

## INTERNSHIP AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP: STUDY OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

BY

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### Abstract

*Skill acquisition in entrepreneurship is a derivative of entrepreneurial learning which promotes functional unemployment reduction through university education. However, universities have turned to producers of unemployed graduates instead of job creators in the face of high rate of global unemployment. This is due to the exhibition of negative attitude towards entrepreneurship which originated from low exposure to internship. This study investigated the effect of internship on attitude towards entrepreneurship among students of Federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population comprised 24,282 four hundred level undergraduates in six (6) Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria. The sample size of 1,673 was obtained using Krejcie and Morgan formula. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents. A validated structured questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranging from 0.73 to 0.95 was employed in the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential (Linear) statistics. Findings revealed that internship had a significant effect on attitude towards entrepreneurship skill acquisition ( $R^2 = 0.194$ ,  $t(1671) = 20.043$ ,  $\beta = 0.829$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that positive attitude towards entrepreneurship was promoted through internship. The study suggests that government, academia and the society should focus on measures that would promote undergraduates' internship and the use of appropriate pedagogy in teaching entrepreneurship.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Entrepreneurship, Internship, Student and Skill acquisition

### Introduction

In the world over, having either negative or positive attitude towards entrepreneurship by university undergraduates is a long term issue. It is also regarded as the predisposition to respond in a favourable and unfavourable manner with respect to a construct which may be positive or negative, desirable or undesirable (Kumar & Uz Kurt, 2016). It is acknowledged that if a student has a positive attitude towards a course he may have an ability to learn beyond what is being expected of him in that particular course. The reverse is the case when a student holds a negative attitude towards that same course, he may strongly resist learning that course to an extent that no matter how thorough and ingenious his teacher may be, all efforts will be futile towards making the individual develop favourable attitude towards the course. Considering the fact that the role of university education to nations' development is germane, this is why universities around the world increasingly seek to foster entrepreneurship in order to increase job creation and economic growth on the premise that entrepreneurship is a major catalyst that drives the nations' economy. According to Abubakar (2016), no matter the degree of training or entrepreneurial opportunities presented to an individual, the attitude of such an individual can hinder the quality of the result recorded which is because attitude determines to a great extent, how much one succeeds in any endeavour and it is the determinant of students' decision in an entrepreneurial career (Karim & Venkataiah, 2016).

Furthermore, the transition of university graduates into labour market with little or no positive attitude towards entrepreneurship has had adverse effects on the development of nations around the world which can be solved by instilling entrepreneurial virtues into undergraduates as one of the factors that could help to foster transition of economies is dependent on having a group of university graduates who are well equipped with knowledge of entrepreneurship from their university training (Ayodele, 2017). In Nigeria, the data of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows that the education sector has not contributed as expected to the gross domestic product (GDP) compared to other sectors of the economy. The sector's contribution according to the National Bureau

of Statistics (NBS, 2018) ranges from 3.54 to 3.12 percent respectively in the first quarter of 2016 to the second quarter of 2017 compared to the contribution of other sectors like telecommunication which contributed from the range of 19.81 to 21.18 percent while the manufacturing sector's contribution ranges from 17.62, to 15.95 percent and the mining and quarrying sector contribution ranges from 34.19 to 39.18 percent similarly, agriculture contributed within the range of 18.33, to 15.39 percent in the same period in the country.

In consistent with the foregoing, it is important that those factors which arouse positive attitude of university undergraduates towards entrepreneurship should be adequately understood and developed to implement effective strategies and to prepare the students for life after graduation. This is because despite, the fact that universities offer entrepreneurship as a compulsory general course while some universities offer major Bachelor degree in entrepreneurship, university undergraduates still lack positive attitude towards skill acquisition in entrepreneurship which is evident in the increasing rate of graduate unemployment (Adefokun, Edebor, & Obera, 2018). This is indicated in the National Bureau of statistics time data which shows that the rate of the total unemployment in Nigeria between year 2018 and 2021 ranges from 6.4% to 18.8%. While about 61.5% of those with gainful employment have under employment. This is worrisome and alarming and detrimental to the economy of Nigeria.

