



Mentorship and Motivation as Determinants of Student Entrepreneurial Intention among Male Undergraduates in Selected Universities, in Ogun State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of mentorship and motivation on entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in selected universities in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research design, utilizing structured questionnaires administered to 313 male students selected through random sampling technique across three universities: the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye; and Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression models. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between mentorship and entrepreneurial intention ($r = 0.654$, $p < 0.05$). Mentorship provided by lecturers and entrepreneurial role models positively influenced students' confidence and willingness to start businesses. Similarly, motivation—both intrinsic and extrinsic—was found to significantly predict entrepreneurial intentions ($\beta = 0.572$, $t = 12.480$, $p < 0.05$). The joint effect of mentorship and motivation on entrepreneurial intention was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.576$, $F = 208.291$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that 57.6% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention can be explained by these two factors. It was concluded that effective mentorship and motivation are critical to enhancing students' entrepreneurial intentions. It recommends that tertiary institutions strengthen their mentorship programs and provide more opportunities for entrepreneurial training.

Keywords: Mentorship, Motivation, Entrepreneurial Intention, Male Undergraduates

Introduction

Through education and training, entrepreneurial intention is encouraged which plays vital role in a nation's development as it fosters innovation, job creation and economic growth. Entrepreneurship, as a subject of academic inquiry, has increased due to the association that exist between entrepreneurial action and economic development (Hassan et al., 2021). New businesses engage significantly in innovative activities, such that the role of innovative entrepreneurship has become a means of diffusion mechanism linking the creation of knowledge and economic growth. Due to this, entrepreneurial intention has got immense recognition for contributing to employment creation, self-sufficiency, social and economic welfare for a country.

According to Shahzad et al. (2017) entrepreneurial intentions (EI) is defined as a conscious awareness and conviction by an individual with the intent to set up a new business venture and plans to do so in the future. Emphasis on entrepreneurial intention has evidenced that the nature and the role of entrepreneurs are indispensable for sustainable economic growth and the development of business (Al-Suraihi et al., 2023). However, despite its importance, entrepreneurial intention remains a complex and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by a wide range of personal, social, and environmental factors. Entrepreneurship has been identified as critical tool for economic development and growth. During decades ago, graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria did not find it difficult to secure white collar jobs for wages and salaries because there was abundance of employment. In contemporary times the situation has been different, rather than abundance of jobs, there have been dearth of employment opportunities against the rising population of job seekers. The contribution of youth entrepreneurs is important in this drive and their marginalization could close the doors of development (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2021). The purpose of creating innovative businesses through entrepreneurship process in the world, principally in emerging economies, is to promote entrepreneurial activities as means of stimulating the economy and a way of coping with unemployment challenges that characterize them. The employment crisis in Nigeria is the result of the cumulative inability to achieve an effective connection between employer expectations and perceptions from the graduates.

Entrepreneurial intention has been recognized as one of the necessary conditions for economic development. Many developing countries have evolved policies to support people at different levels to embark on entrepreneurship (Shahzad et al., 2017). Entrepreneurial activities create further business opportunities for exploitation in the economy. In other words, entrepreneurship breeds more entrepreneurial activities. The unemployment rate in Nigeria as at 2024, was 4.3 %, suggesting that Nigeria is still experiencing cost of living crisis. This has created a source of concern by the government and policy makers on how to reverse the trend and its negative implications in the country (Asuquo 2016). This is an indication that the number of available vacancies

or openings do not correspond with the number of graduates, the record of unemployment in Nigeria as at 2024 is 4.9 percent by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, which is still low to compare with graduates every year (Asuquo, 2016). Therefore, the competition for job in the labor market has become intense that employment is no longer secured on equal opportunity basis. Many college graduates prefer to work as employees in businesses or as government employees, due to lack of confidence in their skills and capital, only a few of them consider creating self-employment jobs or become entrepreneurs, based on the discussion, there are some key variables that determine entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates, which are mentorship and motivation.

