

Correlates of Entrepreneurial Intention Among Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders

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INTRODUCTION

All parts of the world are experiencing a boom in entrepreneurship, not just in industrialized countries but also in emerging economies. Recent years have seen a significant increase in entrepreneurship, especially among individuals in low-income nations. It drives productivity, economic growth, and social development (Denanyoh et al., 2015; O.E.C.D., 2016; Campos et al., 2017). In addition, entrepreneurship has attracted the attention of academics because it is thought to play a vital role in job creation and economic development (Acheampong & Tweneboah-Koduah, 2018; Elliott et al., 2020). Due to its role as a pathway to self-employment, entrepreneurship is considered a viable solution to the employability problem, particularly among students. Because students can only sometimes rely on the government and private sectors to provide employment opportunities, entrepreneurial activities are often seen as an alternative to traditional employment avenues (Iro-Idoro & Jimoh, 2017)

Typically, an individual's entrepreneurial intention is defined as their desire to start up their own business (Bolaji, 2022; Yildirim et al., 2016). Entrepreneurial intention can be characterized as a person's self-acknowledged declaration that they have plans to start a new business endeavor and

do so at some point in the future (Thompson, 2009). The entrepreneurial intention has proven to be a powerful indicator of entrepreneurship potential (Bolaji, 2022).

But there appears to be limited interest in exploring entrepreneurial intention among high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs). For instance, Abbas & Md Khair (2017) found that students with special needs at polytechnics have a high entrepreneurial intention. Additionally, Al-Jubari et al. (2019) found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, which result from psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy, positively impact students' entrepreneurial intention. A study by Singh & Singh, (2020) found that entrepreneurial intention among university students was associated with higher levels of attitude toward behavior, personality characteristics, perceived behavioral control, and motivation to succeed.

Neurodevelopmental disorders may manifest themselves in a variety of ways in an individual. Some may affect cognition, language, behavior, and motor skills, or an individual may have a combination of these disabilities. Various neurodevelopmental disorders in children have been identified (Kuijper et al., 2017; Mullin et al., 2013), including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, communication disorders, autism spectrum disorders, visual and hearing impairments among others. It has been uncovered by Denanyoh et al. (2015) that students' entrepreneurial intention is influenced by a variety of factors, including educational, family, and structural support. Several personal resources, including general self-efficacy and job adaptability, have been linked to increased entrepreneurial intention (Tolentino et al., 2014). According to the study conducted by Arranz et al. (2017), extracurricular activities have a mixed effect on students' entrepreneurial intentions, but they do assist students in turning their intention into initiatives Rubin et al. (2002) stated that students who participate in extracurricular activities develop higher social skills than those who do not. Participating in extracurricular activities allows students to build a network and unique talents, influencing their ability to start and maintain a business.

Students could be more inclined to start their businesses for positive reasons, such as the chance to use their creativity, the freedom, and the potential for a higher income, than for negative reasons, such as the high unemployment rate (Malebana, 2014). Several studies, including Lanero et al. (2011) and Sánchez (2013), have found that programs designed to educate students about entrepreneurship positively affected students' entrepreneurial intention. In Ndofirepi (2020), psychological factors were used to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial goal intention. The study found that entrepreneurship education is significantly associated with the need for achievement, risk-taking tendency, internal locus of control, and purpose to achieve entrepreneurial goals. Wathanakom et al. (2020) study examined the causal link between students' innovativeness and entrepreneurial intention. A study by Shah (2020) investigated the influence of entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial ambitions and reported that the most significant determinants of entrepreneurial ambitions were entrepreneurial attitudes, subjective norms, and self-efficacy.