Internships constitute interdisciplinary learning that is 'truly integrated' into the community, and serve as a unique type of learning approach; a form of learner-centered education. The concept of an internship is to put learning into practice to extend learning into applied experiences in which students actively participate. Sumal and Soputan (2018) defined internship as a co-operative industrial training program that involves students of institutions of higher learning. Through internship students may learn professional knowledge and skills; be provides an avenue for students in institutions of higher learning to acquire industrial skills and experience during their course of study (Tendai, Norman, & Golden, 2014) be able to solve the problem of lack of practical preparatory employment requirement in industries and prepare the students for industrial work situations that they are likely to face after graduation (Norasmah & Siti, 2017). This will help to make the transition from school to the world of work easier and afford students the opportunity to apply their educational knowledge to real work situation, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Furthermore, Merit (2018) highlighted that, internship provides invaluable experience and can change students' lives; it can increase students' maturity levels and can improve their self-confidence and self-concepts; Internships aid students in identifying, clarifying, developing career goals and professional aspirations and confirming career-path options (Babangida & Patience, 2016). Student internships help students to explore non-traditional career fields (Botha & Bignotti, 2016) and to improve students' job-readiness skills, future job prospects and starting salaries (Judith, 2017). However, internships provide students with valuable, first-hand, work-based experiences and relevant workplace skill (Abraham-Ibe, 2015). Internship is plagued with some disadvantages being highlighted by Mitchell (2017) in the sense that internships that match an individual's goals may not be available close to home. In that case, the intern must relocate in order to obtain the internship, which is costly. Relocation makes the internship a bit more difficult, due to securing housing in an unknown area (Su-Chang, Hsi-Chi, Jen-Chia, & Chun-Mei, 2017). Also, many companies take advantage of interns and see them more like slaves or assistants than prospective employees

Authors have defined attitude in various respects, however, the elements that constitute these definitions are similar and complementary. Generally, the behavior of an individual is greatly determined by his/her attitude. It is a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli. And it has also been defined as a feeling or evaluative reaction to an idea, objective or situation. It depicts how positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable a person feels towards that particular idea, object or situation in question (Rashmi & Chennai, 2018). Khursheed (2017) submits that attitude is the way a person or an individual's behavior is determined and the degree to which an individual has favorable or unfavorable assessments of the behavior in question. The position of these authors lays emphasis on feeling or a reaction in response to an idea or objective on the part of an individual to respond positively or negatively to some object, situation, concept or another person. Whereas Pulka, Rikwentishe, and Ibrahim (2015) defined attitude as predisposition learned to respond in a consistent manner to a social object furthermore in Social Psychology, attitude constitute valuable elements for the prediction of behavior. The authors elaborated further that attitude can be cognitive, affective and

behavioral. The definition of these authors supersedes that of the foregoing because of the inclusion of all the constructs of attitude into the definition.

It is highlighted by different authors that entrepreneurs associate the creation of a personal enterprises with independence and economic rewards (Abraham, 2015; Lafortune, Jlio, & Tessada, 2017; Khursheed, 2017). Among all the values gained from creation of a personal business, independence, having all the profits to oneself, complete control and decision-making power over the business. Independence would have a major effect on attitude, and therefore act as motivators on entrepreneurial decision. Therefore, individuals with positive attitude towards entrepreneurship has motivation and ability to get involved in entrepreneurial activities (Fasla, 2017) and perceive more opportunities where others consider the situation as a thread or risk, set more challenging goals, exert more effort and perseverance to achieve their vision and cope with challenges and crises associated with entrepreneurship (Zhai, Sun, Tsai, Wang & Zhao, 2018) Attitude towards entrepreneurship has its disadvantages.

