planned Behavior was used and its four variables: perceived behavior control, personal attitudes, subjective norms, and intention. Results showed that subjective norms, personal attitudes and perceived behavioral control had positive influence on students' entrepreneurial intention while care about others' opinion did not influence students' entrepreneurship intention in East Africa.

Ramos (2014) in a study focused on Entrepreneurial Intention among Business Students in Batangas State University. The descriptive method of research was utilized in the conduct of the study. The study revealed that majority of the respondents have no family business, belongs to middle income group students however, agreed that they possess entrepreneurial intentions, skills and capabilities. The study concluded that entrepreneurial intention is not affected by the profile variables of the respondents.

Northazlin, Nahariah and Tan (2013) in a study examined the self-employment intentions of the universities' students in Malaysia. Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (EAO) scale was used to measure the students' entrepreneurial attitudes. A survey approach was adopted by sending questionnaires to 2000 students of the public and private universities that are listed under tier 5 (Excellent) in the Malaysia Quality Agency SETARA rating of year 2011. The results showed that personal control, self-esteem and innovation were found to have significant and positive relationships with self-employment intention.

Emrah, Ali and Ibrahim (2013) determined the impact of demographic factors on entrepreneurial intention among undergraduate students as a career choice. A written-questionnaire was administered to 638 undergraduate students at a Turkish university. The data obtained were analyzed using logistic regression model. The analysis results revealed that the current faculty, type of high school and the household income of their family were significant factors influencing the entrepreneurial intention among respondents. From the foregoing, the study hypothesis is as follows:

$H_0$ : There is no significant relationship between Entrepreneurship Attitude Orientation and the Entrepreneurial Intentions among the fresh tertiary institution graduates in Nigeria.

### 3. Study Method

The research was conducted in the National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) secretariats in Akure south, Owo, and Ikare local government areas. These three local governments were purposively selected because they housed large number of youth Corps Members of the NYSC (higher institution fresh graduates) posted to the state for the compulsory one-year youth service as study respondents. NYSC members (Corpers) were targeted because they participated in the entrepreneurship programmes introduced in the country's tertiary institutions which were aimed at boosting the entrepreneurial intentions among youth after graduation so that they could be self-employed rather than chasing white collar jobs that were not readily available in the country. The study utilised survey research design. The questionnaire developed by Global University Entrepreneurial Spirit Students' Survey (GUESSS) (2003 modified in 2016) was adopted for the study. GUESSS had been used in 50 countries to evaluate the entrepreneurial intentions and activity of students as well as the entrepreneurship training and education provided by universities. The GUESSS instrument had demonstrated a high degree of validity and reliability across a number of studies across the globe. In general, the questionnaire was divided into two parts, A

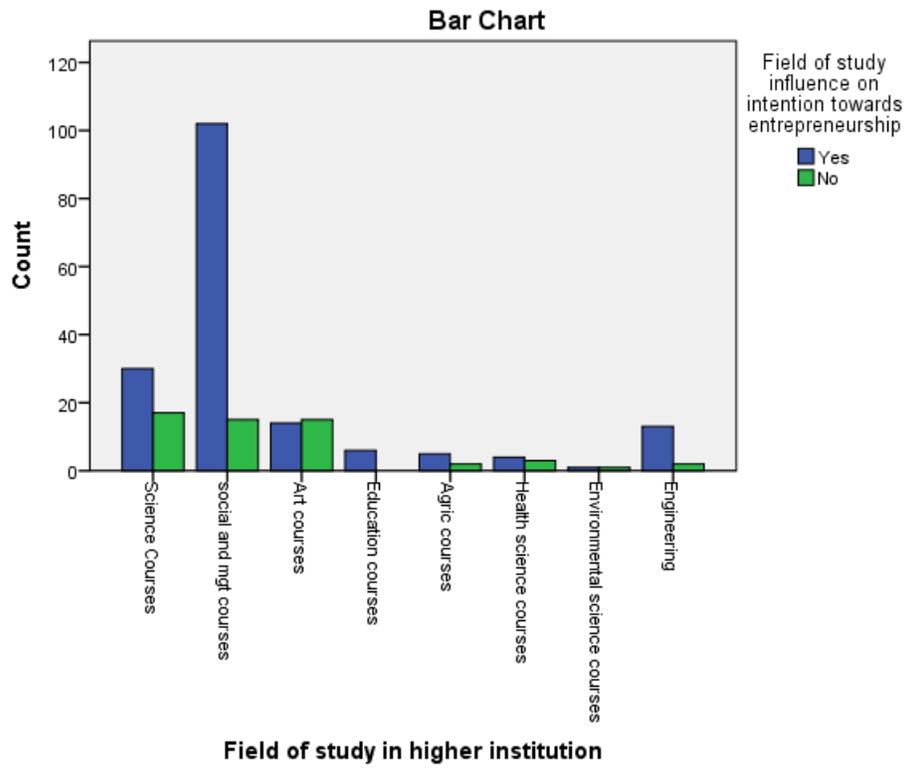
and B. Part A was meant for descriptive and demographic profiles of the respondents. While part B comprised of different questions that examined the research variables. A total of 2357 NYSC members (Batch A) were posted to the selected state in the year 2017. Out of this 2357, the researcher randomly selected 120 respondents from each of the selected local government area. Altogether, 360 respondents were selected for the study using Yaro Yamane (2004) formula. The actual data collection took place during weekly Community Development Services (CDS) and monthly meetings of NYSC members in the three local governments. The selected respondents completed the questionnaire and return the questionnaire directly to the researcher/research assistants. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods such as simple percentage, frequency distribution, and regression analysis.