Furthermore Zain et al. (2010) focused on the role of economic and personality variables, while Hwee Nga & Shamuganathan (2010) concentrated on the influence of demographic and personality variables on entrepreneurial intention. There is a lack of investigation into some entrepreneurial variables that may affect high school students' entrepreneurial choices, resulting in a limited understanding of the relationship of such factors with entrepreneurial intent. Also, the emphasis on entrepreneurial intention seems to be a relatively recent phenomenon among high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders, with a little study on the subject. This study examined the correlates of entrepreneurial intention among high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Theoretical Framework

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) can be understood using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). TPB regards entrepreneurial activity as a behavior that is deliberately planned (Sabah, 2016). As per this theory, a person's behavior is directly determined by their behavioral intention and perception of behavioral control; and the individual's behavioral intention is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perception of behavioral control (Lihua, 2022; Peng et al., 2014). Thus, the TPB model identifies 3 antecedents of EI, namely, attitude toward entrepreneurial behavior (ATT), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control/self-efficacy (PBC/SE). The variance in actual behavior performance can be substantially influenced by the interplay of these antecedents (Ajzen, 1991). The perspective of TPB can thus enable us to gain a better understanding of the EI of individuals. Considering this theoretical proposition, the current study investigates the relationship between EI and these three antecedents among a Nigerian high school student sample with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Rational of Study

The primary rationale for conducting this study was the researchers' desire to see more high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders show an interest in starting their own enterprise, to have access to universities that support such intention, and to enhance entrepreneurial support for these students to reduce their burdens. Studies have not been conducted sufficiently on entrepreneurial characteristics that can influence neurodiverse students' entrepreneurial intention, leaving us with a limited understanding of how these variables relate to entrepreneurial intention among this student group. Moreover, there has been little research on the importance of entrepreneurial pursuit among high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that most individuals with neurodevelopmental disorders struggle academically in higher education due to poor learning support and inadequate facilities, especially in developing economies. Thus, they may consider entrepreneurship to survive and provide for themselves. As a result, this study is essential to understand better the correlates of the entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the correlates of entrepreneurial intention among high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders in Nigeria. The specific objectives of this study are as follows. To ascertain the correlation among entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. To propose a hypothetical model of the interrelationship among attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. To determine the composite influence of entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. To ascertain the significant influence of entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on the entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders.

METHODS

Design

The study takes the form of a correlational survey research design. Using a correlational survey design, we will identify the relationship between entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial ambition among high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. Following Nworgu (2006), a correlational study examines the

relationship between two or more variables, making it a suitable research design for the present study.

Participants

The study's participants include high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. From 10 Nigerian special education schools, 100 high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders were chosen for the study. These special schools and students were selected using a simple random sampling method across five study locations (Enugu, Lagos, Anambra, Delta, and Abuja). The sample was composed of students with learning disabilities ($n = 23$), autism spectrum disorders ($n = 8$), visual impairment ($n = 33$), and hearing impairment ($n = 36$).

Instruments

Students were asked six questions on entrepreneurial intention (EIN) adapted from the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) by [Liñán & Chen \(2009\)](#), and then the responses were scored on a 5-point Likert scale. The EIN score was compared with mean scores of other clusters, including attitude towards entrepreneurial behavior (ATT) (five questions), subjective norm (SN) (three questions), and perceived behavioral control (PBC)/self-efficacy (SE) (six questions), whose questions were also derived from [Liñán & Chen \(2009\)](#). The reliability index and sample of items of the EIQ can be found in [Liñán & Chen \(2009\)](#), [Do Paço et al. \(2011\)](#), and [Robledo et al. \(2015\)](#). In this research, the reliability index for the EIN was 0.80 Cronbach's α , ATT had .68 Cronbach's α , SN had 0.65 Cronbach's α , and PBC/SE had .64 Cronbach's α . As opposed to the 7-point Likert scale used in an early study by [Liñán & Chen \(2009\)](#), a 5-point Likert scale was used that ranged in scores from 1 (I disagree) to 5 (I agree).

Procedure

Only students whose guardians consented were studied. Student's verbal consent was also obtained for research participation. For students unable to complete the questionnaires in writing due to the severity of their disability, the teachers read or terminated the questionnaire items according to the student's choice of options. The work was ethically approved by the Education Faculty Committee on Research Ethics at the University of Nigeria.

