Potential for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria: Lessons from Students of Landmark University

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Abstract
The present article examines the possibility of entrepreneurship development from the perspectives of the budding students in a private university. The discourse is situated within the ambits of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Data were obtained through a survey of 250 students from various departments at Landmark University, Omu Aran, Kwara State, Nigeria. A multi-stage probability sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the sample size. The findings reveal overwhelming proportions of the respondents with talents and desire for entrepreneurship (87% versus 96.6%). Self-employment was the next plan of more than half of the respondents (56.1%). Based on the results of the hypotheses, possession of talent and desire for entrepreneurship was influenced by a number of factors such as ethnicity (R^2 = 0.031, F = 4.6, P = 0.034); possession of talent (R^2 = 0.804, F = 599.76, P = 0.001); desire for entrepreneurship (R^2 = 0.329, F = 71.55, P = 0.001); and desired highest level of education (R^2 = 0.032, F = 4.79, P = 0.03). It is concluded that some of the future entrepreneurs in Nigeria will be highly educated and innovative. In this case, there is need for recognition of self-help as a major strategy to maximize opportunity for the development of entrepreneurship in the midst of the adverse influence of globalization.

Keywords: competence, education, entrepreneurship, innovation, personal progress.

Introduction

The concept of entrepreneurships has been subjected to extensive research, but it remains a current area of interest. Entrepreneurship can be described as the process of establishing and managing a business enterprise. It is generally an act of recognizing opportunities, mobilizing resources to take advantage of the recognized opportunities, ensuring the provision of goods or services and obtaining profit for the risk involved in production (Akinwale, 2009). The popularity of entrepreneurship has been reinforced by the astronomical increase in the rate of unemployment in Nigeria where over 60 percent of the youths are unemployed (Babalola, 2007). Unfortunately, in spite of the growing interest in entrepreneurship, levels of innovation remain inadequate in Nigeria, like the situations in many developing countries (Palmer, 2009). The concept of innovation connotes a process of creating a positive change by transforming a new idea or method into improved products or services. In the words of Evenson and Westphal (1994), innovation attracts recognition and financial reward and it can lead to sustainable human development through productivity. Palmer's (2009) recognition of a shortage of the innovation needed for sustainable development in developing countries reflects the Nigerian experience of retrogression since her attainment of political independence in 1960.

The above description provides a basis for the present article, giving attention to the potential for innovation and entrepreneurship development from the perspectives of university students in Nigeria. The central problems which the present article probes are explained in the light of some interrogations. First, are students conscious or apathetic of innovation and entrepreneurship development? Second, what are the factors that can reinforce students' ability towards innovation and entrepreneurship development?

These questions have been examined through a survey of students in a private university in Nigeria. The choice of the university is based on its novelty and record of comprehensive programmes on entrepreneurship training across all disciplines in the university. It is essential to understand the nuances of innovation and its relevance to the development of entrepreneurship, which is usually based on human creativity. Creativity refers to the process of generating a novel idea for productive purposes. Some scholars define creativity as "a process of being sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements and disharmonies" (Van-Aardt *et al*., 2000: 18). In a way, a number of Nigerians have missed several opportunities for the development of their creativity and innovative abilities.

Review of Debates on the Concept of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The need for synergy between innovation and entrepreneurship has been established in the literature but practical experience sometimes dictates otherwise. For Okafor (2005: 19), "the entrepreneur is that special breed of small-scale enterprise owner who is able to grow the enterprise through innovativeness and creativity, risk-taking propensity, resilience, competitive aggressiveness, proactiveness, achievement motivation, and managerial ability." This description corresponds with the dominant discourse of entrepreneurship. After revisiting several reviews on the evolution of entrepreneurship, Kuratko and Hodgetts (1995: 29-30) posit that:

> Entrepreneurship is the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. This wealth is created by individuals who assume the major risks in terms of equity, time and/or career commitment of providing value for a product or service. The product or serve itself may or may not be new or unique but value must somehow be infused by the entrepreneur by securing and allocating the necessary skills and resources [...] Entrepreneurship has become synonymous or at least closely linked with free enterprise and capitalism. It is generally recognised that entrepreneurs serve as agent of change, provide creative, innovative ideas for business enterprise and help businesses grow and become profitable.

