

Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition as a Facilitator of Self-Employability among Nigerian Youths

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Abstract: Objective of this research is to present argument in favor of the concept of entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a panacea for unemployment among youths in Nigeria. Based on a conceptual analysis, the study examines strategic industries in which youths should focus efforts in, in developing innovative skills that can stimulate self-employment, create jobs and enhance economic growth and development. The outcome from this research will guide efforts of youths and government towards strategic areas that can promote entrepreneurial practices in Nigeria. The implication of the research to Nigerian youth showed that there are presently strategic industrial sector in Nigeria that contribute to the GDP besides the Oil Sector. The researcher recommended among other things that facilitators of entrepreneurial skill training and workshop program, must ensure that skill being taught to the youth match the requirements of the strategic industries in Nigeria.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial skill acquisition, Entrepreneurship Self-Employment, Unemployment, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

In the world today, unemployment remains one of the toughest nut to crack and the Nigerian economy is not left out. Claudia, Christoph, Mariangels and Diego (2009), in their study cited ILO (2008) and UN (2007), respectively that

“today’s world contains an estimated 1.2 billion young people aged between 15 and 24 years (an increase of 17% compared to 1995), that is 24.7% of the world’s working-age population and about 87% of them live in developing economies.” Information from the

International Labour Organisation (ILO) on whose recommendation most countries in the world unemployment methodology is based including Nigeria, asserts that 201 million people globally are unemployed and that this may rise to 219 million by 2019. "With 8 million Nigerians technically unemployed (not including the remaining 14.4million underemployed), this means four percent of the world's unemployed population are Nigerians (punchng, 2017). The data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2004 report revealed that youth (18-30) make up nearly half (47 per cent) of the world unemployed population. According to Odia and Odia, (2013) the unemployment rate of Nigeria was put at about 19.7% above world average of 14.2% by the World Bank, with 41.6% unemployment rate reported for youth in the 18 to 24 years age bracket. Lemo (2013) opined that, given the Nigerian youth unemployment situation, entrepreneurship remains the viable option to become self-employed, reduce unemployment, poverty and empower the youths to develop their businesses, pursue their dreams and contribute to overall productive capacity and national economic growth and development. Therefore entrepreneurial skill acquisition has become an essential bail out for youth self employability and the attainment of economic development (Musa, Wuritka & Zipporah, 2005). Existing literature such as Omoruyi and Osunde, (2004), Maigida, Saba and Namkere (2013), Paul, (2017), have discussed entrepreneurial skill acquisition from a concept exposition perspective without necessarily pointing out the strategic industries of the Nigerian economy which the youth can acquire necessary entrepreneurial skills in for facilitating their self-

employability. In this research work entrepreneurial skill acquisition is defined as acquiring knowledge and expertise in skills that enhance the entrepreneur's personal livelihood through their involvement in enduring business startups, that can further enhance employment opportunities, and promoting economic development and growth. Therefore this research is focused on examining entrepreneurial skill acquisition as a facilitator of self-employability among Nigerian youth.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition

According to Maigida, Saba and Namkere (2013), private sector is what drives the world today, and economic prosperity in the 21st century needs the functioning of entrepreneurial skill. Entrepreneurial skill acquisition can be defined as not just about acquiring skill but acquiring knowledge and driving towards enterprise in skills that enhance personal livelihood through enduring business startups, enhancing employment opportunities, and promoting economic development and growth.

According to Nkechi, EJ and Okechukwu (2012) Entrepreneurial success depends on an entrepreneurial ability to identify opportunity in the environment, take initiatives towards desirable change and ensure value based solution in the market place. Uzochuwu, Lilian and Chidiebere (2015), Tijani-Alawiye (2004), observed that entrepreneurs successfully run innovative enterprises, nurture them to grow and sustain them, with a view to achieving broad socio-economic development goals. In essence entrepreneurs through entrepreneurial development such as in skill acquisition

create job opportunities or become self-employed. Entrepreneurial skill acquisition is the ability to learn or acquire entrepreneurial skills.