Mentorship can exert social influence on individuals' intentions to become entrepreneurs. Laviolette et al. (2012) studies concluded that mentorship positively affected entrepreneurial intentions via improving energy provided to arouse positive emotions and that students can identify with this mentorship. Likewise, Feltnhofer (2017) indicates that mentorship increase perceived behavioral control via strengthening self-confidence. It can therefore be argued that mentorship can also influence entrepreneurial intentions, hence, reduce unemployment levels by increasing entrepreneurial activity. A mentor is a person who influences, who has specific attributes to impact, authority to influence positively and also who compassionately watches over a younger person so they might benefit from their support and counsel. They help mentees to develop self-awareness by providing vicarious experiences as positive examples, allowing them to evaluate and enhance their entrepreneurial and business competencies through social comparison and imitation.

Motivation is another key variable that necessitated numerous interventions, particularly at the organizational and managerial levels, while growing psychological states was partially dependent on the individual employee, as an experienced role for the outcomes and understanding of work results were also dependent on task complexity, layout, and managerial behaviors. motivation helps student to become more resilient in dealing with the challenges during the start-up process Nabi et al. (2018) and hence facilitate entrepreneurial intention. Motivation can be crucial to succeed in the teaching and learning process. Motivation is regarded as "the inner state that energizes activities and directs or channels behavior towards the goal". Motivation is the process that arouses action, sustains the activity in progress and that regulates the pattern of activity.

Objectives of study

The objectives are to:

1. establish the presence of mentorship relationships between male undergraduates and their lecturers in Ogun State universities,
2. identify the most commonly used mentorship styles among male undergraduates and their lecturers in Universities, Ogun State,
3. examine the relationship between mentorship and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun state,
4. determine the relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State, and
5. examine the joint relationship among motivation, mentorship and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State.

Research Question

1. Is there a mentorship relationship between male undergraduates and their lecturers in the selected Universities in Ogun State?
2. What are the most common mentorship styles available to male undergraduates in Ogun State?

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between mentorship and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State.

H₀₂ There is no significant relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State.

H₀₃ There is no significant joint relationship among mentorship, motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State

Methodology

Descriptive research design was adopted in this study. It is considered appropriate because descriptive research describes a phenomenon and its characteristics, rather than how or why something happened. It is a systematic, empirical inquiry into which the researcher does not have control over the variables as their manifestations have already occurred or because they are reflecting the state of occurrences. This is in line with the purpose of the study.

Population and Sample

The target population of this study "Mentorship and motivation as determinants of student entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in selected Universities in Ogun State, includes all male undergraduates in the three selected Universities in Ogun State which are, Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (11,000), Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye (8,643), and Babcock University Ilishan Remo (4,500), totaling 24,143 male students. Simple random sampling techniques was used to select the actual sample for the study, which constituted 393 male students, 179 from Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, 141 from Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye and 73 from Babcock University Ilishan, respectively.

Instrumentation

The instrument that was employed in this study by the researcher was a structured questionnaire, which was used for data collection.

Data Analysis

A total of 393 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 387 valid questionnaires were successfully returned, representing a 98.5% response rate. This high response rate suggests a strong level of participation and interest among respondents, making the findings reliable and representative.

Results

4.1. Demographic Presentation

Table.1: Frequency Distribution of Participant's Demographic Data

S/No.	Variable	Category N=387	Frequency	Percentage
3.	Age	15-20	230	59.4
		21 – 25	130	33.6
		26-30	27	7.0
		Total	387	100.0
4.	Institution	Babcock	73	18.9
		FUNAAB	175	45.2
		OOU	139	35.9
		Total	387	100.0
	Level	100	67	17.3
		200	101	26.1
		300	157	40.6
		400	62	16.0
		Total	387	100.0

Table 1 revealed the respondents' demographic characteristics. The age distribution of the respondents indicated that majority of the respondents, 230(59.4%) were within the ages of 15-20years, 130(33.6%) were within the ages of 21-25years, and 27(7%) were within the ages of 26-30years. It was also revealed that most of the respondents were from Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, 175(45.2%), while 73(18.9%) were from Babcock University, and 138(35.9%) were from Olabisi Onabanjo University. The level distribution revealed that majority of the respondents were in 300level, 157(40.6%), while 67(17.3%) were in 100level, 101(26.1%) were in 200level, and 62(16%) were in 400level.

