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**An Assessment of Factors Influencing Students' Attitude towards Entrepreneurship  
Education in Nigerian Universities**

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**Abstract**

*This study assessed factors influencing students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. The population of the study were all undergraduate students of Nigerian universities, while the target population were students from five selected universities in north east. Multi- stage sampling was employed to carry out the study. Purposive sampling was used to select five universities. Simple random sampling (proportionally) was used in selecting four faculties and respondents. The sample size was 400. Both primary and secondary data was used. Structured questionnaire was used bearing four point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agreed to strongly disagree. Similarly, secondary sources were also utilized. 400 questionnaire were administered but only 375 were retrieved. In the analysis of data, SPSS version 16, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation were used. The correlation results that there is positive relationship between factors influencing attitude and students' entrepreneurial attitude.*

**Keywords:** entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship education, attitude, factors influencing attitude, students

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship is the cornerstone for every nation's economic growth and development. A nation with qualitative and committed entrepreneurs will experience rapid economic growth and development through effective utilization of human and material resources, innovation, creativity and initiative. Quality and commitment of entrepreneurs can be achieved when the potential and practicing entrepreneurs are having favourable attitude towards Entrepreneurship and its Education. This is because attitude plays a very important role in shaping the behaviour of entrepreneurs. Therefore, this study assessed the factors that influence students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study is to examine the influence of the following factors on students' entrepreneurial attitude: Personality, Family, Reference group, Peer group, Social class status, Culture, Class climate, Role model and Internship training.

### **Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: factors influencing attitude have no significant influence on students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education.

H<sub>1</sub>: factors influencing attitude have significant influence on students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Concept of Entrepreneurship Education**

Entrepreneurship and the education of the entrepreneurs are the life sources of any economies. The reason for this fact is the entrepreneurs' position as the corner stone within the economic system. Entrepreneurship Education focuses on developing understanding of Entrepreneurs behaviour, skills and attributes in widely different context (Akponi, 2009). Entrepreneurship Education has been described as a scholarly field that seeks to understand how opportunities to bring into existence future goods and services are discovered, created and exploited, by whom, and with what consequences (Venkatraman, 1997). It is concerned with the creation and recognition of opportunities, as well as the pursuit of those opportunities by turning them into wealth creating businesses during a limited window of time (Sexton, 1997; Smilor, 1997). According to Postigo & Tomoborni (2002) Entrepreneurship Education develops and stimulates Entrepreneurial process, providing all tools necessary for starting up new venture.

### **Entrepreneurial Attitude**

Simpson and Oliver (1990) defined attitude as emotional trends in response to affairs, persons, locations, events or ideas. According to them the phrase such as "I like Entrepreneurship Education" or "I enjoy Entrepreneurship Education course" is enumerate as attitude. An attitude is a tendency to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli. Here stimuli may be object, individual, idea or anything else that an individual can react negatively or positively to it.

Cambell (1986) defines an individual's attitude as an enduring "syndrome of response consistency with regard to a set of social objects". Katz (2003) sees attitude as "the

predisposition of an individual to evaluate some symbols or objects or aspect of his world in a favourable or unfavourable manner. Katz (2003) cites two streams of thought regarding man's attitude: one which minimizes individual/student's rational powers and the other which invokes a rational model of man. Katz, who clearly asserts that at the psychological level the reasons for holding onto or for changing attitude is found in the functions they perform for the individuals. The functions are those of adjustment, ego defence, value expression and knowledge.

Therefore, there is strong ascertaining that attitude plays very important role in determining the learning behaviours of students in schools. This called for continued effort by the researchers/teachers to make sure that students develop positive attitude and behaviour towards Entrepreneurship Education.

According to Katz as cited in Krouscas (1999), attitude serve individual/ students in four ways: it guides behaviour towards valued goals and away from aversive events, it helps to manage and simplify information, it allows individuals/students to communicate information about their personality and values and; it protects individual/students from unacceptable or threatening thoughts, urges, and desire.

### **Factors Influencing Students' Attitude towards Entrepreneurship Education**

There are many factors that can influence attitude of students towards Entrepreneurship Education. According to Talton and Simpton (1985) as cited in Soltani and Nasir (2010) and Osborne et al (2003) it include: personality development, family background, reference group, peer group, social class, culture, class climate, Role model and internship training. Matlay (2006) pointed out that the factors mentioned above can affect student's entrepreneurial attitude, motivation and career aspirations in positive or negative way.

**Personality Development:** it refers to the change in individual's intelligence, language and relationship with other people; change in emotion and in personality. In other words is the pattern of movement or change that occurs throughout the life span of an individual as he/she lives in society. The changes that keep on occurring may influence the attitude of students/individuals in many ways. Rahman et al (2013) found that personality have positive relationship with entrepreneurial attitude of individual/student. In a related study, Chen (1998) states that a number of entrepreneurial friends, relatives and entrepreneurship education course (s) positively is related to development of entrepreneurial personality. According to Crant (1993), personality is positively related with entrepreneurial attitude. In the research findings of Mathur and Amamika (1984) revealed that personal factors such as achievement, initiative, independence, risk taking, hard work and self confidence have positive relationship with entrepreneurial attitude and desire to become entrepreneurs.

