

**DRIVERS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AMONGST
GENERATION Y STUDENTS IN ZIMBABWE**

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-Abstract-

This article examines the influence of four factors, namely, personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions amongst Generation Y students in Zimbabwe. A quantitative approach was followed using a sample consisting of 200 conveniently drawn Generation Y students from Great Zimbabwe University. Hypotheses were tested using the structural equation modelling procedure. The results show that personal attitudes, perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurship education significantly predict entrepreneurship intentions. Subjective norms did not show any significant predictive relationship with entrepreneurship intentions. The results of the study can be used as a tool to boost entrepreneurship amongst young people in developing countries.

Key Words: Entrepreneurial intentions, entrepreneurship, Generation Y, Zimbabwe, entrepreneurial education.

JEL Classification: M20

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

For many years, the study field of entrepreneurship has been of importance to various scholars (Harris, Sapienza & Bowie, 2009). This importance may be attributed to the view that entrepreneurship has been considered a major factor for socio-economic progress and expansion, because it offers many more job opportunities, and impacts on a country's national wealth and standard of living (Zahra, 1999). Certo, Moss and Short (2009) describe entrepreneurs as people who are capable of doing something different and of recognising opportunities, where other people cannot. The activities of entrepreneurs are directed in the course of the development and execution of a business idea by their own personalised entrepreneurship intentions (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994). These entrepreneurial intentions and activities offer opportunities for people to attain financial freedom, to have authority and the ability to make decisions. This also benefits the economy by aiding in job creation, employment opportunities and economic development (Basu & Virick, 2008).

One of the challenging problems facing developing countries in Africa is the high unemployment levels of the youth. This problem makes the job environment very competitive since the supply of jobs is limited (Keat, Selvarajah & Meyer, 2011). The unemployment rate in Zimbabwe was recorded at a high rate of 94 per cent in 2014 (Mangena, 2014) and had increased to 95% in 2016 (Statistica, 2016). Furthermore, contributing to the unemployment problem is the high drop-out rate of university students, which is linked to escalating university fees (Chinamasa, 2014). Entrepreneurship is seen as a catalyst of economic growth and countries are using it as a strategy to reduce the unemployment problem amongst the youth. Most governments have made countless efforts to promote entrepreneurial activities (Wu & Wu, 2008). The government of Zimbabwe, for example, has been providing increasing support to small businesses and entrepreneurs, with initiatives such as tax incentives and training support. Other initiatives have been introduced, for example, the implementation of the Youth Empowerment Policy (YEP) that involved the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) which included the vocational training of youth as a vital element for entrepreneurial skills development (Chinamasa, 2014).

Against the background of high employment rates in Zimbabwe, this study focuses on the entrepreneurial intentions of Generation Y university students.

Intentions are an integral part of human behaviour. One of the most widely used psychological theories to predict and explain human behaviour in recent years is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). This theory is an extension of the theory of reasoned action, developed by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1980 (Ajzen & Cote, 2008). The TPB is regarded as a valuable framework for understanding human behaviour (Ajzen, 2011). Ajzen and Cote (2008), maintain that the TPB is a useful and effective instrument for human behaviour predictions. In the TPB, when the behaviour is under volitional control (conscious willingness), intentions are considered to be excellent forecasters of behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The TPB advocates that the instant cause of action is an individual's intention to act or not to act (Ajzen, 1985). Based on the foregoing discussion, the study draws from this theory to provide an approach to the study.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of four factors, namely, personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions amongst Generation Y students in Zimbabwe. It has been noted that studies conducted on entrepreneurial inclination overweigh those focusing on entrepreneurial intentions amongst students (Lüthje & Franke, 2003; Ho & Wong, 2007; Langowitz & Minniti, 2007; Koellinger, Minniti & Schade, 2013). Souitaris *et al.* (2007) argue that there is lack of empirical evidence confirming the link between students' entrepreneurial intentions, students' attitudes and entrepreneurship education, even though some authors proposed such a relationship. In addition, although there is a growing interest in the study of entrepreneurship, many of these previous studies were conducted in Western countries (Autio *et al.*, 2001; Lüthje & Franke, 2003; Moriano *et al.*, 2012). Likewise, not enough is known concerning differences in attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions among students from diverse cultures and backgrounds (Wilson *et al.*, 2004). The current study is significant in that government authorities may use its results to develop initiatives to promote entrepreneurship amongst people in younger generations, particularly those who are enrolled in universities.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

