

Theory of Planned Behaviour, Contextual Elements, Demographic Factors and Entrepreneurial Intentions of Students in Kenya

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is frequently viewed as a vital means for employment creation and a means of enhancing innovation dynamic in national, regional and local economies. This paper seeks to examine some of the key factors that influence students' entrepreneurial intentions among university students in Kenya. The study examines components of Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), effects of demography and contextual factors on the entrepreneurial intention (EI) of university students. To achieve the objective, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to 326 students drawn from three universities in Kenya. The results indicate that gender, having entrepreneurial parents, subjective norm, perceived behavior control; attitudes, favourable environmental conditions, and academic support were significant determinants of entrepreneurial intention.

Key words: Entrepreneurship; Theory of Planned Behaviour; Entrepreneurial Intentions; Kenya.

1.1 Introduction

Economies of most countries in the world are today influenced by knowledge and globalization. Consequently there has been diminishing political and economic barriers between countries and an increase in globalization of business activities. New venture formation has therefore become relevant and many researchers are diverting their energies into this area for research. To keep up with these challenges, there is need for creativity, innovativeness and flexibility in every economy. This implies economies must be entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurial economies can be created through individual entrepreneurs and the businesses they initiate (Gurbuz & Aykol, 2008).

According to Gartner (1988), an entrepreneur is a person who initiates a venture. The entrepreneur plays a pivotal role in creating employment opportunities, promoting product and market innovation, creating economic wealth, enhancing market competition, ensuring effective utilization of local resources, and thus accelerating general health and welfare of the economy (Poutziouris, 2003). Furthermore, entrepreneurs are viewed as catalysts for technological progress. Hence, entrepreneurs are instrumental in local, national, regional and global economic development (Sadler-Smith et al., 2003). Entrepreneurship is therefore, a strategic issue and needs to be analyzed at the macro level. When governments realize the importance of entrepreneurs for the economic development of the nation, they can include entrepreneurial issues in their national economic development plans. Entrepreneurial aspects can be incorporated in the education policy of the nation. Factors that lead individuals to become entrepreneurs should thoroughly be investigated so that necessary adjustments can be done in the education system to foster the entrepreneurial intention of students in the country. Consequently, academic research on different aspects of entrepreneurship has been on the rise (Davidsson, 1995).

Although entrepreneurship research has identified a number of personal characteristics thought to be key determinants of entrepreneurial behavior, the determinants of entrepreneurial intention still lack adequate empirical evidence (Choo & Wong, 2006; Davidsson, 1995). University students from different parts of the world grow up and live in very different political, economic, and cultural circumstances. Research is beginning to study how students' differing circumstances matter when it comes to entrepreneurial disposition and interest (Louw et al, 2003).

Many studies (Tkachev & Kolvereid 1999; Grid & Bagrain 2008) have been conducted on entrepreneurial intentions in both developed and developing countries to date. The studies, however, have yielded mixed results. Tkachev and Kolvereid, (1999) who studied intentions among Russian students report that family background and gender are not significantly correlated with intentions. According to Grid and Bagrain, (2008) who studied students from South Africa, there is a positive relationship between personal traits and entrepreneurial intention. Scholars such as Maina (2011) undertook a study in Kenya that focused on entrepreneurial intentions among college educated people who were already running their businesses while Oruoch and Muchiri (2014) studied how certain psychological factors impact on an individual's intention to start a business. In order to gain further insight on entrepreneurial intentions, the study utilizes components of Theory of Planned behavior to examine the determinants of entrepreneurial intention such as demographic factors and contextual elements among university students in Kenya.

1.2 General Objective

The study examines the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions among university students in Kenya. The specific objectives are to:

- i) Determine the effect of demographic elements on entrepreneurial intentions.
- ii) Establish the effect of contextual factors on entrepreneurial intentions.
- iii) Determine the influence of components of Theory of Planned Behaviour on entrepreneurial intentions.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Entrepreneurial Intention

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) has emerged as an important element within entrepreneurship literature over the last few decades (Drennan et al., 2005) and continues to attract attention of many researchers due to its contribution to the development for many countries (Zain 2009; Fox et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial intentions are the entrepreneurs' states of mind that direct attention, experience, and actions towards a business concept (Bird, 1988). Intentions are considered to be the very first important step in the entrepreneurship process for people who want to start a business. Entrepreneurial intention is concerned with the inclination of a person to start an entrepreneurial activity in the future (Izedomni & Okafor 2010).

