

Effect of Entrepreneurial Skills on Entrepreneurial Intent of University Undergraduates in, Benue State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduates in, Benue State, Nigeria. The Study focused on the undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi. The study specifically examined the effect of managerial skills, customer care skills and interpersonal skills on entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduates, Benue State, Nigeria. A survey design was adopted for the study. The population consists of 749 students of the college of management sciences of the school. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Simple random sampling was adopted for the study and 261 students were served with the questionnaire. Simple percentages, mean and standard deviation were used for data presentation and analysis while regression analysis was used for test of hypotheses. Findings of the study revealed that managerial skills, customer care skills and interpersonal skills on entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduates, Benue State, Nigeria. Recommendations were made among others that; undergraduate students should be exposed to situations that will develop their interpersonal skills.

Key Words: Managerial Skills, Customer Care Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Entrepreneurial Intent.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The economic realities of many nations with experiences of economic hardship, unemployment and poverty in recent times has made the role of entrepreneurs much more recognized and the need for entrepreneurship development has been very greatly emphasized in all nations, particularly, in the developing countries (Abubakar, 2010). Entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as an important driver of economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment, and it is widely accepted as a key aspect of economic dynamism. Transforming ideas into economic opportunities is the decisive issue of entrepreneurship. History shows that economic progress has been significantly advanced by pragmatic people who are entrepreneurial and innovative, able to exploit opportunities and willing to take risks (Hisrich, 2005).

Entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and entrepreneurial skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth (Drucker, 2007). It is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully.

Entrepreneurship is thus, the process of learning the skills needed to assume the risk of establishing a business (Mueller and Thomas, 2000). Evidence have shown that for any small scale enterprise to be successful, the owner (manager) must possess appropriate skills and abilities to run the business (Roomi & Harrison, 2008; Ezeani, 2012). Graduate entrepreneurs make a substantial contribution to national economies through their participation in start-ups and their growth in small and medium scale businesses (Ayuo & Kubasu, 2014). Their contributions to economic development have been predominantly in the area of job creation, poverty alleviation, environmental vitality, wealth creation and human capital (Ojo, 2006).

To succeed in today's competitive market as an entrepreneur; one needs a broad array of entrepreneurial skills. Ezeani (2012) argued that business owners (men or women) needs to possess basic skills necessary to start, develop, finance and market own business. Entrepreneurial skills are required for starting, developing, financing and marketing business enterprise as opined by Leonier & Guerin (1991). Furthermore, Akande, (2011) described entrepreneurial skills as qualities or attributes required for an entrepreneur to start and successfully manage a business in a competitive environment. Ladzani and Van Vuuren (2002) acknowledged that undergraduates are becoming a very important economic group and therefore more efforts are needed to nurture them in taking up entrepreneurship. In Benue State, graduate entrepreneurs have recently become an important pool of resources for Benue State economic growth and personal prosperity.

Mohammed, & Obeleagu-Nzelibe (2014) observed that in spite of their knowledge, many graduates have low entrepreneurial intention and attributes their challenges to poor entrepreneur skills such as innovation skills, management skills, proper accounting skills and personal skills. From the foregoing, it is envisaged that entrepreneurial skills such as management, accounting, marketing and sales skills seems to be inevitable in developing entrepreneurial intentions of undergraduates (Kerosi, & Kayisime, 2013; Ayuo & Kubasu, 2014; Khuong, & Anhe, 2016). And as such this study intends to examine the effect of entrepreneurship skills on entrepreneurial intentions of university undergraduates in Benue State, Nigeria

Self-employment through entrepreneurship offers university graduates the opportunity to create jobs for themselves and others. According Fatoki (2014) entrepreneurship is one of the options to reduce the unemployment rate and the social problems that are associated with unemployment. Policy makers are charged with the economic development responsibilities and have a belief that enterprise culture is a key to more new ventures and job creation. In addition, students are faced with changing job markets, which renders more graduates to either compete for few but challenging vacancies or opt for self-employment (Mwasalwiba, 2010). While it might seem sensible to assume that high levels of joblessness will encourage entrepreneurship as the next best career option (Sowetan, 2012), this is not the case. In the face of increasing unemployment and underemployment, only few graduates are engaged in entrepreneurship (Gregory, 2011).

