

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS PANACEA FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, EMPLOYMENT, SELF-RELIANCE AND SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

*Dr. Edward Kuruku & Kwasedoo Ngbea

Department of Psychology,
Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria
Email: edwardkuruku@gmail.com

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship as a concept and a vocation is a vital factor in human capital development in terms of job creation and skill acquisition. The objective of the paper is to examine, the role of entrepreneurship in the ever-growing population, with its resultant unemployment and other social problems in the society, especially among the youths, and proffer measures to ameliorate the situation. The unemployment rate in the world has grown astronomically without corresponding infrastructural amenities resulting to pressure on lean scarce resources. Added to this, the educational system in most developing countries are designed and geared towards the humanities, rather than technical, vocational and skills acquisition. This phenomenon has led to many graduates from the universities and other higher institutions of learning not finding jobs, thereby constituting social problems. Emotional intelligence has also been identified as a factor for youth empowerment, as it is perceived to be a predictive factor of entrepreneurial intentions, which refers to the ability to understand, interpret and regulate one's emotions. Training needs of most institutions of learning have always being geared towards white collar jobs that are hard to come by these days. It is the submission of this paper that, if appropriate social support interventions are given to the youths, it will not only curb youth restiveness and, unemployment, but it will also prevent them from being vulnerable for recruitment into criminal gangs, like Islamic state (IS/IS) and other terrorist organizations. National development can only be feasible when technical, vocational and computer education are given top priority, as the world economy is today driven by information technology the implication of this is that, those who lack these basic skills, would be left behind in the labour market. The paper finally recommends among others that, the present educational system especially in developing countries be overhauled to emphasize technical and vocational training which are brain child of entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Social Support, Emotional Intelligence, Employment, Self-reliance, National development.

INTRODUCTION

It is regrettable that unemployment rate globally and perhaps, in Nigeria is quite alarming in recent times due to the dwindling economy as a result of the fall in the value of crude oil globally. According to a recent report by the National Bureau of statistics (NBC, 2016), unemployment rate grew from 12.1 percent in the first quarter of 2016 to 13.3 percent in the second quarter, and 13.9 percent in the 3rd quarter of 2016,

while about 1.5 million Nigerians have lost their jobs in the past years. Accordingly, out of a total youth labour force of 38.2 million, representing 48.7 percent of total labour force of 78.48 million. A total of 15.2 million of them were either unemployed or underemployed. In the first quarter of 2016, representing a youth unemployment rate of 42.2 percent (Nigerian Unemployment Survey Report, NBC Report, NBC 2016). In order to arrest this ugly situation, the paper explores the concept of entrepreneurship, social support and emotional intelligence as a possible solution. It is important to note that, the factors of production can be owned either by government or private individuals and entities. Experience has shown that free enterprise which encourages entrepreneurship, self-reliance and private ownership of factors of production makes society move faster and human beings more prosperous than when government owns and controls the factors of production. Essentially, economic growth and development are achieved faster under a free enterprise economic system.

It is for this reason that, nations support entrepreneurship in various forms, especially the small and medium enterprises. The 2012 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) has empirically identified Nigeria as one of the most entrepreneurial activities. The only countries that have better records in Sub-Sahara Africa are Malawi (36%), Uganda (36%), Ghana (37%) and Zambia (41%). Entrepreneurial intentions can be influenced by personal factors like individual characteristics, personal interest, circumstantial reasons and societal factors that deems fit for a person to be an entrepreneur or self-employed (Muhammed, Aliyu and Ahmad, 2015). To be an entrepreneur, certain factors come into play like social support, family background, friends and significant, others may help an individual to determine the type of financial support among others support systems, that are available when such needs arise. Apart from social support, emotional intelligence of youth is key to influencing the entrepreneurial intention. Entrepreneurs are those individuals who understand, regulate and interpret their emotion in times of stress, depression, anger and other predisposing emotional discomfort. Conversely, someone who cannot understand, interpret and regulate his/her emotion in terms of stress, disappointment and other frustrating stimuli, would not articulate concise entrepreneurial intention (Mohammed et al, 2015).

