

**EFFECTS OF YOUTHS' ENGAGEMENT IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS ON UNEMPLOYMENT IN IJEBU-EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OGUN STATE NIGERIA*****Samuel OlabodeAdeyemi**

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Abstract

This study is for the purpose of examining the effect of entrepreneurship skills embraced by the youths on unemployment in Ijebu-East Local Government (IELG). Ijebu-Imushin and Ogbera were selected randomly out of the five major towns in IELG namely Itele Ijebu, Ijebu Ife, Imobi, Ijebu Imushin and Ogbera from where 100 respondents whose ages ranges between 20 and 35 years were selected using the method of random sampling. Data were collected from the respondents using structured questionnaires due to the similarities in their socio-cultural characteristics. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The T-test result shows that entrepreneurship can be used to solve the challenge of unemployment in the study area since the hindering factors are not significant as shown the result of the chi square, which implies that, it can be used for the transformation of Nigeria into a technologically and economically developed country because of its abundant active youths that are full of vibrant innovative ideas. The author therefore recommended that, Government should design policies that are purposively for the developing and promotion of entrepreneurship skills.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship skills, engagement, youths

INTRODUCTION

The inability of the developing countries and sub-Saharan African nations to control the rate of growth of their population brought the challenges of food security, unemployment, poverty, infrastructural deficit, hunger and malnutrition which are associated with the emergence of different types of crimes. Taiwo and Agwu (2016) described poverty as a state whereby people are not able to provide basic needs in line with global standard. These problems made some countries to look in the direction of Agriculture which was found at one point to be the way out thereby came out with different Agricultural innovations such Operation feed the nation (OFN), Green revolution etc. Agriculture indeed came to their rescue, it became the highest employer of labour thereby reducing unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, reduction in crime due to the increase in income. However, despite backing up these Agricultural innovations with policies, they all failed due to so many factors, prominent among which were lack of planning and corruption. The mistake of abandoning Agriculture by the policy makers of the developing countries and sub-Saharan African nations such as the case in Nigeria due to the advent of crude oil and the inability of ageing farming population to overcome the problems of technology transfer and market forces, brought back their challenges in bigger magnitude and untold hardship on the citizens. Nigeria in her quest to find solutions to these problems involved the youths by introducing the idea of skills acquisition to the youths in the country which revolved around agricultural development due to the global believe that, for poverty and unemployment to be eradicated, Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) must be handled with all seriousness.

This is the process of learning something for the purpose of making a living from it which can be acquired from different sources such as the administrative field as in the areas of problem solving, resourcefulness, time management, education and customer service career as in leadership, classroom management, public speaking etc; and information technology as in coding languages, wireless modems and routers. Other importance of skills acquisition are

- It brings about effective financial management
- The strategic planning method will be enhanced
- The method of managing of crisis will be improved
- There will be improvement in the process of decision making
- There will be effective communication with the stakeholders.

The stage of youth is the position between childhood and the adulthood which made them to be special in that, they possess the characteristics of both childhood and adulthood. This is more pronounced in the rural areas whereby their youths doing what is strictly meant for the adulthood due to lack of options as can be seen in the areas of early marriages of the girls and the boys fending for themselves at their early ages which can be regarded as a survival strategy (Benelli, 2007). In Nigeria, it was found that about 61% of the youths' lives in the rural areas while less than 40% resides in the urban settlements (Onyoziri, 2002).

Unfortunately, the adoption of skills acquisition was short-lived because of

1. Get rich quick syndrome
2. The life style of the leaders, mismanagement/misappropriation of funds and corruption

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3. Constraints of easy access to input and lack of off takers for finished products
4. Inconsistency in the policy of the Government and
5. Insecurity among others

The youths having discovered that they cannot acquire the riches that will enable them to live the same life styles similar to their leaders through skills acquisition opted for entrepreneurship to enable them to be the master of themselves. Entrepreneurship skills is the ability of exploiting new areas or sectors and establishing an enterprise with it which may not necessarily be to profit self but rather for the community or the country; through the improvement of the general standards of the society such as making the political space to be stable and improvement in the security of the country (Mutezo, 2005). Entrepreneurship can be seen as the process of starting or creating a business or ventures or organization and managing it for financial success or meet social needs or to impact positively on the society while bearing all the risks that maybe associated with them. Hence an entrepreneur is a business model developer who starts an enterprise with his human capital and take full responsibility for his action be it positive or negative. Therefore, an entrepreneur needs to equip himself with entrepreneurship skills which is required for an effective economic and business development that will lead to success. These skills are essential to successfully run a new business or add value to an existing one. In the words of Ryan (2003), another way for youths to generate income for themselves is through entrepreneurship which has now been widely accepted as a way increasing employment generation thereby reducing unemployment. However, for it to be beneficial to the youths or their community or nation, it must be nurtured using adequate education. Entrepreneurship can be used to increase a nation's gross total production which will lead to wealth creation as well as reduction in unemployment.

