

Volume 1 / Issue 1 & 2

The Deepening youth unemployment crisis in Africa
occasioned by Covid-19 Pandemic:
What options available for the rescue?

JOURNAL

of

African Employment Entrepreneurship and Skills Development

(JAEESD)

GOOD JOB

DECENT JOB

GOOD JOB

CREATE JOBS
CRUSH POVERTY

ISSN: 2805-3524

"Youth Employment Matter for a Sustainable Africa of Now and the Future"

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JOURNAL DESCRIPTION

The Journal of African Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Skills Development (JAEESD) is an interdisciplinary, continental, and peer-reviewed Academic and Research Journal with the objective of publishing insightful, persuasive, original articles that have constructive evidence-based analysis on the subject of employment, entrepreneurship, innovation and skills development across the continent of Africa. The ARUA, Centre of Excellence for Unemployment and Skills Development Centre (ARUA, CoE-USD) engenders strong collaboration among researchers and experts in Africa and globally with the primary interest of resolving the menace of unemployment (especially youth unemployment) by leveraging entrepreneurship, innovation, and skills development research outputs to galvanize opportunities for decent jobs in Africa. At present, ARUA, CoE-USD is funded by the UKRI through the Partnership, Research, and Capacity-Building for Youth Unemployment Solutions in Africa (PRAC-4-YUSA). The Centre is passionate about researches that explore methods and techniques that can equip the African youth and its entire populace with the indispensable and phenomenal innovative skills, risk taking abilities, creativity and business management skills that will help African youth become employers of labour rather than employees of labour.

AIMS AND SCOPE

It is the aim of JAEESD to publish articles that focus on deepening understanding of the youth unemployment crisis in Africa, with strong research outputs that proffer innovative policy solutions while leveraging the tools of entrepreneurship and innovation for enhanced skills development across the continent of Africa. JAEESD accepts rigorous research papers, case studies, research letters and research notes that are qualitative or quantitative and examine any of the following areas of research focus:

- Unemployment in Africa
- Youth unemployment in Africa
- Entrepreneurship, skills development, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Innovation and Technopreneurship
- International entrepreneurship, business development, and born global
- Family business, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and gender entrepreneurship
- Micro financing, angel financing, and Venture Capital
- Social entrepreneurship and informal sector
- Employment relations, Graduate unemployment, and Talent Management
- Agropreneurship, Healthpreneurship, and Artpreneurship
- Future of Work and Decent Jobs
- The 4th Industrial Revolution

MANUSCRIPT REQUIREMENTS

Articles to be considered for publication must conform to the following requirements:

- Abstract should range between 300 and maximum of 450 word-count, with Five keywords that capture the principal topic of the article
- Font size is 12pt, single line spaced, and in Times New Roman fonts
- Ideas must be clearly communicated in English Language
- Full length of article should range between 7,000 and 10,000 (Maximum) words
- Article must be appropriately referenced using the 6th or 7th edition APA referencing style

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Editor's Speech

First, I want to congratulate the ARUA, Centre of Excellence for Unemployment and Skills Development Centre (ARUA, CoE-USD) through the funding of UKRI in Partnership with Research, and Capacity-Building for Youth Unemployment Solutions in Africa (PRAC-4-YUSA) for the success of the 1st edition of the ARUA, CoE-USD International Conference which birthed the maiden edition of “The Journal of African Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Skills Development (JAEESD)”.

The main theme of the maiden edition of “The Journal of African Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Skills Development (JAEESD)” is centered on employment, entrepreneurship, innovation and skills development across the continent of Africa with the focus on resolving the menace of unemployment by leveraging entrepreneurship, innovation, and skills development research outputs to galvanize opportunities for decent jobs in Africa. There is no doubt that entrepreneurship is an emerging area of discourse the world over, and JAEESD is the best journal to acquaint youths and all stakeholders interested in economic growth with the best practices in this area of entrepreneurship development for sustainable Africa.

Thus, JAEESD addresses different but relevant areas of significance of skills development, entrepreneurship, and innovation for sustainable economic development in Africa and the world at large. The ten (10) Articles in this Volume 1, Issue 1 focus on how entrepreneurship and innovations can salvage the deepening youth unemployment crisis in Africa and beyond.

It is important to stress here that the JAEESD maiden edition went through rigorous assessment and all the assessors are scholars from across the world such as North America, South America, Africa, and Europe. Each article went through double blind review. I want to seize this opportunity to thank all our assessors and reviewers for a job well-done. I also want to appreciate the co-editor in chief, the managing editor, and editorial advisory board for their diligence and assiduousness in making this journal available to us today.

I earnestly appreciate and acknowledge the hard work of the authors of the fantastic 10 articles that made the Volume 1 Issue 1 edition of this journal. Your scholarly contributions to this journal are of international standard with great relevance to the world discourse on current issues. I hope that the articles published in this edition will give our readers, especially youth, students, practitioners, professionals, politicians, entrepreneurs, governments and scholarly minded populace, new and disruptive ideas that can make Africa economy great and sustainable for global competitiveness. We welcome helpful and constructive criticism that can assist us to improve our subsequent JAEESD journal editions.