The current study places emphases on Generation Y students. Generation Y students are defined as people who were born between 1986 and 2005 (Joubert, 2013). According to Martin (2005), it is believed that this Generation Y is the most educated, diverse, tech-proficient, and soon-to-be the largest generation ever.

Entrepreneurial intention is defined as people's enthusiasm to be engaged in self-employment, starting a business or to participate and accomplish an entrepreneurial activity (Engle *et al.*, 2010). According to Shane *et al.* (2003), the individuals' actions of chasing opportunities are the reason for the occurrence of the entrepreneurial process. The choice of starting a new business and being an entrepreneur involves extreme intentional preparation, planning and thinking (Autio *et al.*, 2001). Hence, entrepreneurial intention can be controlled by individuals and the environment.

Li (2007) describes personal attitudes as the individual's desire to be self-employed. Individuals' attitudes are influenced by the higher status they get if they become entrepreneurs and whether there are opportunities for them to start a business (Engle *et al.*, 2010). The opinions about implications of risk, income and independence of performing certain behaviour influences an individual's attitudes, as suggested by Douglas and Shepherd (2002) and Ajzen and Fishbein (2005). These implications of behaviour can involve costs and benefits, behavioural beliefs or outcome expectations (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Krueger (1993) defines subjective norms as people's opinions concerning beliefs, values and norms believed by the individuals who are important to them or those individuals they respect, and the people's wish to conform to those norms. Entrepreneurial behaviour can be influenced by important people such as close friends, an individual's parents, family members, co-workers, spouse or even professionals (Liñán 2008). People are most expected to have entrepreneurship intentions if they have any relationships with other entrepreneurs (Autio *et al.*, 2001).

Perceived behavioural control refers to the judgement of the extent to which one is skilled enough to perform a specific behaviour (Ajzen & Cote, 2008). It is

influenced by a number of factors, of which some follow. Firstly, control beliefs regarding the existence of factors that may enable or hinder behaviour performance regulate perceived behavioural control (Ajzen & Cote, 2008). In addition, the extent to which somebody is in control of the situation can clearly be shown by intentions and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991). If people in the society value and approve the entrepreneurial behaviour, it is probable that an individual will feel that they have the ability to perform the behaviour (Kautonen *et al.*, 2013).

Entrepreneurship education is defined as the courses and lectures that are part of the curriculum scope that offer entrepreneurial capabilities, expertise and understanding to students, so that they can follow the entrepreneurship path as a profession (Ekpoh & Edet, 2011; Keat *et al.*, 2011). According to Politis (2005), entrepreneurship education is a continuous procedure taken to simplify the development of required acquaintance and skills for starting a business. Gibson *et al.* (2011) state that the principal aim of entrepreneurship education is to develop and nurture future entrepreneurs who are skilled for starting and sustaining successful ventures, irrespective of their educational background.

Based on the above views, the following hypotheses are proposed;

- H1:** There is a significant positive relationship between personal attitude and entrepreneurial intentions
- H2:** There is a significant positive relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intentions
- H3:** There is a significant positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intention amongst Generation Y students in Zimbabwe
- H4:** There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial intentions

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research design

A quantitative approach using a survey design was employed in this study. The quantitative approach was accepted and employed because of the specific advantages it has to offer, namely, it is easy, time saving and sometimes cost-effective. Moreover, quantitative approaches provide accuracy as well as prestige

and trustworthiness to the study (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). A survey is suitable in the collection of the data, for the purpose of describing and defining a population that is difficult to observe because of its size (Mouton, 1996). A survey design was chosen because it has a number of advantages such as; it is excellent as a means of collecting descriptive data, it is relatively inexpensive and it has the ability to cover many topics. A survey can collect data from a sample through self-reports (Polit & Hungler, 1993).

