

Entrepreneurship and self-sustainability in Nigeria

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Abstract

The need for this study arose from the worrisome state of unemployment in the country and the obvious neglect of the direct effect of entrepreneurship to entrepreneurs. The study therefore, attempts to ascertain the possible relationship between entrepreneurship and self sustainability in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey design and the six Geo-political zones of the country; south-east, south-south, south-west, north central, north east and north west constituted the population for the study from which a purposive sample of ten (10) entrepreneurs from each zone was taken with particular reference to those that have survived the five (5) years of existence and the total was 60. Data so collected was presented in tabular form and analyzed. The Friedman's Chi-square was instrumental in the test of the hypothesis formulated and the result showed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship and self-sustainability in Nigeria. The study therefore, recommended that considering the pivotal role that entrepreneurship plays in enhancing self-sustainability in the economy, all hands must be on desk to encourage and support entrepreneurial activities in order to curb the high level menace of unemployment rate as well as provide a supporting ground for economic sustainability of the country.

Introduction

Governments at various levels in Africa and Nigeria in particular have seemingly failed in providing gainful employment for her teeming populace. Although, Nigeria as a country has numerous business and investment potentials due to the abundant, vibrant and dynamic human and natural resources it possesses. Tapping these resources require the ability to identify potentially useful and economically viable fields of endeavors. These human and natural resources notwithstanding, Nigeria is still one of the poorest countries in the world and has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in sub-Sahara Africa.

Many other countries have been able to energize and transform entrepreneurship sub-sector to such a vibrant one that they have been able to reduce to the barest minimum their unemployment and poverty level because of the immense contribution of the sub-sector to their economic growth and development, but such cannot be said of Nigeria. In respect of the above sad and deplorable situation, the government has done little to reduce the misery and frustrations of the citizenry. This has foisted a state of hopelessness on majority of young people who have resorted to any means including crime to succeed in life. They resort to vices because they are not gainfully engaged. In other words, they are unemployed; not because they lack the qualification but because the system has been crippled politically, economically, socio-culturally and even religiously.

People especially youths and graduates became displaced economically (Kuratko, 2009), a situation that clearly negates the Millennium Development Goals for 2015, I and II: to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and to halve the proportion of people suffering from hunger respectively. This is the obvious reason why so much emphasis have been shifted to entrepreneurship since it has become apparent that government alone cannot cater for the employment needs of her citizenry. To this effect, the government of Nigeria has embarked on

numerous programs and policies such as YOU-WIN, establishment of entrepreneurship centres in the six geo-political zones in the country, SMEDAN, NEEDS, graduate internship programs, national directorate of employment etcetera aimed at assisting young school leavers to acquire necessary resources to enable them start their own businesses and thus be self-sustainable.

However, a cursory look at Nigeria indicates that the country lacks entrepreneurship ability or that government entrepreneurship oriented policies are not effective. Ugwu (2006) argues that most entrepreneurship related policies and programs in Nigeria fall short of appropriate development frameworks. This according to analysts is as a result and obvious neglect of entrepreneurship development programmes in the country. But evidences from the developed societies show a positive relationship between entrepreneurship development and self-sustainability. It is on the strength of the foregoing that this paper is set to examine entrepreneurship as a means for self sustainability in the Nigerian economy. The paper is therefore structured into five sections viz; section I: introduction, section II: literature review, section III: methodology, section IV: results and discussions and section V: conclusion.

Literature review

The Concept of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship like every other concept in the social and management services have defied any universally acceptable definition. Various scholars have offered diverse definitions based on their backgrounds, experiences and cultures. Binks and Vak (1990) defined entrepreneurship as “an unrehearsed combination of economic resources instigated by the uncertain prospect of temporary monopoly profit. Tijani- Alawiye (2004) defines entrepreneurs as adding to the stock of existing small, medium and big enterprises, nurture them to growth and sustain them, with a view to achieving broad socio-economic developmental goals. One of these goals is sustaining employment which is a key to self-sustainability.