Categories, characteristics and factors that affects entrepreneurship

- An entrepreneur must be able to communicate effectively through all forms of communication
- An entrepreneur should have sales skills which is key to convincing stakeholders
- An entrepreneur is expected to be emotionally stable to enable him to remain focused even when the going gets tough.
- An entrepreneur is expected to learn from every challenge that he encounters hence must have an open mind and ability to learn which will enable him to be successful.
- Every business success requires strategy in their planning hence entrepreneur must learn business strategies

There are four categories of entrepreneurship namely small business, scalable startups, large company and social entrepreneurship. Also, the following factors have been found to affect entrepreneurship viz political, legal, availability of capital, raw materials, labour market, market forces, infrastructures and Government policies.

In an effort towards poverty and unemployment reduction, the Federal Government introduced entrepreneurship courses to the curriculum of the Universities for the purpose of awareness campaign and teaching of prospective entrepreneurs which will lead to self-employment and also becoming an employer of

labour bringing about a chain reaction of the process. The Nigerian Government went further to establish entrepreneurship development centres and also approved microfinance policy, regulatory and supervisory frame work for its backings through the Central Bank of Nigeria all in an effort of empowering the youths and economic diversification (CBN, 2012). However, the success story on business development in Nigeria is yet to reach the level that the Government is aspiring to be despite the efforts so far put into it. This study therefore assessed the effect of entrepreneurship embraced by the youths on unemployment in the study areas using the following objectives viz

1. Examine the socioeconomic characteristics of the youths in the study areas
2. Identify the enterprises mostly practiced by respondents
3. Ascertain the factors that are influencing the youths' involvement in entrepreneurship.
4. Determine the constraints in entrepreneurship

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study area

Ijebu East Local Government was chosen as the study area. It is the largest local government area in Ogun State, shares boundaries with Lagos State and Lagos lagoon in the south with its headquarters located in Ogbera on A121 highway at the latitude 6⁰44'N 4⁰10'E. It occupies an area of about 2,234 km² and based on the 2006 census figure, has a population of about 110,196. Itele Ijebu, Ijebu Ife, Imobi, Ijebu Mushin and Ogbera are the major towns in Ijebu East Local Government Area with its secretariat located in Ogbera.

Population of the study

The people in the study area are mostly of Ijebu's origin who practiced the three-common religion in Nigeria viz Christianity, Islam and African Traditions and speaks one common Ijebu language. The climate and soil condition favours their major occupation of Agriculture which include cash crop cultivation, fishing, logging, and hunting; however, some are civil servants while some still do small businesses. The cash crops that are cultivated in this study area are cassava, yam, melon, cocoyam, rice, maize, vegetable and groundnut.

Sample size and data collection

50 youths comprising of males and females were randomly selected from each of the 2 towns chosen in the study area to give a total of 100 respondents. Based on voluntary participation of the ages which range between 20 and 35 years, data were collected with the aid of structured questionnaires. This was made easy due to the similarities in the religion, beliefs, culture and tradition of the people which were considered before sampling.

Data Analysis

88 questionnaires were returned back out of the 100 copies that were distributed. The responses to the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi square and t-test).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-25	30	34.09
25-30	22	25
30-35	36	40.91
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	68	77.27
Female	20	22.73
Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	24	27.27
Married	64	72.73
Divorced	00	
Widowed	0	0
Separated	0	0
Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	34	38.64
Islam	46	53.27
Traditional	8	9.09
Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Adult education	2	2.27
Primary	26	29.55
Vocational	42	47.73
Secondary	18	20.45
Hnd/BSc	0	0
No of years in business	Frequency	Percentage
<5	24	27.27
6-10	24	27.27
11-15	40	45.45
House of their own	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	38.64
No	54	61.36

From the Table 1 above, there are more male respondents, 68 (77.27%) than the females, 20 (22.73%) who were in the age brackets of 20-25 (34.09%), 25-30 (25%) and 30-35 (40.91%). This may be as a result of the fact that, the observed skills were more of masculine in nature and the associated risks associated. It may also be connected to their socio-cultural factors in line with the findings of Terrell and Troilo, (2010) who opined that, business ownership rate depends on the roles of the gender as driven by the socio-cultural factors. It also agrees with Estrin and Mickiewicz (2011) who found out that contextual factors plays significant role in taken decision on entrepreneurship. The table further shows that most of the respondents are married about 64respondents (72.73%), 24 respondents (27.27%) are single while none are in the categories of divorce, separated or widow. 47% had vocational education, 29.55% had primary education, 20.45% had secondary school education, 2.27% had adult education while none had neither Hnd nor BSc qualification. Larger numbers of the respondents practiced Islam, 52.27% followed Christianity, 38.64% while about 9.09% practice African tradition. 40 (45.45%) of the respondents had been in business for over 11 years, 24 (27.27%) over 6 years while 24 (27.27%) are less than 5 years in the business. About 61.36% (54) of the respondents had no house of their own while 34 (38.64%) had their personal houses.

