

The Dynamics of Youth Entrepreneurial Inclinations in Fostering Sustainable Employment Generation in Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examines the dynamics of youth entrepreneurship inclination in fostering employment in Nigeria. The study notes that building a society that is responsive to encouraging and favourable to youth entrepreneurship is the responsibility of every society as well as the government and that encouraging the youth to become entrepreneurs have a lot of advantages in terms of solving problems of unemployment as well as paving way for the innovation and growth of the country. The study noted that entrepreneurship is all about being a visionary self starter, one who is able to identify opportunities to offer solutions in the form of product, technology, process or service to fulfill a need and thereby gather and employ all necessary resources including manpower, finance, technology, infrastructure and others to build a successful enterprise in the chosen area of business. The youths interviewed had mixed emotions about entrepreneurship as a viable option for sustainable livelihood. Several practicing young entrepreneurs also expressed enthusiasm and confidence in the future of entrepreneurship. Data collected from the study was statistically analyzed using SPSS version 14.0. Data from the questionnaire was coded, investigated for integrity, analyzed and prevented in useful outputs. The analysis was used to draw conclusion and to make recommendations. The results of the test of hypotheses were supported, suggesting that the youths have higher inclinations towards entrepreneurship

Key words: youth entrepreneurial inclination; sustainable employment

JEL codes: M

1. Introduction

The history of entrepreneurial inclinations dated back in 1938 when Stigeru Fijii initiated the teaching of entrepreneurship education (Alberti, Sciascha et al., 2004). However, many American universities have comparatively long tradition and paved way for entrepreneurship studies as a legitimate area of academic programmes (Franke & Luttje, 2004). Entrepreneurial inclinations according to Binks (2005) refers to the pedagogical process involved in the encouragement of individual behaviours and mindsets. Hence, the role of entrepreneurial inclination is to build an entrepreneurial culture among young people that in turn would improve their career choices towards entrepreneurship (Deakins et al., 2005). In other words, the objectives of entrepreneurial inclinations are aimed in changing youths states of behavior and to make them to understand entrepreneurship that finally result in the formation of new businesses as well as new job opportunities

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(Venkatachalam & Waqii, 2005). Entrepreneurial inclinations have been recognized as one of the vital determinants that could influence youths career decisions (Peterman & Kennedy, 2003).

This study comes at time when Nigerian youths faces one of the highest unemployment rates in sub-Saharan Africa, combined with persistent low growth and widespread poverty. The study intend to highlights how the business environment and other factors like societal attitudes and cultures of entrepreneurship as well as skills and motivation of entrepreneurs are critical for fostering productive youths entrepreneurship in Nigeria. It is our hope that this study would enhance the understanding of the complex employment challenges facing Nigerian Youths and to stimulate further studies on how to address this key developmental issue.

This study could be a building block for strategies, policies and programs for sustainable livelihoods of Nigerian youths in job creation and entrepreneurship development. Despite the importance assigned to entrepreneurship development and youths in National development strategies, studies on youths entrepreneurial inclinations have been limited. We observed that many youths are drawn to entrepreneurship out of both necessity to escape unemployment and build livelihood and opportunity to realize their vision and contribute to their community as a whole. In this study we examine a mix of factors, namely, institutional, social and personal traits that could foster or impede youth entrepreneurial inclinations.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the dynamics of youth entrepreneurial inclinations in fostering sustainable employment in Nigeria. Other specific objectives include:

- To identify the important personal traits and motivations of young people starting up new business.
- To contribute to the current literature by identifying the variables to entrepreneurial inclinations that influence youth toward entrepreneurship in Nigeria setting.
- Seek to identity what entrepreneurial skills are acquired to develop a growth orientated business and how these skills might be enhanced.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were propounded to guide the study:

- What are the possible challenges that might arise in getting Nigerian youths empowered to acquire skills and ideas for creating employment for themselves?
- To what extent can Nigerian youth face the critical challenge for the development of small and medium scale enterprise that might metamorphose into large scale business development?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

In the course of this study, the following hypotheses were propounded to guide the study:

- (1) H_0 : Entrepreneurial internship programmes increases the likelihood of Nigerian youths to be more entrepreneurially inclined.
- (2) H_0 : The availability of role models increases the likelihood of Nigerian youths to be more entrepreneurially inclined.
- (3) H_0 : Entrepreneurial curriculum and content increases the likelihood of Nigerian youths to be more entrepreneurially inclined.