In furtherance to the above, they submit that the study of entrepreneurship is still emerging and a contemporary understanding of entrepreneurship requires a complete understanding of innovative behaviour in all forms. The centrality of innovation to entrepreneurship was confirmed in a recent report by Lagace (2009: 1):

> When people are laid off from jobs, they need re-training […] With firms scaling back and with the scarcity of capital for launching new ventures, this creates huge possibilities for an entrepreneur to identify the opportunities, get creative about assembling resources, and go after them with the knowledge that the potential for competitive advantage will be greater than in a boom period.

The above context shows the relevance of entrepreneurship, which remains relatively misunderstood despite its usage in the business context for over two centuries. In Banfe's (1991: 2) view, entrepreneurship involves "rethinking conventional paradigms, and discarding traditional ways of doing things", while Morris (2001) argues that early definitions of entrepreneurship encompassed risk and co-ordination of other factors of production such as land, labour and capital. Scholarly focus on the definition of entrepreneurship shifted to innovation since the early 20th century (Schumpeter, 1934).

After considering the loopholes in several definitions of entrepreneurship, many scholars have subscribed to Schumpeter's definition with modification and emphasis on creativity and innovation as its key elements (Van-Aardt, Van-Aardt & Bezuidenhout, 2000; Smilor & Sexton, 1996; Tropman & Morningstar, 1989). An earlier study by Kuratko and Hodgetts (1995) demonstrate that a willingness to tolerate failure and learn from it could result in innovation, a key feature of entrepreneurship. Innovation is always connected with creativity as demonstrated in the literature on the subject. Both creativity and innovation are fundamental steps in the development of entrepreneurship. Creativity is a process by which an individual generates a novel idea, while innovation is a process of change via different channels such as discovery, invention, dissemination and diffusion. Some scholars defined creativity as a process of being sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements and disharmonies (Van-Aardt *et al*, 2000: 18).

Creativity precedes innovation, which involves collaboration with others (Fuller, 1995; Rosenfeld and Servo, 1990). Creativity and innovation are relevant in most organizations because innovative

products depend on novel ideas. Innovation can enhance career development with its positive impact on productivity. Pinchot and Pinchot (1994: 64) note thus: "Creativity and innovation are fuelled by the intelligence of people who have the freedom and right to express their ideas". The above suggests a necessary condition for individual and collective survival in the globalization era. The Nigerian experience has been showing signs of urgent need for creativity and innovation since the colonial era but the attentions given to such signals have not yielded adequate results, as low technological capability remains a major disadvantage in Nigeria. Evenson and Westphal (1994) classify technological capability into three broad categories. The first is production capability, which includes various activities involved in production design, production management and engineering, repair cum maintenance, input sourcing and output marketing. The second is investment capability, which focuses on activities related to project selection, design cum engineering, execution and extension services and manpower training. The third is invention or innovative capability, which deals with indigenous efforts to adopt, adapt, improve, develop and innovate technology. Such efforts have been on board in Nigeria since the pre-colonial era, given the history of trading networks among different groups such as the Yoruba, the Igbo and the Hausa.

Most of the creative efforts of Nigerians were sidestepped following the establishment of schools and imposition of wage labour during the colonial era. This situation led to the abandonment of indigenous crafts and high rates of rural-urban migration, which resulted in expansion of the informal economy in cities. The Nigerian educational system was later modified to promote development through inculcation of theoretical knowledge in schools. The structure for creativity and innovation is not lacking in Nigeria but the creative and innovative abilities of many Nigerians have not been clearly supported with proactive policies. An examination of the general situation in Africa presented a woeful result of performance on innovation. In his reaction to the above situation, Okafor (2006: 17-18) opines that:

> The great majority of labour required for industrial development particular in developing countries is unskilled […] Many African countries have also imported technology extensively in the last three decades or so and yet nearly all of them have not succeeded in acquiring technological capability.