Though most tertiary institutions in Nigeria now have modules in entrepreneurship as part of their course structure irrespective of the students' course option, the negative attitude of graduates towards self-employment appears not to have changed and graduate self-employment continues to decline while graduate unemployment keeps rising. Meanwhile the introduction of entrepreneurship courses in universities, especially in Nigeria stem from efforts at reducing graduate unemployment in the country through making graduates see self-employment as an

alternative to wage employment. Factors other than entrepreneurship education may or may not promote graduate self-employment. To this end, this study is designed to examine the effect of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduate students in Benue State, Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effect entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduate students in Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to;

- i. examine the effect of managerial skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi;
- ii. examine the effect of customer care skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi; and
- iii. examine the effect of interpersonal skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section focuses on theoretical framework, conceptual framework and a review of related empirical studies.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theory of planned behavior and skill acquisition theory are considered relevant to this study.

2.1.1 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 & Carsrud (1993). According to TPB, entrepreneurial behavior (EB) is a function of entrepreneurial intentions (Krueger and 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 & Isaksen, 2006). 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 behavior 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 (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

2.1.2 Skill Acquisition Theory

The skills acquisition theory was developed by Dekeyser (2007). The theory postulates that development in knowledge has three stages: declarative, procedural and automatic. Declarative knowledge refers to explicit knowledge about a topic; procedural knowledge is implicit knowledge that refers to behaviour. And automaticity occurs towards the end point of extensive practice; towards the point at which one has become completely expert in performing a task. From the perspective of skill acquisition theory, the sequence of these stages is crucial as is appropriate combination of abstract rules and concrete examples at the declarative stage.

The theory relates to this study in the sense that skill acquisition is task oriented and there is need to diagnose a task and break it down into its components in order to provide effective feedback. When it is not possible to conceptualize a task, then feedback becomes considerably less effective. The theory if adopted when teaching skills will be helpful to students as it follows the stages of learning a skill and allows them to learn entrepreneurship skills. The cognitive phase requires the identification and development of component parts of the skill which involves formation of a mental picture of the skill. Then through practicing the various components of the skill will be linked together. And constant practice will make the skill become automatic. When they learn through these processes they will acquire the necessary skills and knowledge required in managing their businesses.

2.1.3 Theoretical Linkage

This study is hinged on the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991). This theory is relevant to this study because it explained the process that leads to eventual intent. 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). In this study, entrepreneurial intent⁷⁷ of university undergraduates is measured in terms of attitude toward start-up and perceived behavioral control with respect to entrepreneurship which are all elements of theory of planned behavior.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

This subsection examines the concepts that relates to the topic under investigation. The concepts considered in this study are entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial intent.

2.2.1 Concept of Entrepreneurial Skills

Entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and organisation skills in order to combine people, money and resources to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth (Agomuo, 2002). Akande (2011) defines entrepreneurship as a way of thinking, reasoning and acting that results in the creation, enhancement, realization, and renewal of value for an individual, group, organization or society. It is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. However, entrepreneurship requires skills, needed to assume the risk of establishing a business. An entrepreneur is a person who organizes and manages any

enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk. Entrepreneurship skills are simply business skills which individuals acquire to enable them effectively function in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur or self-employed. It takes special skills to succeed as an entrepreneur but most entrepreneurial skills come by learning and practicing (Ezeanyi, Osita & Ezemoyih, 2012). Skill is a basic ability by which human beings adjust to life. Skill is described as a quality of performance which does not depend solely upon a person's fundamental, innate capacities but must be developed through training, practice and experience (Msoka, 2013).

Entrepreneurial skills are the basic skills necessary to enable someone start, develop, finance and succeed in business enterprise (Msoka, 2013). According to Kuratko & Hodgetts (2008) entrepreneurship skills are the skills that complement the ability of the entrepreneur to analyze situations, opportunities and environments and assist the entrepreneur/manager to organize, manage and assume the risks and rewards of a business or enterprise. Entrepreneurship skills are the basic skills required for starting, developing, financing and marketing business enterprise (Shaw, 2012). Akande (2011) described entrepreneurship skills as qualities or attributes required for an entrepreneur to start and successfully manage a business in a competitive environment. Farhad, Nsim & Najafabadi (2011) defined entrepreneurship skills as identifying customer needs, technical or market opportunities, and pursuing opportunities. Sambo, Gidura & Yusuf (2015) explained that entrepreneurship skills are simply business skills which individuals acquire to enable them effectively function in the turbulent business environment as an entrepreneur or self-employed.