4.2. Sampling design

The target population used in this study was composed of full time undergraduate Generation Y students from the Faculty of Commerce at Great Zimbabwe University, Masvingo Campus in Zimbabwe. Respondents were both male and female students pursuing business related courses. Business related courses were selected since they normally involve entrepreneurship modules which inspire entrepreneurial attitudes. To select students, the study made use of a non-probability, convenience sampling method as it was difficult to obtain a comprehensive sampling frame for the study. In addition, it was difficult to employ a probability sampling technique as students were approached during their non-contact times. The final sample was composed of 200 students, after benchmarking with previous studies (Kristiansen & Indarti 2004; Liñán *et al.* 2005; Gürol & Atsan 2006; Hmieleski & Corbett 2006; Gurel *et al.*, 2010) in which between 150 and 300 students were used as the sample. An analysis of the demographic profile of respondents shows that the majority of the students (51%; n=103) preferred to be salaried workers when compared to those who preferred to be entrepreneurs (49%; n=97). In terms of age, there were more respondents between 21 and 23 years of age (43%; n=86), followed by those who were 20 years and younger (38.5%; n=77). With respect to gender, 56% (n=112) of the respondents were male students and 44% (n=88) were female students.

4.3. Data collection methods

This research made use of a self-administered questionnaire to collect the data. A total of 200 fully completed questionnaires from the university were realised. The questionnaire used for this study was an adapted version of the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ), developed in 2009 by Liñán and Chen (2009). This questionnaire was developed as a standard for measuring entrepreneurial

intentions and its antecedents. The questionnaire comprised six sections (refer to Appendix 1). Section A aimed at understanding personal attitudes towards being an entrepreneur, based on the Generation Y students' view of an entrepreneur. Questions in Section B were directed to measure subjective norms regarding whether or not people close to an individual would support the decision of becoming an entrepreneur. Questions in Section C focused on perceived behavioural control, which is the apparent capability they think they have. Questions in Section D measured entrepreneurial intentions of students. Questions in Section E focused on understanding entrepreneurial education of these students and how their education can influence their entrepreneurial intention. Questions in Section F questions sought information on demographic data such as age, gender, race and level of education. The questionnaire was developed in the English language and included a covering letter, requesting students to participate in the study, explaining the purposes of the study and providing instructions on how to answer the various sections of the questionnaire. The cover letter also emphasised issues of confidentiality and anonymity and was considered an essential part of the questionnaire. Likert-type scales were employed in Sections A to E because their construction and administration are relatively easy. The scale items ranged from 1 to 6, with 1 denoting strongly disagree and 6 denoting strongly agree.

The questionnaire was administered to Generation Y students in August and September 2014. The principal researcher personally distributed the questionnaire to the students to complete. Students were accessed during their non-contact periods (free periods).

4.4. Data analysis

Data were analysed using the statistical packages for the social sciences, SPSS version 22.0 and the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS), version 22. Descriptive statistics were used for analysing the demographic profile of respondents. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to ascertain the psychometric properties of measurement scales. Hypotheses were tested using the structural equation modelling (SEM) technique.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Psychometric properties of measurement scales

The study implemented the two-step procedure suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), which suggests that before testing the hypotheses, it is necessary to perform a CFA in order to assess the accuracy of the measurement scales. The results of the CFA procedure are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability and Scale Accuracy Statistics