2.1.2 Entrepreneurial Skill Acquisition and Self Employability in Nigeria

Entrepreneurial Skill acquisition, is a strong force in pushing self-employability. This has become among other things part of the policy thrust of the Nigerian Government. In order to promote self-employability and reducing high unemployment rate among Nigerian youth entrepreneurial programmes was established in the country by former President Olusegun Obasanjo through the establishment of National Empowerment and Development Strategy (Needs), while the Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DEFRI), the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), and the People's Bank of Nigeria was established under the former government of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babaangida, (Maigida, Saba & Namkere, 2013). According to Odia and Odia (2013), "entrepreneurial skills acquisition can be obtained through various avenues such as: attending entrepreneurial training classes, development programmes, seminars, workshops, etc. universities, job rotation, special (intensive) training, article ship or apprenticeship, organizational learning, research and development Institutions, consultants, national and international agencies and bodies ,non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional bodies." That is to say once these training have been obtained by the Nigerian youth from the various avenues as stated above this would help them acquire the necessary skill to be self-employed. Ogundele, Akingbade and Akinlabi (2012), cited

Mullins (2010), that "training is the process of systematically acquiring job related knowledge, skill and attitude in order to perform with effectiveness and efficiency specific tasks in an organization." Maigida, Saba and Namkere (2013), Competencies of individual's entrepreneurial skill acquisition in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are tailored in a way that it will bring self-employability, employment generation and economic self-sufficiency to Nigerian youths. Through short and long-term training, many African countries including Nigeria have been made to understand that there is no substitute for training in TVET as it is necessary for the alleviation of poverty and to foster self-employability through skill acquisition. In describing TVET it is any form of education whose primary purpose set Nigerian youth towards gainful employment in a going concern. It was revealed through a study of entrepreneurship development and growth of enterprises in Nigeria, that several policy interventions in Nigeria that were aimed at improving entrepreneurship development via small and medium scale enterprises have not been successful but instead in the areas where building in-country entrepreneurial capacity should have existed, entrepreneurs have been found to be distribution agents of imported products (Ebiringa 2012). There is need for the government and organized private sector to employ more efforts to support entrepreneurial training programs in tertiary education system.

On the need to reduce unemployment through entrepreneurship in Pakistan. It was shown that the regression results reflected high rate of unemployment associating with low level of

entrepreneurial development in economy of Pakistan, (Asad, Ali & Islam 2014). Entrepreneurial training and education employs Nigerian youth to become jobs creator rather than job seekers. It also equips them with skills for constant improvement and innovations in their undertaken. The skill for entrepreneurial acquisition leading to self-employability can be classified into three main areas such as; Technical skills, Business management, Personal entrepreneurial skills. Writing, listening, oral presentation, organizing, coaching, being a team player, and technical know-how are entailed in the technical skills. While starting, developing and managing an enterprise are what constitute the area of business management skills. And Skills such as inner control (discipline), risk-taking, being innovative, being change-oriented, being persistent, and being a visionary leader among others, makes up the personal entrepreneurial skills, which is what also differentiates an entrepreneur from a manager, (Ogundele, Akingbade & Akinlabi). In the work of Maigida, Saba & Namkere (2013) and Sekenu (2004). The only way to empower the youth is to encourage them in acquiring adequate and qualitative entrepreneurial skill in order to make them job creators and self-employed. Maigida, Saba and Namkere, further opined that entrepreneurship skills is a platform that helps the youth acquire the mind set and know-how tailored towards successfully being self- employed or having a viable career option.