For entrepreneurs to be successful, owner managers must possess appropriate skills and abilities to run the business (Msoka, 2013). It is therefore, very important for entrepreneurs to develop all necessary skills required for setting and effective running of the enterprises. Terry (2005) argued that business owner needs to possess basic skills necessary to start, develop, finance and market own business. Entrepreneurial skills compare favourably with the basic skills required for starting, developing, financing, financing and marketing business enterprise as opined by Lyve (2005).

2.2.2 Dimensions of Entrepreneurial Skills

The skills associated with entrepreneurship include technical skills, specific operation technology, communication, interpersonal relations, presentation and assertiveness (Egbe-Okpenge & Orhungur, 2012). According to Msoka (2013) successful entrepreneurs possess special skills ranging from accounting skills, customer relations skills, management skills, interpersonal skills and marketing skills. This study however, is focusing on managerial skills, customer care skills and interpersonal skills.

Managerial Skills

Entrepreneurship skills are said to be the necessary set of skills required to be an entrepreneur. In other words, managerial skills are those necessary skills an entrepreneur needs to successfully run a business or add value to work. Agu & Ikeme (2013) argued that entrepreneurial skills must be nurtured through proper education so that it can be directed to responsible and enriching small business endeavours that will benefit the individuals and the communities in which the entrepreneurs live. Managerial skills can also be defined as those skills that an individual should

possess to enable him/her succeed in a virtual learning environment. The various managerial skills include: decision-making skill; problem-solving skills; planning and organizing skills; risk management skills; self-management skills; teamwork skill; learning skills; initiative skills; enterprise skills; financial skills; managerial skills, marketing/saleable skills; integrity skills; practical skills; assertiveness skills; leadership skills; listening skills; openness to change and business identification skills (Oliveira, 2008).

Accounting skills are the totality of skills ranging from record keeping, attention directing, financial management and reporting skills that are expected to promote effective decision, performance evaluation and business reporting of any business enterprise (Akande, 2010). Akintoye (2008) argues that accounting skill is necessary for successful entrepreneurial and small business development. This is because the inability to install a proper accounting system would disallow business monitoring, reporting, and performance evaluation that are essential to the business survival. Akintoye (2008) asserted that most Small business owned by rural women has failed in the past for ignoring this vital measurement apparatus.

Marketing skills is another important and essential skill level of entrepreneurs which depends on the very success or failure of a business. Sales and marketing skills keep the entrepreneur informed, knowledgeable and confident as to determine the most efficient method of physical distribution of goods and services (Akande, 2011). Important sales and marketing skills, which women entrepreneurs should possess include: knowledge of seasonal fluctuation of goods; ability to determine the extent to which products will sell; ability to determine current trends in sales of products, ability to determine what customers need and shortage of such goods; knowledge of advertising; ability to determine and interpret factors which indicate extent of and strength of competition; and ability to determine and interpret factors which indicate extent of and strength of competition; and ability to determine availability of goods/raw materials for product and shortage of finished goods (Ezeani et al., 2012).

Customer Care Skills

Customer care skills are important in the performance of enterprises. According to Msoka (2013) entrepreneurs have very special customer-relations skills which help in running their enterprises effectively. Tsvetanka (2010) outlines ways to treat clients. She indicates that there is need to treat the clients with the utmost respect. Clients whether they consciously do it or not, know the value of their money. And they always want to know that they are being treated with the dignity they deserve as a client. Clients expect to have undivided attention. Delivering full attention and also on top of that showing the clients that you are attentively listening to what they are saying, you set yourself up for a repeated business and possibly referrals. Listening carefully and having all attention on the clients, absolutely flatters them. The clients will want to go back where they are treated with respect.

