



Influence of Locus of Control and Gender on Entrepreneurial Intention among Civil Servants in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Despite the benefit of entrepreneurship to national development, many studies have focused attention on young adolescents with little or no study on government workers. This paper therefore examined locus of control (LOC) and gender on entrepreneurial intention (EI) among civil servants in Osun State, Nigeria. The study used a cross-sectional research design and 264 respondents (Mean age = 34.23, $\sigma = 6.63$, $\varphi = 46.6\%$) participated in the study. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from samples that were conveniently drawn from the study area. Data were analysed using t-test for independent measure. Result confirmed that civil servants with external locus of control reported higher entrepreneurial intention than civil servants with internal locus of control. There was no gender difference in entrepreneurial intention among the sampled respondents. The study concluded that locus of control has significant impact on entrepreneurial intention of civil servants.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial intention, locus of control, gender, government workers

Introduction

The rate of unemployment and underemployment among citizens in Nigeria is at alarming rate and this has continued to hinder socio-economic development of the nation (NBC, 2016; Ayedun & Ajayi, 2018; Ojewumi, Fagbenro & Babatunde, 2020). This menace has called for concern among scholars and policy makers. The rate of entrepreneurship in any nation is regarded as an economic growth index that has the potential to improve the growth of the economy and ultimately indicate the nation's competitiveness in withstanding the growth rate of globalisation. The popularity

of entrepreneurship according to many people is basically because of its progressive impact in many countries as it provides job opportunities (Othman, Ghazali & Cheng, 2005; Gurol & Atsan, 2006; Koe, Sa'ari, Majid & Ismail, 2012). Moreover, entrepreneurship been a tool used by countries such as China and Singapore to develop their economic growth, create innovative ideas, and remain competitive in the global world (Scarborough & Zimmerer, 2003; Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2007). The aforementioned positive impacts have made the concept of entrepreneurship very relevant.

Uddin and Bose (2012) defined entrepreneurship as a means of recognising potentials in the global world, imposing measures and essential means to utilise the window of opportunity for sustainable individual and national benefit. On the other hand, a person's ability to start his or her business is commonly termed entrepreneurship intention in the literature. As stated by Rasli, Khan, Malekitfar and Jabeen (2013), entrepreneurship intention is regarded as the frame of mind upheld by a person to promote creativeness in a business enterprise. In the definition put forward by Dohse and Walter (2010), entrepreneurship intention refers to the inclination of an individual to execute entrepreneurial action, to be involved in entrepreneurial operation, be independent worker, or to institute innovative undertaking. Studies (Reynolds, 2001; Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000) have demonstrated that ability of an individual to have entrepreneurial intent will go a long way to determine the future engagement of entrepreneurial action. It is no longer news that many civil servants in Nigeria especially those working with various state governments and other agencies of government are currently faced with meager and irregular salaries (Opejobi, 2017; Emeyia, & Antiaobong, 2016) which has culminated into poor standard of living as a result of their inability to cater for their responsibilities. Despite the obvious hardship being faced by civil servants, many still have no intention of venturing into entrepreneurship as a means by which they can earn alternative income on a regular basis. Having entrepreneurial intention may therefore reduce civil servants' overdependence on the meagre salary that a lot of state governments are paying.

Many studies have investigated different antecedents of entrepreneurial intention such as entrepreneurship educational support and informal network (Amos, Oluseye & Bosede 2015), fear of failure and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE) (Okoye 2016) self-efficacy and social networks (Ojewumi & Fagbenro, 2019), gender and self-efficacy (Ojewumi, Oyeleke, Agberotimi & Adedayo, 2018) and psychodemographic factors (Ojewumi, Fagbenro & Babatunde 2020) but little or no study to the

researcher's knowledge have investigated the influence of locus of control (LOC) and gender on entrepreneurial intention. Also, studying entrepreneurial intention especially among a sample of civil servants in Nigeria is relatively sparse in the literature.