**Family Environment:** Family is a group of people living together and functioning as a single household, usually consisting of parents and their children. An empirical research finding of Collins and Moore (1970), Cooper and Dunkeberg, (1984) found that individuals/students who have family Member (s) who are entrepreneurs tend to be more likely to develop on entrepreneurial behaviour, form entrepreneurial intention and more likely to start their own business than those who have not experience the same level of entrepreneurial exposure. Therefore, the family will be willing to give all support needed by their family member (s) to actualize his/her entrepreneurial intention. Shapero (1982)

examines the family; he states that particularly the father or mother plays the most powerful role in establishing the desirability and credibility of the entrepreneurial action for an individual. According Bowen and Hisrich (1986) entrepreneurial parent positively influence entrepreneurial career intentions of their children. Similarly, they tend to lower barriers to entrepreneurial entry that exist for young generation. Similarly, according to Crant (1996) found that being raised in an entrepreneurial family impacts positively on individuals/students' attitude and intention to start their own business. The literature on family background evidences a positive relationship between the presence of role models in the family and the emergence of entrepreneurs.

**Reference Group:** This refers to group that an individual is using as a guide for behaviour in a specific situation. As an individual grow up older, the influence of parents wares and they are replaced by reference group as major influence on attitude.

Reference group may influence an individual attitude and behaviour. According research finding of Taylor and Thorpe (2004) found that an individual's net work act as information resource that can influence decision making throughout entrepreneurial process.

**Peer Group:** Peer group are individuals of about the same age or maturity level. Peers relation influences individual entrepreneurial attitude. The influence may be negative or positive. In a related research findings, (Nanda and Sorensen, 2006: Sergeant and Crawford, 2001: Djankov et al, 2004) reported that peers influence one's attitude toward becoming an entrepreneur.

**Social class:** Social class system refers to the hierarchical division of a society into relatively permanent and homogenous groups with respect to attitudes, values, and lifestyles. It also refers to the difference between people in their social standing. According to Hawkins (1983) because individuals with different social standing are likely to live their lives differently, social class system can be seen as a hierarchical division of a society into relatively distinct and homogenous group with respect to attitude.

**Culture:** This is a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society. Culture set behaviour for its members. According Kotler (2000) culture may be acquired from an individual's social and cultural environment. Culture influence individual's behaviour in terms of what the individual think, feels, and belief that is accepted by the members of his/her society. In the same way, the larger the number and variety of entrepreneurs in a particular culture, the greater the probability that the individuals in that culture will form companies (Veciana, 1988).

**Role Model:** According to peters and shepherd (2005), role models are individuals that are influencing an entrepreneurs' career choice or styles. In the words of Keat (2011) Postigo et al (2006) and Rajkonwar (2006), role models have vital influence on individuals in determining entrepreneurial careers as they would provide the useful business-related information, guidance, moral supports and training for socialization The students perceive the role models as credible sources of business information and may likely to imitate and relate with them (Bygrave, 2004). Similarly, in a research conducted by Birley and Westhead (1994) indicated that having role models significantly impact on

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individual's/student's attitude and intention to start their own business. A study by Hussein et al (2011) indicated that students contact with the practicing Entrepreneurs is one of the effective and efficient methods of teaching Entrepreneurship Education with 10.18% freedman test number and was ranked the second in priority. They further added that this method has helped in increasing the level of students' attitude toward Entrepreneurship Education.

**Class Climate:** It is the prevailing condition in the class room. From experience, the climatic condition in Entrepreneurship Education lecture is not favourable. The problems are divided into two broad categories: Physical and non physical climate. The physical problems associated with this are: overcrowded class, lack of enough ventilation, problem of lightening, problems associated with means of communication and so on. While on the other hand non physical problems refers to lack of attention from the students, negative attitude of students, perceiving the course as not important and so on. According to Banu (1984) the class room in which there are positive collection of attitude to a course (Entrepreneurship Education) is associated with the following characteristics; students regard the course as important, they tend to feel they have a chance to succeed in the class and thereafter, the teacher is perceived as being effective from a number of stand points, namely: fairness, precise, reinforcement, commitment to helping students to learn, showing enthusiasm, providing individual attention and gaining students respect, there is friendly atmosphere in the class and physical aspect of the class room are attractive and instruction is goal directed and well organized.

### Methodology

The study was carried out in North East geo-political zone of Nigeria. Survey research method was used. Purposive sampling was used in selecting five universities. Simple random sampling (proportionally) was used in selecting four faculties, and respondents. Structured questionnaire and Likert scale was used (4 point scale). 400 questionnaires were administered and 375 were retrieved. SPSS version 16 and correlation were used in the analysis of the data.