Research Objective One: To establish the presence of mentorship relationships between male undergraduates and their lecturers in Ogun State universities,

Table 2: The presence of mentorship relationships between male undergraduates and their lecturers in Ogun State universities,

S/No.	Variable	Category N=387	Frequency	Percentage
3.	Is there a mentor/ mentee relationship between you and your lecturers	Yes	322	83.2
		No	65	16.8
		Total	387	100.0
4.	If yes in no 7 above, tick the mentorship styles that is applied:	One on one mentoring	134	34.6
		Group mentoring	133	34.4
		Peer mentoring	42	10.9
		No Mentorship	65	16.8
		Total	387	100.0

Table 2 showed the respondents view on the presence of mentorship relationship between the male undergraduates' student and their lecturers. It could be deduced that majority of the respondents, 83.2%, opined that there is a mentor/mentee relationship between them and their lecturers, while 16.8% do not have such relationship with their lecturers. This implies that there is the presence of mentor/mentee relationship in the institution under study. While most of the respondents, 34.6%, who opined that there exists a relationship revealed that the style of mentorship is one on one mentorship, 34.4% believe it has group mentoring style, and 10.9% opined that it is peering mentoring style the lecturers use for them. 16.8% revealed the number that opined they do not have mentoring relationship.

4.2: Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀ There is no significant relationship between mentorship and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix on relationship between mentorship and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates

		EIS
Mentorship	Pearson Correlation	.166**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	387

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The data presented in Table 3 reveals a statistically significant positive correlation between mentorship and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State, as evidenced by a correlation coefficient of ($r = 0.166$) with a significance level of ($p < 0.05$). This correlation suggests that as the level of mentorship experienced by these students' increases, so too does their intention to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This finding indicates that effective mentorship plays a critical role in fostering entrepreneurial aspirations among male undergraduates

Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no significant relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix on the relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates

		Entrepreneurial intention
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.116*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022
	N	387

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State, with a correlation coefficient of ($r = 0.116$) and a significance level of ($p < 0.05$). This relationship implies that as motivation levels increase among these students, there is a corresponding enhancement in their intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activities. In essence, this finding highlights the crucial role that motivation plays in influencing the entrepreneurial aspirations of male undergraduates. Motivation acts as a driving force that propels individuals towards pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities.

Hypothesis Three

H₀: There will be no significant joint relationship among mentorship, motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State.

Table 5a: A multiple regression on the relative relationship among mentorship, motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	18.761	3.032		6.187	.000
Mentorship	.151	.051	.151	2.964	.003
Motivation	.160	.090	.090	1.775	.077

Dependent Variable: **Entrepreneurial intention**

Table 5a revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between mentorship and entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = .151$; $t = 2.964$; $p < 0.05$). There is no significant relationship between motivation and entrepreneurial intention ($\beta = .160$; $t = 1.775$; $p > 0.05$).