Research constructs		Cronbach's test		CR	AVE	Shared variance	Factor loadings
		Item-total correlations	α value				
Attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATT)	ATT ₁	.680	.884	.88	.60	.41	.706
	ATT ₂	.747					.771
	ATT ₃	.673					.729
	ATT ₄	.796					.876
	ATT ₅	.704					.795
Subjective norm (SNM)	SNM ₁	.617	.853	.86	.65	.17	.664
	SNM ₂	.777					.883
	SNM ₃	.779					.906
Perceived behavioural control (PBC)	PBC ₁	.595	.852	.84	.51	.26	.620
	PBC ₂	.627					.764
	PBC ₃	.627					.725
	PBC ₄	.693					.635
	PBC ₅	.641					.566
	PBC ₆	.640					.749
Entrepreneurship education (EED)	EED ₁	.594	.884	.83	.50	.14	.638
	EED ₂	.656					.736
	EED ₃	.709					.817
	EED ₄	.664					.746
	EED ₅	.510					.574
Entrepreneurial intentions (ENT)	ENT ₁	.555	.886	.89	.58	.41	.590
	ENT ₂	.687					.729
	ENT ₃	.751					.804
	ENT ₃	.734					.813
	ENT ₃	.746					.809
	ENT ₃	.709					.785

The reliability of the measurement instrument was measured using Item total correlations, the Cronbach alpha test, the Composite reliability (CR) test and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). All measurement scale items attained item-to-total values above the minimum threshold of 0.3 (Hair, *et al.*, 1998). Cronbach's alpha as well as CR coefficients were also above the minimum threshold of 0.7 (Hulland, 1999). In addition, the values for AVE were well above the minimum threshold of 0.4 (Fraering & Minor, 2006). Since all minimum thresholds were satisfied, these results provided evidence for the acceptable reliability of the measurement scales used in this study.

Convergent validity was ascertained by testing whether individual item loadings for each research construct were above the recommended minimum threshold value of 0.5 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). All the items finally used had a factor loading of more than the recommended 0.5, indicating acceptable individual item convergent validity as more than 50 percent of each item's variance was shared with its respective construct. Discriminant validity was established by assessing whether the AVE value was greater than the highest shared variance value (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, discriminant validity was further checked by assessing whether correlations between the constructs were less than 1 (refer to Table 3). Since all recommended thresholds were satisfied in this study, it was deemed that discriminant validity was adequate in this study.

5.2. Model fit analysis

After assessment of reliability and validity, it was deemed necessary to check the model fit for both the CFA and the structural model, in line with the recommendation by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Acceptable model fit was indicated by chi-square value over degree of freedom ($\chi^2/d.f.$) of a value between 1 and 3, with the values of goodness-of-fit index (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI), and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) equal to or greater than 0.90, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value to be equal to or less than 0.08. The results of model fit analysis are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Model-fit Statistics

Fit indices	Acceptable fit indices	CFA (<i>Measurement model</i>)	SEM (<i>Structural model</i>)
Chi square/degree of freedom (d/f)	< 3.0	1.870	1.696
Incremental fit index (IFI)	> 0.90	0.917	0.934
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	> 0.90	0.905	0.924
Comparative fit index (CFI)	> 0.90	0.916	0.933
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	< 0.08	0.066	0.059

The results of the model fit for both the CFA and the SEM show that all model fit indices were met, which confirms that there was acceptable fit of both models to the underlying data structures. In addition to fit measures, correlations between the study constructs were computed. The correlation results show that there is a strong positive relationship between entrepreneurial intentions and personal attitudes ($r= 0.643$; $p= 0.000$); between entrepreneurial intentions and subjective norm ($r=0.414$; $p <0.05$) and between entrepreneurial intentions and perceived behavioural control ($r= 0.512$ $p <0.05$) and between entrepreneurial intentions and entrepreneurship education ($r=0.371$ $p <0.05$). These results resonate with the findings of other researchers who found significant relationship between entrepreneurial intention and personal attitudes (Souitaris, Zerbinati & Al-Laham, 2007; Volery & Mueller, 2006). Wu and Wu (2008) also tested this relationship on Chinese university students and they found that personal attitudes positively influence entrepreneurial intention. In a German sample of students, Volery and Mueller (2006) found that subjective norms have a significant positive relationship with entrepreneurial intention. These results corroborate the findings of some researchers (Souitaris et al. 2007; Wu & Wu, 2008) who found that there is a significant relationship between entrepreneurial intention and behavioural control. Kolvereid and Moen (1997) found that among Norwegian business school students, those who took entrepreneurship as a major are likely to possess more entrepreneurial intention and showed propensity to venture into new businesses creation.