Professor Sunday Abayomi Adebisi

Editor

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Technopreneurship and Innovation Diffusion as Rescuing Therapy for the Rising Youth Unemployment in Post-COVID-19 Africa

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Abstract

This study attempts to proffer solutions to the youth unemployment challenge facing the African continent through technopreneurship and innovation in the post COVID-19 era. It is common knowledge that the corona virus pandemic which has affected over 47 million people worldwide with more than 1.2 million fatalities has left national economies and businesses devastated, thereby compounding the unemployment challenge faced by many countries. With the closure of international boundaries and the attendant supply chain disruptions, many factories have scaled down their operations or closed shop completely thereby rendering many workers redundant. These redundant erstwhile workers join the pool of the jobless that are in an already saturated labour market. Consequently, it has become imperative to seek novel solutions to the unemployment challenge through innovation and technopreneurship as a way of awakening the creative ingenuity of the youth in order to become job creators rather than job seekers. It is instructive to note that a country like China rose from the ashes of poverty in 1978 to become the greatest nation in manufacturing through technopreneurship in less than 30 years. It can also be argued that the economic prosperity of several countries such as the United States of America, Japan, Germany, South Korea, Malaysia, Italy, Singapore and France is not predicated on natural resource endowment. Rather, it is based on the creative ingenuity of the citizens, and the governments' conscious and deliberate effort in the promotion and investment in research and development in the areas of technology and education. This research is a qualitative design based on the interpretivist philosophy and an ontological orientation of subjectivism. Qualitative research emphasizes words rather than quantification in collecting and analysing data. Interpretivism advocates that researchers, as a matter of necessity, should appreciate differences between humans in their role as social actors. Findings from the research reveal that innovation and technopreneurship are capable of galvanizing the youth into job creators rather than job seekers and this can translate into wealth creation for the economic prosperity of the African continent. Based on the findings, the recommendation made is that African governments should provide an enabling environment as well as the financial and technical support required for innovation and technopreneurship to thrive in the post-COVID-19 period.

Keywords: COVID-19, Innovation, Technology, Tehnopreneurship, Unemployment

Introduction

African countries are faced with a debilitating youth unemployment challenge that sometimes results in social unrest and other means of expressing their anger and frustration on the ruling class. The recent wave of protests by youths that swept through Nigeria tagged “#ENDSARS” which was originally aimed at checkmating police brutality was grossly an expression of frustration and disenchantment emanating from unemployment and poverty. It is common knowledge that youth unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria is among the highest in the world (Akande, 2014). With a youth population of about 69%, and the vast majority of them either wholly unemployed or partially employed, the tendency for chaos and spontaneous reaction to despondency is to be expected. The corona virus that started in Wuhan, China, late 2019 has swept through the entire world leaving many economies on the brink of total collapse (Ehiorobo, 2020). The devastation caused by the spread of COVID-19 is felt more in the developing nations that have always depended on handouts from rich countries for sustenance and survival. With global glut in commodity prices, most developing nations

that are primary producers have been at the receiving end of the economic quagmire. In Nigeria, for example, the country mostly depends on the sale of crude oil for its foreign exchange earnings but with the global slide in the price of crude oil getting below \$30 per barrel, it was obvious that the country was heading for very difficult times.

Unemployment is a global phenomenon that has come to stay with humanity. Different countries have continually crafted strategies that are aimed at reducing unemployment, especially, among youths, since no country is completely free from the twin challenges of unemployment and underemployment. These strategies range from adopting the Keynesian model of increasing government spending to create jobs to encouraging the establishment of micro and small business firm by entrepreneurs (Jhingan, 2016). Thus, a deliberate policy aimed at boosting self-employment and providing seed capital is employed by many nations as remedy for mitigating the dangers associated with youth unemployment. With the creation of entrepreneurial firms, the emphasis of most governments around the world on job creation has shifted from large scale enterprises to the development of small business firms (Dende & Joshua, 2012).

Technopreneurship which involves the pursuit of entrepreneurship with emphasis on the creation of business firms that are technology-based or a novel approach to existing businesses with the application of modern information technology has the capacity to create successful businesses and minimize unemployment. With technopreneurship, traditional entrepreneurship orientation is transformed to focus more on lifestyle entrepreneurship which is more in tandem with modern life (Shine, 2003). The increasing dependence by people all over the world on information technology as a means of enriching their lifestyle makes technopreneurship a veritable instrument for achieving success as a lifestyle entrepreneur.

Innovation is the ability to creatively transform an idea or a product from its original form to something of value that can be beneficial to identifiable customer groups, whether as individuals or corporate entities. Zahra (1996) posits that innovation is the commitment by an individual or corporate entity to create and introduce new products, processes, organisational systems and technology. The ability to be creative or innovative is sine-qua-non for successful entrepreneurship due to the turbulence of market forces and the reality of competition occasioned by globalisation. For any individual to succeed as an entrepreneur, they must be able to offer something that is unique and valuable at a price that the target customers can pay and this is only achievable through creativity and innovation (Tanwar, 2013; Zahra & Covin, 1995).

The aim of this research is to evaluate how technopreneurship and innovation can mitigate the unemployment challenge in the post COVID-19 African continent. Specifically, the study seeks to identify how to encourage the youths to venture into technopreneurship in an increasingly digitalised world where the lifestyle of the vast majority of the human race is being governed daily by use of information and communications technology. In order to address this objective, the study attempts to provide solutions to the following research questions: Can technopreneurship mitigate the challenge of unemployment in the post COVID-19 African continent? Does innovation lead to successful business venturing?