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

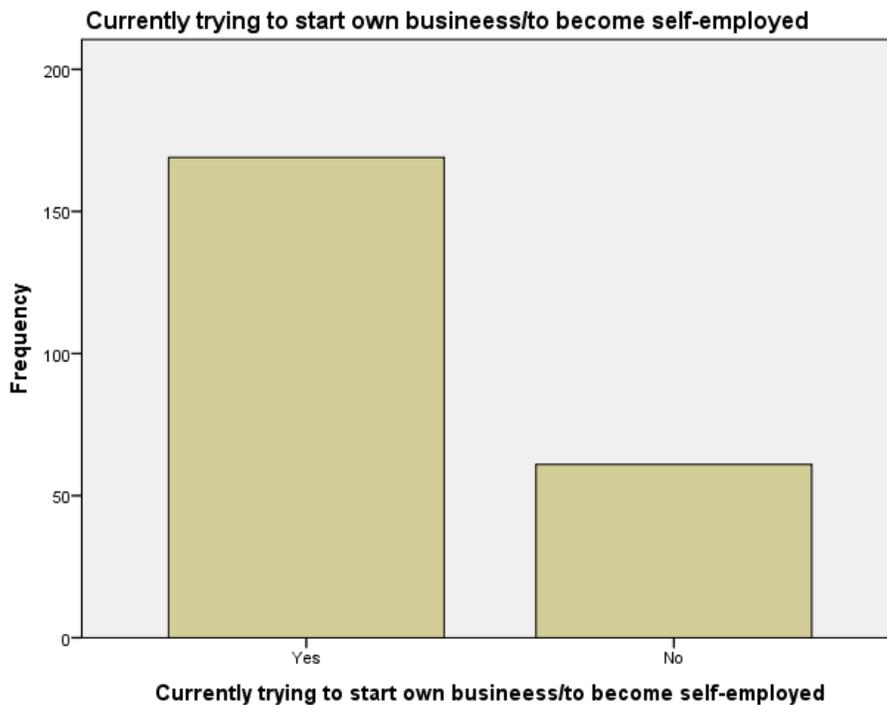
The majority of respondents belonged to the 24-26 age bracket (32.2%, N = 74), while 30.9% (N=71) were aged between 21-23 years old and those between the age bracket of 27 and 29 were 23% (N = 53). Those between the age bracket of 30 and above were 13.9% (N = 32). Male constituted 64.3% (N = 148) of the total respondents while female were 35.7% (N = 82). The majority of the selected corps member were found to be bachelor degree (B.Sc.) holders (79.6%, N= 183). Higher National Diploma (HND) graduates accounted for 18.3% (N= 42) of the study sample and other category totaled to 2.2% (N= 5) of those who answered the survey. Selected respondents were asked which academic field they graduated from in their first degree. The majority of the NYSC members sampled indicated that they studied social and management sciences courses representing 50.9% (N= 117) of the 230 corps member sampled. The least popular Field of Study was 'Environmental Science' courses accounting for 0.9% or 2 of the total respondents.