Table 5b: The joint relationship among mentorship, motivation and entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates in Ogun State

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	367.251	2	183.625	7.072	.001 ^b
Residual	9970.165	384	25.964		
Total	10337.416	386			

$R = 0.188$; $R^2 = 0.036$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.031$; Std. Error of the Estimate = 5.09549

Dependent Variable: EIS

Predictors: (Constant), Motivation, Mentorship

The analysis depicted in Table 5b demonstrates that mentorship and motivation collectively exert a significant influence on the entrepreneurial intention of male undergraduates in Ogun State, as indicated by the statistical results ($F_{(2, 384)} = 7.072$; $p < 0.05$). Consequently, it can be concluded that both mentorship and motivation together play a critical role in shaping the entrepreneurial aspirations of these students. However, the joint effect of mentorship and motivation is statistically significant, this effect is revealed to be low to be low as the analysis reveals these factors account for only 3.1% of the variation in the entrepreneurial intentions of the students, as indicated by the adjusted ($Adj R^2 = 0.031$). This suggests that while mentorship and motivation are indeed influential, they represent only a small portion of the overall factors that determine entrepreneurial intention. There may be additional variables, such as socio-economic background, personal experiences, or educational environment that could further explain variations in entrepreneurial intent among male undergraduates.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from Table 2 reveal that a substantial proportion of male undergraduate respondents (83.2%) reported the existence of mentor-mentee relationships with their lecturers. Among these respondents, 34.6% identified the mentorship style as one-on-one, 34.4% as group mentoring, and 10.9% as peer mentoring. These figures suggest the presence of a relatively well-established mentorship culture within these institutions, with a significant emphasis on personalized, one-on-one, and group-based mentoring practices. This result aligns with the findings of Abubakar et al. (2019), who observed that mentorship relationships in Nigerian universities positively contribute to student development, particularly in career planning, personal growth, and skill acquisition. Their study emphasized that structured mentorship programs, often spearheaded by lecturers, are instrumental in shaping students' entrepreneurial intentions by providing direction, support, and real-world exposure. Similarly, Ogunleye and Adepoju (2017) found that male undergraduates who engage in meaningful mentorship relationships demonstrate higher levels of clarity regarding their career paths and are better positioned to navigate academic and professional challenges.

Further reinforcing these findings, Eze and Nwali (2020) argued that mentorship enhances students' psychosocial support systems, increasing their self-confidence and preparedness for entrepreneurial endeavors. They posited that consistent mentoring interventions create a nurturing environment that fosters innovation and risk-taking among students.

However, Akinyemi and Ofem (2018) present a contrasting view. In their research on mentoring practices in South-Western Nigeria, they found that while mentorship programs exist, they are often inconsistent, informal, and sporadic. They argued that the absence of institutionalized mentorship policies and clear frameworks undermines the quality and effectiveness of these relationships. This discrepancy highlights potential regional variations in mentorship implementation. While universities in Ogun State may demonstrate more robust and structured mentorship frameworks, this may not be a generalizable trend across the entire South-West or Nigeria as a whole. Ogunmodede and Adeniyi (2021) echo this concern, noting that although mentoring programs are common, they often lack proper evaluation mechanisms to ensure sustainability and effectiveness.

According to Table 3, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between mentorship and entrepreneurial intention ($r = 0.166$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that students who benefit from mentoring relationships are more likely to develop entrepreneurial aspirations. This finding corroborates Obaji and Olugu (2014), who established that mentorship is a key factor in nurturing entrepreneurial intentions among Nigerian youth. Their study posits that mentor especially academic staff—serve as role models, providing both guidance and social capital necessary for students to envision and pursue entrepreneurial careers. Similarly, Agu and Nwachukwu (2020) found that mentorship provides access to entrepreneurial networks, industry insights, and moral support, which collectively encourage students to consider entrepreneurship as a viable career path. They argue that mentors not only transfer knowledge but also instill confidence and entrepreneurial values in mentees. Conversely, Adebayo et al. (2019) offer a more cautious perspective. They argue that while mentorship has a role to play, it is often insufficient in isolation. Their findings indicate that without adequate institutional support systems—such as incubation hubs, entrepreneurship centers, and access to financing—mentorship alone does not significantly impact entrepreneurial outcomes. Yahaya and Bello (2021) support this argument, emphasizing that a lack of complementary resources and enabling environments often renders mentorship programs less impactful. This may provide a plausible explanation for why, despite the positive correlation observed in this study, mentorship accounts for only a modest portion of the variance in entrepreneurial intention.