In this wise, Bennell (2000) maintains that governments, Non-Governmental Organisations and international bodies seeking to improve youth livelihoods could best pursue their empowerment objective by tapping into the dynamism of young people and build on their strong spirit of risk through entrepreneurship development. Shane (2003) described entrepreneurship as the act of being an entrepreneur. According to him, the word entrepreneur which is a French word means “one who undertakes innovations, finance and business acumen in an effort to transform innovations into economic goods”. He further continued that the result of entrepreneurship may be a new organization or a part of revitalizing mature organization in response to perceived opportunity. Entrepreneurship therefore assumes a societal leadership role of spearheading the society’s allocation of scarce productive resources amongst competing needs.

Thus, entrepreneurship activities and innovative ingenuity in Nigeria have developed enterprises in the following areas. Agricultural/agro-allied activities where there are foodstuffs, restaurants, fast food vending etc. In the area of solid minerals, there are quarrying, germ stone cutting/polishing and crushing engineering. In the area of information and telecom business, there are manufacturing and repairs of GSM accessories and the printing and selling of Recharge cards. In hospitality and tourism business, there are hotels, accommodation, resorts centres, film and home video production; in oil and gas business, there are construction and maintenance of pipelines, drilling, refining by products. In the area of environmental and waste management business, there is refuse collection/disposal, recycling, and drainage/sewage construction job. In the area of financial banking services, there is banking, insurance and stock trading. In engineering and fabrication work, there are machines and tools fabrications. There is also the building and construction, where there are plan and design services and material sourcing (Agbeze, 2012).

From the above elaboration, it will be deduced that, entrepreneurship is the sole activity that brings productive resources together to create an output whose value is hoped to exceed the cost of all the productive resources. It then follows that, when the value of output indeed exceeds the cost of

resources used, profit is made and wealth is created thereby enhancing the living standard of the people.

Given the benefits entrepreneurship creates for the society and the existing entrepreneurship base in Nigeria, the government in recent time has embarked upon certain programmes and policies aimed at encouraging entrepreneurship development in the country.

Selected policy programmes aimed at entrepreneurship development in Nigeria

The reality of the importance of entrepreneurship to society socio- economic development has led various levels of government in Nigeria to institute measures aim at enhancing entrepreneurial activities. These programmes according to Ohuremi and Gbenda, (2011) and (Sansi, 2003) are categories into two:

1. Entrepreneurship development programmes and institutions and
2. Finance and micro programmes and institutions.

The first category comprise policies and programmes aimed at stimulating developing and enhancing the capacities of entrepreneurs, while the second category consists of measures aimed at providing stress- free credit facilities for entrepreneurs. They are further shown in the table below:

Table 1: Policy Programmes aimed at Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria

S/No	PROGRAMME	OBJECTIVE	REMARKS
1	Industrial Development Centre's (IDCS)	Provision of extension services to SMEs in project appraisal and training	Lack of adequate equipment and funding
2	Small scale industries credit scheme (SSICS)	Set up to provide technical financial support for the SMEs	Inadequate manpower to monitor advances leading to repayment default
3	The Nigerian industrial development bank (NIDB)	Designed to provide medium / long term loans for financing of industrial activities	Financial and administrative constraints and currently embroiled in merge controversy.
4	The Nigerian bank for commerce and industry	Set up to provide financial services to indigenous business community and to administer the SME 1 World Bank Loan Scheme.	The bank suffered operational problems, which resulted into a state of insolvency
5	National directorates of employment (NDE)	Responsible for vocational skills development and small scale enterprises programmes designed to combat unemployment	Lack of commitment by the different tiers of government to its operations.
6	National Economic reconstruction fund (NERFUN)	Fill in the gap in any observed inadequacies in the provision of medium to long term financing to small and medium scale industrial enterprises	Currently embroiled in merger controversy.
7	Family economic advancement programme (FEAP)	Established to provide micro facilities for entrepreneurs.	Discontinued due to change in government
8	People's Bank	Designed to make banking service more accessible and extend credit to the poor.	Discontinued due to change in government
9	Community Bank	Designed to make banking credit accessible to the active poor.	Discontinued and substituted with Microfinance Banks
10	Better Life programmes/ family support programme (BLP/FSP)	Aimed at sensitizing and providing micro-credit facilities for women entrepreneurs.	Discontinued due to change in government

11	Small and medium enterprises development agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)	Established to Promote the Development of the MSME sector of the Nigerian Economy	The impact is not felt at all levels of societal strata.
12	Small and Medium Enterprise equity Investment Scheme	To provide credit facilities for small and medium entrepreneurs	Lack of national spread in implementation
13	Micro Finance Banks	Established to provide finance for the active poor in the population	Lack of national spread and high interest rate.