Extant literature on internship provides general argument, complex and continually evolving areas of research that encompasses a variety of ideas. Internship has been identified as an avenue for transitioning from theoretical learning gained in the classroom to the applicability of the knowledge in the work environment (Fredrick, 2015). As part of the studies (Abraham-Ibe, 2015; Alina, 2017; Desta & Jebena, 2018; Imani, Nazem, & Rafee, 2017; Sunyoto, & Ulum, 2017; Tendai, Norman, & Golden, 2014; Thouin, Hefley, & Raghunathan, 2018; Tran & Ngah, 2018; Mofesola, 2012) all found positive result in their investigations on internship and attitude towards entrepreneurship. A study by Mofesola (2012) investigated the relationship between students' placement on internship and attitude of students towards entrepreneurship. The study found that students' placement on internship is related to increased attitude towards entrepreneurship this is in congruence with the study conducted by Alina (2017) who looked into the role of international internships conducted during academic studies in development of attitude towards entrepreneurship the study was conducted during academic studies in development of positive attitude towards entrepreneurship the study shows that internship is positively significant to students' attitude towards entrepreneurship. In the same vein, the study of Tendai, et.al, (2014) found that students of Bothouniversity in Botswana who experience industrial training have positive perception and a supportive attitude towards entrepreneurship. Contrarily, Babangida and Patience (2016) who studied a collaborative students' industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) on attitude of students towards entrepreneurship found that internship is negatively significant attitude towards entrepreneurship. These finding supports that of Dennis (2017). Who investigated the impact of students' in work experience scheme on the development of attitude towards entrepreneurship. The finding of the study revealed that internship is negatively significant to the development of students' attitude towards entrepreneurship.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The number of students exposed to entrepreneurship internship is minimal compared to the total number of students in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria this brings about negative attitude towards entrepreneurship which turns universities to producers of graduates who cannot create employment for themselves but seekers of employment. The researcher has observed that most, if not all the tertiary institution graduates who have been given the Entrepreneurship Education cannot embark on one form of entrepreneurship or the other. This can be evidenced as most graduates still roam about helplessly in search for government employment in one job area or the other. This can be due to the present trend or approach in teaching the subject which is predominantly theoretical with little or no practical approach at all and this leads to students acquiring little or no skill in which case, the aim of introducing Entrepreneurship Education cannot be achieved. Several studies have examined the factors that influence individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Abdullatif, Sawsen, Sami, & Younes, 2016; Alexander, Francis, Hudu, Goddana & Elvis, 2015) but despite the effort of government and institutions to promote entrepreneurship as an alternative career, student after graduation, prefer to be hire as employees and there is a little interest in venturing into self-employment initiative . Therefore, there is need to examine the effect of internship on attitude towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to examine the impact of internship on attitude towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West Nigeria

**Research Question**

How does internship affect attitude towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria?

**Hypothesis**

H0<sub>1</sub>: Internship has no significant effect on attitude towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

**Methodology**

This study used survey research design which facilitated the use of a structured research instrument in obtaining data from the respondents for the study. The population consists of (6) federal universities in South-West Nigeria which are, University of Lagos, Lagos State, ObafemiAwolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, University Of Ibadan, Oyo State, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State and Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo state. Further, the accessible population of this research comprised of 24,282 final year students of all Federal Universities in South -West, Nigeria. The study employed table of sample size determination developed by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970 and obtained from Research Advisor (2006). The sample was selected at 0.05 margin error and 95% confidence level for each of the universities for the study. This study used a stratified sampling technique to determine the sample size of 1673 for the study. A self-structured questionnaire was employed. A validated structured questionnaire with Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients for the constructs ranging from 0.73 to 0.95 was employed in the study. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential (linear regression analysis) statistics.