Problem Statement

The basic aim of government in any society is to provide decent living for all its citizens through such measures as physical and economic security which may include the provision of meaningful and easy access to decent employment. However, many countries still have to grapple with the challenges of outright unemployment or underemployment for the vast majority of their citizens. Where some nations attempt to tackle the problem, administrative lapses, corruption and poor definition of what constitutes genuine job creation usually stifle such initiatives. Consequently, the measures adopted

usually fail to address unemployment or they are either shoddily executed or fail woefully in mitigating the challenge.

Another major cause of high rate of unemployment and underemployment in developing countries is the overdependence on government to provide jobs. While it is the duty of the government to provide an enabling environment for private sector initiatives to thrive, it also owes the citizens a robust policy framework, infrastructural backbone and access to capital for potential entrepreneurs to exercise their talents. It is instructive to know that technopreneurship which has become the game changer in a highly digitalised world is at its very low ebb in most African countries, including Nigeria. With the economic devastation caused by the corona virus globally, it has become imperative to seek technological solutions that can enable products and services to be produced cheaper, faster and better for the discerning customers who are no longer limited by international boundaries in buying whatever they need.

It is upon this premise that technopreneurship can become the rescuing therapy that is required to galvanise productivity, create new markets, increase job creation and therefore, mitigate the problem of youth unemployment. Several studies in the past on technopreneurship have tended to focus on how technopreneurship can improve productivity, for example, (Adeoti, 2019; Wang & Wong, 2007) without focus on how it can be used to mitigate global unemployment in a period of pandemic. This research is, therefore, an attempt to fill this gap by addressing how different African countries can adopt technopreneurship and innovation to revitalise their productive sectors and, thus, create jobs for their youths in the post-COVID-19 era.

Literature Review

Theoretical Underpinning: Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Diffusion of innovations theory may be attributed to the earlier works of Everett Rogers in 1962. Rogers posits that diffusion is the process by which an innovation is passed to, and disseminated among a group of people in a given society. Rogers (1962) postulates that four archetypal elements contribute to spreading any novel idea and these include the strength and relevance of the innovation itself, the channels of communication, time as well as the nature of the social system where the innovation is expected to be put to use. The whole process, according to Rogers, is largely dependent on the quality of human resource asset entrusted with the responsibility of executing the innovation.

The diffusion of innovations theory attempts to explain how, why and to what extent a new idea or technology can spread. Rogers further declares that the various categories of adopters are the innovators who embrace any new idea as soon as it is popularized, early adopters who follow next, this is followed by early majority and lastly, the laggards who adopt a wait and see attitude to observe the impact of the innovation on others before slowly introducing it in an evolutionary manner. Technological innovation involves information about an idea or new technology, and options are weighed before a decision is reached. Consequently, when it is eventually adopted, it helps to minimize doubt and uncertainty. The diffusion of innovations theory is found relevant to this research as technopreneurship is anchored on the creative ingenuity and technological feats that are translated into goods and services that satisfy the wants of particular customer groups when businesses are created to provide jobs and mitigate the challenge of unemployment in the society.

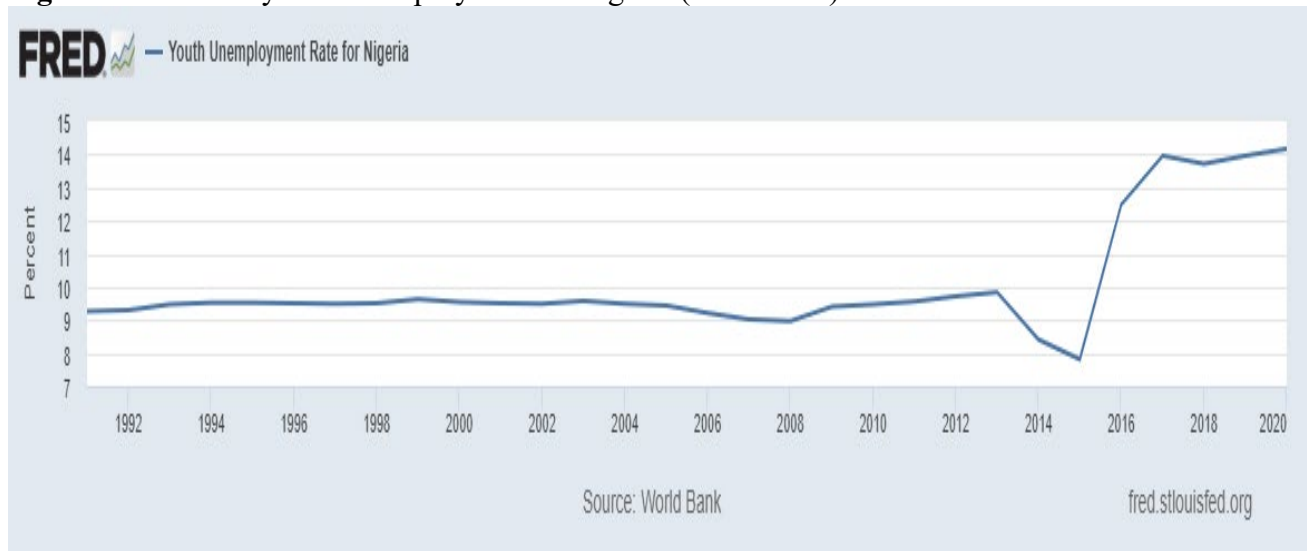
Understanding the challenge of unemployment in Africa