Locus of control refers to a belief about the basic causes of events in a person's life (Flippo, 2010). According to Rotter (1996) individuals may have internal or external locus of control. Internal LOC are individual who believes that their personal ability, skill, behaviour or competence is determined by their outcomes and they often take blame for their actions. On the other hand, individual with external locus of control LOC believe that whatever action they exhibit is regulated by outer force that is beyond their control which could come in form of luck, fate, or chance (Shilpa & Bharathi, 2017). The set of individuals with this orientation are disposed to blaming other people for their outcomes as opposed to taking personal responsibility and therefore believing they have little restraint over their behaviour and targets. It could be said that the kind of locus of control orientation an individual has could go a long way to determine their intention to engage or not to engage in entrepreneurship.

Gender has also been examined in the literature but despite its investigation, studies have found conflicting results on its impact on entrepreneurial intention. For example, studies such as Ayodele (2013) established that gender have no significant influence on entrepreneurial intention among adolescents in Ogun state. Also, Harris and Gibson (2008) in their study found that there are significant age and gender difference in entrepreneurial attitude while Thrikwala (2011) result revealed that gender has momentous influence on entrepreneurial intention. Fagbohungebe and Jayeoba (2012) affirmed that gender do not influence entrepreneurial abilities among university undergraduates in southwest, Nigeria. These conflicting results necessitated the current investigation of the impact of gender on entrepreneurial intention among civil servants in a developing country like Nigeria.

Review of Empirical Studies

Locus of control and Entrepreneurial intention
Ojewumi, Fagbenro and Babatunde (2020) examined the role of psycho-demographic factors on entrepreneurial intention (EI) among final year university students (FYUS). The result revealed among other variables of study that locus of control independently influenced entrepreneurial intention among final year university students (FYUS). Ojiaku, Nkamnebe and Nwaizugbo (2018) observed variables predicting entrepreneurial intention among a sample of 288 National Youth Service Corp members in Anambra State, Southeast Nigeria. Result indicates that independence, autonomy, opportunities, exploitation, government support, personal attitude, and self-efficacy considerably impact entrepreneurial intention. Hermawan, Soetjipto, and Rahayu (2016) examined the effect of locus of control on entrepreneurial intention. The investigation made use of quantitative research method. The population of the study initially was 622 students from the twelfth grades and using a proportional random sampling technique, a sample calculation was used to arrive at a sample size of 124. The result showed that student with internal LOC show more interest in entrepreneurship in comparison to students with external LOC. Ozaralli and Rivenburgh (2016) examined the antecedents of EI among 589 Junior and Senior US and Turkey students; they found that a statistically significant relationship exist between personality attributes, economic and political conditions and EI. Akanbi and Owoseni (2015) examined personality traits on entrepreneurial intention among 400 students were selected across a private university faculty. The study revealed that personality traits (innovativeness, risk taking behaviour and LOC) of an individual influence a person's EI. Lee and Tsang (2001) revealed strong relationship between entrepreneurial intention and personality traits, locus of control, innovativeness and risk-taking propensity. Fagbohunge and Jayeoba (2012) examined locus of control and gender on entrepreneurial capability. The study surveyed 668 which consist of 356 male and 312 female university undergraduates of two Nigerian universities in Western Nigeria. The result did

not establish any major association between locus of control and entrepreneurial capability; meaning that whether participants have either internal or external locus of control does not impact significantly on their entrepreneurial abilities. Also, the result of the same study did not any gender difference in entrepreneurial abilities. Based on the reviewed literature we therefore propose that:

Hypothesis 1: There will be locus of control difference in entrepreneurial intention among civil servants.