Youth empowerment is an unconditional parameter for nation building, as the strength of development of a nation depends solely upon it. The future and sustainability of any country is always predicated on its present youth productive workforce. (Agbim & Owocho, 2013). A society with an inefficient and irresponsible youth workforce is a serious setback to national development. Empowerment refers

to the ability of an individual to make choices regarding his or her life. It refers to the ability for an individual to possess the capacity, to transform his desired goals into action. (Shittu & Dosumu, 2014). The 2012 GEM Report confirms Nigeria as an entrepreneurial nation. Most Nigerians believe and see opportunities in entrepreneurship and are ready to start and run a business. This provide ample opportunities for government and policy makers at all levels of government, to use the promotion of entrepreneurial activities as a strategy for poverty eradication, wealth creation employment generation and sustain able development. (Tolutope, *et al.* 2015). The educational system in Nigeria is geared towards acquisition of paper qualification rather than technical, vocational and skill acquisition. The result of this is that the labour market cannot accommodate these categories of workers, hence the increase in the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. Rather than graduates of higher institutions to be self-reliant and gainfully employed, they roam the streets looking for white collar jobs that are difficult to come by these days. The result of this is anti-social behaviour which they are exposed to and become vulnerable for recruitment into criminal gangs, sex slaves, drug abuse, cultism, kidnapping and terrorist organizations like Islamic States (ISIS), to mention but a few. National development cannot be achieved without technological, vocational and scientific breakthrough. To achieve this, the educational system of developing countries like Nigeria must be overhauled and restructured, with emphasis more on technical, vocational and computer education, which are basic skills that must be acquired for sustainable growth and development.

Imperatives of Self-reliance, Self-employment and Youth Empowerment

The growing rate of poverty, low standard of living and growing insecurity, and social vices arising from unemployment makes it imperative for governments to promote and encourage entrepreneurship. The World Bank in its May 2013 Nigerian Economic Report highlighted that the number of Nigerians living in poverty was increasing rapidly. It also said that, Nigeria's annual GDP growth rate was 6 to 8 percent. As impressive as it looks, is not capable to reduce poverty in the country. This description is corroborated by statistical evidence. For example while 28.1 percent or about 17.7 million Nigerians were in poverty, earning less than the proverbial one dollar a day by 1980, this had moved to 67 percent or 112 million people by 2012. Nigeria is confronted with this challenge, if a typical Nigerian is inclined towards starting and running a business irrespective of his primary employment and if he/she is excited about entrepreneurship and has relative confidence in starting and running a business, why the rate of unemployment high is and the rate of poverty on the rise. After all, entrepreneurship and self-employment are meant to promote wealth creation and employment opportunities.

Entrepreneurship, Social Support, and Emotional Intelligence as Panacea for Youth Empowerment, Employment, Self-Reliance and Sustainable National Development in Nigeria

For entrepreneurship to meet the aspiration of youth's empowerment and wealth creation, employment, poverty alleviation and value-reorientation, a lot need to be done, in terms of creating the enabling environment for doing business, like granting soft interest free loans, and meaningful collaterals for potential entrepreneurs. The Doing Business 2014 exposed the weak nature of the situation in Nigeria. Nigeria has not witnessed material improvement over the last ten years in most of the indices, except in access to credit. Nigeria had an impressive growth in access to credit by ranking 13 out of 189 economies on the ease of getting credit. The availability of credit information made possible by the existence of licensed private credit bureaus and the continuous strengthening of legal rights for borrowers and lenders make this possible. Entrepreneurship can help address the challenge of high rate of unemployment by formulating policies and programs that would lead to job creation in the short and long run. Job opportunities may come in two main ways to the teeming unemployed, by establishing businesses, government and self-employment or entrepreneurship. The country needs to diversify its economy by investing more in the agricultural sector. A good agricultural policy should drive agriculture away from subsistence farming to large scale commercial farming, use of technology rather than manual implements and ability to plant, cultivate and preserve products throughout the year. Beyond this, agriculture has a robust value chain which if well structured and with the right policies can lead to Nigerians engaging in all the different activities along the chain. The policies should include incentives to produce raw materials and process them rather than exporting raw agricultural products. Apart from oil, Nigeria is blessed with so many other natural resources, for example Nigeria has thirty four unexploited minerals apart from oil & gas. Opening up this area would generate huge entrepreneurial opportunities for Nigerians.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Entrepreneurship is a vocation that builds human capital development in terms of skill acquisition and development. It is a vital stage in life for building the human capacity that allows young people to acquire a vocation or skill for self employment and reliance (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010). The human capitals developed in the youth are veritable in investment and assets for growth and development of any nation.