Traditional theories of industrial development place great emphasis on local availability of required natural resources. However, there is a growing feeling that availability of natural resources tends to stifle the development of capital good and production capability. In spite of the various challenges including adverse effects of globalisation and the state's neglect, which have hindered peoples' potential for creativity and innovation in Nigeria, some individuals can still strive to showcase their talents. Thus, an examination of individuals' strategies for creativity and innovation in the context of inadequate support could contribute towards expanding the frontiers of knowledge on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Theoretical Orientation on Potential for Innovation

The central issues addressed in the present article reflect the main themes of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The TPB shows the relevance of intention in the analysis of human behaviour. The TPB is sensitive to culture and social conditions in the explanation of factors influencing human behaviour. In his explanation of the TPB, Ajzen (1991) suggests that intentions are often the best indicators of behaviour. In support of the TPB, Volkema and Bergmann (1995: 6) note that "intentions alone are sufficient to predict actions when an individual has control over behavioural performance". The TPB provides a model that guides human action and predicts the occurrence of a specific intentional behaviour. The model comprises three variables, which the theory suggests will predict the intention to perform behaviour. The variables are: attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. These variables are specially constructed within the theory to explain the modalities for a change in behaviour. It is specified that the target behaviour should be defined carefully in terms of its Target, Action, Context and Time (TACT). Francis et al (2004: 7) summarise the TPB thus:

> To predict whether a person intends to do something, we need to know […] Whether the person is in favour of doing it ('**attitude**') […] How much the person feels social pressure to do it ('**subjective norm**') […] Whether the person feels in control of the action in question ('**perceived behavioural control**'). By changing these three 'predictors', we can increase the chance that the person will intend to do a desired action and thus increase the chance of the person actually doing it.

Although the relationship between behavioural intention and actual behaviour may not be perfect, intention can be used as a proximal measure of behaviour. An attitude toward behaviour is a person's overall evaluation of the behaviour. The attitude is assumed to have two interrelated components: beliefs about consequences of the behaviour and the corresponding positive or negative judgement about the consequences of the behaviour. Subjective norms are a person's own estimate of the social pressure to perform or not perform the target behaviour. Subjective norms are assumed to have two components which work in interaction: beliefs about how other people, who may be in some way important to the person, would like them to behave. The perceived behavioural control of the behaviour is the extent to which a person feels able to enact the behaviour. It has two aspects: how much a person has control over the behaviour and how confident a person feels about being able to perform or not perform the behaviour. It is determined by control beliefs about the power of both situational and internal factors to inhibit or facilitate the performing of the behaviour (Francis *et al*, 2004).

The above postulation, showing various concepts including intentions, subjective norms, and perception of behavioural control, lends credence to the suitability of the TPB for an analysis of potential for innovation and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria from the perspectives of the budding students in a private university.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The present article is based on a combination of primary and secondary data. With the structured questionnaire, the primary data was collected in April 2012 and the process of its analysis lasted for four months (May to August 2012. The next paragraphs show further details of the methods adopted during the collection of the primary data for the present article. All the students of Landmark University are encouraged to devote attention to entrepreneurship development. Each student is made to undergo entrepreneurship education for at least eight semesters during the duration of their programmes in the university. From the university's record of 1,711 students including 953 pioneer students and 758 students who matriculated in the 2011/2012 academic session, a total of 250 students were systematically selected to participate in the study due to inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The sampling frame comprised all the 631 students who were admitted without any offer of scholarship in the 2011/2012 academic session. This category of students constitutes a group with proven interest in the university. Thus, the eligible students were found in two colleges out of the three colleges in the University. Out of the two eligible colleges, one college was scientifically selected and it turned out to be the College of Business and Social Sciences. Then, a list of students from all the departments in the college was obtained and a total of 250 students were systematically selected. All the pioneer students were however excluded from participation in the study in order to reduce sampling error in relation to the subject matter under investigation. This is because most of the pioneer students were offered scholarship, which could have been the primary motivation for their interest and enrolment in the university. All the 127 students who matriculated for various programmes in the College of Agricultural Science in the 2011/2012 academic session were also excluded due to their acceptance of scholarship, being the primary motivation for their enrolment in the university.