Data Analysis

IBM SPSS 26 and IBM Amos 26 were used to analyze the data. The data were analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression at a significance level of .05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Table 1 shows the demographic variables of the respondents. The data in the Table 1 indicated that 55 respondents were male students while 44 were female students. Furthermore, with respect to age, 25 respondents were within the age bracket of 13-15, 49 were within the age of 16-18, and 26 were within the age bracket of 18 to 20.

Table 2 shows the Multiple Pearson Product Moment correlation among entrepreneur attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. The data shows that entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders is positively and moderately associated with attitude ($R = .46$), small but positively associated with perceived behavioral control ($R = .19$), and

Table 1: Demographic variables of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders

Variables	N
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	55
Female	45
<i>Age</i>	
13-15	25
16-18	49
18 -20	26

Table 2 shows the Multiple Pearson Product Moment correlation among entrepreneur attitude

	Mean±SD	EIN	ATT	PBC	SN
EIN	22.98±1.79	-	.46	.19	.27
ATT	19.21±1.82		-	.54	.13
PBC	23.01±1.77			-	.41
SN	11.92±4.30				-

small but positively associated with subjective norms (R = .27). Furthermore, the entrepreneurial attitude of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders is positively and moderately associated with perceived behavioral control (R = .46), small but positively associated with subjective norms (R = .13). Finally, perceived behavioral control of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders was moderately and positively related to subjective norms (R = .41).

Figure 1 shows the path diagram of the interrelationship among entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. The data indicate a positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial attitude and perceived behavioral control with a path coefficient of $\beta = .54$ ($p=0.01$) and attitude and entrepreneurial intention with a path coefficient of $\beta = .46$ ($p = .01$). However, the relationship between attitude and subject norms with a path coefficient of $\beta = .13$ ($p =$

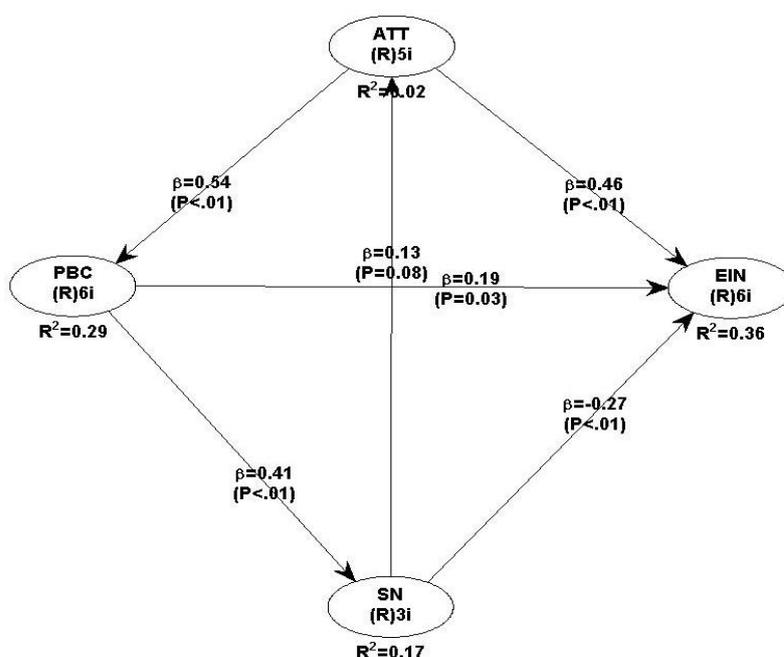


Figure 1. Path diagram of the interrelationship among attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders

Table 3. Multiple regression of the influence of entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders

Model	R	R Square	Ad. R Square	SE	df	M square	F	p
1	.601 ^a	.36	.33	1.78825	3	3.656	1.143	.023

Predictors: (Constant), SN, PBC, ATT

Table 4. T-Test Analysis of The Influence of Entrepreneurial Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control on Entrepreneurial Intention of High School Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