Gender and Entrepreneurial intention

Ojewumi, Fagbenro and Babatunde (2020) also found that there was no gender difference on entrepreneurial intention among the sampled respondents. Ayodele (2013) found that socio-economic status had significant correlation with the adolescents' EI, while age and sex did not influence EI. Chaudhary (2017) revealed no meaningful difference between men and women on entrepreneurial intention. Zeffane (2013) in their research found no difference between males and females on entrepreneurship in United Arab Emirates. Akinbola, Ogunnaike and Amaihian (2015) in their work centered on the of institutional type on EI of university students found that there was an association between EI among final year private and state funded college undergraduates in Lagos and Ogun State, Nigeria. Peprah, Afoakwa and Koomson (2015) posited that savings behavior and entrepreneurial characteristic impact the choice to engage in private business among undergraduates from chosen public and private colleges in Ghana. Gibson (2008) found that there was a significant difference between male and female business students in their need for innovation in business, with males having higher scores on the entrepreneurial attitude scale than females. Wilson et al. (2007) also found that women have better entrepreneurial aspirations than their male counterparts. Gibson and Gibson (2010) also found that gender, and race influence innovative attitude of arts and business students. Based on the direction of this review we propose that:

Hypothesis 2: There will be significant gender difference on entrepreneurial intention among civil servants.

Methods

Design and setting

A cross sectional survey design was adopted for this study. The independent variables are locus of control and gender, while the dependent variable is entrepreneurial intent. The study was carried out at Ife Central and Ife North Local Government Secretariats (LGS), in Ile-Ife, Osun State Nigeria. The setting (LGS) was selected because of the proximity and accessibility to the researchers.

Participants

The study used a total number of two hundred and sixty-four (264) civil servants with a mean age of 34.23, and σ (6.63). Their gender showed that majority 137(51.1%) were males while 127(46.6%) were females. Their marital status revealed that 63(23.9%) were single, majority 191(72.3%) were married while 10(3.8%) were separated. Their religious affiliation showed that majority 135(51.1%) were Christians, 124(47.0%) were Muslims while 5(1.9%) were from African traditional religion. Distribution according to ethnicity revealed that the majority 216(81.8%) were Yorubas, 27(10.2%) were Igbos, 15(5.7%) were Hausas while 6(2.3%) were from other tribes.

Measures

A pencil and paper questionnaire were used to collect data in this study. Section A of the questionnaire sought information on respondents' demographics such as age, gender, marital status, religious affiliation, and ethnicity

Entrepreneurial Intention Scale:

Entrepreneurial Intention was measured using the 15-item Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire developed by Lee, Lim, Lim, Ng, and Wong (2012). Sample items on the scale are "I'd rather be my own boss than have a secure job" and "A career as entrepreneur is

attractive for me". The scale was scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly agree, to 5= strongly disagree. A co-efficient reliability of 0.87 was reported by the author of the scale and 0.93 Cronbach's alpha was reported for this scale in this present study.

Locus of Control Scale: Locus of control was measured using the 24-item Multidimensional locus of control scale (MLOCS) propounded by Levenson (1973). All items on the scale were rated on a six-point likert scale. The scale has two dimensions which are internal and external. Items that measure the internal LOC includes 1, 4, 5, 9, 18, 19, 21, and 23 while items 2, 3, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 24 measures external locus of control. Sample of the items on the scale are "I feel like what happens in my life is mostly determined by powerful people and "To a great extent my life is controlled by accidental happenings." The author got alpha coefficient of 0.74 for Internality, and 0.79 for Externality. In this particular study, a Cronbach's alpha of .89 was found for internal LOC while 0.77 for external LOC.

Procedure

Permission was obtained from the Chairmen of the two local governments. Ethical issues were followed based on informed consent and assurance of confidentiality. The respondents were duly briefed of the motives and goals of the investigation. The way the questionnaires should be completed was explicitly explained to the participants. Questionnaires were distributed among respondents after the close of work in their various departments and offices at different point in time. In all, two hundred and eighty questionnaires were administered to the participants; however, two hundred and sixty-four were returned and were good for data analysis. The distribution of the questionnaires lasted for two weeks across the two local government areas. The collected data were coded and analysed using the SPSS version 20.0 software. t-test for independent measure was used to test the hypotheses in the study.