Interpersonal skills

Interpersonal skills are a set of skills that people use when interacting and communicating with one another. The term "interpersonal skills" is used often in business contexts to refer to the measure of a person's ability to operate within business organizations through social communication and interactions. These skills include persuasion, active listening, delegation, and

leadership. According to Gakure, Ngugu, Waititu & Keraro (2013) interpersonal skills are critical in any business as they enable entrepreneurs to build great relationships with team, customers, suppliers, shareholders, investors, and more. They further explained that the types of interpersonal skills necessary for entrepreneur include: leadership and motivation, communication skills, listening skills, personal relations and negotiation skills.

2.2.3 Concept of Entrepreneurial Intent

Students' entrepreneurial intent is an intention of students to decide to become entrepreneurs. The concept entrepreneurial intent has been defined differently by different authors just like entrepreneurship. Peng, Lu & Kang (2012) define the entrepreneurial intention as a mental orientation such as desire, wish and hope influencing their choice of entrepreneurship. Li, Wu, & Wu (2008) define it as the mental state of individuals which encourages an individual to form a novel business or else a novel value driver amid current establishments.

The concept of entrepreneurial intent is defined by Remeikiene & Startiene (2013) as the growing conscious state of mind that a person desires to start a new enterprise or create new core value in existing organization. Individual entrepreneurial intent is perhaps most appropriately, formally and practically defined by Thompson (2009) as a self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future. That point in the future might be imminent or indeterminate, and may never be reached. He went further to state that those with entrepreneurial intent need not ever actually set up a new business because myriad personal circumstances and environmental factors may militate against this. Someone with entrepreneurial intent may advance to being nascent entrepreneurs, that is, those undertaking advanced actions formally to set up a new firm.

However, while having entrepreneurial intent is a necessary condition for a nascent entrepreneur, becoming a nascent entrepreneur is neither necessary for having entrepreneurial intent, nor is it entrepreneurial intent's inevitable outcome. The degree and intensity of individuals' entrepreneurial intent might reasonably be expected to vary from person to person possessing it, and to vary for the same person at different points in time depending on circumstances. This is in line with the assumption of the Ajzen's theory which explains that the higher the intention the higher the possibility of displaying the behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

It has been proven by past studies that entrepreneurial intent is a validated determinants of the entrepreneurial activities of an individual (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000; Linan, 2004), as such studying the entrepreneurial intent clearly helps in understanding the antecedents that predict entrepreneurial intent. Since its conceptualization, many studies have been conducted to determine its relationship with other variables believed to have direct or indirect effect on it. Peng, Lu and Kang (2012) found that the perceived subjective norm of university students has significantly positive influence on their entrepreneurial attitude and the entrepreneurial self-efficacy while all these factors influence their entrepreneurial intent significantly. Wongnaa & Seyram (2014) found that personality factors (extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness), support from family members and friends, occupation of parents, entrepreneurship education, gender and access to finance have significant positive effect on polytechnic students' decision to graduate as entrepreneurs while students who care about public remarks on their decisions have a significant negative effect.

Drawing on the above discussion, this study adopts Thompson (2009) definition of entrepreneurial intention which defined entrepreneurial intent as a self-acknowledged conviction by a person that they intend to set up a new business venture and consciously plan to do so at some point in the future.

2.2.4 Measures of Entrepreneurial Intent

In measuring entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduates, this study examines the respondents in terms of their attitudes towards start-up and their perceived behavioral control.

Attitude toward Start-up

Attitude toward start-up refers to the degree to which the individual holds a positive or negative personal valuation about being an entrepreneur (Ajzen, 2001; Autio, Keeley, Klofsten, Parker & Hay, 2001; Kolvereid & Isaksen 2006). It includes not only affective (I like it, it is attractive), but also evaluative considerations (it has advantages). It is also defined as the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation appraisal of engaging in an entrepreneurial activity. Several studies that have measured attitude toward entrepreneurship have conceptualized entrepreneurship as a career option (e.g. Autio, Keeley, Klofsten, Parker and Hay, 2001; Kreiser, Marino & Weaver, 2002). Autio, Keeley, Klofsten, Parker & Hay (2001) measured attitude toward entrepreneurship using one item that assessed the attractiveness of entrepreneurship as a career alternative. They used other single-items to measure the attractiveness of corporate, civil servant and academic careers. Kreiser, Marino and Weaver (2002) used these same measures. It should be noted that both studies surveyed students facing the decision of a career choice.

Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control with respect to entrepreneurship refers to the sense of self-efficacy or ability to perform the entrepreneurial activity which means the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the entrepreneurial activity (Kristiansen & Indrti, 2004). Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is defined as the perception of the ease or difficulty of becoming an entrepreneur. It is, therefore, a concept quite similar to self-efficacy (SE) (Bandura, 1997), and to perceived feasibility (Linan, 2004). All three concepts refer to the sense of capacity regarding the fulfillment of firm-creation behaviors. Nevertheless, recent work has emphasized the difference between PBC and SE (Ajzen, 2002). PBC would include not only the feeling of being able, but also the perception about controllability of the behavior. Individuals who think that they have the knowledge, skill and experience to start a dc new business will feel the sense of self-efficacy or ability to start a new business (Carrier, 2005). That is, they will perceive that they can start a business without much difficulty). On the other hand, individuals who do not think that they have the knowledge, skill and experience to start a new business will perceive that they have much less control over the process of starting a business (Linan & Santos, 2007) (i.e., they will perceive much more difficulty in starting a new business).

2.2.5 Effect of Entrepreneurial Skills on Entrepreneurial Intent

Frank, Korunka, Leuger & Mugler (2005) stated that success in business is associated with behavior that involved innovative management skills such as producing new ideas, willingness to try new ventures and reaching out to others who have the same values, as such, individuals who

possess these skills have perceived behavioural control in terms of entrepreneurship. Jelineck and Litterer (1995) agreed that entrepreneurs differ from other people in terms of the way in which they adapt to environmental changes. Thus, entrepreneurs need effective management skills to react quickly to internal and external changes, to depend more on social norms and the spirit against the official rules of traditional organization.

Dhiliwayo (2008) found a significant effect of management skills and entrepreneurial intent among youths stating that acquiring education and being equipped with management skills is critical so that student may meet the challenges of changes and hence, succeed in their undertaking. Demirguc-Kunt, Maksimovic, Beck & Laeven (2007) found that those who are self-reliant and exercise prudent financial management without seeking help from any party can be deemed a successful entrepreneur. This will make them independent to face all the challenges (including changes in the environment) and grow a higher entrepreneurial intention (Timmons and Spinelli, 2000; Hisrich Peters & Shepherd, 2002).

Coleman & Cohn (2000) emphasized that small companies can only reach limited public equity markets and credit facilities are rare. At the same time, large companies can finance their business by issuing shares or bonds which a small company is not able to do so. As an alternative, small companies are very dependent on trade credit, loans from the banks, and informal financing sources such as internal savings, credit cards and loans from family and friends (Lee & Wong, 2004). Therefore, management skills in terms of securing financing are essential in promoting entrepreneurial intent (Choo & Wong, 2009).

Tsvetanka (2010) found that possession of good customer care skills triggers an individual to venture into entrepreneurship. According to him, clients expect to have undivided attention. Delivering full attention and also on top of that showing the clients that you are attentively listening to what they are saying, you set yourself up for a repeated business and possibly referrals. Listening carefully and having all attention on the clients, absolutely flatters them and secures a repeated purchase (Crant, 2000). The clients will want to go back where they are treated with respect. According to Gakure, Ngugu, Waititu & Keraro (2013) stated that individuals with interpersonal skills are always scored high on entrepreneurial intent. According to him, interpersonal skills are critical in any business as they enable entrepreneurs to build great relationships with team, customers, suppliers, shareholders, investors, and more.

This study therefore hypothesizes that:

- i. *There is no significant effect of managerial skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.*
- ii. *There is no significant effect of customer skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.*
- iii. *There is no significant effect of interpersonal skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.*

2.4 Review of Related Empirical Studies

Fatoki (2010) investigated the motivations and obstacles to graduate entrepreneurial intention in South Africa. 701 students in their final year of study participated in the survey and data was

collected through self-administered questionnaires. The principal component analysis, T-test and descriptive statistics were used for data analysis. The results indicated that the entrepreneurial intention of South African students is very weak. In addition, the study identified five motivators of entrepreneurial intention. They were employment, autonomy, creativity, economic and capital. The obstacles to entrepreneurial intention of South African graduates are capital, skill, support, risk, economy and crime. The study identified skills as obstacles to entrepreneurial intention among South African students. The current study therefore seeks to examine the effect of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian undergraduate students in Benue State, Nigeria.

