



FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION: AN INTEGRATIVE MODEL FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT: *The first step toward entrepreneurial behaviour is entrepreneurial intention (EI). Thus, responding to the call for an integrative model approach to the study of entrepreneurial intention (EI), this study employs the push-pull-mooring (PPM) model of migration to examine the factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions. Data for this study were collected from 913 final-year undergraduate students using a structured questionnaire. The result of the analysis validates the capacity of the PPM model to predict entrepreneurial intentions. In addition, results indicate that the pull factors and the mooring factors are better determinants of EI than the push factors and that the mooring factors have the most influence on EI.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial intentions, Push-pull-mooring, Push factors, Pull factors, Mooring factors. Entrepreneurial behaviour.



INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is a vital engine for the economic growth and social well-being of any nation. This is due to its role in encouraging innovation and creating job opportunities (Zhaoyuan and Kangyin, 2023). It encompasses any activities by an individual, group of individuals, or established organisation directed at creating, developing, and managing a new business venture or expanding an existing business for the purpose of generating profits and/or creating value (Akpan and Okwudu, 2022). The activities leading to entrepreneurship are premeditated as such intention towards entrepreneurship is seen as the first step towards entrepreneurial behaviour.

Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is a crucial aspect in the formation of new ventures and the development of an entrepreneurial culture. It refers to the willingness of or conscious awareness and conviction by an individual or group of individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activities or start their own business in the future (Cekule *et al.*, 2023). Entrepreneurial intention (EI) is an important element in entrepreneurship, as it influences actual behaviour.

Recent research on entrepreneurial intention (EI) has generally focused on two areas. First, several studies have discussed EI as being driven by necessity, opportunity and/or personality traits (Ismail *et al.*, 2012; Giacomini *et al.*, 2011; Fatoki and Patswawairi, 2012). This stream of studies generally portrayed EI as resulting from personality traits in the individual(s) that encourage entrepreneurial behaviour or an individual's need to exploit or take advantage of a given opportunity. Second, some other studies investigated EI from the perspective of the theory of planned behaviour or the theory of entrepreneurial events. This group of studies suggested that EI resulted from both the internal and external factors that influence the individual including individual insights, experiences and environmental elements. Though these studies have reasonably established the determinants of EI along the dimensions mentioned above, there are legitimate concerns about the inherent limitations of using a single-model approach to examine the predictors of EI. One of the concerns stems from the scope. It is argued that a single model approach presents a narrow scope to the understanding of the factors that influence entrepreneurial intentions (Stevens *et al.*, 2022). Also, most factors that predict EI are interdependent or interrelated, as such studying the determinants of EI using a single model may result in a partial picture of the concept. Therefore, based on Harper and Neil's (2021) suggestion of an integrative model approach to the study of EI, this study employs the push-pull-mooring (PPM) model of human migration to examine the determinants of EI. Specifically, this study aims to investigate the influence of push, pull and mooring factors on entrepreneurial intentions.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

The push-pull-mooring (PPM) theory of migration was first developed by Lee (2021) as the push-pull model, and later extended by Moon (1995) to include the mooring dimension. The basic postulation of the theory is that migration is the consequence of the interaction between the push and the pull effects. The theory further explained that the push effects are from the negative factors that compel people to leave their original place while the pull effects, on the other hand, are from the positive aspects of the destination that attract people to it.

According to Nimako and Ntim (2013), the push and pull factors do not work in isolation but interdependently with the mooring factors. They opined that the mooring factors are equivalent to the moderating variables, and act to either encourage migration or to deter the potential migrants from it. Although mooring factors were defined as social and personal factors that influence migration intentions as well as migration behaviour, the term could be expanded to encompass any element that may promote or inhibit the migration process. Following the pioneering application of the push-pull-mooring (PPM) model to the study of customer switching behaviour by Bansal *et al.* (2005), we draw on this integrative model to examine the factors that influence entrepreneurial intention.