Results

Table 1: Summary of t-test of independent samples showing the influence of locus of control on Entrepreneurial Intention

	Locus of control	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	P
Entrepreneurial intention	External	146	60.28	13.64	262	-2.06	<.05
	Internal	118	57.05	7.70			

Table 1 results showed that civil servants' locus of control have significant impact on entrepreneurial intention, $t(262) = -2.06$; $p < .05$. Result confirmed that civil servants with

external locus of control (Mean = 60.28; SD = 13.64) have higher entrepreneurial intention compared to civil servants with Internal locus of control (Mean = 57.05; SD = 7.70).

Table 2: Summary of t-test of independence samples showing the influence of gender on Entrepreneurial Intention

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	P
Entrepreneurial intention	Male	137	59.09	10.34	262	1.57	>.05
	Female	127	58.28	11.26			

Result in Table 2 indicated that gender had no significant influence on EI, $t(262) = -1.57$; $p > .05$. Result affirmed that males (Mean = 59.09; SD = 10.34) and females (Mean = 58.28; SD = 11.26) have no significant differences on Entrepreneurial Intention.

Discussion

The primary purpose of the current study is to examine the influence of locus of control and gender on entrepreneurial intention among a sample of civil servants in an emerging country like Nigeria. The first hypothesis found that civil servants with external locus of control have higher entrepreneurial intention than civil servants with internal locus of control. By implication this means that civil servants with external locus of control beliefs that embarking on entrepreneurship is an adventure which could results in success or failure. People with this type of personality traits tend to take risk because they can ascribe their failures to external force like luck, fate, or chance and not self. This finding was in line with Ojewumi, Fagbenro and Babatunde (2020) who revealed among other variables of study that locus of control independently influenced entrepreneurial intention among final year

university students. The study was also in line with Ayodele (2013) who found that locus of control, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and socio-economic status had significant correlation with entrepreneurial intention. This finding was also consistent with the findings of Strauss (2005) who found that external LOC have positive impact on EI among 232 adolescents. The plausible reason for this finding may be unconnected to how civil servants place their mind set on entrepreneurship. Most of the civil servants may believe that starting a business of their own in Nigeria may not be dependent on them but some external factors such as government regulations, market environment and support which in turn can encourage them to engage in entrepreneurship. The result of the second hypothesis found that there was no significant difference between male and female in their entrepreneurial intention. This indicates that neither male nor female civil servant is different in their entrepreneurial intention, meaning that being male or female is not enough to confer an advantage when it comes to intention to establish personal business. This result negates the popular societal perception that males are more prone to business than their

female counterparts. This result revealed that on an average, male and female have similar motives in establishing their own personal business. This result was in line with study done by Ojewumi et al (2018) that found no significant difference between male and female in EI among undergraduate students. The study was also in accordance with Ojewumi, et.al (2020) who found no gender difference on entrepreneurial intention among the sampled respondents. The study finding was also similar with Ayodele (2013) who also found that gender has no significant impact on EI among 210 adolescents in Ogun state. It also affirmed Fagbohunge and Jayeoba (2012) findings that gender difference does not impact entrepreneurial abilities among 668 University undergraduates in southwest Nigeria. However, this finding was inconsistent with the finding of Harris and Gibson (2008) who found a significant age and gender difference in entrepreneurial attitude among their participants. Another research by Thrikwala (2011) also found that gender has significant effect on EI. The justification for this finding is that as at today in Nigeria, both male and female are both engaged in the informal economy in Nigeria making self-employment activities applicable to both genders.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study provides relevant information pertaining to entrepreneurial intention and the influence of locus of control among civil servants. The findings of the study clearly demonstrated that locus of control has influence on entrepreneurial intention, meaning that civil servants with external locus of control have high entrepreneurial intent than civil servants with internal locus of control. Finally, the study concluded that there was no gender difference in entrepreneurial intention; this implies no divergence exists between male and female civil servants in their level of entrepreneurial intention. Based on this conclusion, we recommended that trained psychologists should develop locus of control orientation programmes and workshop especially for civil servants with internal locus of control in order to boost their intention of engaging in entrepreneurship while still active at work.

Also, Government should also intensify developmental programs that increase awareness and specific competencies about the concept of entrepreneurship among civil servants.

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