Unemployment is a global phenomenon that has lived with humanity since the advent of interdependence between individuals and among societies. This assumed an upward surge with the industrial revolution when machines took over the manual processes of production. Thus, with machines doing the work which several people used to do, redundancy ensued and the number of

people required to carry out tasks began to drop (Stoner, Freeman & Gilbeert, 2007). The problem has been further compounded with the recent developments in information and communications technology (ICT) which has revolutionised the entire work process and reduced manual work to its barest minimum with its concomitant reduction in the number of people required in either the production lines or service organisations (O'Brien, 2003). Unemployment occurs when people within the working population, usually between the ages of 15 and 65 years are unable to find jobs.

However, youth unemployment is taken as when people who are willing and able to work between the ages of 15 and 24 are unable to secure jobs. The problem is more pronounced in developing countries where population growth rate far exceeds the available jobs that are created to engage the teeming population. The developed nations of the world equally experience unemployment, though to a lesser degree, and have robust policies and programmes to create employment or cater for the unemployed through social safety nets that help them to cushion the impact of joblessness. High unemployment poses danger for the economy because of losses of output as many people within the productive age are not put to work. It also results in misery, social unrest (as was recently witnessed in Nigeria), as well as hopelessness for the unemployed (Begg, Fisher & Dornbusch, 1994).

Figure 1: Trend of youth unemployment in Nigeria (1992-2020)



Source: World Bank (2020)

As can be observed from the figure 1, unemployment has assumed a double digit status in Nigeria since 1999. It took a leap in 2015 as it shot up to 24 % and it is expected to hit 38 % by the last quarter of 2020 (tradingeconomics, 2020). According to PwC (2020), the various unemployment facts about Nigeria hold as presented thus:

Unemployment in Nigeria, 2020 by level of education, gender and age

- 41% with Bachelors degrees unemployed;
- 23% with Masters degrees
- 23% with Doctorate degrees
- 18% with Vocational employees
- 15-24 years old – 41% unemployed
- 25-34 years old - 31% unemployed
- Male unemployment rate 32%
- Female unemployment rate 23%

In quarter 4 of 2020, it is projected that the labour force will be 81million

For the whole of Africa, there is an estimated youth population of 420 million between the ages of 15-35 years. Out of this number, 1/3 completely unemployed, another 1/3 are vulnerably employed leaving just 1/6 in wage employment (AfDB, 2016). With 10-12 million youth entering the labour market every year and barely 3.1 jobs created annually, in the continent, the consequences have been manifesting in social unrest, armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, risky migrations and engagement in internet fraud among other crimes as a means of survival. The vast majority of the employed youth are engaged in the informal sector and accounting for over 80% in some countries.

According to the ILO (2020), North Africa has the highest unemployment rate in the world exceeding 30%. It is instructive to note that one in every five youth in Africa are not engaged in employment, education and training as at 2019 (ILO, 2020). A further study by the ILO in 2018 show that an overwhelming majority of African youth aged between 15-24 years or 94.9% are informally employed with little or no education. 2/3 of the youth with secondary education and 1/3 with tertiary education also find solace in working in the informal sector where they are mostly engaged in vulnerable employment. The number of youth engaged in wage employment in the formal sector are higher in Algeria and South Africa in the entire continent (AfDB,2016).

COVID-19 and the Global Unemployment Crisis

The corona virus pandemic which started in Wuhan, China, late 2019 has spread all over the globe with over 47million infections and about 1.2million deaths so far as at 3rd November, 2020 (WHO, 2020). Consequent upon the spread of the pandemic, businesses have been devastated globally causing factory shutdowns and mass retrenchment in both small and large business organisations (World Economic Forum, 2020). As at March 2020, many industries including aviation, tourism, manufacturing, entertainment, services providers, financial institutions, haulage businesses and retail organisations had begun to close shop due to the rampaging pandemic (Ehiorobo, 2020). In the USA for instance, more than 40million people have filed for unemployment claims as at October 24, 2020 (New York Times, 2020).

In Nigeria, the unemployment rate took a leap from around 23.7% to a projected 38 percent in the last quarter of 2020 (tradingeconomics, 2020). In Germany, Spain, France, United Kingdom and Italy, unemployment figures have soared and the various governments are paying huge unemployment benefits to the unemployed for sustenance. The factories that have shut down will not be in a hurry to re-open neither are jobs going to be provided very soon especially as many countries in Europe and America have begun a second wave of lockdown due to a recent surge in corona virus infections. Many closed factories may never re-open again because the corona virus pandemic has brought in its wake a shift in demand to more existential goods and services (Ehiorobo, 2020). For those companies that may re-open after the pandemic, it is noteworthy that when there is no effective demand for goods and services produced by any company, its survival becomes threatened (Jhingan, 2016).