The movement from employment or unemployment to self-employment is analogous to migration. Thus, entrepreneurial intention can be conceptualized as an individual's intention to migrate from unemployment or salaried-employment to self-employment (Ojiaku *et al.*, 2018). Within this context, the push-pull-mooring (PPM) model serves as an integrated framework to investigate different antecedents to entrepreneurial intention, consisting of push factors that drive individuals away from unemployment or salaried employment, pull factors that attract users to entrepreneurship, and mooring factors that either hamper or facilitate the decision to be self-employed.

According to Uhlaner and Thurik (2007), the push effect occurs when conflicts exist between an individual actual state and the ideal state forcing him/her into self-employment. There are conceptual similarities between the construct of push factors from the migration literature and many evaluative drivers of entrepreneurial intentions. These similarities include that (1) the push effect are negative factors that cause an individual's discontent towards the original situation in life, and (2) they are antecedent to migration (in this case motivation to move from unemployment/salaried employment to self-employment) (Thurik and Dejardin 2012). Relating the above to the entrepreneurial intention literature, individuals are pushed to seek self-employment because of factors like dissatisfaction, unemployment and social recognition. Previous studies have agreed that dissatisfaction, unemployment and social recognition are important push factors that affect entrepreneurial intentions. For instance, Ritsilä and Tervo (2002) opined that unemployed individuals are pushed into self-employment when they are faced with choosing between unemployment and self-employment. They explained that individuals' dissatisfaction with their social status brought about by unemployment creates a need for employment in them and pushes them to consider self-employment through entrepreneurship. Noorderhaven *et al.* (2004) examined dissatisfaction and found a strong correlation between dissatisfaction with life, dissatisfaction with democracy and self-employment. Saravathy (2004) added that those who are unemployable for lack of education or poor academic performance may be pushed into self-employment.



Although some people are forced into entrepreneurship by their circumstances, others are attracted to it by craving for autonomy, their particular skills endowment or an opportunity that presents itself. This is referred to as the pull effect. According to the pull theory, the attractions which move individuals into self-employment or entrepreneurship by seeking independence, wealth, and self-fulfilment are called pull factors (Moon, 1995). Pull factors are related to access to opportunities and a desire for independence that attracts a person to start a business. These factors make the act of entrepreneurship more appealing and spur entrepreneurial intent in individuals through its positive outcomes, such as greater autonomy and financial return.

Individuals are attracted to self-employment, predominantly, by the desire to become independent, a motivation to search for profit or wealth and, the perception of a market opportunity (Ojiaku *et al.*, 2018). Ojiaku *et al.* (2018) defined independence in the context of entrepreneurship as a willingness to be free from external control in decision-making making typically represented by the desire for autonomy, having no boss and creating one's job. It describes an individual desire for freedom, control, and flexibility. Search for profit or wealth refers to the rent-seeking tendencies of individuals. Extant literature suggests that the desire for independence, personal satisfaction, sense of achievement, search for profit as well as perceived market opportunity are major pull factors toward entrepreneurship (Evan and Dean, 2002; Shane *et al.*, 1991; Barringer and Ireland, 2010; Kirkwood, 2009). Fitzsimmons and Douglas (2005) and Gatewood *et al.* (1995) report that individuals with a stronger desire for independence, and positive attitudes toward income generation through opportunity identification exhibit higher entrepreneurial intentions.

The push-pull perspective notwithstanding, entrepreneurial intentions may be encouraged or hindered by certain factors (mooring factors). Mooring factors are individual, societal and cultural factors responsible for differences in individual reactions to various combinations of pull and push factors (Ojiaku *et al.*, 2018). These individual, societal, or cultural variables explain the differences in attitude towards entrepreneurship. Mooring variables include obstacles such as personal attitude, subjective norm, family attachment, personal anxiety, etc. (Bansal *et al.* 2005). Krueger *et al.* (2000) argue that a strong intention to start a business might suffer a long delay due to immediate circumstances such as marriage, childbearing, finishing school, a lucrative or rewarding job or an earthquake. In addition, Luthje and Franke (2003) argue that entrepreneurial intentions are shaped by an individual perception of barriers as well as start-up support. Given the above, it is expected that the push, pull and mooring factors will influence entrepreneurial intention significantly.

