The Impact of Gender on the Entrepreneurial Start-Up Activities of Selected Obafemi Awolowo University Students

[*]Olaposi, T. O., [**]Binuyo, G. O., and [***]Ayanlade, O. S.

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Abstract:

Student entrepreneurship is now a common phenomenon in universities both in developed and developing countries. In Nigeria, research on student's entrepreneurship is still on-going. This study assessed the impact of gender on the entrepreneurial activities of 272 students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Family background, source of motivation, type of business, source of capital, and factors influencing non-involvement in business of some students were investigated. Results suggest that more males are involved in business than female students. Other results suggest that there are differences between the entrepreneurial activities of male and female students but most of the differences are not significant. However, a strong association was found between gender and lack of business flair among those that were not involved in business.

Keywords: activities, entrepreneurial, gender, Obafemi Awolowo University, students

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INTRODUCTION

To understand the importance of research on gender in association with student entrepreneurship, one only needs to look at recent trends in business ownership among youths. Student entrepreneurship is now a common phenomenon in tertiary institutions of learning both in developed and developing countries. Both male and female students engage in diverse forms

[*] African Institute for Science Policy and Innovation Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. e-mail: olaposititi@gmail.com

of business. As in other forms of entrepreneurship, venture types and management styles vary across genders. Scholars have argued that differences exist between the attributes, operations and performance of male and female entrepreneurs. In view of this, Minniti (2009) asserts that women entrepreneurship presents several distinctive characteristics that differentiate it from men entrepreneurship. Also, in the report *Good Practices in the Promotion of female Entrepreneurship* of the European Commission (2002) it is argued that women face a number of gender-specific barriers to starting-up and running a business. However, Ahl (2002) have found more similarities in some individual characteristics (including psychological, attitudinal, and personal background factors) than differences between male and female entrepreneurs.

While research on gender in entrepreneurship is still very rigorously embarked upon in the developed world, it is still at its infancy in Nigeria. This paper therefore seeks to extend knowledge on the similarities and differences between entrepreneurial start-up activities of male and female students and to examine the impact of gender on the start-up activities of selected Obafemi Awolowo University students. The main question that this study addresses is "what differences exist between the entrepreneurial start-up activities of male and female technology students of Obafemi Awolowo University?" The remaining part of the paper will focus on a brief literature review, methodological approaches adopted, presentation and discussion of findings and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The existence of a gap between men and women in entrepreneurship has long been acknowledged, and it is attracting increasing academic attention (Hughes et al. 2012). It was reported that the proportion of any country's adult female population participating in entrepreneurship is lower than that of men (Hindle, Klyver and Jennings, 2009). Santos et al. (2014) reported that in their study, men were found to exhibit higher entrepreneurial intentions than women did and previously, Diaz-Garzia and Jimanez-Moreno (2010) had confirmed that It is generally accepted than men have stronger entrepreneurial intentions than women. Also, in the literature, women are said to present some weaknesses in the context of entrepreneurial activity in

comparison with men. For example, entrepreneurship starts from identification of opportunity. It has been found that women perceive fewer opportunities and identify higher financial barriers than their male counterparts (Langowitz and Minniti, 2007; Minniti and Nardone, 2007). Also, some research has found that women possess a higher fear of failure than their male counterparts (Langowitz and Minniti 2007). Moreover, it was found that women possess fewer human and network resources (Becker-Blease and Sohl, 2007; Brush et al., 2002) or less management experience (Brush et al. 2004).