The systematic selection of 250 students, representing the sample size adopted for the study aligns with existing models on the determination of sample size. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) observe that a sample size of 380 is adequate for a population of 35,000 to 40,000. This reinforces the fact that a sample size of 250 is adequate for representation of the entire students of Landmark University. Similarly, Guilford and Flruchter's (1973) formula for estimating sample size is given thus: Sample Size = $N / 1 + \boldsymbol{\alpha}^2 N$, Where: **N** = size of population; and $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$ = alpha (0.05). Also some scholars maintain that a sample size that is not less than 10 percent of the study population is a good representative of the population (Owojori, 2002; Peretomode, 1992).

Two hundred and fifty copies of a structured questionnaire were directly distributed to the same number of respondents. However, a total of two hundred copies were filled and returned but some of these were incompletely answered, and only 148 copies were usable, yielding a response rate of 59.2 percent. The exclusion of the incompletely answered questionnaire from the analysis is appropriate, considering scholarly advice that questionnaires which are less than 25 percent completed should be eliminated from further data processing (Sekaran, 2003). The response rate recorded during the

collection of the primary data used for the present article is acceptable within the ambit of Sekaran's (2005) rule of thumb, which indicates that a sample size from 30 to 500 is appropriate for most research.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the statistical distributions of the respondents' personal socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, income (pocket money) and course of study. The female respondents outnumbered their male counterparts (61.5% versus 38.5%). This finding could be attributed to the gender ratio in the Nigerian private universities where there is a record of higher frequency of admission of female students compared to their male counterparts. The majority of the respondents (92.6%) were in the age bracket of 16 – 20 years. This finding gives an impression that many of the respondents are teenagers, while a few are adults in their youthful age. Regarding the estimates of their income (pocket money) per month, the female respondents differed significantly from their male counterparts with an indication of a relatively higher rate of cash flow at the disposal of the male students. The respondents with monthly income of ₦ 0 – N19,999 constitute 52 percent including 60.4 percent for female respondents and 38.6 percent for the male respondents. The above sum of money was followed by ₦20,000 – N39,999 recorded by 39.9 percent of the respondents including a record of 34.1 percent for female respondents and 49.1 percent for male respondents. An almost equal proportion of the respondents identified with various disciplines in the areas of business and social sciences, respectively. A total of 56.1 percent of the respondents identified with business-oriented disciplines such as Accounting, Banking and Finance, and Marketing, while 43.9 percent selected social science disciplines such as Economics, International Relations, Political Science and Sociology.

Table1: The Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Gender Identity						
Male	57	100	0	0	57	38.5
Female	0	0	91	100	91	61.5
Total	**57**	**100**	**91**	**100**	**148**	**100**
Age Group (Years)						
16 – 20	51	89.5	86	94.5	137	92.6
21 – 25	6	10.5	5	5.5	11	7.4
Total	**57**	**100**	**91**	**100**	**148**	**100**
Monthly Income (Pocket Money)						
₦ 0 – ₦19999	22	38.6	55	60.4	77	52
₦ 20000 – ₦39999	28	49.1	31	34.1	59	39.9
₦ 40000 and Above	7	12.3	5	5.5	12	8.1
Total	**57**	**100**	**91**	**100**	**148**	**100**
Course of Study						
ACC/BFN/MKT	30	52.6	53	58.2	83	56.1
ECO/IRL/POL/SOC	27	47.4	38	41.8	65	43.9
Total	**57**	**100**	**91**	**100**	**148**	**100**

The Respondents' Potentials for Innovation

Table 2 shows the statistical distributions of the respondents' potential for innovation. The key issues addressed in the table include identification of talents, specification of the type of talents and recognition of the ultimate goal in life. Over 87 percent of the respondents noted that they possessed one form of talents or another. The scope of their talents showed a wide range of activities including singing, music, drama, writing, dancing, drama and art. Their areas of talent were classified into three main categories such as mental, manual and mixed depending on the level of involvement of critical thinking and practical demonstration in each talent. The above mentioned classification produced various types of talents such as mental talent, which was recorded for 41.9 percent of the respondents, manual talent, which became prominent among 46.5 percent of the respondents and mixed talent identified with some respondents (11.5 %). This finding suggests that a lot of the respondents had developed interest in activities that are distinct from their course of study in the university. This situation could promote or hinder the development of

entrepreneurship depending on their competence and qualifications at the end of their university education.