In many studies on entrepreneurial activity, there has been consistent interest in identifying the factors that lead an individual to become an entrepreneur (Gerry, Marques & Noguera 2008). According to Koh (1996) the behavioural characteristics most commonly found in entrepreneurs include their ability to innovate. The types of factors most frequently associated with entrepreneurial intention include age, gender, education, work experience, psychological profile and family background (Delmar & Davidsson 2000). According to (Naffziger, Hornsby & Kuratko 1994) three factors in particular have been frequently used to measure entrepreneurial intention namely: personal characteristics, personal traits and contextual factors.

2.2 Demographic Elements and Entrepreneurial Intention

Several factors that influence the willingness to undertake entrepreneurial activity, thus, become self-employed have been investigated (Verheul et al., 2005; Kolvereid, 1996). Factors such as age and gender have been proposed to have an impact on EI (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2004). It is often argued that females are less likely to establish their own businesses than men (Verheul et al., 2005). Age is also an important factor in EI. Research shows that people mostly decide to establish their own firms between the ages of 25-45 years old (Storey 1994). However, according to Ferreira (2003), age seems to be negatively related to innovation and growth orientation (Ferreira, 2003).

Empirical studies also focus on individual background characteristics such as education, prior experience in employment and occupation of the parents to explain entrepreneurial intention (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2004). There are, however, contradictory findings on educational level and entrepreneurial activity. According to Bates (1995) education has a positive impact on EI while Reynolds (1995), disagree with this finding. On the other hand, when analyzing the entrepreneurship indicators, Davidsson (1989) found a positive relationship between factors of educational formation, previous experience and growth aspirations, despite having also found entrepreneurs with a low level of education.

2.3 Personality Traits and Entrepreneurial Intention

Another field of research that focuses on EI is personality traits or psychological characteristics school of thought (Gurbuz & Aykol 2008). The main assumption of this approach is that people who choose self-employment as a career option have peculiar personality profiles (Kolvereid, 1996). The most commonly mentioned personality traits of EI are: need for achievement; locus of control, and risk taking propensity (Phan et al., 2002). As to risk propensity, Davidsson (1989) states that most empirical studies confirm the theory that entrepreneurs (of small firms) do not have favourable attitudes related to risk, nor are they considered as risk takers.

According to Davidsson (1989), there is some evidence of a relationship between the need for achievement and the individual entrepreneurial behavior. However, Davidsson and Wiklund (1999) reported that the need for achievement does not constitute a relevant explanation for entrepreneurial behavior, since the concept lacks precision and therefore is difficult to measure. In relation to locus of control, Brockhaus (1980) undertook a study and found evidence of a positive correlation between internal orientation and entrepreneurial intention. According to this view, entrepreneurs are expected to have higher levels of need for achievement, internal locus of control and risk taking propensity. It has been observed that this approach does not yield satisfactory results in explaining entrepreneurship (De Pillis & Readon, 2007).

2.4 Contextual Factors and Entrepreneurial Intention

Several authors (Naffziger et al., 1994; Gerry et al., 2008) have stressed the importance of contextual factors suggesting that the decision to become an entrepreneur is based on other factors other than just personal characteristics and psychological traits. In view of these observations, many studies often include contextual factors in the studies of entrepreneurial intention. Contextual factors are the environmental elements that might have an influence on EI. These factors include aspects such as: administrative complexities, accessibility to resources, physical and institutional infrastructure, economic, political and cultural climate (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2004; Verheul et al., 2005). Administrative complexities refer to the degree of administrative

complication in establishing a business. Having access to business information is the availability of information in the environment about establishing a new venture and on how to run the venture. Access to finance is the ability of the individual to find financial support to establish a business since most of the investors and banks are reluctant to make investments in new ventures. Availability of capital is regarded as one of the obstacles to establishing a new business (Kristiansen & Indarti, 2004). General economic climate is the availability of entrepreneurial opportunities and its associated risks (Verheul, et al., 2005).

