

Developing Countries and the Entrepreneurial Intention of Postgraduates: A Study of Nigerian Postgraduates in UUM

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Abstract : The surge in unemployment among nations and the understanding of the important role played by entrepreneurship in job creation by researchers and policy makers have steered to the postulation that entrepreneurship activities can be spurred through the development of entrepreneurial intentions. Notwithstanding, entrepreneurial intention studies are very scarce in the developing world especially in the African continent. Even among the developed countries, studies of entrepreneurial intention were mostly focused on the undergraduate candidates. This paper therefore, aimed at filling the gap by employing the descriptive quantitative survey method to examine the entrepreneurial intention of 158 Nigerian postgraduate candidates of Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), comprising 46 Masters and 112 PhD candidates who are studying in the College of Business (COB), College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and College of Legal, Government and International Studies (COLGIS), the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model was used due its reputable validity, with attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control as the independent variables. Preliminary analysis and data screening were conducted which qualifies the data to the multivariate analysis assumptions. The reliability test was performed using the Cronbach Alpha method which shows all variables as reliable with a value of >0.70 . However, the data is free from the multicollinearity issue with all factors in the Pearson correlation having <0.9 value and the VIF having <10 . Regression analysis has shown the sufficiency and predictive capability of the TPB model to entrepreneurship intention with attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control being positively and significantly related to the entrepreneurial intention of Nigerian postgraduates. Considering the Beta values, perceived behavioural control emerged as the strongest factor that influences the postgraduates entrepreneurial intention. Developing countries are therefore, recommended to make efforts in redesigning their entrepreneurship development policies to fit candidates of the highest level of academia. Further studies should replicate in a larger sample that comprises more than one university and more than one developing country.

Keywords : attitude, entrepreneurial intention, Nigeria, perceived behavioral control, postgraduates, subjective norms

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