Some studies reported findings on factors that inhibit the activities of women entrepreneurs. For example, Hisrich (1997), cited in Lee, Sobin and Ju (2011) found that the performance of women entrepreneurs was affected by a factor that was related to social network, such as, mentor, women association, and number of network. The Small and Medium Business Administration (SMBA) and the Korean Women Entrepreneurs Association (KWEA) reported that the difficulties of women entrepreneurs and their involvement in economic activities were due to financing, sales, labour supply, business information acquisition, and Research and Development (R&D) (KWEA, 2007). OECD (1997) reported that high rate of failure due to inadequate management, access to risk-averse capital and borrowing less capital than men, reluctance to seek counseling or advice from an expert, lack of networks that will allow them to facilitate business, and tendency to obtain support services at the regional level rather than at the national level were the problems been faced by women entrepreneurs in Korea In 1992, Gascon observed that human capital such as experience, education level, age and goals, affected the performance of women entrepreneurs. This was supported by Brush (1992) who found that business experience, business technique, education level, degree of motivation, and presence of a mentor, all had an influence on the performance of women entrepreneur. Exploring family factors, Shelton (2006) stated that housework and childcare were the limitations of women working in business. Similar to this, Kim and Ling (2001) indicated that the conflict between family members of women entrepreneurs affected their satisfaction with their job, marriage and life. Considering economic environments and .socio-economic circumstances, Morries et al. (2006) submitted that business environment affects the satisfaction of economic activities of women entrepreneurs. On the issue of capital sourcing, Haynes (1999) ex-

amined that women entrepreneurs depend on networks such as family and friends, to raise funds.

METHODOLOGY

Primary data were collected for the study. Data were collected from 272 randomly selected students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Nigeria is a republic in Western Africa, with a coast along the Atlantic Ocean on the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria covers an area of 923,768 sq km (356, 669 sq mi). Nigeria is bounded by Cameroon to the east, Chad to the Northeast, Niger to the North, Benin to the west, and the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Nigeria is a developing country with a high rate of unemployment and poverty. The search for a job after graduation without success has become a source of frustration for graduates. Thousands of university graduates join the labour market in search of gainful employment yearly. According to NBS (2010), unemployment rate amounted to 19.7% of total Labour Force in March 2009, indicating a sharp increase from 14.9% in March 2008. When disaggregated by sector, 19.2% of urban and 19.8% of the rural population were unemployed. Of the total unemployed persons as at March, 2009, 32.0% were aged below 25 years, while 47.5% were aged 25-44 years and 20.5% were aged 45- 64 years. This has resulted into programmatic interventions and policies of the Nigerian government and international agencies targeting the reduction of the rate of unemployment in the country. Part of such policies is the development of youth entrepreneurs who will create jobs for themselves and others. However, in spite of all the various governmental policies and programmes aimed at reducing the rate of unemployment, little or no result has been recorded. For example, to make up for the curricula inadequacies in meeting employment problem, the National Universities Commission (NUC) in July, 2004, organized a workshop on entrepreneurship for Nigerian universities as a way forward (Uduak and Aniefiok, 2011). The NUC workshop produced a draft curriculum on entrepreneurial studies for Nigerian Universities in an attempt to solve the problem of unemployment in the country. The NUC, in line with education policy, directed all universities in the country to establish entrepreneurial centers and that entrepreneurial training should be given to all Nigerian undergraduates. Consequently, many Universities have initiated entrepre-

neurship education programmes in an attempt to reverse the graduate unemployment trend by giving the needed entrepreneurial skills for setting up businesses to students. After about half a decade, a survey carried out by NACETEM (2010), revealed that entrepreneurial interest among Nigerian Students is quite high but the expression of the interest in practice is rather low. There is a need to investigate the factors that are responsible for this and this is the aim of this study.

Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, Nigeria, is a federally funded university. It is a big university located in Osun State, in the southwestern part of Nigeria. It has more than ten faculties, and some colleges and institutes, each having many departments under them. It is one of the universities that quickly responded to the directive of the NUC to establish entrepreneurial centres. OAU does not just start an entrepreneurial centre, it established an Institute of Entrepreneurship where undergraduates of the university are taught entrepreneurship development and students are admitted to study for ordinary diploma and advanced diploma in entrepreneurship. These activities in the university has increased the awareness of entrepreneurship as a career option among the students of the university and this has led to some of the students starting ventures of their own, while some do not engage in any entrepreneurial activity. While we acknowledge that many factors may be responsible for this disparity among the students, we propose that gender is a key factor influencing the entrepreneurial start-up activity of Obafemi Awolowo University students.