2.1.3 Identifying Strategic Industries in Nigeria Economy

According to National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2016), entrepreneurial skill acquisition can be acquired from

sectors strategic to the Nigerian economy. But over the years scholars, and some facilitators of entrepreneurial skill acquisition have excessively stream lined this skill to be a common activity and a basic skill that any individual interested in it can be given training without having the full knowledge whether or not such a skill has been identified as part of a tiny, cottage, small, medium or large scale strategic industry within the Nigerian economy. Skills like in, hairdressing, make-up artistry, fashion designing, shoe-making, public speaking, food processing, catering services, fish farming e.tc. are most of the times taking for granted with the perception that it is too small to be classified as strategic, and that it is just a skill merely for meeting personal needs or immediate family needs, limiting its importance and deemphasizing the need for youth to take seriously and becoming entrepreneurial in such skills relating to a tiny, cottage, small, medium or large scale industry strategic to the Nigerian economy and a means for self-employability, contributing to the nations GDP and growing the economy. Strategic industry in Nigeria's economy is viewed as industries that contribute the most to Nigeria's GDP, consistently over the past, say 5 years (NBS). Nigeria is the 10th largest producer of oil in the world, and third in Africa. The oil sector supplies 95% of foreign exchange earnings and over 90% of total exports. Despite all of these there are still some strategic industries in the Nigerian economy that have contributed to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and are surviving in the prevailing recession, in which the Nigerian youth can acquire entrepreneurial skill and become self-employed. The International Monetary

Fund (2016) listed Nigeria, among other countries of the world, as an emerging market and developing economy. Nigeria's Economic Recovery Growth Plan (ERGP), (2017), considers the need for youth to build and acquire skill interventions, producing on made in Nigeria goods in areas such as youth dominated sectors which are in the, agriculture, industry, and services which will also improve growth and diversification of the economy through their acquired skills in these sectors, thus making themselves entrepreneurial

and self-employed, further reducing unemployment and under-employment in the nation.

Methodology

Secondary source was used as the means for data collection, from records of the National Bureau of Statistics web site in the past 5years showing the strategic industries identified in Nigeria and its contributions to GDP. These data are what constitute table 1, 2, 3 and 4 below.

Table 1 The Strategic Industries In Nigeria

Ind. Type	Agriculture	Industry	Services
S/N			
1	Crop Production	Mining And Quarrying	Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply
2	Livestock Production	Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas	Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation
3	Forestry	Coal Mining	Trade
4	Fishing	Metal Ores	Construction
5		Quarrying and Other Mining	Accommodation and Food Services
6		Oil Refining	Transportation And Storage
7		Cement	Road Transport
8		Food, Beverage and Tobacco	Rail Transport And Pipelines
9		Textile, Apparel and Footwear	Water Transport
10		Wood and Wood Products	Air Transport
11		Pulp, Paper and Paper Product	Transport Services
12		Chemical and Pharmaceutical Products	Post and Courier Services
13		Non-Metallic Product	Information and Communication
14		Plastic and Rubber Products	Telecommunication and Information Services
15		Electrical And Electrical	Publishing
16		Basic Metal, Iron and Steel	Motion Picture and Sound, Recording
17		Motor Vehicles and Assemble	Broadcasting
18		Other Manufacturing	Arts Entertainment and Recreation
19			Finance and Insurance Services

20			Financial Institutions
21			Insurance
22			Real Estate
23			Professional Scientific and Technical, Services
24			Administrative and Support Services
25			Public Administration
26			Education
27			Human Health and Social Services
28			Other Service Activities

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2012-2016)

According to the National Bureau of Statistics there are two major sectors in Nigeria and these sectors are; the oil sector and the non-oil sector. Table 1 shows industries that are available within the Nigerian economy in the non-oil sector and how these industries are

very strategic to her economy through their annual contributes and growth to the GDP of the Nigerian economy. The strategic industries as given above are what the youth should look out for to acquire necessary skills in, in order to facilitate their self-employment

Table 2 Annual Growth Rate of The Two Major Sectors in Nigeria Economy

S/N	Major Sectors	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1.	Non-Oil Growth Rate	5.81	8.42	7.18	3.75	-0.22
2.	Oil Growth Rate	-4.95	-13.07	-1.32	-5.445	-13.65