According to Kristiansen and Indarti (2004) and Verheul et al., (2005), it is usually the practice to study environment at the perception level because rather than the actual environment, the perceptions of the individual are important for determining the opportunities and resources in the environment. It is the availability or non availability of resources in the environment that influences the intention to establish a firm. Role models have also been cited as crucial factors in the determination of career choices. Role modeling refers to learning by examples rather than direct experience. Role models in the family setting are considered as the most influential factor for entrepreneurial intentions. Entrepreneurial parents form a role model and create management knowhow for the individual entrepreneur (Papadaki & Chami, 2002).

2.5 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) aims to explain how intentions can predict actual behavior. This is a commonly used theory that aims to explain and predict why people behave in certain ways. The TPB was postulated by Ajzen (1991) and adopted by Krueger and Carsrud (1993). According to TPB, entrepreneurial behavior (EB) is a function of entrepreneurial intentions (Krueger & Carsrud, 2000). The TPB proposes three main reasons for intention. The first one is the appraisal of the behavior, which is the extent to which a person has favourable or unfavourable attitude towards behavior. This is referred to as attitude toward behavior (ATB). The second determinant is the subjective norm, (SN) that is the social pressure to perform the behavior. The third element is the perceived difficulty to perform the behavior which is also called perceived behavior control (PBC) (Ajzen, 1991).

The TPB stipulates that in order to increase a person's intention to perform a behavior, the attitude and subjective norm towards that behavior has to be more favourable and perceived behavior control has to be greater (Kolvereid, 1997). This means that the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm and the greater the perceived behavior control is, the stronger should be the intention of an individual to perform the behaviour under consideration (Ajzen, 1991). However, it might be found that the significance of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control vary depending on the different behaviours. Hence, it may be possible that only the attitude has a significant impact on entrepreneurial intention or that attitude and perceived behavioural control are significant or still all three predictors are sufficient to account for entrepreneurial intentions.

From the literature review, the following hypotheses are developed for analyses.

H₁: Demographic elements (gender and family background) are positively related to EI.

H₂: Attitudes have a positive relationship with EI.

H₃: Subjective norm will be positively associated with EI.

H₄: Perceived Behaviour Control has a positive association with EI.

H₅: Contextual factors (academic support and environment for entrepreneurship) have a positive association with entrepreneurial intention.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Survey Instrument

A survey instrument was designed, pre-tested and applied during the academic year 2012/2013 (November 2013). For this study, the method of data collection was the survey by self-administered questionnaire. The structured questionnaire used to collect data consisted of four parts: TPB, demographic factors (age and gender), contextual factors (academic support and environmental elements), and EI. The TPB index (Kolvereid, 1996), consisting of three parts: occupational status choice attitude index, subjective norm and perceived behavior control was used. The respondents were asked to rate their degree of agreement with statements from the index on a Likert scale. Subjective norm was measured by items taken from Kolvereid (1996) and Autio et al., (2001). This instrument contained four items aimed at measuring the belief of the respondent about social support that comes if one pursues a career as self-employed. Motivation to comply was measured by four items referring to each of the belief questions. The belief items were re-coded into a bipolar scale then multiplied with the respective motivation to comply item then finally the scores added in order to obtain an overall measure of subjective norm. In order to measure perceived behavior control, a six-item measure developed from Kolvereid (1996) and Autio et al., (2001) was adopted. The respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with specified statements on a six-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" = 1 to "strongly agree" = 6. The contextual factors consisted of two components; academic support and environmental elements. The academic factors were drawn from Autio et al., (2001) while environmental elements were adopted from Verheul et al., (2005) which had a scale of eight items.

Finally, EI which was the dependent variable was measured by the index of Davidsson (1995). The index consisted of three items: i) “Have you ever considered starting your own firm?”(ii & iii) “How likely do you consider it to be that within one (or five) years from now you will be running your own business? The construct was thus based on these three statements. Reliability of data in all cases was tested by use of Cronbach Alpha. The constructs were all found to be within the 0.7 threshold for reliability.

3.2 Study Sample

The unit of analysis was university students. Data were collected from 326 fourth year Bachelor of Commerce students from Egerton, Kabarak and Kenyatta universities in Kenya. The fourth year students were chosen because they are at the final academic stage of making career choices.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data was initially analyzed by reliability and factor analysis. The relationship between dependent and independent variable were tested by multiple regression analysis. This was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Reliability and Factor Analysis of Occupational Status Choice Attitude Index.

The first factor analysis was performed and two factors emerged. One item had a factor loading of lower than 0.50 and was subsequently eliminated. The second factor analysis was done and resulted in two factors. The findings of the analysis are presented in Table 1 below.