This study focused on students of the faculty of technology. This is because technological entrepreneurship leads to rapid economic development which engenders industrialization (Schumpeter 1934) and technological entrepreneurship is domiciled in science and technology faculties. Technical entrepreneurial education has been recognized as one of the crucial factors that help youths with science and engineering background to understand and cultivate entrepreneurial attitudes. (e.g. Gorman et.al., 1997; Kourilsky and Walstad, 1998). Technological innovation has long been viewed as an integral part of entrepreneurship (Drucker, 1985). One of the true measures of success for technological entrepreneurs is the extent to which they are able to develop and bring to market radical or incremental innovations in products or services. These innovations are important not only for the posi-

tive economic impact they typically create, but also because they fundamentally change the behaviour of consumers, often in ways that improve their lives.

A structured questionnaire was used to elicit information on issues that relate to entrepreneurial activities among students. The questionnaire focused on bio-data, family background, parents' business involvement status, students' current involvement in business, and start-up activities of students. The start-up activities focused on include source of motivation, the type of business the students engaged in, and capital sourcing. We went further to find out reasons why some students did not engage in business activity and if gender had any impact on this. The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Respondents' Bio-Data

Majority (70.2%) of the students were within age range 21 – 25 years. About 13% was within 26 – 30 years. Majority (84.2%) was male while 15.8% was female. Majority (98.5%) was single while only 1.1% was married. All those who responded to the question (99.6%) were Nigerians. More than 80% of the respondents hailed from the Southwestern part of Nigeria and the rest hailed from the Southeastern part of Nigeria. About 88% were of Yoruba ethnic origin. About 9% were Agricultural Engineering students, 25% were Chemical Engineering students, 14% were Civil Engineering students, about 21% were Computer Engineering students, about 6% were Food Science and Technology students, 11% were Materials Science and Engineering Students, while about 15% were Mechanical Engineering students. One of the respondents (0.4%) was in 300 Level, one hundred and six (39%) was in 400 Level, while one hundred and sixty three (59.9%) was in 500 Level. About 28% did not indicate their present Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). About 6% of the respondents had CGPA below 2.5, about 35% had CGPA within 2.5 – 3.49, about 28% had CGPA within 3.5 – 4.49, while about 3% had CGPA within 4,5 – 5.0. This indicates that majority of the respondents (63%) had CGPA 2.5 – 4. 49).

Family Background

Eighty per cent came from monogamous family. Majority (63%) of them was from families with 1 – 4 children and majority (71%) was neither first nor last born. Only 22% were first born, while only 6% were last born. Fathers' highest educational qualifications varied widely. Less than 1% did not have any formal education. Twenty-eight per cent had one of primary school leaving certificate, secondary school leaving certificate or Technical College. About 7% had National Certificate of Education (NCE) or Ordinary National Diploma (OND). Thirty-eight per cent either have Higher National Diploma (HND) or Bachelor's Degree. Twenty-three per cent had postgraduate qualifications. Their mothers' highest educational qualifications also varied widely. About 3% did not have any formal education. About 32% finished Technical College or less, while 17% had NCE or OND. Thirty-five per cent had HND or Bachelor's degree, while 13% had postgraduate qualifications. Thirty-six per cent of the fathers were self-employed; others were in organizational employment ranging from agricultural sector (4%); Armed Forces (3%); Civil/Public service (14%); Teaching/Academics (9%); Engineering (15%); Law (2%); Private sector employment (6%); Medical Practice (2%); Banking (3%); and politics (4%). The present occupation of their mothers include self-employment (44%), agriculture (3%), civil/public service (17%), teaching/academics (21%), Law (0.7%), private sector employment (4%), medical practice (6%), Banking (0.4%), and politics (0,4%). Twenty-two per cent did not respond to the question about their father's monthly income. Fifteen per cent indicated that their fathers earned 50, 000 Naira or less per month, 18% earned between 51, 000 Naira – 100, 000 Naira, 11% earned between 151, 000 – 200, 000 Naira, 11% earned between 151, 000 – 300, 000 Naira. The rest earned 201, 000 Naira and above. The incomes indicated for the mothers were not as high as that of fathers. Majority of the mothers (61%) of the mother earned 150, 000 Naira or below. Out of the remaining 39%, 19% gave no response, leaving just 20% that earn more than 150, 000 Naira per month.