Table 2 shows the almost even distribution in the number of youths that are involved in different types of entrepreneurial skills which based on their interest and choice in relation to their perceived opportunities in these entrepreneurs which is line with the findings of experience Burton et al. (2002) that people usually take advantage market opportunities that are available for different skills before venturing into entrepreneurship. The table shows that the youths have more interest in tailoring 14 (15.91%) probably because it's unisex

in practice which is followed by mason 12 (13.64) which may be due to need for people to put roof on their heads. Barbing and hairdressing followed with 10 (11.36%) practitioners each.

Table 2. Businesses engaged in by the respondents

Types of business	Frequency	Percentage
Barber	10	11.36
Motor mechanic	6	6.8
Electrician	8	9.09
Cyber café operator	4	4.55
Vulcanizer	6	6.8
Electronics repairer	6	6.8
Mason	12	13.64
Painter	8	9.09
Hair dresser	10	11.36
Plumber	4	4.55
Tailoring	14	15.91

Others are painter, motor mechanic and electrician 8 (9.09) practitioners each; vulcanizer and electronics repairer 6 (6.8%) each; cybercafé operator and plumber 4 (4.55%).

Table 3. Factors influencing youths' involvement in entrepreneurship

	X	Mean	SD	t-test value	Decision
Yes	88	88.00	10.95	13.15	S
No	88	8.00			

Table 3: The positive and high mean result of 88.00 and the t-test value the positive of 13.15 shows that the youths are really engaged in entrepreneurship skills due to the prevailing favourable factors which translated to a significant reduction in unemployment. This is an indication that entrepreneurship skills really had a positive effect on youths' unemployment in the study area. The result further revealed that, this outcome wouldn't have been achieved if there were no favourable factors which brought about good entrepreneurship that led to the creation and thriving of over ten small scale business in the study area which conform with the findings of Chingunta (2002) that unemployment will reduce if youth entrepreneurship is well promoted as more youths will prefer to be self-employed which bring about the development of new skills through innovation. It also align with Ukpong and George (2012) and Okoli and Okoli (2013) that separately found that youths unemployment will be further reduced based on the different types of skills that will be created through innovation if supports are given to the youth entrepreneurs.

Table 4. Constraints to entrepreneurship

	X	Mean	SD	t-test value	Decision
Yes	88	56.40	22.82	2.17	NS
No	88	31.60			

Table 4 above shows the mean value 56.40 of the respondents who felt that, constraints did not really deter them from achieving their goals while the mean of 31.60 thought otherwise which was supported by the t-test value of 2.17 that shows the effect of constraints to be insignificant. The cost of working tools was not seen by 74% of the respondents as constraints, followed by 72% respondents who disregarded lack of financial assistance as a challenge and 68% of the respondents considered frequent and sudden changes in Government policies as regular occurrences. Others issues that were not taken as challenges are the unsteady supply of electricity by 48% respondents and 20% for the demolition of illegal structures usually occupied by them due to their

inability to afford the legal ones which correlates with the findings of Gorji and Rahimian (2011) who opined that, the major barriers to the development of youth entrepreneurship is finance.

Conclusion

The study examined the effects of the engagement of youths in entrepreneurship skills on unemployment in Ijebu-East Local Government Area, Nigeria. From the fore-going based on what the youths in the study areas are doing, it shows that entrepreneurship can be used to solve the challenge of unemployment in the study area which therefore implies that, it can be used for the transformation of Nigeria into a technologically and economically developed country because of its abundant active youths that are full of vibrant innovative ideas. It will bring about a reduction in rural-urban migration as a result of improved productivity, standards of living and increase in income.

Recommendations

Going by history, the designs of entrepreneurship by Government were not done for the purpose of promoting them considering the level of infrastructural development which has been imparting negatively on the activities of entrepreneurship and productivity. From the findings, for the youths to be self-employed and self-reliant;

1. They should be made to acquire entrepreneurial skills which will impart in them attitudes, skills and capabilities which will lead to the creation of wealth (Trivedi, 2016; Jones *et al.*, 2017).
2. Government should create a stable and conducive environment for prospective investors who may be contemplating investing in entrepreneurial activities.
3. They should be encouraged and supported to enable them to overcome the fear of failure when considering taken the risk of engaging themselves in entrepreneurship skills.
4. Encouraging and favourable policies should be implored in the areas of taxation and financial assistance most especially for the startups capitals.
5. Government should pay closer attention to all the factors that made the several attempts by past administrations efforts at developing entrepreneurship to fail or not to work most especially misappropriation and corruption.
6. A system should be designed for the adequate monitoring, supervision and evaluation of all entrepreneurship training activities to prevent the reoccurrence of what is happening in the NDE and
7. Adequate supports should be given to institutions to enable them to carry out the practical aspects of entrepreneurship skills training.

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