4.2 Reliability and Factor Analysis of Perceived Behavioural Control Index

Initially the PBC index yielded two factors in factor analysis. One item was eliminated due to low loadings. When the factor analysis was run a second time, two factors emerged. These were labeled as: ‘perceived confidence’ and ‘perceived behavioural control’. This is shown in Table 2:

4.3 Reliability and Factor Analysis of Academic Support

The four items measuring academic support were loaded on a single factor which was labeled “Academic Support” with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.784. The results were as shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Reliability Analysis of Academic Support Scale

	Cronbach alpha	No. of items
Academic Support	0.784	4

4.4 Reliability and Factor Analysis of Environment for Entrepreneurship

The four items measuring environment for entrepreneurship were loaded on a single factor which was labeled as ‘Environment for Entrepreneurship (Cronbach’s alpha of 0.738). The results were as indicated in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Reliability Analysis of Environment for Entrepreneurship

	Cronbach’s alpha	Number of items
Environment for Entrepreneurship	0.738	4

4.5 Multiple Regression analysis for TPB on Entrepreneurial Intention

The multiple regression analysis for TPB was run and only five significant results were realized ($R^2=0.317$, $F = 16.061$, $p = 0.000$).Economic opportunity and challenge has a positive and the highest contribution to entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = 0.404$). Security and work load has a negative contribution to entrepreneurial intention with $\beta = -0.247$. Self realization and participation in the whole process has a significant but negative contribution to entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = -0.168$). The findings therefore suggest that H_3 is accepted. However, H_2 and H_4 are partially accepted. The results are tabulated in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Multiple Regression for Theory of Planned Behaviour on Entrepreneurial Intention

Independent Variables	β coefficients	Dependent Variable	
Perceived Behavior Control	0.323	Entrepreneurial Intention	$R^2 = 0.317$ $F = 16.061$ $P = 0.000$
Economic Opportunity and Challenge	0.404		
Security and Work Load	-2.407		
Self-realization and participation in the whole process	-0.168		
Subjective Norm	0.140		

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis for Contextual Elements and Entrepreneurial Intention

Contextual elements have positive and significant contributions to entrepreneurial intention ($R^2 = 0.137$, $F = 20.005$, $p = 0.000$). Environment for entrepreneurship has a positive and the highest contribution to EI which means that entrepreneurial intention increase if one perceives the environment for entrepreneurship as supportive ($\beta = 0.342$). Academic support also had a positive contribution to entrepreneurial intention with $\beta = 0.173$.

Therefore, H_3 is accepted. The results are as shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis for Contextual Elements on Entrepreneurial Intention

Independent Variable	β coefficient	Dependent Variable
Environment for entrepreneurship	0.342	Entrepreneurial Intention $R^2 = 0.137, F = 20.005, p = 0.000$
Academic support	0.173	

Multiple Regression Results for Demographic Factors on Entrepreneurial Intention

Gender and family background had to be recoded before being analyzed. Females were coded as 0 while males were coded as 1. For family background, respondents with entrepreneurial families were re-coded as 1 and no entrepreneurial family history was coded as 0. The results of the regression analysis show that gender and family background are significant contributors to entrepreneurial intention ($R^2 = 0.150, F = 19.650, p = 0.000$). This shows that H_1 is accepted. The results are tabulated in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis for Demographic Factors on Entrepreneurial Intention

Independent Variable	β coefficients	Dependent Variable
		Entrepreneurial Intention $R^2 = 0.150, F = 19.650, p = 0.000$
Gender	0.341	
Family Background	0.170	

5.0 Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that attitudes and contextual factors influence entrepreneurial intentions of university students. Having entrepreneurial parents have a significant relationship with EI. This finding is consistent with Guerrero et al., (2008). The multiple regression analysis results for TPB indicate that PBC, SN and economic opportunity and challenge contribute positively to entrepreneurial intention. Security and work load have significant but negative influence to EI. This means that university students would prefer to be formally employed because of job security and work load. These findings are in line with previous studies (Choo & Wong; Gurbuz & Aykol 2008) which found that such factors motivate potential entrepreneurs.