Parental Involvement Business Enterprise

The results indicated that 75% of the students' fathers were involved in business and were still running the business at the time of this study. Four-

teen per cent were in manufacturing business, 37% was in service business, 15% was trading, while 9% was in agriculture-related business. Twenty four per cent of the fathers initiated a business, stopped at a point in time and later continued. The rest of the fathers were not involved in business at the time of the study. Seventy six per cent of the students' mothers have initiated businesses and were still running it. Majority (43%) of the mothers were into trading business, 9% was into manufacturing, 19% was into service, while 5% was into agriculture-related business. Twenty nine per cent initiated a business, stopped at a point in time and later continued. The others were not involved in business at the time of this study.

Students' Current Involvement in Business

Thirty one per cent (31%) of the students was currently engaged in business. Two per cent of the students were engaged in manufacturing, 20% in service business, 9% in trading, and the others were into other forms of business. Twenty six percent (26%) of those who were engaged in business sourced start-up capital from personal savings, 5% from their family, 0.7% from inheritance, 0.4% from bank loan, 3% from family friends, 0.4% from government sources, nobody sourced funds from cooperative. The source of motivation for the student entrepreneurs was mainly (39%) personal interest. Other sources of motivation include parent (15%), siblings (6%), desire to make money (21%), self-actualization (12%), events (2%), and peers (3%). Out of the entrepreneurial students, 28% expressed their wish to continue the business after graduation.

Those who were not in business gave various reasons for it. These ranged from desire to focus on their studies (40%), lack of interest (6%), no flair for business (4%), lack of capital (32%), to fear of failure (3%). Out of those that were not currently engaged in business, 88% stated that they would start business after school. Cross tabulation results show that more male students (30.6%) than females (28%) are involved in business. (Table 1).

Table 1: Gender * Presently engage in business Cross tabulation

			Presently engage in business			Total
			No Response	Yes	No	
Gender	Male	Count	9	70	150	229
		% within Gender	3.9%	30.6%	65.5%	100.0%
	Female	Count	1	12	30	43
		% within Gender	2.3%	27.9%	69.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	10	82	180	272
		% within Gender	3.7%	30.1%	66.2%	100.0%

Start-up Activities

Source of Motivation

There were differences in the factors that motivated male and female students to start business (Table 2). More female (14%) than male (12%) were motivated by personal interest. A greater number of female students (7%) were motivated by their parents than male (5%) students. While no female student was motivated by sibling, 2% of the male students were motivated by siblings. Seven per cent of the male students were motivated by the desire to make money, while 5% of the females were motivated by the same factor. Five per cent of male students and 2% of the females were motivated by self-actualization. Two per cent of the female students and 0.4% of the males were motivated by events. One per cent of the male students and no female student were motivated by peers.

Business Type

The results of the study indicate that there are differences in the kind of business the male and female students were involved in. More female students (2%) were engaged in manufacturing business than male students (1%). More male students (21%) were involved in service business than female (12%). More female (16%) students were engaged in trading than males (8%).