On the whole, the aggregate goals of these policies and programmes include amongst others, stimulation of economic development, empowerment of the disadvantaged portion of the population, employment generation and invariably, poverty reduction etc.

The major strands emerge from the remarks about the policy programmes on the table: the first strand encapsulates programmes that are not effective in their roles designed for them. The programmes that fall in the first strand have fallen victim of any or a combination of the following: discontinuation as a result of change in government, merger of related programmes as in the case of the merger of National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), and the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry (NBCI) into Bank of industry (BOI), or outright replacement with new programmes. A clear example is found in the recent replacement of community banks with Microfinance Bank.

The second strand that emerges from the remarks comprises policy programmes that are not performing effectively. For example, Sanusi (2003) as quoted in Oluremi and Gbenda (2011), in his appraisal of some government initiations in the area of entrepreneurship development, contends that most of the programmes are not well designed or lack adequate recourses both human and material, for them to meet the desired needs.

Peculiar factors affecting entrepreneurship in nigeria

Entrepreneurship researchers such as Thoritom (1999): public policies, Dobbin and Dowd (1997): regulations and policies; Baumol (1990): and physical infrastructure; Agboli and Ukanegbu (2006) have identified various environmental factors which affect the operations of entrepreneurship which some have been tagged external factors, principal among the factors identified are influence of firms, influence of markets etc. These they classified and presented as perceptions of Nigerian entrepreneurs to infrastructure services.

Table 2: Perceptions of Nigerian Entrepreneurs to Infrastructure Services

S/N	Infrastructure	Major problem %
1	Electricity	92
2	Water	85
3	Tarred roads	79
4	Waste	73
5	Telecommunication	69
6	Security (police)	66
7	Trucking services	51
8	Postal service	27
9	Air freight service	12

In a related development, the World Bank (2005), as part of its finding in a study on doing Business across the globe states that:

- ❖ Business in poor countries faces much large regulatory burdens than those in rich countries. They fall 3 times the administrative cost and nearly twice with them bureaucratic

procedures and delays associated with them and they have favor than half the protective's of property agents of rich countries.

- ❖ Heavy regulation and weak property rights exclude the poor from doing business. In poor countries 40% if the economy is informed. Women, young and low- skilled workers are hurt.

Idehen (2007, April 26), an industrialist contends that without doubt, the greatest challenge that our business and others in Nigeria are facing is inadequate infrastructure of course, a lot of people have explained how lack of infrastructure greatly affects business. But the truth remains that the relevant agencies of government have no idea how monstrous the problem is. In our transport division, we spend a lot of money whenever our vehicle travels to other parts of the country, because of the very bad state of the roads. Power supply is the worst. The money we spend on acquisition and maintenance of generators can start a business of its own and employ a lot of people.

Some empirical evidences on the link between unemployment and entrepreneurship

That unemployment is linked to entrepreneurship dates back at least to Oxenfeldt (1943), who pointed out that individuals confronted with unemployment and low prospects for wage employment turn to self-employment as a viable alternative. This was an extension of Knight's view that individuals make a decision among three states - unemployment, self-employment and employment. The actual decision is shaped by the relative prices of these three activities but there was a clear prediction that entrepreneurship would be positively related to unemployment. However, as Storey (1991) documents, the empirical evidence linking unemployment and entrepreneurship is fraught with ambiguities. While some studies find that greater unemployment serves as a catalyst for start-up activity (Reynolds, Miller and Makai, 1995; Reynolds, Storey and Westhead, 1994; Hamilton, 1989; Highfield and Smiley, 1987, and Yamawaki, 1990; Evans and Leighton, 1989 and 1990), still others have found that unemployment reduces the amount of entrepreneurial activity (Audretsch and Fritsch, 1994; Audretsch, 1995).