Besides the information obtained on their talent, the respondents were equally asked to indicate their ultimate goal in life. As shown in their responses, the highest percentage (43.3%) expressed their ultimate desire to be successful, while 18.4 percent indicated their ultimate interest in professionalism. Some of them (14.9%) also noted that they wanted to be great in life and the remaining few expressed interest in either becoming leaders or making heaven (12.1% versus 11.3%). It is clear that none of the respondents wanted to be a failure but it is not clear if they have been well equipped to follow the career trajectories that would enable them to realize their ultimate goals in life.

Table 2: The Respondents' Potential for Innovation

Potential for Innovation	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female		Frequency	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Possession of Talent						
Yes	47	82.5	82	90.1	129	87.2
No	10	17.5	9	9.9	19	12.8
Total	**57**	**100**	**91**	**100**	**148**	**100**
Type of Talent						
Mental	16	34	38	46.3	54	41.9
Manual	28	59.6	32	39	60	46.5
Mixed	3	6.4	12	14.6	15	11.6
Total	**47**	**100**	**82**	**100**	**129**	**100**
Ultimate Goal in Life						
To be great	8	14.5	13	15.1	21	14.9
To be a professional	8	14.5	18	20.9	26	18.4
To be a leader	12	21.8	5	5.8	17	12.1
To be successful	21	38.2	40	46.5	61	43.3
To make heaven/ up to God	6	10.9	10	11.6	16	11.3
Total	**55**	**100**	**86**	**100**	**141**	**100**

The Respondents' Potential for Entrepreneurship Development

As shown in Table 3, the respondents expressed their opinions on a number of issues associated with entrepreneurship. The issues of interest include the following: the desired highest level of education, next decision after the desired highest level of education, and willingness to participate in entrepreneurship development. Surprisingly, most of the respondents (75 %) expressed their desire for doctorate degrees, although they were just at the beginning of their university education. This shows their knowledge of the zenith of the university education. Some of the respondents (20.3%) also disclosed their intention to pursue master's degrees after the completion of their undergraduate education. This finding suggests that putting a final stop on one's level of educational qualification at first degree is no longer fashionable. Nigerian universities have recorded phenomenal increases in the number of applications for admission to their postgraduate programmes.

Self-employment received utmost (56.1%) attention in the respondents' expression of the next plan after their desired highest educational qualifications, although some of them (33.8%) noted that they would opt for jobs in order to become employees in the private or public sector. Low recognition was also given to marriage as only very few (10.1%) indicated interest in getting married immediately after the accomplishment of their desired highest educational qualifications. A close observation of the above findings clearly indicates the respondents' expression of future interest in doctorate degrees and self-employment, thereby debunking the notion that self-employment is meant for only dropouts. Moreover, the finding on whether or not the respondents would like to become entrepreneurs also showed an overwhelming affirmation at 96.6 percent response rate.

Table 3: The Respondents' Potentials for Entrepreneurship Development

Potential for Entrepreneurship Development	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female		Frequency	%
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%		
Desired Level of Education						
BSc	3	5.3	4	4.4	7	4.7
MSc	12	12.1	18	19.8	30	20.3
Ph.D.	42	73.7	69	75.8	111	75
Total	**57**	**100**	**91**	**100**	**148**	**100**
Next Plan After Desired Education						
Look for a Job	15	26.3	35	38.5	50	33.8
Get Married	3	5.3	12	13.2	15	10.1
Self-employment	39	68.4	44	48.4	83	56.1
Total	**57**	**100**	**91**	**100**	**148**	**100**
Intention to Be An Entrepreneur						
Yes	54	94.7	89	97.8	143	96.6
No	3	5.3	2	2.2	5	3.4
Total	**57**	**100**	**91**	**100**	**148**	**100**