**Model Specification**

The model used in establishing relationships between the variables of the study were specific in this section as:

Where:

Y= Attitude towards entrepreneurship

X=Internship

Therefore, functional relationship is expressed as:

$Y=f(X)$

ATTENT=f (INT).....Functional Relationship

$ATTENT=\alpha_0+\beta_1INT+ \mu_i$ .....Equation 1

**Results**

**Restatement Hypothesis One**

H0<sub>1</sub>: Internship has no significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

The results of the regression are presented in Tables 1

**Table 1:Linear Regression Results on the Effect of Internship on Attitudes towards Entrepreneurship among students of Federal Universities in South-West, Nigeria**  
**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	27.471	.801		34.309	.000
	Internship	.829	.041	.440	20.043	.000

$R = 0.440; R^2 = 0.194; F (1/1671) = 401.704$

**a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards Entrepreneurship**

Source: (Researcher’s Field Results, 2022)

Table 1 provides details of regression analysis results on the effect of Internship on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. Results reveal that Internship has a significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria ( $\beta = 0.829$ ,  $t = 20.043$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The t-statistic and corresponding p-value are 20.043 and 0.000 respectively. This implies that Internship has significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The results further reveal that Internship explains about 19.4 percent of the variations in attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria ( $R^2 = .194$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), which is also significant. However, the regression model did not explain 80.6 percent of the variation in attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria, implying that there are other factors associated with attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria, which were not captured in the current model. The established linear regression equation is:

$$ATTE = 27.471 + 0.829INT \dots\dots\dots (eq.)$$

Where:

- ATTE = Attitudes towards entrepreneurship
- INT = Internship

From the regression equation, taking all factors constant at zero, attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West was 27.471. The regression coefficient of Internship was 0.829, which implies that for every change in Internship, there is a 0.829 increase in attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. This implies that attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West increase significantly when Internship is increased and properly implemented. The level of confidence for the analysis was set at 95%. Therefore, the null hypothesis one ( $H_{01}$ ) which states that Internship has no significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria is hereby rejected.

**Discussion of findings**

The finding revealed that internship has significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. There are lots of early studies on the effect of internship on attitudes towards entrepreneurship by different researchers. Most of them support our finding that internship has positive and significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship (Alina, 2017; Mofesola, 2012; Sumual&Soputan, 2018; Tendai, Norman & Golden, 2014). Furthermore, this finding of this study also consistent with the empirical finding of Desta and Jebena (2018), Iman, Nazem, and Rafee (2017), Tran and Ngah (2018), Thouin, Hefley and Raghunathan (2018). On the contrary to this study finding, Babangida and Patience (2016) and Dennis (2017) revealed that internship has no significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Conclusively, majority of previous empirical findings have deduced that internship has significant and positive effect on student attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Based on these majority findings and supporting empirical literature of positive and significant effect of internship on student attitudes towards entrepreneurship, this study therefore rejects the null hypothesis one ( $H_{01}$ ) which state that Internship has no significant effect on attitudes towards entrepreneurship among students of federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. Similarly, Theory of Entrepreneurial Event also supported our finding that internship, perceived feasibility, perceived desirability and propensity to act influence the intention and in turn the behaviour of an individual to start a business (Shapero&Sokol, 1982). In congruence with study finding John, Gakure, Simon and Agnes (2012) and Abubakar and Kouana (2018) employed Entrepreneurial event theory to explain entrepreneurial Intentions among university students in Kenya.

**Conclusion**

The study concluded that the exposure of undergraduates to internship, have statistical effect on attitude towards entrepreneurship. Thus, University policy makers, Federal Ministry of Education and government in Nigeria should be concerned since entrepreneurial learning which can lead to development of positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and can automatically lead to entrepreneurial development which is vital for drastic reduction in unemployment rate and growth of the Nigerian economy. Exposure of undergraduates to entrepreneurship internship would give the students the opportunity to be familiar with work environment and be able to translate theories learnt in the classroom into practice which could make them consider venture creation as a career choice.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings in the course of the study the researcher recommends that:

1. Federal ministry of education should strive to inculcate a compulsory, sound and qualitative exposure of undergraduates to internship which would lead to the development of favourable attitudes towards entrepreneurship for creation of ventures.
2. Student internship program should be done entrepreneurial companies based instead of employment companies based to boost their entrepreneurial interest
3. Government, academia and the society should focus on measures that would promote undergraduates' internship and the use of appropriate pedagogy in teaching entrepreneurship.

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