Variables	B	SE	β	t	p
(Constant)	20.617	2.693		7.655	.00
ATT	.46	.088	.46	5.158	.01
PBC	.19	.095	.19	1.977	.01
SN	.27	.093	.27	-2.914	.03

Dependent Variable: EIN

.08) was positive but insignificant. Furthermore, there was a positive and significant relationship between perceived behavioral control and entrepreneurial intention with a path coefficient of $\beta = .19$ ($p = .03$) and perceived behavioral control and subjective norms with a path coefficient of $\beta = .41$ ($p = .01$). Finally, a positive and significant relationship exists between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intention with a path coefficient of $\beta = .27$ ($p = .01$).

In addition, entrepreneurial attitude explained 29% variation in perceived behavioral control and 17% variation in subjective norms, while subjective norms explained 2% variation in entrepreneurial attitude. Entrepreneurial attitude, perceived behavioral control and subjective norms explained 36% variation in the entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. Figure 1. Path diagram of the interrelationship among attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders.

Table 3 shows the regression ANOVA of the composite influence of entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. The data shows that 36% variation in the entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders was explained by the combined influence of entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

The data indicated a significant composite influence of these variables on the entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders ($F(3, 97) = 1.143, p = .23$) since the associated probability value is less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis that these variables have no composite influence is rejected.

In table 4, t-test analysis was conducted to explore the significant influence of entrepreneurial attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control on the entrepreneurial attitude of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. The data shows entrepreneurial attitude had a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial intention. Therefore, a unit increase in entrepreneurial attitude will increase entrepreneurial intention by .46 units. Similarly, perceived behavioral control had a positive influence on entrepreneurial intention. Hence, a unit increase in perceived behavioral control will increase entrepreneurial intention by .19 units. Finally, subjective norms had a positive influence on entrepreneurial intention. Thus, a unit increase in subjective norms will increase entrepreneurial intention by .27 units.

Discussion

The findings reveal that attitude significantly and positively impacts the entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. The results also demonstrated that subjective norm is a good predictor of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders' entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, perceived behavioral control significantly and positively influences the entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. The results of this study demonstrate the significance of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), in the analysis of the EI of Nigerian college students diagnosed with neurodevelopmental disorders. This result is consistent with Bolaji (2022) findings, which found that attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior all impacted entrepreneurial inclination. Furthermore, the study's findings are consistent with those of Moriano et al. (2012), who discovered a link between attitude and entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, according to Do Paço et al. (2011), attitude, among other things, is the most important element in explaining entrepreneurial purpose. This study aligns with Moriano et al. (2012), who found that social norms predict entrepreneurial intention.

In contrast, Do Paço et al. (2011) suggests that social norms have a negligible influence on entrepreneurial intention. Shook & Bratianu (2010) found that social norms do not affect entrepreneurial intention. Similar to the findings of this study, Do Paço et al. (2011) and Moriano et al. (2012) reported that perceived behavioral control influenced entrepreneurial intention. While the results of this study are encouraging, they must be seen in the context of some limitations. The study included only high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. Because behavior is constantly changing, the findings may not accurately represent the relationship between the research variables throughout time. In the future, longitudinal studies could be conducted to confirm the results found in this study. It is recommended that stakeholders, such as government agencies, school authorities, and parents, create an environment that will aid these students in developing positive attitudes and mindsets concerning entrepreneurship.

The study's findings shed light on entrepreneurial intention among students with neurodevelopmental disorders, which is valuable information for students, teachers, guidance counselors, and the government, in terms of strengthening, reshaping, and enhancing career transition among students with neurodevelopmental disorders. This can be accomplished by implementing focused interventions such as involving students in entrepreneurial goal-setting and establishing alternative strategies for achieving goals. Most people with neurodevelopmental disorders are frequently regarded as unfit or incapable of functioning in the open labor market. Thus, for those with neurodevelopmental difficulties, career transition can be challenging. Undoubtedly, transitioning from school to work is a crucial phase in the lives of students with neurodevelopmental disorders (Jackson, 2021). The lack of preparedness for the transition, the lack of experience, and poor relationships and communication among students are all problems in this transition process (Institut de recherches cliniques de Montreal, 2014).