Confirmation of Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were tested and partly supported. The alternative versions of the hypotheses are presented as follows:

1. Possession of talent has a significant association with personal characteristics such as gender, age, course of study and income (pocket money)
2. Desire for entrepreneurship has a significant association with personal characteristics such as gender, age, course of study and income (pocket money)

The results of the above hypotheses are shown in Tables 4 and 5. As shown in Table 4, possession of talent significantly associated with level of income measured in terms of the sum of pocket money available to the respondents ($F = 2.14$, $P = 0.04$). Surprisingly, there was no significant association between possession of talent and other personal characteristics such as gender, age and course of study ($P > 0.05$). Regarding the second hypothesis, which focuses on the extent of significant association between desire for entrepreneurship and personal characteristics, there was no significant association between desire for entrepreneurship and personal characteristics such as gender, age, income (pocket money) and course of study ($P > 0.05$).

Table 4: The Analysis of Variance of the Respondents' Possession of Talent, Desire for Entrepreneurship and Next Plan with Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics	Talent		Entrepreneurship		Next Plan	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Sex	1.01	0.32	1.83	0.18	4.35	0.04 *
Age	0.75	0.63	0.86	0.54	0.78	0.63
Course of Study	0.32	0.86	0.03	0.87	0.65	0.42
Income (Pocket Money)	2.34	0.04 *	0.88	0.5	1.62	0.16

* Significant at $P < 0.05$

The results of ANOVA equally show that the respondents' possession of talent and desire for entrepreneurship had a significant variation with expression of talent ($SS = 1.180$, $MS = 0.008$, $F = 599.76$, $P = 0.01$) and with desire for entrepreneurship ($SS = 4.045$, $MS = 0.028$, $F = 71.55$, $P = 0.01$). The role of talent is significant since expression of talent was highest (97.7%) among the respondents (129) who indicated their talent and desire for entrepreneurship. However, all the respondents with a record of no talent (19) expressed no desire for entrepreneurship.

Table 5: The Analysis of Variance of the Respondents' Possession of Talent and Desire for Entrepreneurship with a Diversity of Factors

Diverse Factors	Merger of Talent and Desire for Entrepreneurship			
	SS	MS	F	Sig.
Possession of Talent	1.180	0.008	599.76	0.001
Desire for Entrepreneurship	4.045	0.028	71.55	0.001
Desired Highest Level of Education	5.802	0.04	2.82	0.63

The desire for entrepreneurship also has a significant association with the combination of expression of talent and desire for entrepreneurship. All the respondents with apathy for entrepreneurship failed to show their expression of talent, whereas those who showed their expression of talent mostly indicated their desire for entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

The potential for innovation and entrepreneurship development in Nigeria has been examined in the present article, giving attention to the perspectives of budding students in a private university known for its emphasis on the need for revolution to transform Nigeria and other African countries from decadence to decency and prosperity. Their potential for innovation and entrepreneurship development was examined from various perspectives including possession of talent, type of talent, desired highest level of educational qualifications, desire for entrepreneurship and next plan after the completion of their university education. A number of private university students have been able to reflect on their musical and artistic talents, while some remain conscious of their linguistic and writing prowess. The findings presented in the present article generally show the possibility of a brighter prospect for the Nigerian youths who can combine their talents with acquisition of university education to the highest levels. The major lesson from the present article is based on the fact that some private university students in Nigeria have developed consciousness for innovation with recognition of entrepreneurship development as a necessary condition for social progress and economic recovery. It can be concluded that some of the future entrepreneurs in Nigeria will be highly educated and innovative. From this conclusion, it can be projected that continued pursuit of university education to higher levels with development of personal talents along different occupational lines would improve the fit between innovation and entrepreneurship, and this will also create ample opportunities for wealth creation and employment generation through self-employment and decent forms of gainful employment. Therefore it is recommended that individuals should strive to jettison all forms of encumbrances and forge ahead to claim ownership of their talents for immediate and future progress.

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