Georgieva (2020) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) observes that global economic outlook for 2020 was negative with economic recession staring every country in the face and capital outflows looming in poorer nations. OECD (2020) maintains that the global economy would suffer for several years due to the pandemic while the Asian Development Bank (2020) warns that the global cost of COVID-19 could exceed \$4.1 trillion. With the economic quagmire occasioned by the pandemic and the attendant business closures, there have been unprecedented levels of supply chain disruptions across the globe. Purchasing power has dwindled due to massive job losses and this has further worsened the unemployment crisis in many countries (Ehiorobo, 2020).

A Brief Overview of the Nigerian Economy

The Nigerian economy can best be described as an economic paradox. The country is labelled a middle-income nation ranking as the 27th largest economy in the world and number one on the African continent in terms of nominal GDP. Nigeria also ranks 24th in the Purchasing Power Parity index (World Bank, 2020). However, despite these positive economic indicators, Nigeria is regarded as the poverty capital of the world with over 70 percent of the population living below poverty line (World Bank, 2020). Nigeria is not also included in the top 100 countries in the Youth Progress Report for 2017. Youth progress index measures a country's achievement in basic human needs, foundations of wellbeing and opportunity. On the African continent, the countries that rank among the top 100 are Tunisia (56), Morocco (72), Egypt (77), South Africa (79), Ghana (84), Senegal (88), Rwanda (89) and Malawi (90) (Deloitte, 2020). In terms of the Human Development Index (HDI) for 2019, no African country makes the top 60 in the world. Seychelles which ranks 1st in Africa is No 62 at the global stage while Mauritius which ranks 2nd in Africa is No 66 in the world. Nigeria does not rank among the high or medium Human Development countries even in Africa. Nigeria is found among the low ranking countries at No 25 on the continent (UN HDI Report, 2019).

The agricultural sector is the highest contributor to Nigeria's GDP accounting for about 18% while oil revenues, though the major source of foreign exchange earnings, contributes only 2.7% to GDP. With a largely subsistence agricultural sector, Nigeria remains a major producer of groundnut, cocoa, palm oil, rubber, rice, millet, sorghum, cassava and yams. Livestock production is equally a booming business in Nigeria, with about 19 million head of cattle in 2018 (World Bank, 2020). Nigeria is the largest livestock producer in Africa. The agricultural sector which provides huge investment opportunities for technopreneurs due to the fact that it is still grossly subsistence, requires a deliberate and conscious policy framework to attract investments in the sector in order to achieve food sufficiency, become a net exporter of agricultural products and increase foreign exchange earnings and GDP.

Table 1: Key economic performance indicators for Nigeria and selected African countries 2018

Economic indicator	Nigeria	South Africa	Botswana
Population (million)	195.87	57.78	2.25
GDP (US\$ billion)	397.27	368.288	18.62
GDP per capita (US\$)	2,028.18	6,374.02	8,258.64
Share of manufacturing in GDP (%)	7.78	11.76	5.16
Manufacture export as share of total merchandise export (%)	3.60	47.93	96.82
Manufacture import as share of total merchandise import (%)	57.46	63.09	72.47
High technology exports (% manufactured exports)	1.85	5.32	0.62
Agric. mechanization (tractors per 100 sq. km of arable land)	6.57 (2004)	47.52 (2004)	135.75 (2004)
Gross Expenditure on R&D as share of GDP (%)	0.2 (2007)	0.82 (2016)	0.54 (2013)

Source: Adapted from Adeoti (2019).

The oil sector is Nigeria's highest source of foreign exchange earnings but it is mostly dominated by foreign companies such as ExxonMobil, Shell, Chevron and Agip. Nigeria's proven oil reserves in 2020 stands at about 35 billion barrels with about 100 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (The CablePetrobarometer, 2020). Due to foreign domination, the Nigerian government enacted the local contents law in 2010 which is hardly being obeyed as a result of shortage of indigenous technical expertise in the oil industry. Nigeria is also blessed with several solid mineral deposits which have

remained untapped because of government bureaucracy and the absence of a clear national policy to exploit the mineral deposits.

Also of interest are some key economic performance indicators for Nigeria, South Africa and Botswana. A comparison of the countries' performance on key human development indicators reveal that Nigeria has the lowest HDI and also the lowest GDP per capita despite having the highest GDP in nominal terms. Table 1 shows the key economic performance indicators for Nigeria, South Africa and Botswana for 2018.

Table 2 shows how technopreneurship can leapfrog a nation from poverty to wealth. China had lower GDP per capital than Nigeria in 1978 (\$150) while Nigeria had (\$527). However, the massive investment in technopreneurship and the structural reforms that took place in China between 1970 and year 2000 changed the development equation. As at 2018, China's per capita GDP has risen from \$156 in 1978 to \$9,771 with a percentage increase of 6,147% whereas, Nigeria's per capital GDP increased from \$527 to \$2,028 representing a percentage increase of 285% (WDI, 2019).

Table 2: GDP and GDP per capita for USA, China and Nigeria

YEAR	GDP (USD Billion)			GDP Per Capita (USD)		
	USA	CHINA	NIGERIA	USA	CHINA	NIGERIA
1978	2350	150	37	10,565	156	527
2018	20,494	13,608	397	62,641	9,771	2,028
% Increase	772	8,972	988	492.92	6,147	285

Source: WDI (2019)

Who is an Entrepreneur and What is Entrepreneurship?