Social Support

Shuaker and Bruwnell (1984) defined social support as an exchange of resources between two individuals perceived by the provider or recipient to be intended to enhance the wellbeing of the recipient. (Matsuda, Tsuda, Kim and Deng 2014). They

defined social support as provision of psychological and material resources of a social network intended to enhance the ability of an individual to cope with stress. The social support is identified as predictors of entrepreneurial intentions.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to accurately perceive, appraise and express emotions; the ability to access or generate feelings, or both, when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions, to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Individuals who are able to understand and regulate their emotions would be able to generally maintain a better outlook on entrepreneurial intention and experience better psychological wellbeing in life (Heck & Oudsten, 2008); Salovey (2001) and Galliford (2003) explained emotional intelligence as the capacity for understanding our own feelings and the feelings of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing our emotions effectively in our relationships. Emotional intelligence is sometimes referred to as “people smarts” because of the creativity involved in understanding, interpreting and controlling one’s emotion. The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) was first proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1990), to mean intelligence quotient (IQ). However, it was then popularized by Goleman (2002). This area has gotten much attention in the field of entrepreneurship, healthcare delivery system leadership, human resource management and organizational behaviour. Thurndike (1920) as cited by Tolulope and Dennis (2015), classified intelligence into three types: Abstract intelligence, concrete intelligence which is related to shapes and matters; and thirdly social intelligence now termed as emotional intelligence (Tolulope & Dennis, 2015). Gelle and Amadu (2015) explained entrepreneurial intention as one’s willingness, desire and ability to engage in entrepreneurial behaviours or establish a business that is of relevance to the person, others and society at large. It is the willingness of individuals to perform entrepreneur behaviour, to be self employed and establish a new business (Dell, 2008) (Dhose & Walter, 2010).

Youth Empowerment

Empowerment refers to the ability of an individual to make choices regarding his or her life in terms of vocational training and skills acquisition such as learning a trade for gainful employment and self reliance (Ferreira et al., 2012). Most graduates nowadays cannot secure jobs with increasing population coupled with few jobs in the labour market.

Entrepreneurship

It is the act of acquiring basic knowledge of skill development based on creativity, passion and vision, which translates into practical reality of value. Entrepreneurship is the gateway to self employment and self reliance especially in a competitive world economy.

Employment

Employment is a key factor in any economy. It is the act of providing job opportunities for the citizenry both in the formal and informal sectors of the economy, as a fundamental obligation of state policy. Human development will definitely be grossly undermined and impaired without employment. (NEEDS Document, 2004). A good number of Nigerians are today unemployed and that has created a lot of social problems.

Entrepreneurship Education Policy

The Western World proposed the concept of entrepreneurship education in the early days as encapsulated in the UNESCO. It was proposed that entrepreneurship education is as important as academic education and the occupations. Entrepreneurship promotes creativity, gainful employment and self-reliance particularly in growing global unemployment.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Entrepreneurial Intention Approach/Models

Some researchers have adopted different models or approaches in the understanding of entrepreneurs as follows;

- Psychological Approach to Entrepreneurial Intention.

Early research on the factors that influence the decision to create a business focused on trait or characteristics of individuals (McClelland, 1961; Brockhaus, 1980) describes entrepreneurs as those who have certain psychological characteristics, such as emotional intelligence self-efficacy, innovativeness risk-taking, commitment and a need for total self-control. According to Koh (1996), this should be expected, Owing to the understanding of psychological traits that are unique to entrepreneurs Kraus and Frese (2005), found that psychological traits are predictors of the entrepreneurial orientation. Also, it can be seen that theoretical and empirical research have associated psychological characteristics with entrepreneurship (Kennedy et al, 2003; Brice, 2004; Bhardari, 2006; Li, 2006; Hmieleski and Corbett, 2006; Florin, 2007). In general, the main psychological characteristics associated with entrepreneurship in the literature are: internal locus of control; propensity to take risk; self-confidence; need for achievement; tolerance of ambiguity and

innovativeness (Ferreira, Raposo, Rodrigues, Dinis & Paco, 2012). This approach to entrepreneurial intention emphasizes that individual personality or trait make up an entrepreneur. There are peculiar characteristics in individuals that make up intention to own a business enterprise, unlike other individuals who do not possess such entrepreneurial trait in the form of personality characteristics. Entrepreneurs are individuals who possess high sense of emotional intelligence, risk-takers, innovative, high tolerance to stress and frustration, those who perceive entrepreneurship as a positive enterprise.