The results in Table 4 reveal a statistically significant positive correlation between motivation and entrepreneurial intention ($r = 0.116, p < 0.05$). This suggests that motivation acts as an intrinsic driver propelling male undergraduates towards entrepreneurial pursuits. This aligns with Olanrewaju and Fagbohun (2022), who demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is a significant predictor of entrepreneurial behavior among university students in Nigeria. Their research suggests that motivated individuals are more likely to overcome structural barriers such as limited access to capital and bureaucracy, proactively seeking out entrepreneurial opportunities. Additionally, Izedonmi and Okafor (2019) found that intrinsic motivation, coupled with self-efficacy, enhances entrepreneurial resilience and persistence among Nigerian youth. They argue that internal factors, such as passion, desire for independence, and personal goals, are strong predictors of entrepreneurial action.

However, Nwagwu (2020) contends that while motivation is important, it is often undermined by environmental and economic constraints in Nigeria. He argues that issues such as unstable policies, lack of infrastructure, and limited access to markets create a hostile entrepreneurial environment that motivation alone cannot overcome. Okpara (2017) reinforces this view, suggesting that the socio-economic context in Nigeria often dampens entrepreneurial enthusiasm, leading to high rates of business failure despite high levels of motivation. This perspective is reflected in the relatively low variance explained by motivation in this study.

The combined analysis in Table 5a shows that mentorship and motivation jointly have a statistically significant effect on entrepreneurial intention ($F(2, 384) = 7.072, p < 0.05$). However, the explanatory power of these variables is modest, accounting for only 3.1% of the variance in entrepreneurial intention ($Adj R^2 = 0.031$). This suggests that entrepreneurial intention is a multifaceted construct influenced by a wide range of factors beyond mentorship and motivation.

Audu et al. (2018) argue that factors such as socioeconomic background, access to entrepreneurial education, family business experience, and availability of start-up capital are major determinants of entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, Olawale and Garwe (2010) emphasized the role of the external environment, such as government policies, regulatory frameworks, and access to financial markets, in fostering or hindering entrepreneurial initiatives.

Moreover, Udu and Amadi (2021) highlighted the influence of peer networks and social norms in shaping entrepreneurial aspirations, particularly in collectivist cultures like Nigeria's. They suggest that societal expectations and cultural attitudes toward entrepreneurship play a significant role in determining whether students pursue entrepreneurial careers.

In conclusion, while mentorship and motivation are important contributors to entrepreneurial intention among male undergraduates, they represent only part of a broader ecosystem of influences. To enhance entrepreneurial outcomes, policymakers and university administrators should adopt a holistic approach that integrates structured mentorship programs, motivation-enhancing strategies, entrepreneurial education, financial support mechanisms, and enabling environments.

Recommendation

1. Given that some respondents identified group and peer mentoring as existing styles, universities should promote and expand group mentoring initiatives where lecturers can engage larger groups of students. Peer mentoring schemes can be established to allow students with entrepreneurial experience or training to support and motivate their peers. These collaborative mentoring environments can broaden the reach and impact of existing mentorship frameworks.
2. Since motivation was shown to play a role in enhancing entrepreneurial intentions, universities should incorporate motivation-building activities into both academic curricula and extracurricular engagements. Activities such as business plan competitions, innovation challenges, and recognition awards can encourage students to set and pursue entrepreneurial goals.
3. Since a significant proportion of male undergraduates reported benefiting from mentorship, particularly through one-on-one and group mentoring, universities should formalize and strengthen these mentorship relationships. Structured mentorship programs should be developed, ensuring that lecturers are provided with guidelines and support to foster impactful one-on-one mentoring. This will help sustain and enhance the mentor-mentee dynamic that has already shown to positively influence students' entrepreneurial intentions.

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