2. Literature Review

With the current economic challenges facing Nigerian youths, the notion of engendering greater

entrepreneurial activity has become a prominent goal of the government. The relevance of entrepreneurial inclination to economic development has been highlighted by many researchers (Davidsson et al., 2006). It is now recognized that education and training opportunities play a key role in cultivating entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. As such, the Nigerian government has increasingly recognized productive entrepreneurship to be an important driver of economic development through fostering growth, job creation, technology adoption and innovation. For a large number of Nigerian youths believed that productive entrepreneurship offers not only an opportunity to build sustainable livelihoods, but also a chance for integrating themselves into society.

With high youth unemployment and under-developed private sector, Nigeria is particularly interesting and relevant for examining issues surrounding youths entrepreneurship. The emergence of youths entrepreneurship as a viable livelihood option should be high on the policy issues thus making this study timely. Recognizing the complexity of factors driving youths entrepreneurship, this study adopted three broad approaches. First, to gain understanding of economic, legal and other institutional issues impacting on entrepreneurship development. Second, the study focuses on the societal context shaping youths entrepreneurship, such as values, attitudes towards youth entrepreneurship and social/professional networks. Third, the study also looks into personal traits of successful youth entrepreneur to inform possible changes and to facilitate creation of an enabling environment. With these three distinct approaches, this study provides new insight into the aspirations of young entrepreneurs.

European Commission (2002) emphasizes that many countries and international bodies attempted to promote growth oriented entrepreneurship either through direct measures or indirectly through policy instruments. Rae (2012) highlighted a model for entrepreneurship inclination that considered “effectiveness” as the key outcome rather than learning. Rae’s model has meaning for the development of entrepreneurship skills to grow a business as it seeks to combine mindset, capability effectiveness. Henry et al. (2003) criticized entrepreneurship inclination program for being too focused on the functional aspects of business management rather than helping to develop the broader capabilities of entrepreneurs to be innovative, manage their changing business environment and to be creative in developing and taking forward their businesses. Kutzhanova et al. (2009) highlighted that personal transformation was an important part of training programs for entrepreneurs. They suggested that learning starts with a deeper understanding of one’s strengths and weakness, and so, entrepreneurs should first learn about their own identity and personality.

In recent years, the European Union has been proactive in seeking to develop the skills of growth-orientated entrepreneurs by initiating a number of tailored programs dedicated to enhancing their capabilities. These programs include the following:

- The Eurostars programs aimed to stimulate SMEs towards leading international collaborative research and innovation projects by easing access to support and funding.
- The enterprise growth programs to assist small and medium to large sized enterprises to transform themselves.
- The Harmony project designed to guide SMEs through the stages of developing and launching a business innovation collaboration project.

Notwithstanding, Kutzhanova et al. (2009) examined an entrepreneurial development scheme located in the Appalachian region of United State. The key finding of the analysis of the programs was the role of peer coaching, and thus stated that:

“Peer relationship develops a community for entrepreneurs that provides important networks for sharing knowledge, support and possible business collaboration”.

An important finding of this study is that entrepreneurs when presented with the opportunity to connect with other entrepreneurs in a non-competitive environment build significant social capital. This social capital is used by all participating members to advance their own knowledge and expertise to learn from the experiences of others and to assist each other. The relationship with peers provides entrepreneurs with needed emotional and psychological support. Eno-Obong (2006) pointed that entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully. Anayakoha (2006) stated that the entrepreneur is one who chooses or assumes risks, identifies business opportunities, gathers resources, initiates actions and establishes an organization or enterprise to meet such demand or market opportunity. From this definition, the entrepreneur is seen as an independent, self-sufficient individual who is willing to sink or swim with his/her idea.

Ogbor (2009) sees entrepreneurship as the process of creating something different with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the company financial, psychological and social risks and receiving the reward of monetary and personal satisfaction. According to Aruwa (2004) entrepreneurship is the ability some people have to accept risks and combine factors of production in order to produce goods and services. It can be seen as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek investment opportunities in the environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities.

This implies that for entrepreneur to succeed, should have the capacity to seek the environment for economic opportunities that will increase its economic value. Stevenson (2007) pointed that the essence of entrepreneurial inclination is the ability to envision and chart a course for a new business venture by combining information from the functional disciplines and from the external environment in the context of extraordinary uncertainty and ambiguity which faces a new business venture, while Soyibo (2006) emphasizes that entrepreneurship is the process of identifying an opportunity related to needs, satisfaction and converting it to a thing (product or services) of value.