Behavioural Approach to Entrepreneurship Intention

Heinonen (2007) concept of entrepreneurial behaviour has become well known. There is growing need to develop entrepreneurial abilities in order to deal with current challenges and uncertain future. In the current economic situation, white collar jobs are relatively scarce hence the need for attitudinal change to entrepreneurship. Ferreira, Raposo, Rodrigues, Dinis and Paco (2012) described entrepreneurial intention as a conscious state of mind that directs attention and therefore experience action toward a specified object or pathway to achieve it. Different researchers in the field of business psychology affirmed that social support and emotional intelligence are predictive variables of entrepreneurial intention. Mould (2013) findings on the topic: Do personality traits predict entrepreneurial intention and performance? Was examined to determine the effectiveness of using personality traits to predict entrepreneurial intention and performance among 113 members of Enterprise Development Programme in Cape Town, Western Cape South Africa? Agbim, Oriarewo and Owocho (2013) study on the factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions among graduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions using purposive sampling technique revealed that 307 graduates selected for a study of different demographic background revealed that, the most influential factor in determining entrepreneurial intentions is creativity and that increased with age accordingly. Jekwu (2016) study on: The role of psychosocial factors (entrepreneurial self-efficacy, fear of failure, social support and gender) on entrepreneurship intention among Nigerian graduates revealed that male graduates significantly scored higher on entrepreneurial intention than female graduates.

Saleh (2015) study on the influence of psychosocial support and risk taking propensity on entrepreneurial intention among 365 IKBN Kuala Perlis students in Malaysia, using a Survey method, showed that, all psychosocial factors such as college experience, social support and risk taking propensity have a significant positive relationships towards entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, Saleh (2015) in a study found a joint influence of psychosocial factors to influence entrepreneurial intention

among skills-based students. Shittu and Dosummu (2014) reiterated that the family plays three key roles in entrepreneurial intentions through: a source of financial and human resources (Zhana, Wong & Soh, 2003), a source of information and credible value (Renzulli, Alarich & Moody, 2000) and source of role models (Krueger, 1993). One's family is considered to be influential in moulding and shaping youth's behaviour on entrepreneurship (Klyver, 2007). Weimi, Buoping Liying, Sern & Lih, (2012) accorded that entrepreneurship is the process which individual pursue opportunities regardless of the resources they currently control (Stevenson & Jarrilo as cited in Barringer & Ireland, 2010). Entrepreneurship is the art of turning ideas into a business, it originated from a French word "Entrepreneur" Entrepreneurs are also known as self-employed people. Some researchers argued that, entrepreneurs can be made and are not genetically inherited (Barringer & Ireland, 2010). Everyone has the potential to become an entrepreneur especially for those who have undergone educational process in universities (Gelard & Saleh, 2011; Ooi, 2011).

CONCLUSION

The rate of poverty arising from unemployment with increasing population around the world especially in developing countries, calls for a paradigm shift in human resources development and human capital and capacity building. The World Bank in its May 2013 Nigerian Economic Report highlighted that the number of Nigerians living in poverty was increasing rapidly. It also said that Nigeria's annual GDP growth rates of 6 to 8 percent as impressive as it looks, not capable or sufficient to reduce poverty in the country. For entrepreneurship to meet the aspirations of our political leadership of wealth creation, employment, poverty alleviation and value-reorientation, a lot still needs to be done. The world economy is today arrives by technological advancement, made possible by computers and information communication technology, the implication of this is that, entrepreneurship, vocational and technical education should be given top priorities in our educational planning and curriculum for self-reliance and gainful self-employment for sustainable national development. Those who lack basic skills and vocational training may find themselves unemployed as there are few jobs there in the labour market. Entrepreneurship also entails social support from the significant figures as well as emotional intelligence which may aid potential entrepreneurs for self reliance as white collar jobs are scarce to come by, in the ever growing world population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the foregoing analysis, unemployment, poverty reduction and other social problems can only be realized when entrepreneurship is embedded in our national life. The paper therefore makes the following recommendations:

1. Entrepreneurship and vocational training be promoted and encouraged especially among young school learners who may not find jobs in government owned parastatals or agencies.
2. The educational system of most developing countries like Nigeria be geared and oriented more on technical, vocational and skill acquisition and computer education for self-reliance and employment especially as the world economy is today driven by information and communication technology (ICT).
3. Social support inform of self loans with interest free and cumbersome collateral conditions be relaxed or avoided to enable potential entrepreneurs access funds/loans to start-up businesses.
4. Finally, this paper recommends that, the government should provide the right climate and enabling environment for doing business in the country devoid of corruption and other unethical practices inimical to sustainable national development.