An entrepreneur is a person with a business acumen that identifies an opportunity and undertakes an innovation (which includes committing resources) to translate the opportunity into producing economic goods or services for consumers at a profit. Schumpeter (1934) observes that an entrepreneur is a person who is willing and able to convert a new idea or invention into a successful innovation. Akande (2014) defined an entrepreneur as a risk-taking, innovative individual who sets up an enterprise for the purpose of making a profit and for growth. Entrepreneurship which is the act of entrepreneurs is defined by Vesper (1980) as "the art of operating in an excellent way" Schumpeter (1942) opines that entrepreneurs engage in a gale of "creative destruction" to replace inferior innovations which on the long run result in the creation of new products and the development of new business models. Thus, creative destruction, according to him, result in the dynamism of industries that eventually culminate in long-run economic growth. The assumption that entrepreneurship leads to economic growth is also domiciled in the endogenous growth theory which stipulates that economic growth results from innovations and investments from internal sources rather than external interventions. Entrepreneurship is aimed at creating and introducing new products and technologies which are capable of improving the economic fortunes of a society (Low & MacMillan, 1988; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000).

Entrepreneurship is all about taking risks (Drucker, 1970; Knight, 1921). However, Schumpeter (1942) argues that the entrepreneur does not take risk, that it is the capitalist that bears the risk. An examination of entrepreneurial behaviour indicates that his obligation is all about risk-bearing as he is ready to put his career and finances on the line to actualise a dream which is beclouded with uncertainties. Knight (1921) identifies three major types of uncertainties which include:

- Measurable risk which has equal probability of success or failure
- Ambiguity which is difficult to measure statistically, and

- Knightian uncertainty or True uncertainty which cannot be predicted or ascertained.

It is instructive to note that the actual act of entrepreneurship is more closely linked with true uncertainties especially when a novel idea or product that is previously unknown to the market is to be introduced. Whether it will succeed or not cannot be ascertained.

For successful entrepreneurship, there must exist entrepreneurial orientation among potential entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) refers to the processes, practices, and decision-making activities that lead to new initiatives and business ventures which are essential ingredients of entrepreneurship (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Owualah (1996) observes that the entrepreneur is motivated by several factors which include: (a). the desire to work independently without supervision; (b). perception of higher financial returns; (c) an opportunity for more effective feedback; (d). the desire to experiment on some novel ideas which may generate intrinsic reward and self-fulfilment and; (e). the desire to explore new opportunities.

According to Bird (1988), the entrepreneurial process has both attitudinal and behavioural components. The attitudinal perspective can be derived from the willingness of an individual to search for new opportunities and take responsibility for creating change while the behavioural component hinges on the set of activities needed to evaluate the business opportunity, define the business, obtain necessary resources and create a business to harness the available opportunity (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990).

Entrepreneurs operate within the entrepreneurial ecosystem in order to identify with and operate successfully in their chosen line of business. Mason and Brown (2014) opine that the entrepreneurial ecosystem is a set of different individuals who may be existing or potential entrepreneurs, organisations and agencies that support entrepreneurship which may include business venture capitalists, business angels, banks and other institutions such as universities, government agencies, ministries and parastatals, and the entrepreneurial processes that occur within the ecosystem including the business birth rate, number of high growth firms, serial entrepreneurs as well as their entrepreneurial ambitions.

The Concept of Technopreneurship

Technopreneurship is a compound word that combines technology with entrepreneurship. Technopreneurship implies the application of technology to the development of business ideas and risk-taking aimed at figuring out something new. It is simply a merger of technological innovation with entrepreneurship (Adeoti, 2019). The literature is replete with various nomenclature such as technical entrepreneur, hi-tech entrepreneur, technological entrepreneur and technology-based entrepreneurs (Dahlstrand & Lindholm, 1999; Oakey, 2003). “Technopreneurship” is founded by merging two words “Technology and Entrepreneurship”. It is a “technology innovator and business man rolled into one”; or better still “an entrepreneur whose business involves technology related activities” (Mashingaidze, (2016). Fowosire, Idris and Opoola (2017) citing Blanco (2007) observe that technopreneurship is the process of identifying modern technologies or even creating new technological opportunities for the production of commercially viable goods and services. Technopreneurship does not necessarily involve invention but harps on innovation as the technopreneur must be technology-savvy. For a technopreneur, innovation is the key to success as it involves seeking solutions to business problems by utilising technological resources (Adeoti, 2019).

To be successful as a technopreneur, certain factors should be considered as the application of technological innovation to create goods and services require a certain degree of readiness which include being technology savvy, having a good technical background, possessing an appetite for risk-taking, having a genuine passion for innovation and creativity, possessing adequate knowledge of other

technopreneurs and the strides they are making, and having access to cheap capital. Mashingaidze (2016) observes that a “technopreneur distinguishes logic from tradition, tradition from prejudice, prejudice from common sense and common sense from nonsense while integrating a variety of ideas from diverse groups and disciplines” In the new knowledge economy, it is innovation and creativity that will set successful entrepreneurs apart from the rest. In 2012, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reports that there are over 400 million entrepreneurs in the world. What that simply means is that every nation is relying on these private initiatives to grow their economies and create wealth. Grimaldi, Kenney, Donald & Wright (2011) argue that the main objective of technopreneurs is the commercialization of innovations developed by research scientists through patenting, licensing, new business creation, and university–industry partnerships and collaboration. With declining formal sector jobs globally, and the changing lifestyle of the youth across the globe, it is obvious that technopreneurship will become more relevant in an increasingly digitalised world.