Table 2: Gender * Business Involvement Motivation Cross tabulation

			Business Involvement Motivation								
			No Response	Parent	Sibling	Personal Interest	Desire to make money	Self-Actualization	Events	Peers	Total
Gender	Male	Count	153	11	5	28	17	11	1	3	229
		% within Gender	66.8%	4.8%	2.2%	12.2%	7.4%	4.8%	.4%	1.3%	100.0%
	Female	Count	30	3	0	6	2	1	1	0	43
		% within Gender	69.8%	7.0%	.0%	14.0%	4.7%	2.3%	2.3%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	183	14	5	34	19	12	2	3	272
		% within Gender	67.3%	5.1%	1.8%	12.5%	7.0%	4.4%	.7%	1.1%	100.0%

Table 3: Gender * Kind of business Cross tabulation

			Kind of business					
			No Response	Manufacturing	Service	Trading	Others	Total
Gender	Male	Count	154	3	49	18	5	229
		% within Gender	67.2%	1.3%	21.4%	7.9%	2.2%	100.0%
	Female	Count	30	1	5	7	0	43
		% within Gender	69.8%	2.3%	11.6%	16.3%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	184	4	54	25	5	272
		% within Gender	67.6%	1.5%	19.9%	9.2%	1.8%	100.0%

Start-up Capital Sourcing

Both male (25%) and female (28%) students sourced start-up capital from personal saving (Table 4), Some 6% male sourced capital from family savings, while 2% female did the same (Table 5). Both male and female students hardly or never source capital from family inheritance (male 0.9%; female 0.0%) (Table 6) nor take loan from bank (male 0.4%; female 0.0%) (Table 7).

Table 4: Gender * Personal Savings _Funds Source Cross tabulation

			PersonalSavings_FundsSource		
			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Male	Count	171	58	229
		% within Gender	74.7%	25.3%	100.0%
	Female	Count	31	12	43
		% within Gender	72.1%	27.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	202	70	272
		% within Gender	74.3%	25.7%	100.0%

Table 5: Gender * FamilySavings_FundsSource Crosstabulation

			FamilySavings_FundsSource		Total
			No	Yes	
Gender	Male	Count	216	13	229
		% within Gender	94.3%	5.7%	100.0%
	Female	Count	42	1	43
		% within Gender	97.7%	2.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	258	14	272
		% within Gender	94.9%	5.1%	100.0%

Table 6: Gender * FamilyInheritance_FundsSource Crosstabulation

			FamilyInheritance_FundsSource		
			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Male	Count	227	2	229
		% within Gender	99.1%	.9%	100.0%
	Female	Count	43	0	43
		% within Gender	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	270	2	272
		% within Gender	99.3%	.7%	100.0%

Table 7: Gender * BankLoan_FundsSource Crosstabulation

			BankLoan_FundsSource		
			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Male	Count	228	1	229
		% within Gender	99.6%	.4%	100.0%
	Female	Count	43	0	43
		% within Gender	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	271	1	272
		% within Gender	99.6%	.4%	100.0%

both male and female students did not source fund from cooperative loan (Table 8) but some of them sourced capital from family friends – 3% male, 5% female (Table 9).

Table 8: Gender * CooperativeLoan_FundsSource Crosstabulation

			CooperativeLoan_FundsSource	Total
			No	
Gender	Male	Count	229	229
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%
	Female	Count	43	43
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%

Table 9: Gender * FamilyFriendsLoan_FundsSource Crosstabulation

			FamilyFriendsLoan_FundsSource		
			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Male	Count	222	7	229
		% within Gender	96.9%	3.1%	100.0%
	Female	Count	41	2	43
		% within Gender	95.3%	4.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	263	9	272
		% within Gender	96.7%	3.3%	100.0%

Reasons for Non-involvement in Business

Three major reasons were given why respondents did not engage in business. There are also differences in the reasons given by male and female students. More female students (12%) gave 'no business flair' as their reason; while 3% male gave the same reason (Table 10). More male students (34%) gave 'lack of capital' as a reason; while 23% female gave the same reason (Table 11). About 3% of male students gave 'fear of failure' as a reason; while 2% female students gave the same reason (Table 12).