Schoof (2006) noted that understanding the need to creating and nurturing youth entrepreneurship, which many countries have taken up strategic initiatives and implemented plans aimed at impacting entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through education. Such a move, no doubt provides the freedom and the trust to the youth to dream and achieve their dreams. More recently, entrepreneurship is viewed as a way of thinking and behaving that is relevant to all parts of the society and the economy, as such as understanding of entrepreneurship now requires a different approach.

Lichtenstein and Lyons (2001) argued that it is important for service providers to recognize that entrepreneurs come to entrepreneurship with different levels of skills and therefore each entrepreneur requires a different game plan for developing his/her skills. Kelly et al. (2010) propounded that within any society, it is important to support all people with entrepreneurial mindsets, not just the entrepreneurs, as they each have the potential to inspire other to start a business. Kelly (2010) argued that any educational training should enable people not just to develop skills to start a business but rather to be capable of behaving entrepreneurially in whatever role they take in life. This approach is quite broad but it captures the critical philosophy of modern entrepreneurship development required to generate an increasing pool of people who are willing to be have entrepreneurially.

Gibb (2010) argued that the manner in which entrepreneurship is taught need to be significantly altered as the traditional model of entrepreneurship is no longer applicable to the modern business environment, and portrayed the dominant model of entrepreneurship as being static and focused heavily on the working of a business plan and the various functional activities of an enterprise. According to Gibb (2010), his model embraces a number of key characteristics as follows:

- Instilling empathy with entrepreneurial values and associated ways of thinking, doing, feeling, seeing, communicating, organizing and learning things.
- Developing of the capacity for thinking and scenario planning and the practice of making intuitive decisions based upon judgment with limited information.
- Creating a vision and empathy with, the way of life of the entrepreneurial person.
- Stimulating the practice of a wide range of entrepreneurial behaviours such as opportunity seeking and grasping, networking, taking initiatives, persuading others and taking intuitive decisions.
- Creating the capacity for relationship learning network management building knowledge and managing on the basis of trust.
- Developing understanding of and building knowledge around the processes of organization development, from start through survival to growth and internationalization.
- Focusing upon a holistic approach to the management of organizations and the integration of knowledge.
- Creating the capacity to design entrepreneurial organizations of all kinds in different contexts and understand how to operate them successful.

Gibb's model found an increasing band of supporters who view the development of behavioural attributes as critical to the growth of entrepreneurial activity. From Gibb's model, we can conclude that entrepreneurial inclinations seeks to provide youths with the knowledge, skills and motivation to encourage entrepreneurial success in a variety of ventures.

Ikeme and Onu (2007) captured entrepreneurship as the use of human courage to seek investment opportunities and establish a profit oriented enterprise. Entrepreneurship is generally viewed as a process of creating something new. Gana (2001) defined it as willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on identified opportunities.

Hisrich and Peters (2000) captured the term as the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth. They explained that entrepreneurship is the personalized version of actualizing one's desire, ambitious and expression.

Pendergast (2004) suggested that there is a relationship between entrepreneurial context and traits of entrepreneurs. The findings show that individuals are attracted to entrepreneurial situations and their compatible traits enable them to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurial contexts, hence, categories the entrepreneurial context into four types;

- Opportunity orientation
- Unstructured, uncertain
- Resource scarcity
- Fluid dynamics, turbulent

Each context requires entrepreneurs posses some specific traits in order to deal with the situation.

In the recent time, seminars, conferences and workshops are organized across the globe with emphasizes on the importance of entrepreneurial inclinations. This concept has become one of the best economic development

strategies to develop country's economic growth and sustain the country's competitiveness in facing the increasing trends of globalization. This popularity of entrepreneurial inclinations is largely due to the positive effects as a catalyst that creates wealth and the generation of job opportunities. Kuratleo and Hodgetts (2004) specifically noted that entrepreneurial inclinations are the major engine driving many nation's economic growth, innovation and competitiveness. This in turn has increasingly made entrepreneurship emerged as one of the most popular research domain in academic circles.

Literature on entrepreneurship has extensively noted the differences between "necessity" and "opportunity" (productive) entrepreneurship. According to Rogerson (2001), necessity entrepreneurship has been widespread in Africa while opportunity entrepreneurship has been relatively scarce. While opportunity entrepreneurship has significant positive effect on development, necessity entrepreneurship has almost none according to ACS and Verga 2005. We conclude therefore that as entrepreneurial inclinations have significant contribution to the economic through creating jobs and income, it should be fostered and developed.