For the transition process to be successful for students with neurodevelopmental disorders, school authorities, counselors, and guardians must form a synergy and play their critical roles in the process, as failure to do so could cause frustrating circumstances for the students. The career transitions inventory (Heppner, 1998) is an essential assessment among the many instruments that can guide individuals in the career transition process. When one considers the different factors that influence the well-being of students with neurodevelopmental disorders during the career transition process, these students require professional guidance and counseling. Counselors should assist students with neurodevelopmental disorders to identify the skills or resources needed to succeed as entrepreneurs. Furthermore, they should guide them on mitigating any difficulties they might experience in finding an appropriate business venture that considers the severity of their disability.

Implications

This study has implications for high school students with NDDs, their families, career counselors, educational institutions, and the government. Several factors contribute to students' desire to start their businesses. Among these factors are their attitude, subjective norms, and perception of behavioral control. Students with NDDs constitute a distinct group whose entrepreneurial intention must be supported and promoted by teachers and schools throughout their programs and courses because these students possess the potential to drive economic development. The results of this study can impact how high school students with NDDs in Nigeria think and feel about pursuing their entrepreneurial goals. Families should understand and support high school students with NDDs who desire to start their own businesses. By working with entrepreneurship mentors and role models, family members can also assist high school students with NDDs to transform their negative perceptions about entrepreneurship into positive ones.

It is crucial for career counselors to occasionally mentor and coach these students in terms of academics and other aspects of their lives, including entrepreneurial endeavors. In addition, career counselors should assist these students in overcoming obstacles they may encounter in reaching their goals as potential entrepreneurs. The findings may help educational institutions develop study programs to increase students' entrepreneurial intentions, particularly those with NDDs. Such a program will strengthen the link between students and academic institutions. Students with NDDs can benefit from this relationship in terms of developing the interests and skills necessary to launch and manage an enterprise in the future successfully. The government should create an enabling entrepreneurial environment for prospective student-entrepreneurs, including those with NDDs, by establishing entrepreneurship support programs, providing entrepreneurship funds for students with NDDs, and passing tax-free legislation for high school graduates with NDDs who intend to start a business.

Limitation and Strengths

Despite the usefulness of this study's findings, it has some limitations. The study was conducted in one country. Because of the diversity of cultures, one nation's results cannot represent all countries. However, the study findings could be relevant to Nigeria and other nations with similar socioeconomic backgrounds. Thus, future research may consider replicating this study in other countries. This approach may facilitate the development of a meaningful database for comparing findings. This correlational study has another disadvantage: it was conducted when COVID-19 was in progress, thus providing many opportunities for future research in this area. A longitudinal study is therefore required to determine whether the entrepreneurial intention of students with NDDs has changed post-COVID. Based on the variables in the proposed model, substantial results were obtained in predicting the correlates of the entrepreneurial choice of students with NDDs. The results do not, however, indicate that they must be the only factors to be considered in future research. Future research could consider how students' family background, their parent's socioeconomic status, parental occupation, and family systems impact their entrepreneurial intention. They can be used to construct more complex models of the entrepreneurial intention of students with NDDs to understand the phenomenon better.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed the entrepreneurial intention of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders. The findings demonstrated that subjective norms are a good predictor of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders' entrepreneurial intention. Furthermore, high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders' entrepreneurial intentions are influenced by perceived behavioral control in a significant way. Thus, career counselors must

assist and support these students in overcoming any barriers they may face and achieving their objectives and desires as prospective entrepreneurs. This work contributes to the literature meaningfully in that it includes preliminary information on high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders' entrepreneurial intention and implications for career transitions. Moreover, this study confirms that the Theory of Planned Behavior can be applied to the Nigerian context to understand the EI of high school students with neurodevelopmental disorders.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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