Table 10: Gender * NotInBusinessReason_no business Flair Crosstabulation

			NotInBusinessReason_SomethingelseFlair		Total
			No	Yes	
Gender	Male	Count	222	7	229
		% within Gender	96.9%	3.1%	100.0%
	Female	Count	38	5	43
		% within Gender	88.4%	11.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	260	12	272
		% within Gender	95.6%	4.4%	100.0%

Table 11: Gender * NotInBusinessReason_LackCapital Crosstabulation

			NotInBusinessReason_LackCapital		
			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Male	Count	152	77	229
		% within Gender	66.4%	33.6%	100.0%
	Female	Count	33	10	43
		% within Gender	76.7%	23.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	185	87	272
		% within Gender	68.0%	32.0%	100.0%

Table 12: Gender * Not In Business Reason_Failure Fear Cross-tabulation

			Not InBusinessReason_FailureFear		
			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Male	Count	222	7	229
		% within Gender	96.9%	3.1%	100.0%
	Female	Count	42	1	43
		% within Gender	97.7%	2.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	264	8	272
		% within Gender	97.1%	2.9%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

Chi-Square test results of this study show (Table 13) that there is no significant association ($p>0.05$) between gender and the following variables: (i) presently engage in business; (ii) business involvement motivation; (iii) Kind of business; (iv) personal saving as source of fund; (v) family saving as source of fund; (vi) family inheritance as source of fund; (vii) bank loan as source of fund; (viii) family friends as source of loan; (ix) fear of failure as a reason for not getting involved in business; (ix) lack of capital as a reason

for not getting involved in business; and (x) interest in starting business. On the contrary, the results show that there is a strong association ($r^2 = 6.307$; $p < 0.05$) between gender and lack of business flair as a reason for not getting involved in business.

Table 13: Chi-Square Tests

Description	Value	df	P-Value	
Gender * Presently engage in business	0.438	2	0.803	
Gender * Business Involvement Motivation	4.627	7	0.705	
Gender * Kind of business	5.759	4	0.218	
Gender * PersonalSavings_FundsSource	0.126	1	0.723	.849
Gender * FamilySavings_FundsSource	0.833	1	0.361	
Gender * FamilyInheritance_FundsSource	0.378	1	0.538	
Gender * BankLoan_FundsSource	0.188	1	0.664	
Gender * CooperativeLoan_FundsSource	a*	-	-	
Gender * FamilyFriendsLoan_FundsSource	0.288	1	0.592	
Gender * NotInBusinessReason_No Business Flair	6.307	1	0.012*	
Gender* NotInBusinessReason_FailureFear	0.068	1	0.795	
Gender * NotInBusinessReason_LackCapital	1.789	1	0.181	.214
Gender * Interested in starting business	2.361	2	0.307	

*Significant at 0.05 Level
a* No statistics are computed because cooperative loan_fundsSource is a constant.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study contribute to our understanding of gender in the context of student entrepreneurship. Previously we explained that gender may be critical in driving the actions of student entrepreneurs. The findings show that there are more differences than similarities between the activities of male and female students. We can summarize our key findings thus: (1) More male students were involved in business than females. (2). the factors that motivate the male students to start business differ from those that motivate the females. (3). the type of business the male students do differ from the one their female counterparts do. (4). both male and female students sourced start-up capital mainly from personal saving. (5)) Factors influencing non-involvement in business differ between male and female students.

Chi-Square analyses results revealed that the associations between gender and the dependent variables were not significant except for 'no flair for

businesses as a factor for non-involvement in business. This suggests that the differences recorded between the activities of the male and female students may not be due to gender. A growing body of empirical evidence tends to support this finding (Johnson and McMahon, 2005; Watson and Robinson, 2003). These studies did not report any differences in firms' performance having controlled for operational differences.

While findings from descriptive statistics suggest differences in the activities of male and female entrepreneurs, inferential statistics revealed no significant association between gender and the activities of both genders. Therefore, we conclude that there is no significant difference in the start-up activities of entrepreneurial students of Obafemi Awolowo University.

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