Hypothesis: Push, pull and mooring factors have a significant positive influence on entrepreneurial intention

The above hypothesis implies that $EI = f(\text{Push, Pull, Mooring})$

where:

EI = entrepreneurial intentions

Push = push factors

Pull = Pull factors

Mooring = Mooring factors



METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. A survey was used to gather data from final year undergraduate students who were about to graduate at the time of this study. This is an important target population for promoting entrepreneurship because they represent a population group that is soon to enter the job market and entrepreneurial intention is crucial for offering them an employment alternative (Shirokova, Tsukanova & Morris, 2018; Hattab, 2014).

Measurements

Push Factors: Four push factors were considered in this study: dissatisfaction with life; dissatisfaction with democracy; social recognition; and poor academic grades (reverse coded). The items to measure the push factors were adapted from Giacomini *et al.* (2011), Noorderhaven *et al.* (2004) and Ojiaku *et al.*, (2018).

Pull Factors: The pull factors considered in this study were market opportunity, autonomy/independence, personal satisfaction, sense of achievement and profit search. The measurement items in this scale were adapted from Giacomini *et al.* (2011).

Mooring Factors: The mooring factors were environmental factors (availability of finance and government support), perceived desirability, self-efficacy, and risk tolerance. The items to measure these factors were taken from Ojiaku *et al.* (2018).

Entrepreneurial Intentions: The scale to measure entrepreneurial intentions was adapted from Liñán and Chen (2009). This was made up of six items.

All the items above were subjected to face and content validity, and Cronbach alpha reliability statistics were adopted to test the reliability of the items. An overall reliability coefficient of 0.79 was achieved. All items were designed using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Copies of a questionnaire completed and returned were 913. Descriptive analysis, correlation and multiple linear regression analysis were used to analyze the data collected for this study.



RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

As earlier stated, 913 respondents completed and returned their copies of the questionnaire. Out of this number, 51.9% were male and 48.1% were female.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

Study Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation
EI	913	4.112	.821
Push factors	913	3.491	.867
Pull factors	913	3.915	.773
Mooring Factors	913	4.218	.841

Table 2 indicates the mean, standard deviation and standard error of the variables under study. It shows that the mean for all the variables is between 3.491 and 4.218. The fourth column shows the standard deviation; a measure of how dispersed the data is in relation to the mean. According to Table 2, the standard deviation is 0.821 for EI, 0.867 for push factors, 0.773 for pull factors and 0.841 for mooring factors. The standard deviations from these results indicate that the data are clustered around the mean and that the mean is a good representation of the data.

Table 3: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis (n = 913)

		EI
Push factors	Pearson Correlation	.147
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Pull factors	Pearson Correlation	.196**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
Mooring factors	Pearson Correlation	.232**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

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

Table 3 shows the correlation between variables. The result reveals that there are significant positive correlations between EI and pull factors ($r=0.196$, $p<0.05$), and EI and mooring factors ($r=0.232$, $p<0.05$). However, the relationship between EI and push factors ($r=0.147$, $p>0.05$) is positive but not significant.

**Table 4: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis between push, and pull mooring factors and EI**

Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.425 ^a	.181	.173	.38761

a Predictors: (Constant), push, pull, mooring

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.111	3	3.037	17.256	.000 ^b
	Residual	159.663	909	.176		
	Total	168.774	912			

a Predictors: (Constant), push, pull, mooring

b. Dependent Variable: EI

Coefficients

		Unstandardised Coefficient		Standardised Coefficient	t	Sig.
Model		Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.782	.153		5.111	.000
	Push	.077	.039	.071	1.974	.112
	Pull	.301	.034	.311	8.853	.000
	Mooring	.438	.048	.428	9.125	.000

a. Dependent Variable: EI

Multiple regression analysis, as shown in Table 4, was used to examine the extent of influence of the independent variables (push factors, pull factors and mooring factors) on EI. In general, the results provide some support for the hypothesis as the entire push-pull-mooring model has an adjusted R^2 value of 0.173. This means that collectively, the fitted model and its predictor variables explain approximately 17.3 per cent of the variance in EI. Also, the regression model fits the data at the 0.05 level of significance and accurately depicts the relationships between the dependent and predictor variables (see F-value = 17.256, $p=0.000$). However, only the pull