The influence of the respondents' field of study on their intention towards entrepreneurship was examined (see figure 1). Respectively, 47 and 117 indicated that they studied science and social and management sciences courses. Out of 47 respondents that studied science related courses, 68% (N = 30) indicated that their field of study has influence on their intention towards entrepreneurship while 87% (N = 102) of those that read social and management sciences courses responded that their disciplines had influence on their intention to set up their own businesses. Those that read Art and Engineering related courses were 29 and 15, out of these, 48.5% (N = 14) and 87.7% (N = 13) of the respondents revealed that their area of study has influence on their intention to start up new business after NYSC programme. 100% (N= 6) and 71.4% (N = 5) of the sampled Corps member that studied Education and Agricultural Sciences related courses respectively, indicated that "Field of Study" had influence on the intention to start up new venture.

The respondents were also asked whether consideration was given to starting their own business in order to become self-employed. Their responses showed that majority of the sampled NYSC members (73.4%, N= 169) indicated that they were trying to start their own business. Only 26.5% (N= 61) responded that they did not plan to establish their own business after their NYSC service year (See figure 2). The participants were asked whether they were already running their own business or already self-employed. The results showed that 60.9% (N = 140) of the selected fresh graduates were not running own business or already self-employed.



*Figure 1: Field of study influence on entrepreneurship intention*



*Figure 2: Intention to start own business*

A number of statements were presented to the respondents about their entrepreneurial intentions. The majority of the respondents were keen to pursue entrepreneurship. Out of the 230 Corps member selected for the study, 141 representing 61.3% showed that they have strong intention to start business someday while 135 (58.7%) have seriously thought of starting a business. Besides, out of 230 participants, 149 (64.7%) strongly agreed that they would make every effort to start and run their own business in the future. The implication of these findings is that the Nigerian fresh graduates have strong determination to set up their own businesses.

The NYSC members sampled were asked to comment on the extent to which they attended entrepreneurship course(s) offered in their undergraduate classes. All the participants answered that they actually attended entrepreneurship course(s) either as compulsory or elective during their undergraduate classes (100%, N = 230). This shows that the Nigerian fresh graduates have knowledge of entrepreneurship.

The study participants were asked to what extent would agree that course(s) offered in entrepreneurship helped them to develop certain competencies and knowledge relating to entrepreneurship. Majority of the respondents agreed with the items 'entrepreneurship course(s) offered increased their understanding of attitudes and values of entrepreneurs, actions to take to start a business. Moreso, out of the 230 participants for the study, 144 (62.6%) strongly agreed that their abilities to identify opportunities were enhanced by the course(s) offered in entrepreneurship. The item that received the strongest disagreement was 'my course increases my understanding of the attitudes, values and motivations of entrepreneurs' (11.3%).

When the selected fresh graduates were asked what were the activities that they undertook towards entrepreneurship, 70% (N = 161) and 60% (N = 138) had opened discussion on their business idea with potential customers and collected information about markets or competitors respectively. Moreso, 56.5% (N = 130) claimed to had written business plan. Majority of the participants indicated that they had not started product development, attempted to obtain external funding, and registered a business.

**Table 1: Factor and Regression Analyses Results**

<b>Coefficients</b>				
<b>Predictor</b>	$\beta$	Standard Beta	<i>p</i>	
Self-Determination	-0.004	-0.004	0.942	
Entrepreneurship Education	0.165	0.134	0.038	
Risk Taking	0.291	0.294	0.000	
Family, Friends and Mentor	0.305	0.228	0.000	
Society	0.115	0.113	0.080	
Constant	5.616	-	0.093	
<b>Test</b>				
	R Square ( $R^2$ )		Adjusted R Square ( $R^2$ )	
Model Summary	0.550	0.302	0.287	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	0.836			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	528(Sig. level = 0.000)			
<b>ANOVA</b>				
	Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Regression	4439.145	5	19.421	0.000
Residual	10240.351	224		
Total	14679.496	229		

**a. Dependent Variable:** *Entrepreneurship Intentions*

**b. Predictors:** (*Constant*), Self-Determination, Entrepreneurship Education, Risk Taking, Family, Friends and Mentor, Society

**Source:** Field Report, 2018

The key determinants of entrepreneurship intentions among the selected participants in the study areas were empirically examined. The sampled NYSC members were asked to rate the items in the survey questionnaire given to them according to their perception. Both factor analysis by principal component and regression analysis were used to identify the entrepreneurship intentions' determinants among fresh Nigerian graduates. Besides, the items were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha in order to determine the internal reliability and consistency of the

items. The basic assumptions underline factor analysis was tested. Table 1 displayed both the Bartlett test of sphericity (528 at Significance level 0.000) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.836) which was believed to be at the acceptable range. Therefore the assumptions for carrying out factor analysis were met. Also the Cronbach's Alpha for the determinants measure was high and acceptable (0.893)