Table 3: Correlations between Constructs

Constructs	ATT	SNM	PBC	EED	ENT
Attitude towards entrepreneurship (ATT)	1.000	.382**			
Subjective norm (SNM)	.382**	1.000			
Perceived behavioural control (PBC)	.445**	.308**	1.000		
Entrepreneurship education (EED)	.305**	.184**	.252**	1.000	
Entrepreneurial intentions (ENT)	.643**	.414**	.512**	.371**	1.000

** Significant at $p < 0.05$. M = Mean. SD = Standard deviation

5.3. Hypotheses tests results

Hypotheses were tested using the SEM procedure. The results are reported in Table 4.

Table 4: Structural Equation Modelling Hypotheses Testing Results

Paths	p-values	Path coefficients	Standardised estimates	t-values	Hypotheses results
ATT → ENT	0.000**	0.460	0.090	5.132	H ₁ : Supported
SNM → ENT	0.768	0.010	0.035	0.295	H ₂ : Not supported
PBC → ENT	0.002*	0.188	0.060	3.135	H ₃ : Supported
EED → ENT	0.016*	0.151	0.063	2.413	H ₄ : Supported

**significant at $p < 0.001$ * significant at $p < 0.05$.

The results in Table 4 show that three hypotheses (H₁, H₃ and H₄) were supported whilst H₂ was not supported. The first hypothesis suggested that there is a positive relationship between personal attitude and entrepreneurial intentions. This hypothesis was accepted in this study since there was a positive and significant relationship between personal attitudes and entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = 0.460$; $p = 0.000$; $t = 5.132$). The second hypothesis suggested that there is a positive relationship between subjective norms and entrepreneurial intentions. In this study, this hypothesis was not supported since subjective norms were statistically insignificant ($\beta = 0.010$; $p = 0.768$; $t = 0.295$). The third hypothesis

suggested that there is a positive relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intentions. This hypothesis was also supported because there was a positive and significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = 0.188$; $p = 0.002$; $t = 3.135$). The fourth hypothesis suggested that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial intentions. This hypothesis was supported as well because there was a positive and significant relationship between perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = 0.151$; $p = 0.016$; $t = 2.413$). Overall, the results of the study demonstrate that entrepreneurial intentions are predicted by personal attitudes, perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurial education.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of four factors namely, personal attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and entrepreneurship education on entrepreneurial intentions amongst Generation Y students in Zimbabwe. The study shows that personal attitudes and perceived behavioural control of students are positive predictors of students' entrepreneurial intentions. Despite these results, it should be noted that the results show a low predictive relationships between the dependent and independent constructs. Perhaps this may be attributed to the effects of the content of entrepreneurial-related programmes in Zimbabwe. Traditionally higher education institutions have not prepared students for self-employment as a career option, resulting in the loss of many potential entrepreneurs (Matsheke *et al.*, 2015). As a result of this educational bias and lack of information on self-employment as a career option, many higher education institutions are now offering courses related to entrepreneurship and small business through business schools and short learning programmes. However, the skills traditionally taught in business schools are essential but not sufficient to make a successful entrepreneur (Rae, 1997). Furthermore, different countries are at different pedagogical levels of entrepreneurship education, hence different outcomes from this education (Haase & Lautenschläger, 2011).

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