On the other hand, why should an increased amount of entrepreneurial activity impact unemployment? One approach to address this question can be inferred from the literature on Gibrat's Law. Gibrat's Law asserts that firm growth is independent of size. Sutton (1997) interprets "Gibrat's Legacy", as "The probability that the next opportunity taken up by any particular active firm is proportional to the current size of the firm." An important implication of Gibrat's Law is that shifting employment from large to small enterprises should have no impact on total employment, since the expected growth rates of both types of firms are identical. Thus, a restructuring of the economy away from large enterprises and towards small ones should have no impact on the unemployment rate.

However, there is strong and systematic empirical evidence suggesting that, in fact, Gibrat's Law does not hold across a broad spectrum of firm sizes. Two comprehensive and exhaustive compilations (Sutton, 1997; and Caves, 1998) of studies relating firm size to growth have produced what Geroski (1995) terms as a stylized fact that smaller firms have higher growth rates than their larger counterparts. Beginning with the pioneering studies by Evans (1987a and 1987b) and Hall (1987), along with Dunne, Roberts, and Samuelson (1988 and 1989), a central finding of this literature is that firm growth is negatively related to firm size and age. These findings have been confirmed in virtually every subsequent study undertaken, despite differences in country, time period, industry, and methodology used.

Evans and Leighton (1990) found that unemployment is positively associated with greater propensity to start a new firm. Many other studies establish that greater unemployment serves as a catalyst for startup activity (Reynolds, Miller and Makai, 1995; Reynolds, Storey and Westhead, 1994). Anyadike, Emeh and Ukah (2012), researched on entrepreneurship development and employment generation in Nigeria: problems and prospects, they found out that the major problems of entrepreneurship in generating employment in Nigeria include inadequate working capital, low

standard of education and inadequate training among others. In a similar research by Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjiye (2011) on entrepreneurship development; a panacea for unemployment reduction in Nigeria, using the Ordinary Least Squares econometrics technique. The empirical result shows that variations in industrial production are caused by unemployment rate.

From the review of available literature on the subject matter under context, it is very pertinent at this point in time for a study like this; hence it is most likely to create a positive impact on the entrepreneurial landscape of Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employed a survey design with the six (6) Geo-political Zones of Nigeria constituting the population of the study. A sample of 10 entrepreneurs from each geo-political zone which totaled 60 was taken. The sample was purposive in nature since the study focused on entrepreneurs that have been in existence for at least 5 years. The research used both primary and secondary sources of data but primary source data was the main data used for data analysis. The data were collected using a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire, administered to selected entrepreneurs across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. The Chi-Square statistic with the aid of the statistical package for social science (SPSS) will be used for testing the hypothesis. In order to confirm the contributions of entrepreneurship to sustainability of the Nigerian citizenry, we had postulated the following hypothesis:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between entrepreneurship and self sustainability in Nigeria.

Ha₁: There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship and self sustainability in Nigeria.

Results and discussions

Table 3: Responses as to the Relationship between Entrepreneurship and Self Sustainability in Nigeria

	Assertions	SA	A	U	SD	DA
1	Your ability to cater for the basic things of life and even more can be attributed to your involvement in entrepreneurial activities.	32	20	2	4	2
2	Entrepreneurship provides owners with sufficient wage employment	15	37	1	2	5
3	The educational level of owners can be attributed to their involvement in entrepreneurial activities	16	29	3	3	7
4	Entrepreneurs in Nigeria can be considered to be above the poverty line considering the high level of poverty in the country	23	28	2	3	4

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 3 shows that, on the assertion of whether the ability of entrepreneurs to cater for the basic things can be attributed to their involvement in entrepreneurship, 32 respondents representing 53.3 percent strongly agreed to this assertion, 20 respondents representing 33.3 percent also agreed to this assertion, 2 respondents representing 3.3 per cent were undecided on the issue, 4 respondents representing 6.7 strongly disagreed that their ability to cater for the basic things of life can be attributed to their involvement in entrepreneurship and 2 respondents representing 3.3 percent disagreed on the issue.

On the issue on whether entrepreneurship provides owners with sufficient wage employment, 15 respondents representing 25 per cent of the total respondents strongly agreed to the assertion, 37 respondents representing 61.7 per cent also agreed to this assertion, 1 respondent representing 1.7 per cent was undecided on the issue, 2 respondents representing 3.3 per cent strongly disagreed that entrepreneurship provides owners with sufficient wage employment and 5 respondents representing 8.3 per cent disagreed to this assertion.