Technology as the Driving Force of Technopreneurship

Technopreneurship has been describes as the adoption of technology for entrepreneurship. It is a compound word that combines technological innovation with entrepreneurial orientation for the purpose of creating goods and services for a given customer group or market. Technology is simply the application of scientific discoveries in practical ways (Ehiorobo, 2020). Cakmak and Tas (2012) note that as competition has increased globally, only firms that key into modern technology can withstand the gale of competitive pressures with a view to gaining competitive advantage. Singhai (2014) observes that the rapid improvement in technology has fuelled more competition at the global level and with changing customer demand, adoption of modern technology is the way for firms to go in coping with their new realities. The technological revolution is given a boost with the revolutionary change brought about by improvements in information technology. With these recent developments, information technology has been found to enhance the creation of long-term customer value, increase the possibilities of achieving distinctive and sustainable competitive advantage and improve employee-customer relationship (Dehning & Stratopoulos, 2003; Strebinger & Trailmaier, 2006; Tabb, 2006). Obradovic, Ebersold and Obradovic (2015) have described technology as a component part of the major stimulants of global market formation through the integration of global markets. The researchers also observe that there is a ‘direct proportionality between the level of technological advancement and the development of international trade.’

For technopreneurs, the development or adoption of modern technology is crucial to business survival, growth and sustainability. It therefore behoves on every aspiring or existing technopreneur to invest more in acquiring requisite technologies in order to be competitive and weather the storm in an increasingly globalized world. Technological leadership creates first-mover advantage (Harrison, 2003). It is instructive to note that business organisations that have changed the world with outstanding performance in profitability, high levels of job creation, exceptional customer service, improved customer experience as well as innovative products and services are all technology driven.

The revolutionary trends in robotics technology, artificial intelligence, internet of things (IoTs), data science, big data and machine learning provide a huge opportunity for technopreneurship. AI technologies help businesses in cost savings, increase efficiency, predict customer demand, eliminate wasteful spending, facilitate decision making and enhance customer experience (Deloitte, 2017; Scor, 2018). Dickson (2020) observes that recent improvements in edge hardware, cloud computing and internet of things (IoTs) has continued to make information about objects, people and organisations a lot easier to obtain in the digital economy with data readily available and speedily processed using machine learning algorithms. It therefore behoves on aspiring and existing technopreneurs to embark on extensive research and development for revolutionary products and services in order to become competitive in the digital economy

Innovation and Creativity as Holy Grail for Technopreneurship

The survival and wellbeing of any modern organisation lies in its ability to be creative and innovative. While creativity is concerned with the generation of a new idea, innovation is putting the idea to work which could be the birth of a new company, a new or enhanced product or service, a new process or a new method of production (Stoner *et.al.*, (2007). Any organisation that fails to innovate will either remain stagnant or die. Huynh and Lin (2013) argue that business organisations worldwide are facing the heat of competition from both domestic and foreign companies because of their inability to innovate. In order to survive in an increasingly turbulent world of discontinuity and change, companies must, at all time, be prepared to change along with trending developments and adapt their strategies to remain competitive through constant innovation. Akinyele and Fasogbon (2010) observe that many businesses fail due to their lack of innovativeness which forces them into jittery reactions to change which could have been avoided by anticipating the future and embarking on innovative strategies to take advantage of the changing circumstances.

Drucker (1993) posits that innovation is the tool by which entrepreneurs take advantage of change for an innovated business or service. Owualah (1996) however argues that the introduction of a novel or enhanced product, process or service to the market is innovation. Donaldson (2001) opines that the goal of innovation strategy is to ensure improved performance by the organisation. Innovation puts a company in charge during periods of uncertainties and cataclysmic disruptions rather than adopting reactive measures that may not be in tandem with changing trends. Individuals as well as organisations can be creative. Just as individuals differ in their ability to be creative, so also are organisations. Creativity requires questioning the status quo; refusing to compromise where there is an opportunity for novelty. For individuals and organisations, the creative process requires idea generation, idea development and implementation (Stoner, *et.al.*, 2007).

Technopreneurship feeds on creativity and innovation as these are the holy grail that drive performance and ensures survival and sustainability. The growing use of information technology in deriving business solutions has given a boost to creativity and innovation. Highly innovative individuals simply seek novel solutions to existing problems and this philosophy has driven the success story of companies like Microsoft, Amazon, Uber, Alibaba, Jumia, Twitter, Facebook, and Apple (Adeoti, 2019). To get everyone on board in the creative process, organisations should ensure that there exists a culture of innovation, the company should be customer or market focused, there should be open communication and networking, human resource strategy that supports innovation, teamwork, effective knowledge management, exemplary leadership, flexible structures and adoption of modern technology (Damanpour, 1991).