factors ($\beta = 0.301$, $p < 0.05$) and the mooring factors ($\beta = 0.438$, $p < 0.05$) had a significant positive influence on EI. In contrast, the push factors ($\beta = 0.077$, $p > 0.05$) did not significantly influence EI.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study was designed to examine the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions (EI) using the push-pull-mooring theory of migration. Findings from the results show that the model is a good fit and thus, justifies the inclusion of many predictors of EI in one model. Also, findings from the study show that while the pull factors and mooring factors significantly and positively influence EI, the push factors have no significant influence on EI. In addition, an examination of the correlation table (see Table 3) suggests that the pull and mooring factors are more strongly related to EI than the push factors. Thus, it appears that among the individuals surveyed in this study, market opportunity, autonomy/independence, and search for profit moderated by perceived desirability, self-efficacy, and risk tolerance are a more important predictor of their EI than dissatisfaction with life and democracy, social recognition and poor academic grades. This is in line with the findings/opinion of Martinez-Canas *et al.* (2023), Kirkwood (2009); and Berke-Berga *et al.* (2021). Specifically, Martinez-Canas *et al.* (2023) opined that the attractiveness of pull factors such as market opportunity, independence and profit motives strongly influence individuals' intentions to become entrepreneurs or self-employed. They explained that the tendency to be pulled into entrepreneurship by the lure of independence, opportunity availability and profit motives is usually stronger than the push of dissatisfaction and/or social recognition.

Also, of the two variables (pull factors and mooring factors) with a significant positive influence on EI, the mooring factors (perceived desirability, self-efficacy, and risk tolerance) had the stronger influence. This finding is consistent with previous studies like Monoarfa *et al.* (2023) and Ojiaku *et al.* (2018). It emphasises the importance of the mooring factors in facilitating or impeding entrepreneurial decisions. In support of this finding, Monoarfa *et al.* (2023) opined that the mooring factors such as finance availability, government support, perceived risk tolerance and self-efficacy are stronger predictors of entrepreneurial intentions as these variables can speed up or inhibit individuals' decision to engage in entrepreneurship. Taking the availability of finance for instance, they explained that an individual will be strongly encouraged to engage in entrepreneurship if finance is available as he or she will have the wherewithal to exploit available market opportunities in pursuit of profit. A position supported by Ojiaku *et al.* (2018).



IMPLICATION FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Given that final year students are a critical mass who are about to exit the university and enter the job market, the findings of this study have several implications for policy and practice. For instance, the pull factors – such as profit objectives, personal fulfilment, autonomy, independence, and a sense of accomplishment – are intrinsic to an individual, therefore emphasising them is crucial to igniting the inner drive to engage in entrepreneurship. This should be done via entrepreneurship education that goes beyond in-class teaching to incorporate experiential and discovery learning. Policies on entrepreneurship education should be geared towards developing the internal desire to engage in entrepreneurship. The policies should include encouraging students to take an active part in creating and running small businesses on campus and deliberate exposure of students to successful entrepreneurs both in their immediate environment and beyond by way of internships, coaching, mentorship, entrepreneurial simulations and invitation of such entrepreneurs to deliver lectures on campuses. These will not only aid the activation of entrepreneurial intent but will ensure the students acquire the skills, experience and critical competencies needed to bridge the intention-startup gap.

Also, as a matter of economic importance, the government should create a bouquet of support for young graduates who want to engage in entrepreneurship. This should include but not limited to creating a supportive legal framework, reducing bureaucratic red tape (simplifying and streamlining the process of starting and running a business), investing in education and training for young entrepreneurs, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship (public awareness campaigns; recognizing and celebrating the contributions of entrepreneurs), stimulating networking and collaboration (encouraging accelerators and incubators that provide mentorship, training and resources to early-stage start-ups), and provision of access to funding (grants, loans and other financial incentives). To generally engage and benefit from the pull-mooring effect on entrepreneurial intentions, the government at all levels should promote policies that are entrepreneurship-friendly and encourage innovation and small venture start-ups by young people to stimulate their intention to become entrepreneurs and self-employed.

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