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2012-2016)

In Table 2. above it reflects the GDP of the Nigerian economy which are from two major sources which includes the oil sector and the non-oil sector. Table 2 shows that the annual growth of this two major sectors reflects that in 2012 the non-oil experienced 5.81% annual growth rate, and in 2013 the annual growth rate was 8.42, and in 2014 the

annual growth reflected 7.18% and in 2015 the growth was 3.75 while in 2016 it was -0.22%, in comparing the non-oil sector to the performance of the oil growth the table shows that the non-oil sector performed better than the oil growth rate, even though both sectors experienced fluctuations.

Table 3. Annual Real Contributions Rate By Sector % Year On Year On

S\N	Non-Oil Sectors	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1	Agriculture	23.91	23.33	22.91	23.11	24.43
2	Industries	25.61	22.81	24.93	23.71	22.02
3	Services	50.48	53.86	52.16	53.18	53.55
	Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 4. Annual Real Growth Rate by Sector % Year on Year on

S/N	Non-Oil Sectors	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
1.	Agriculture	6.70	2.94	4.27	3.72	4.11
2.	Industries	2.43	2.16	6.76	-2.24	-8.53
3.	Services	3.97	8.38	6.85	4.78	-0.82

Source: National Bureau Of Statistics (2012-2016)

According to table 3 and table 4 respectively, it reflects that the non-oil sector comprises of three major sectors such as the Agricultural sector, the Industrial and the Service Sector. The annual real contributions and growth of these three major sectors to GDP in the past 5 years that is, from 2012-2016 in the table above. The table shows that all the three major sectors in the non-oil sector experienced ups and downs in their annual contributions to GDP over the past 5 years which also reflected in their growth rate. According to NBS (2012) one of the cause of the ups and downs in agriculture was as a result of floods. Agriculture in 2012 contributed to the annual GDP at 23.91%, in 2013 it reflected 22.33% in its annual contribution to GDP, in 2014 the annual contributions was 22.91%, in 2015 it had 23.11% as its annual contributions, while in 2016 it reflected 24.43%. Agriculture also experienced an annual growth rate of 6.70 % in 2012, 2.94% in 2013, 4.27% in 2014, 3.72% in 2015, and 4.11% in 2016.

The Industrial sector is another major sector that has so many strategic industries within it, the industrial sector like the agricultural sector has also experienced ups and downs in its contributions to the annual GDP of the Nigerian economy. In 2012 its annual contribution to the GDP was 25.61%, which was greater than that 2013 annual contributions which had 22.81% in 2013, it further contributed to the annual GDP at 24.93% in 2014, which is an increase in compared to the previous year 2013 and in 2015 the annual contribution to GDP was 23.71% which was a decreased compared to in 2014, while in 2016 its annual contribution was 22.02% which was a further decrease compared the previous year 2015. The industrial annual growth rate in 2012 experienced up to 2.43% growth , in 2013 it experienced 2.16% annual growth rate, in 2014 it experienced 6.76% annual growth rate ,in 2015 it experienced a negative growth rate of -2.24% , while in 2016 it experienced a negative growth rate of -

8.53%. Despite these fluctuations in the growth rate above the youth should see more than these fluctuations because these percentage of the annual contributions and growth rate is a pointer that there is more to be achieved and reflects more opportunity in among the activities within the industrial sector. The service industry, this is another strategic industry in the Nigerian economy as a result of its annual contributions to GDP, which cannot also be over looked even if there are fluctuations in its annual contributions. In 2012 the annual contributions to GDP was 50.48% which was higher in 2013 which projected 53.86% as its annual contribution to GDP. While in 2014 its annual contribution to GDP was 52.16% which reflects decrease in contribution to GDP compared to 2013, and in 2015 its annual contribution to GDP was 53.18% reflecting an increase compared to year 2014, while in 2016 the annual contribution recorded was 53.55% which was an increase compared to the previous year. Furthermore the annual growth of the service industry in 2012 experienced 3.97% annual growth rate, in 2013 the annual growth rate increase to 8.38%, and in 2014 the annual growth rate fell to 6.85%, and further decreased to 4.78% annual growth rate in 2015, while in 2016 it had a negative annual growth of -0.82%.