### Analysis

Factors	Agreed		Disagreed	
	Freq.	%	Freq	%
Personality	306	81.60	69	18.40
Family	286	76.30	89	23.70
Peer group	250	66.70	125	33.30
Ref. group	191	50.90	184	49.10
Social Class	186	49.60	189	50.40
Culture	258	68.80	117	30.20
Class Climate	240	64.00	135	36.00
Role Model	283	75.50	92	24.50
Internship	304	81.10	71	18.90
<b>Mean</b>		<b>68.26</b>		<b>31.74</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2013

From table 1 the respondents indicated their responses on how these factors are affecting or influencing their attitude towards entrepreneurship education. The respondents agreed



### Discussion of Findings

**Personality Development:** According to the Pearson correlation analysis, personality has significant influence on students' entrepreneurial attitude with 0.361. That means there is influence of personality on attitude. This has agreed with the findings of Bandura (1986), Perjures (1997) and Anderson (2000), that personality act as one of the determinants of entrepreneurial attitude. Particularly they emphasized that entrepreneurship education teachers should design a programme that will help the students to achieve change through by providing them with the appropriate entrepreneurial skills, knowledge, and training needed for initiating, establishing, managing and sustaining businesses. Findings of Chen (1998) indicated that a number of entrepreneurial friends, relatives and entrepreneurship education positively are related to the development of entrepreneurial personality.

On the other hand, the personality traits of an individual inform him of being capable and having the ability and strength to execute entrepreneurial activities (Bandura, 1997). Sing and DeNoble (2003) found that personality have positive relationship with entrepreneurial attitude.

**Family Environment:** The correlation results indicated that the relationship between family and attitude is statistically significant at 0.304. This have agreed with the findings of Collins and Moore (1970), Verella (2011), Cooper Dunkeberg (1984), that students who have family members(s) who are entrepreneurs tend to be more likely to develop entrepreneurial behaviour. This also has agreed with the findings of Shapero and Sokol (1982), where they stated that family influence students' entrepreneurial attitude particularly the father or the mother. Similarly, this has concurred with the findings of Hisrich (1986) that parents positively influence entrepreneurial attitude and career intention of their children and lower barriers for entrepreneurial entry. Mathew and Moser (1995) asserted that family background is positively related to attitude and that has agreed with this research findings. However, the result of this research has disagreed with the findings of Kolveried (1996), where his finding shows that the correlation between family and entrepreneurial attitude is statistically not significant.

**Reference Group:** The results of this research indicated strong positive correlation between reference groups on entrepreneurial attitude (0.233). This has agreed with the findings of Taylor and Thorpe (2004), that students' network of reference group assert influence on their entrepreneurial attitude.

**Peer Group:** The correlation coefficient is 0.151, interpreted as having significant relationship between peer group and entrepreneurial attitude of students. This has concurred with the findings of Nanda and Sorenson (2006), Sergent and Crawford (2001) and Djankov et al (2004). It showed that peer influence one's entrepreneurial attitude to become entrepreneur.

**Social Class Status:** The correlation result indicated that social class influence students' entrepreneurial attitude with 0.278, indicating strong relation between the two variables.

**Culture:** The correlation coefficient is 0.220 which is significant. This has agreed with the findings of Veciana (1988), that the larger the number and variety of entrepreneurs in a particular culture, the greater the probability that the students in that culture will become entrepreneurs.

**Class Climate:** The result indicated correlation coefficient of 0.214, which is significant. This has agreed with the findings of Banu (1984) which found that class climate has significant influence on students' entrepreneurial attitude. Therefore this indicate that class climate such as number of students in class, cross ventilation of air, lightening, and communication aid may help in influencing the class climate which will in turn influence attitude.

**Role Model:** The result of correlation between role model and entrepreneurial attitude is significant with coefficient of 0.268. This agreed with the findings of Peters and Shepherd (2005), that role models influence students' attitude. The findings of Keat (2011), Postigo et al (2006), Rajkonwar (2006) and Bygrave (2004) also concurred with this findings, where role model have vital influence on students in determining their entrepreneurial latitude as they supply them with useful business related information, guidance, moral support and training. The findings of Birley and Westhead (1994) indicated that having role models is significantly impact on students' attitude and intention to start their own businesses. In another findings of Hussein et al (2011) indicate that contact with practicing entrepreneurs increases the level of students attitude towards becoming an entrepreneur.

**Internship Training:** The result of correlation between role model and entrepreneurial attitude is significant with coefficient of 0.193 this has agreed with the findings of Neil and Mulholland (2003) indicated positive relationship between internship training and students entrepreneurial attitude. Raymond and McNabb (1993) concluded that internship training has grate impact on students to have high interest in entrepreneurship and its education. It means internship training is helping the students to develop positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, consequently it will affect positively the attitude of students towards entrepreneurship education.

### **Conclusion**

This study evaluated factors influencing students' attitude towards entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities. These factors include Personality, Family, Reference group, Peer group, Social class status, Culture, Class climate, Role model and Internship training. The results indicated that all factors under consideration have influence on students' entrepreneurial attitude. Therefore, teachers, authorities, policy makers and families should intensify the use of these factors in order to create favourable influence of these factors on students' entrepreneurial attitude, which may lead to development of positive attitude towards entrepreneurship education in Nigerian universities.

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