Yahya, Fatt, Othman, Rahman & Moen (2011) analyzed the contribution of entrepreneurs in terms of their management skills towards the success of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the services sector in Malaysia. The methods used were descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation, stepwise regression procedures and t-test. The data for the study were collected through mail questionnaires sent out to selected entrepreneurs of SMEs. The empirical information resulted from analyzing the data obtained from the 186 entrepreneurs suggests the findings that high entrepreneurial success was associated with high business operating skills, skills to obtain market share that suits their size and capability and skills to offer more special services; with bumiputera and non-bumiputera being indifferent in their perception towards management skills that affected their success. This study is related to the current study as managerial skills is one of the skills considered in the current study. However, this study is relating managerial skills to success of SMEs while the current study is to examine the effect of managerial skills on entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduates in Benue State, Nigeria.

Kerosi & Kayisime (2013) researched to examine the impact of entrepreneurship skills development on growth of SMEs in Rwanda. The study adopted mixed method approach that is, qualitative and quantitative methods. Basically the study was conducted in Kigali city specifically with all the 71 members of CAPLAKI Cooperative. Data were collected using structured and unstructured questionnaires. Also, secondary data were collected from various documents. The findings of the study show that on the whole, the respondents (CAPLAKI members) have limited entrepreneurship skills particularly in terms of recognising business opportunities, being innovative and communicating effectively in business transactions. The study is relevant to the current study as it tries to expose the impact of entrepreneurial skills on the growth of SMEs. However, the current study is undertaken to examine the effect of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduates in Benue State, Nigeria.

Gakure, Ngugi, Waititu & Keraro (2013) investigated the effect of entrepreneurial skills on the sustainability of small and medium family enterprises after the exit of the founders. The study aimed at investigating the challenges hindering the sustainability of Small and Medium Family Enterprises (SMFEs) after the exit of the founders in Kenya. Exploratory research design, using descriptive survey and ex- post facto was employed in the study. A stratified random sample of 247 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) was selected. The results indicate that seventy per centum (70%) of the corresponding change in sustainability of Small and Medium Family Enterprises after the exit of the founder can be explained by a unit change in entrepreneurial skills. The findings suggest that an entrepreneur/owner inculcates an entrepreneurial culture in the

enterprise and that entrepreneurial skills of the entrepreneur/ managers drive the enterprise to above average performance leading to high profitability for the sustainability of the of Small and Medium Family Enterprise. The study investigated the effect of entrepreneurial skills on sustainability of family business whereas the current study is examining the effect of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduates in Benue State, Nigeria.

Ayuo & Kubasu (2014) carried out a study to examine some of the key factors that influence students' entrepreneurial intentions among university students in Kenya. The study examined 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 indicated that gender, having entrepreneurial parents, subjective norm, perceived behavior control; attitudes, favourable environmental conditions, and academic support were significant determinants of entrepreneurial intention. This study did not consider the effect of skills of students on their entrepreneurial intention, and this is the gap the current study is set to fill.

Mohammed & Obeleagu-Nzelibe (2014) examined the effect of entrepreneurial skills and profitability of small and medium enterprises. The study used simple t-test and survey methodology through questionnaire (administered) as an instrument of primary data collection from a stratified random sample of 250 owners and employees of SMEs in major industrial cities in Nigeria. Major findings include entrepreneurial skills, proper record keeping, access to financing, concessional taxation, longer period of operation and consistent policies were found to be significant factors required for business success and profitability in Nigeria. The study examined the effect of entrepreneurial skills on profitability of SMEs in Nigeria but failed to explain the effect of such skills on entrepreneurial intention, thereby leaving the gap which the current study is set to fill.