3. Methodology

The literature review provided valuable insight into the identification of aspects influencing youth entrepreneurial inclinations. Data was collected from a self administered questionnaire conducted among students, young entrepreneurs and employees residing in Abuja, Nigeria. The questionnaire was adapted from various sources and used as a source of data collection. The scales used in the questionnaire was adapted from various sources and used as a source of data collection. The scales used in the questionnaire was based on a 5 point Likert scale with (1) strongly disagreed, and (5) strongly agreed for each close ended question. Prior to conducting the main study, a pilot test was conducted to improve the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

The participation in this study was on voluntary basis and the respondents were given one week to return the questionnaire after screening, 350 out of 500 questionnaire were fully completed and usable, yielded a response rate of 70 percent. SPSS version 14.0 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis, a principal axis oblique factor analysis and hierarchical multiple regression were performed to examine the hypothesized propositions in this study, a reliability coefficient of 0.50 was set as the criterion of acceptability (Felder & Spurlin, 2005). For factor analysis, factor with higher loadings greater than 0.30 was chosen to represent a factor due to its greater influence and more important (Haire et al., 1998).

4. Research Findings

Of a total of 500 questionnaire distributed, 350 were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 70 percent. Among 350 valid responses, male respondents accounted for 58.57 percent while female respondents accounted for 41.43 percent.

Respondents were asked to choose their three most desired jobs among five options. The sample result shows that about 85 percent of the total participants have a desire to work for multinational company, while 70 percent of the respondents have desire to create their own business and 45 percent have the desire to work for private company. Apart from the desire to work for the multinational company, the result shows a high desire to be an entrepreneur of young people.

Prior to major analysis, factor analysis was employed to reduce the items used in measuring either the independent or dependent variables.

Table 1 Sample Demographics

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	205	58.57
Female	145	41.43
Total	350	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	%
School Certificate	73	20.86
OND/NCE	68	19.43
B.Sc/HND	110	31.43
MB.A/M.Sc	83	23.71
PH.D	9	2.57
Others	7	2.00
Total	350	100

Source: Survey Result

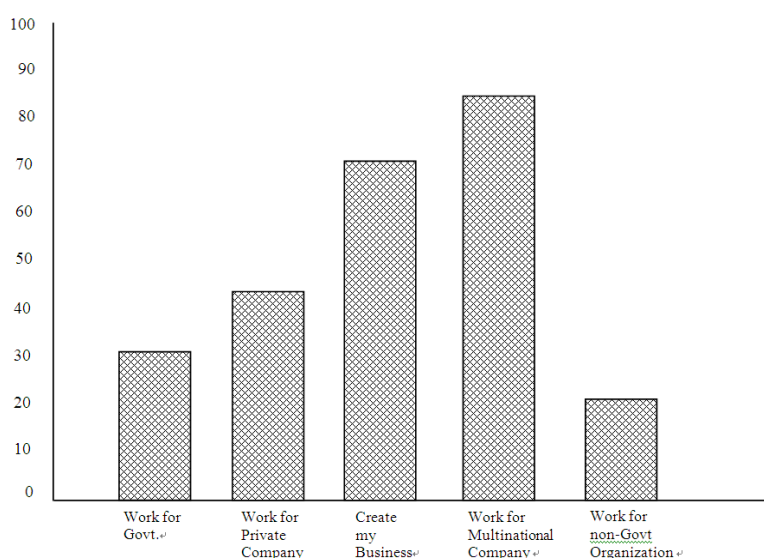


Figure 1 Desired Jobs

Table 2 Factor Analysis for Key Variables

S/N	Main Variable	Questions	Factor Loadings
1.	Institution's role in promoting entrepreneurial skills	(a) Institution's infrastructure and policies discourages entrepreneurial skills. (b) Entrepreneurial activities are limited only to business department. (c) Institution's provides resources to assist students entrepreneurs. (d) Creative institution environment inspires me to develop ideas for new business	0.42 0.46 0.48 0.43
2.	Entrepreneurship internship programmes	(a) Assist to develop the ability to plan and organize my day to day work. (b) Did not learn much from it. (c) Was used as a cheap labour. (d) Develop my communication skills. (e) Provide me with a lot of new business ideas.	0.53 0.46 0.43 0.56 0.58
3.	Role models	(a) Friends are the main source of business related information. (b) Interested in business because my friends are in business. (c) Believe that closet friends think I should become self-employed. (d) Care what closet friends think about my employment decision.	0.63 0.56 0.48 0.45
4.	Entrepreneurial inclination	(a) Never thought of entrepreneurship as a career option. (b) Prefer to work in big organization. (c) Would some-day start my own business (d) Won't start a business became it is too risky.	0.78 0.74 0.68 0.63