The variables used for the factor analysis were subjected to factor extraction by principal component. In this analysis, varimax an orthogonal rotation which assumes that the factors are uncorrelated was used. This rotation was adopted based on the fact that it produces more meaningful loadings. The communalities of the majority of the variables were above 50%. The implication of this is that more than 60% of the variances in all the variables are accounted for by the common factors. Five (5) factors were retained as the main determinants of fresh graduates' entrepreneurship intentions, and these factors explained 69.68% of the variance. According to the accepted guidelines for identifying significant factor loadings (Hair *et al.*, 1995) 0.30 was accepted as the cut-off point for interpretation purposes. The factors are; self-determination, entrepreneurship education, ability to take risks, family and friends including mentor, and society.

The result for multiple regressions is displayed in Table 1. The  $R^2$  was 0.302 which translates to 30.2% variance explained by the independent variables. Also the table showed the outcome of an ANOVA test. The F-value was 19.421 and this was significant (since  $p < 0.005$ ). The coefficients of the variables and their significance were also shown in Table 1. The coefficients of all the variables, apart from self-determination, in the model were positive. The coefficients of the factor- entrepreneurship education, ability to take risks, family and friends including mentor, and society were 0.165, 0.291, 0.305, and 0.115 respectively. Entrepreneurship education, ability to take risks, family and friends including mentor had statistically significant influence on entrepreneurship intentions among fresh graduates. The implication of this is that the factors were important determinants of entrepreneurship intentions.

**Table 2: Regression Analysis Results**

<b>Coefficients</b>					
Predictor	$\beta$	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	20.830	2.279	-	9.139	0.000
EAO	0.266	0.54	0.313	4.978	0.000
<b>Test</b>					
Model Summary	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		
	0.313	0.98	0.94		
<b>ANOVA</b>					
	Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.	
Regression	1438.937	1	24.778	0.000	
Residual	13240.558	228			
Total	14679.496	229			
<b>Correlations</b>					
Pearson Correlation	0.313				
Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000				
N	230				

**a. Dependent Variable:** ENTINTEN (*Entrepreneurship Intention*)

**b. Predictors:** (Constant) *Entrepreneurial Attitude Orientation (EAO)*

**Source:** Field Report, 2018

Moreso, regression analysis was performed on the EAO and entrepreneurship intention variables in order to examine the empirical link between the EAO and entrepreneurship intention among the fresh graduates in Nigeria. The regression results were compressed in Table 1 and it consists of the regression of the complete model this including the coefficients and the significance of each of the variables, the total variance explained ( $R^2$  and adjusted  $R^2$  Score), the F-test (ANOVA) which determines whether the model is useful, and the Correlations. The value of the  $R^2$  was 0.98. This means that 98 percent of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by the model. The F-value and its significance were 24.778 and 0.000 respectively. The value of the significance level indicates that the model is very significant. Stated otherwise, the chance that the model is not usable is less than 0.000. The coefficient of EAO in the model was positive ( $\beta = 0.266$ ) and significant ( $p <$

0.5). This shows that the EAO had positive influence on entrepreneurship intention, and the influence was statistically significant ( $\rho < 0.5$ ). The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was positive and statistically significant ( $r = 0.313$ ;  $\rho$ - value = 0.000). This result shows that there is a significant positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation Attitude and Entrepreneurship Intention among Nigerian fresh graduates. Thus, the study hypothesis was accepted.

## 5. Conclusion

The study empirically investigated the major determinants of self-employment intentions and the effect of Entrepreneurial Attitude and Orientation on Entrepreneurial Intention among fresh graduates from the Nigerian higher institutions currently undergoing National Youth Service Corps programme. The study revealed significant relationship between the variables under investigation, besides, self-efficiency and societal influence were found to have negative and insignificant impact on the entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurship education, ability to take risks, family and friends including mentor were linked to entrepreneurship intentions among the study participants. Thus, this study concluded that establishment of more skills acquisition and innovation centers across Nigeria to equip the young graduates with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to be self-reliant will assist in making them job creators rather than job seekers, and in the long term effect, graduates unemployment and criminal activities among Nigerian youths will be reduced.

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