Khuong & Anhe (2016) investigated factors affecting entrepreneurial intention of the students of Vietnam National University. Conducted by collecting data from 401 students aged from 18 to 24 years old in Vietnam National University (VNU), the study applied quantitative approach with statistical techniques used such as factor analysis, multiple regressions and path analysis. As a result, prior entrepreneurial experience, external environment and perceived feasibility were the three independent variables that significantly affected the positive perception toward entrepreneurship and consequently, they had positively indirect effect on entrepreneurship intention. On the other hand, perceived feasibility and personal trait significantly affected the negative perception toward entrepreneurship and provided negatively indirect effect on the entrepreneurship intention. The study examined the effects of personal traits, prior entrepreneurial experience, external environment, social norm and perceived feasibility on entrepreneurship intention whereas the current study is undertaken to examine the effect of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intention.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design using survey method is adopted and used in this study. This design was adopted because it involves the field enquiries by collecting data from the target population. The target population for the study consisted of the entire students of the college of management sciences of University of Agriculture Makurdi during 2016/2017 academic session. Below is the breakdown of the population according to their courses of study. Employing Taro Yamane and Burley’s proportional allocation formula, 261 questionnaires were issued out to the students of the 6 departments (Accounting =69, Agric-Business=34, Banking and Finance=33, Business Administration=41, entrepreneurship=41 and Marketing=43) and 251 were properly answered and returned for analysis. The questionnaire covered entrepreneurial skills and the three entrepreneurial skills under review based on the objective of the research. Also, a pilot study was conducted to test the accuracy and the consistency of the research instrument. The result shows that all the constructs were greater than 0.70 indicating that the measures of the variables were reliable (consistent). Data were statistically analyzed after being collected from the field using Multiple Regression Analysis as the main statistical tool with the aid of SPSS to explain the relationship between variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of Regression Model

The regression model for this study is analyzed under model summary, analysis of variance and regression coefficients as follows:

i. Model Summary

The result in Table 1 showed that the regression coefficient, $R = .653(65.3\%)$ which shows positive relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R^2) = .426 explains the extent to which changes in the dependent variable can be explained by the change in the independent variables or the percentage of variation in the dependent variable (entrepreneurial intent) that is explained by all the independent variables (managerial skills, customer care skills and interpersonal skills). The coefficient of determination showed that 42.6 % of the variation in entrepreneurial intent of University of Agriculture Makurdi undergraduate student is explained by managerial skills, customer care skills and interpersonal skills.

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change	Sig. F
1	.53 ^a	.426	.416	.89528	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Managerial skills, Customer care skills, Interpersonal skills

b. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intent

Source: Field Survey, 2018

iii. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The result in Table 2 showed the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result shows that F-value = 43.555 and the significance level = .000 ($F = 43.555, P .000 < 0.05$). This implies that over all

regression model is statistically significant, valid and fit. The valid regression model implies that all independent variables (managerial skills, customer care skills and interpersonal skills) are capable of explaining that the positive effect of the dependent variable (entrepreneurial intent).

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	104.732	3	34.911	43.555	.000 ^b
Residual	141.068	248	.802		
Total	245.800	251			

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intent

b. Predictors: (Constant), Predictors: (Constant), Managerial skills, Customer care skills and Interpersonal skills.

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

iii. Regression Coefficient

The result in Table 3 established the regression equation as follows: $Y = 0.481 + 0.148 X_1 + 0.292 X_2 + 0.336 X_3$

The regression equation indicated that holding managerial skills, customer care skills and interpersonal skills to a constant zero, entrepreneurial intent would be 0.481, a unit increase in managerial skills would lead to increase in entrepreneurial intent by 0.148 (14.8 %), a unit increase in customer care skills would lead to increase in entrepreneurial intent by a factor of 0.292 (29.3 %). Also, a unit increase in interpersonal skills would lead to increase in entrepreneurial intent by a factor of 0.336 (33.6 %). The significance of the variables was supported by the t-values whose significance values were less than 0.05 which indicates that the variables were statistically significant in influencing the entrepreneurial intent of university undergraduates of the federal University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
Constant	.481	.181		2.663	.008	
Managerial Skills	.148	.064	.155	2.295	.023**	Rejected
Customer care skills	.292	.063	.319	4.662	.000**	Rejected
Interpersonal Skills	.336	.064	.342	5.266	.000**	Rejected

a. Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial Intent

Source: Field Survey, 2018.