Table 3 Multiple Regression Results

	Variables	Result
a.	Image of Entrepreneurship	0.74
b.	Role models	0.86
c.	Institution's role	0.64
d.	Internship programme	0.59

Note: $R = 0.438$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.190$;
 $R^2 = 0.192$ $AR^2 = 0.115$
F value for AR^2 (5.328)

In this test entrepreneurial inclination was used as the dependent variables. The results of the hypotheses testing show that R^2 was significant. The result demonstrated that the role of the institution in promoting the two significant independent variables, hence, the hypotheses were supported. Other variables showed positive relationship between gender and entrepreneurial inclination, suggesting that youths have higher inclinations towards entrepreneurship.

Table 4 presents the mean, standard deviation and inter-correlations for the mentioned scales, as well as family business background variables. We found that youths with self employed parents have higher inclinations toward entrepreneurship. In addition, we found that youths with university working experiences were more inclined towards entrepreneurship than those without the experience. The role of institutions in promoting entrepreneurship was highly correlated as well as image of entrepreneurship from the correlation matrix, all scales have statistically significant correlation with entrepreneurial inclination.

Table 4 Mean Standard Deviation and Matrix Regression

	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Entrepreneurship inclination	4.59	0.65	1						
2	Father's occupation	0.38	0.42	0.115**	1					
3	Mother's occupation	0.34	0.41	0.116**	0.104**	1				
4	Role models	4.96	0.68	0.230**	0.142**	0.132**	1			
5	Entrepreneurial internship programme	4.35	0.64	0.210**	0.156**	0.148**	0.136	1		
6	Institution's role in promoting entrepreneurship programme	3.84	0.56	0.163**	0.136**	0.125**	0.124	0.116	1	
7	Image of entrepreneurship	4.69	0.64	0.161**	0.147**	0.136**	0.124**	0.104**	0.102**	1

Note: $N = 350$; ** $P < 0.05$

5. Conclusion

Despite the importance assigned to entrepreneurship and youth in National development strategies, research on youth entrepreneurial inclinations in Nigeria have been limited. The lack of evidence has impeded designing policies addressing the youth employment challenges. This study revealed that most Nigerian youths are drawn to entrepreneurship out of both necessity to escape unemployment and build livelihood and opportunity to realize their vision and contribute to the country and community. The study also highlighted that young Nigerians are often not familiar with conditions they need to meet in order to start a business or obtain a loan. Also, it is not aware of all the supporting institutions and services available to them. From the study, we recognized that productive entrepreneurship to be an important driver of economic development through fostering growth, job

creation, technology adoption and innovation as well as poverty alleviation. We also found that productive entrepreneurship offers not only an opportunity to build sustainable livelihoods, but also a chance for integrating themselves into society.

This study provides systematic evidence of views of youth entrepreneurial inclination on opportunities and constraints they face, and examined a combination of institutional, social and personal traits that determine productive youth entrepreneurship. Findings from the study suggest that while well recognized constraints such as the business environment undoubtedly play an important role in fostering or impeding youth entrepreneurial inclinations, “Softer” factors such as positive societal attitudes also play very critical role. The youths interviewed had mixed emotions about entrepreneurship as a viable option for sustained livelihood. Some aspired to start businesses and even had concrete ideas on the types of business they wanted to operate. Several practicing young entrepreneurs also expressed enthusiasm and confidence in the future entrepreneurship. Despite a challenging business environment, some young entrepreneurs in Nigeria have achieved substantial success in their activities, both in terms of performance and in terms of recognition by society and their peers.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proposed:

- Training and capacity building, need to extend from the “nascent” entrepreneurship from early entrepreneurship stage and beyond.
- Young people should be linked with and learn from established entrepreneurs through professional networks and mentoring programs.
- Government should play an active role through advocacy and featuring successful young Nigerian entrepreneurs who could serve as role models.
- Fundamental changes need to be made to the educational system with courses on entrepreneurship and problem-solving skills featuring prominently at all levels.
- More innovation financial instruments need to be created.

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