REFERENCES

- Bhandai, N. (2006). Intention for Entrepreneurship among Students in India. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship* 15(2), 1-11.
- Brice, J. (2004). The Role of Personality Dimensions on the Formation of Entrepreneurial Intentions, Small Business Advancement. National Centre, University of Central Arkansas, Conway.
- Brockhaus, R.H. (1980). Risk Taking Propensity of Entrepreneurs. *Academy of Management Journal*. 23(3), 509-20.
- Ferreira, J, Paco, A. Raposo, M. & Radriques, R. (2007). *Entrepreneurship Education and Business Creation Propensity: Testing a Structural Model*. Proceedings of Luter National Enterprise. 17th Global Conference, Internationalizing Entrepreneurship Education and Training, Gdansk.
- Ferreira, J.O, Raposo, L.R. Rodriques R.G., Dinis, A. & Paco, A. (2012). A model of Entrepreneurial Intention: An Application of the Psychological and Behaviourial Approaches. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 19(3) 424-440.
- Gulliford, R. (2003). Emotional Intelligence: How your Emotions Influence your Life at Work and at Home, *Buffalo University Research Foundations*, 2, 1-62.

Entrepreneurship, Social Support, and Emotional Intelligence as Panacea for Youth Empowerment, Employment, Self-Reliance and Sustainable National Development in Nigeria

- Heinonen, J. (2007). An Entrepreneurial-Directed Approach to Teaching Corporate Entrepreneurship at University level; *Education and Training*, 49(4), 310-24.
- Jekwu, O. L. (2016). Psychological Predictors of Entrepreneurial Intention among Nigerian Graduates. *International Journal of Psychology and Counseling* 8(6), 73-80.
- Koh, H. (1996). Testing Hypotheses of Entrepreneurial Characteristics. A Study of Hong Kong MBA Students. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. 11(3) 12-25.
- Krueger, N. (1993). The Impact of Prior Entrepreneurial Exposure on perception of New Venture feasibility and Desirability. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*. 18(1), 5-21.
- Matsuda, T. Tsuda, A. Kim E. & Deng, K. (2014). Association between Perceived Social Support and Subjective Well-being among Japanese, Chinese and Korean College Students. *Journal of Scientific research*. 5, 491-499.
- Muhammad, A.D. Aliyu, S. & Ahmed, S. (2015). Entrepreneurial intention among Nigerian University Students. *American Journal of Business Education* 8, (4) 239-248.
- National Bureau of Statistics (2016). *Nigerian Unemployment Survey Report*. NBC, 2016.
- Mould, C. (2013). *Do Personality Traits Predict Entrepreneurial Intention and Performance?* A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Commerce in Organizational Psychology, Faculty of Commerce, University of Cape Town.
- Paco, A. M .F. Ferreira J. M. Kaposo, M, Rodriques, R. G. & Dinis, A. (2011). Behaviours and Entrepreneurial Intention. Empirical Findings about Secondary Students. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship*. 9, 20-38.
- Tolutope, K. J. & Donald, D. U. (2015). Emotional Intelligence and Social Support as Predictors of Life Satisfaction among Hospital Workers. *American Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1, (4), 12-22.
- Weini, L. Baoping, L. Liying, L., Sern N. H. & Lih, W. L. (2012). *Entrepreneurial Intention: a Study among Students of Higher Learning Institution*. A

Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons), University Tunku Abdul Rahman.

- Awogbenle, A., Cyril and K. Chijioke I. Wuamadi (2013). Youth Unemployment: Entrepreneurship Development Programme as Intervention Mechanism (African Leadership Forum (ALF), Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. Zth Institute for Development Studies, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Enugu State, Nigeria
- Agbim K. C., Oriarewo, G.O. & Owocho, M. (2013). Factors Influencing Entrepreneurial Intentions among Graduates of Nigeria Tertiary Institutions. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention* 2,(4), 36-44.
- Helk, G. L. & Oudsten, B. L. (2008). *Emotional Intelligence: Relationship to Stress, health and wellbeing. In Avingerhoets, I. Nyklicek & J. Denollet (Eds). Emotional Regulation, Conceptual and Clinical Issues.* New York, NY; Springer
- Mayer, J. & Salovey, P. (1990). What is Emotional Intelligence? I.U.P. Salovey & D. Sluyter, *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Implications for Educations* New York: Basic Book.
- Saleh, N.H. (2015). *The Influence of Psychological Factors on Entrepreneurial Intention among IKBN Students.* Thesis Submitted to Othmani Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business, University Utara, Malaysia in Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Science, Management.
- Shittu, A. & Dosunmu Z. (2014). Family Background and Entrepreneurial Intention of Fresh Graduates in Nigeria. *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development.* 5, 75-92.
- Zhang, J. Wong, P. & Soh, P. (2003). *Network Ties Prior Knowledge and Resources Acquisition by High-tech Entrepreneurial Paper Presented at the Academy of Management Conference, Seattle, India.*
- Stevenson, H. H. & Jarillo, J. C. (1990). A Paradigm of Entrepreneurship: *Entrepreneurial Management Strategic Management Journal.* 11(4), 17-27.