According to Guerrero et al., (2008) TPB is a predictor of entrepreneurial intention. However, the study found that self-realization and participation contribute negatively to entrepreneurial intention. In entrepreneurship literature, people are expected to establish their own businesses in order to prove self-realization and participate in the whole process (Gurbuz & Aykol 2008). For University students, working in the formal sector as a waged employee is preferred as a means of accomplishing self-actualization and participation. This contradictory finding to the established literature may be due to the fact that the respondents are only exposed to entrepreneurship education in their fourth year of study hence inadequate exposure to the course. Furthermore, Kenya is developing country yet most researches in literature are conducted in developed nations where establishing a business and finding a formal employment is easier as compared to Kenya.

In Kenya, there are few formal employment opportunities with many qualified university graduates competing for the few opportunities. This means that if one starts a business which later collapses, it would be difficult for the person to find a new job in the private or government sector. For that reason, the university students may prefer to stay in safer grounds (comfort zones) working as waged employees in the formal sector.

Contextual factors also revealed significant and positive results with entrepreneurial intention. Favourable environment for entrepreneurship and academic support also influenced the individual's entrepreneurial intention to establish own business. This study has implications for researchers and policy makers. For researchers, the application of these scales in universities which have established Enterprise and Innovation Centers or Business Incubators may yield different implications.

The universities and governments need to understand factors which influence entrepreneurial intention among the would-be entrepreneurs. If these factors are identified the universities, governments and stakeholders in the education sector could develop programs that turn these latent entrepreneurs into nascent entrepreneurs (Verheul et al., 2005). To promote entrepreneurship in universities it is necessary to understand and find ways to develop and encourage latent entrepreneurs when they are still students (Wang & Wong, 2004). University students are an important source for entrepreneurship. Their perceptions about entrepreneurship and establishing their own business will affect their career choices. This confirms that universities and middle level colleges should develop programs that facilitate entrepreneurship so that more university graduates will be encouraged to establish their own businesses in the future (Wang & Wong 2004).

Entrepreneurship and small firms are the major solutions to unemployment and economic development problems (Davidsson 1995). To promote entrepreneurship, the policy makers have to focus on how to encourage entrepreneurship among university students and graduates (Wang & Wong 2004).

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Table 1: Reliability and Factor Analysis of Occupational Status Choice Attitude Index

Factor	Variance loadings	Cronbach Explained	Number alpha	Number of items
Autonomy and Authority		16.027	0.922	6
Have power to make decisions	0.837			
Have authority	0.793			
Be able to choose your own tasks	0.767			
To be your own boss	0.756			
Independence	0.741			
Freedom	0.688			
Economic Opportunity and Challenge		14.951	0.908	8
To have a challenging job	0.748			
To have an exciting job	0.727			
To have a motivating job	0.696			
To receive motivation based on merit	0.695			
To have an interesting job	0.632			
To keep a large proportion of the result	0.631			
Economic opportunity	0.630			
Self-realization	0.535			
Security and Work Load		10.103	0.798	5
Job stability	0.777			
Job security	0.753			
Not having to work long hours	0.750			
To have fixed working hours	0.735			
Not to have stressful job	0.526			
Avoid Responsibility		9.749	0.818	4
Not taking on too much responsibility	0.885			
Avoid responsibility	0.871			
Avoid commitment	0.745			
Have a simple, not complicated job	0.694			
Self realization and Participation		9.537	0.818	4
To create something	0.727			
To take advantage of your creative needs	0.713			
To follow work tasks from a-z	0.663			
Participate in the whole process	0.602			
Social Environment and career		8.472	0.823	4
Participate in social environment	0.843			
To be a member of social organization	0.788			
Have opportunity for career Progress	0.704			
Promotion	0.695			
Total Variance Explained		68.837	0.916	31
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.875			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				
Chi-Square	5657.108			
df	464			
significance	0.000			

Table 2: Reliability and Factor Analysis of Perceived Behavioral Control Index

	Factor loadings	Variance explained	Cronbach alpha	Number of items
Perceived Confidence		38.434	0.758	3
I am confident that I would succeed if I started my own firm	0.912			
I have the capabilities required to succeed as an entrepreneur	0.853			
I have the skills required to succeed as an entrepreneur	0.568			
Perceived Behavioral Control		32.756	0.600	2
It would be easy for me to start my own firm	0.834			
To start my own firm would be probably the best way for me to take advantage of my education	0.812			
Total Variance Explained		71.191	0.736	5
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.677			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				
Chi-square				
df	386.102			
significance	10			
	0.000			

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