The Implication of the Research to Nigerian Youth

There are presently strategic industrial sector in Nigeria under the non- oil sector which also contributes to the GDP besides the Oil Sector. The non-oil sector comprises of sub-sectors such as Agricultural, Industrial and Service sectors.

In agriculture it is made up of four sub-activities, namely: Crop Production,

Livestock, Forestry and Fishing. These sub-activities are strategic to the agricultural sector so therefore youth should look into this sector to acquire skill to facilitate their self-employability in Nigeria.

In the industrial sector, there are 13 activities in the manufacturing and allied activities which makes up the category of industrial sector. It is comprised of Oil Refining, Cement, Food, Beverages and Tobacco; Textile, Apparel, and Footwear; Wood and Wood products; Pulp Paper and Paper products; Chemical and Pharmaceutical products; Non-metallic Products, Plastic and Rubber products, Electrical and Electronic, Basic Metal and Iron and Steel; Motor Vehicles and Assembly; and Other Manufacturing which was what drove the growth of this sector in different years within 2012 and 2016. Skills should therefore be acquired by youths in this sector to facilitate their self-employability which at a long run affects the annual growth rate of the manufacturing industry positively in Nigeria.

Furthermore within the service sector the annual contributions and annual growth to GDP were as a result of activities such as trade , construction, accommodation and food services, transportation and storage, information and communication , arts entertainment and recreation, finance and insurance services, real estate, professional scientific and technical e.tc. Therefore youths in Nigeria must endeavor to look at these activities within these sectors as they form the strategic service industry and acquire a skill in it to facilitate self-employability.

Conclusion

Every Nigerian youth stands the chance to be self-employed and must be

encourage not to take entrepreneurial skill acquisition for granted. As reflected in this work there are opportunities for youth in the non-oil sector of the Nigerian economy which is made up of major sectors with strategic industrial activities such as in the Agricultural, Industry and service sectors., and acquiring entrepreneurial skills in them will be the key in facilitating their self-employability. Youth must also endeavor to build in themselves the entrepreneurial traits and characteristics such as passion, perseverance, persistence and willingness to work hard which will give any individual what it takes to operate a successful going concern.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made on how to achieve entrepreneurial

skill acquisition as a facilitator of self-employability among Nigerian youths.

1. The government should establish more entrepreneurial training and workshop programs that would serve as a guide for the youth in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skill in other to facilitate their self-employability.
2. Government should ensure that the created entrepreneurial training and workshop fees are affordable.
3. Government should ensure that fair policies are put in place in other to encourage the youths involvement

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in the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills.

4. Facilitators of the entrepreneurial skill training and workshop program, must ensure that skill being taught to the youth match the requirements of the strategic industries.
5. Youth must be able to maintain entrepreneurial characteristics and traits so as to be successful.
6. Youth must read and seek for information so as to assist in their quest for entrepreneurial skills acquisition in a strategic industry within Nigeria.

By following the above recommendation vigorously and carefully by Nigerian youths and through support in various forms of encouragement from the government and facilitators in entrepreneurial skill centre, it would lead to mass self-employability.

Acknowledgements

Firstly we want to acknowledge God Almighty for the divine ideas and strength He gave to us to carry out this work and concluding it. Secondly we deeply want to thank Mr Ibidunni A. Stephen, a lecturer in the Department of Business Management, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, and Dr Vincent Efevbokhan, Lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering, Covenant University, Ota, Ogun State, we say thank you and God bless you.

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