On the issue on whether the educational level of owners can be attributed to their involvement in entrepreneurial activities, 18 respondents representing 30 per cent of the total respondents strongly agreed to this assertion, 29 respondents representing 48.3 per cent agreed to this assertion, 3 respondents representing 5 per cent were undecided on the issue, 3 respondents representing 5 per cent of the respondents strongly disagreed that the educational level of owners can be attributed to their involvement in entrepreneurial activities and 7 respondents representing 11.7 per cent disagreed to this assertion.

On the issue on whether entrepreneurs in Nigeria can be considered to be above the poverty line considering the high level of poverty in the country, 23 respondents representing 38.3 per cent of the total respondents strongly agreed to this assertion, 28 respondents representing 46.7 per cent agreed to this assertion, 2 respondents representing 3.3 per cent were undecided on the issue, 3 respondents representing 5 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that entrepreneurs in Nigeria can be considered to be above the poverty line and 4 respondents representing 6.7 per cent disagreed to this assertion.

The responses gotten above show that, majority of the respondents agree to the assertions raised which is a clear pointer to the fact that, entrepreneurship has the potentialities of ensuring self sustainability amongst the teeming Nigeria populace.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	118.703 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	72.497	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	47.519	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	60		

The chi-square test result shows a significant relationship between entrepreneurship and self sustainability (0.000). This further confirms the result gotten from responses of entrepreneurs that constituted the population of the study.

Conclusion

The state of the nation and the government are the crucial elements to the development of entrepreneurship of any country. The role of each differs widely on a global scale due to disparities in the local business environments. In a developing economy like ours where the poverty level is much high as a result of unemployment ratio, there is an urgent need to support the efforts of Nigerians to build an integrated and sustaining national economy. This will go a long way in integrating the economy into a global economy and enhance industrial competitiveness that generates income and employment to eradicate poverty. Given the structural nature of our economy, which is over-dependent on oil, poses a serious problem of fluctuations in the international oil market most likely to cause more harm if the concept of entrepreneurship is not seriously engaged in the other sectors of the economy. However the provision of basic infrastructures must be emphasized.

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Appendix 1

		SufficientWageEmployment					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	
	Strongly Agree	15	17	0	0	0	32
	Agree	100.0%	45.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	53.3%
Cater For Basic Needs	Agree	0	20	0	0	0	20
		0.0%	54.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
	Undecided	0	0	1	1	0	2
		0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	50.0%	0.0%	3.3%
	Strongly	0	0	0	1	3	4

	Disagree	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	60.0%	6.7%
	Disagree	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	40.0%	3.3%
		15	37	1	2	5	60
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	118.703 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	72.497	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	47.519	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. 21 cells (84.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval Pearson's R	.897	.027	15.494	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal Spearman Correlation	.725	.063	8.006	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases	60			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

		Educational Level					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	
Cater For Basic Needs	Strongly Agree	18	14	0	0	0	32
		100.0%	48.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	53.3%
	Agree	0	15	3	2	0	20
		0.0%	51.7%	100.0%	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%
	Undecided	0	0	0	1	1	2
	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	14.3%	3.3%	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0	4	4
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	57.1%	6.7%
	Disagree	0	0	0	0	2	2
		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	3.3%
Total		18	29	3	3	7	60
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	88.413 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	75.682	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	46.002	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. 21 cells (84.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .10.

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval Pearson's R	.883	.028	14.327	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal Spearman Correlation	.788	.049	9.744	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases	60			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.

Cater For Basic Needs * Above Poverty Line Cross tabulation

		AbovePovertyLine					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	
Cater For Basic Needs	Strongly Agree	23 100.0%	9 32.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	32 53.3%
	Agree	0 0.0%	19 67.9%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	20 33.3%
	Undecided	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 50.0%	1 33.3%	0 0.0%	2 3.3%
	Strongly Disagree	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 66.7%	2 50.0%	4 6.7%
	Disagree	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 50.0%	2 3.3%
	Total	23 100.0%	28 100.0%	2 100.0%	3 100.0%	4 100.0%	60 100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	118.728 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	85.748	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	50.756	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	60		

a. 21 cells (84.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.928	.021	18.897	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.831	.051	11.382	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases		60			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

c. Based on normal approximation.