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

The three hypotheses formulated in this study were tested as follows:

4.2.1 Test of hypothesis one

H0: Managerial skills have no significant effect on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi

To test this hypothesis, the strength of the relationship between managerial skills and entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students was measured by the calculated p-value = 0.023

at a significance level (α) of 0.05. Since the computed p-value is less than the significance level (α) of 0.05 ($p\text{-value } 0.023 < \alpha 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, we conclude that there is positive significant effect of managerial skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

4.2.2 Test of hypothesis two

H0₂: Customer care skills have no significant effect on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

To test this hypothesis, the strength of the relationship between customer care skills and entrepreneurial intent was measured by the calculated p-value = 0.000 at a significance level (α) of 0.05. Since the computed p-value is less than the significance level (α) of 0.05 ($p\text{-value } 0.000 < \alpha 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate accepted. Therefore, it was concluded that customer care skills have positive significant effect on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

4.2.3 Test of hypothesis three

H0₃: Interpersonal skills have no significant effect on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi

In order to test this hypothesis, the strength of the relationship between interpersonal skills and entrepreneurial intent was measured by the calculated p-value = 0.000 at a significance level (α) of 0.05. Since the computed p-value is less than the significance level (α) of 0.05 ($p\text{-value } 0.000 < \alpha 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, we conclude that interpersonal skills have positive significant effect on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed from data collected that entrepreneurial skills significantly affect entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State. The major findings of the study are presented according to the objectives of the study as follows:

i. Effect of managerial skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi

The findings of the study indicated that there is significant effect of managerial skills have positive significant effect on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, Nigeria. Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 5 % level of significance and the p-value (0.023) was lower than the significance level. This can be statistically given as P-value $0.023 < \alpha 0.05$. The finding of this study is in line with previous study by Dhiliwayo (2008) who found a significant effect of management skills and entrepreneurial intent among youths stating that acquiring education and being equipped with management skills is critical so that student may meet the challenges of changes and hence, succeed in their undertaking. The finding of this study is also in line with Demirguc-Kunt, Maksimovic, Beck and Laeven (2007) who found that those who are self-reliant and exercise prudent financial management without seeking help from any party can be deemed a successful entrepreneur stating that this will make them independent to face all the challenges and grow a higher entrepreneurial intention

ii. Examine the effect of customer care skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi

The result of data collected and the analysis carried out revealed that customer care skills have significant positive effect on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi., Nigeria. Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 5 % level of significance and the p-value (0.000) was lower than the significance level. This can be statistically given as $P\text{-value } 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. This result supports the findings by Tsvetanka (2010) who found that possession of good customer care skills triggers an individual to venture into entrepreneurship. According to him, clients expect to have undivided attention.

iii Examine the effect of interpersonal skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi

The analysis of the data collected from the respondents also revealed that there is significant positive effect of interpersonal skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, Nigeria. Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis at 5 % level of significance and the p-value (0.000) was lower than the significance level. This can be statistically given as $P\text{-value } 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$. The finding of this study agrees with finding from an earlier study Gakure, Ngugu, Waititu & Keraro (2013) which found that individuals with interpersonal skills are always scored high on entrepreneurial intent, stressing that interpersonal skills are critical in any business as they enable entrepreneurs to build great relationships with team, customers, suppliers, shareholders, investors, and more.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study examines the effect of entrepreneurial skills on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. In this study, the dimensions of entrepreneurial skills as it affects entrepreneurial intent were seen to include: managerial, customer care and interpersonal skills. Arising from the findings, the study concludes that entrepreneurial skills have significant effect on entrepreneurial intent of undergraduate students of University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The implication of this is that when student acquire managerial, customer care and interpersonal skills, they have higher intentions to go into entrepreneurial pursuits.

5.2 Recommendations

- i. Knowing that managerial skills has a direct effect on entrepreneurial intent of ungraduated students, the university council should make acquisition of managerial skills compulsory to students of all departments. This will ensure that the school will produce graduates who will be self-employed.
- ii. The study again recommends that undergraduate students and graduates alike should attach themselves where they can learn and acquire customer skills.
- iii. Finally, the study recommends that undergraduate students should be exposed to situations that will develop their interpersonal skills.

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