McKinsey's 3 horizons of innovation framework help organisations to adopt a structured approach to innovation. The approach suggests that for a company to remain competitive and survive from external disruptions, it must consistently invest in its innovation pipeline.

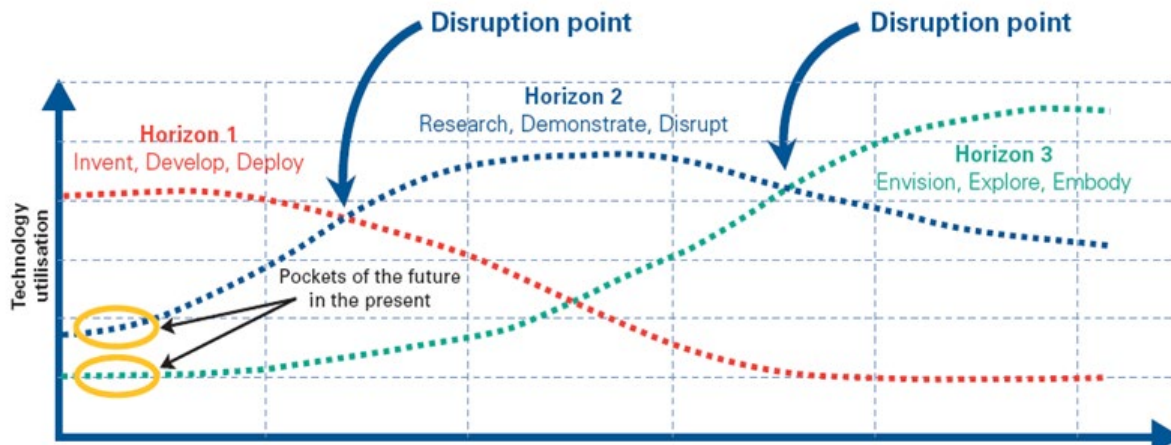
Horizon 1 deals with exploiting your current portfolio of business offering which involves concentrating on your current business offering and making incremental innovations to improve present product or service offering.

Horizon 2 dwells on improving current core business with new offerings and introducing new ideas that create new value.

Horizon 3 is all about exploring new future offering that could change the business.

As time progresses, it would be realised that customer tastes, technology, competition and the whole market will change making current offering obsolete and, therefore, more innovative offering would be required to remain in business.

Figure 2: McKinsey 3 Horizons of Innovation



Source: Adapted from Fink (2018).

Technopreneurship in Selected Countries

In order to ascertain how technopreneurship can impact employment and wealth creation for youth in Africa, a closer look at some countries that have benefited from the initiative is presented in this section.

- a. **Technopreneurship in Malaysia:** In Malaysia, the term 'technopreneur' infers technology entrepreneurs which are mostly represented by ICT, multimedia companies, biotechnologies, bioinformatics, and other high tech industries (Yunus, 2002). As a conscious government effort, Malaysia has established technology parks, Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) and incubators to nurture start-ups. Also relevant to technopreneurship is the SIRIM Malaysia incubator hub at Sepang which is aimed at helping intending technopreneurs at innovative concept development, skill acquisition and skill upgrading (Yunus, 2002). Owing to the encouragement and incentives provided by the government for technopreneurship to thrive in Malaysia, several young people have cashed in on the opportunities and are doing marvellously well in their chosen line of business. For example, Mark Chang the owner of jobstreet.com has become prosperous as his company is the largest online recruitment company in Malaysia. Jobstreet.com has as its clientele over 20,000 companies with more than 3 million job seekers and raking in millions of dollars in revenues. The company has won several awards including the Internet Company of the Year Award and Star E-business Site of the year award. Other prominent technopreneurs among the top ten in Malaysia are Ganesh Kumar Bangah, founder of MOL Access Portal, an online payment system company that has branches in 75 countries; Pua Khein Seng is another successful Malaysian technopreneur and founder of Phison Electronics in Taiwan. His multi-billion business specialises in the production of high quality flash drives.
- b. **Technopreneurship in Singapore:** The government of Singapore has a deliberate policy of promoting technopreneurship through the provision of quality education, infrastructural backbone, and cheap internet access (Burnett, 2000). Technopreneurism has become a social movement in Singapore as everything is being done to encourage technology-based companies and their proprietors to blossom. A Master of Science degree in Technopreneurship and

Innovation is available in Nanyang Technical University in Singapore as a vehicle for training and equipping technopreneurs with skills and stamina to turn novel ideas into successful business ventures. There is the Singapore Technopreneurs Club whose members are successful technopreneurs. Singaporeans are entrepreneurial in nature as they rank 17th in the global entrepreneurial hotspots in 2013 based on entrepreneurial mindset and trendsetting culture (Turner, 2014). Singapore has an innovation culture, access to pre-seed, seed, bridge financing and continuous chain funding (Turner, 2014). Successful technopreneurs in Singapore include Sim Wang Hoo, founder and CEO of Creative Technology engaged in the design and manufacturing of personal computers and digital entertainment devices. Another example is Henn Tan, CEO of Trek 2000 International that invented the Thumb Drive (the USB flash drive that phased out the floppy disk drive) and revolutionised the portable storage industry.

- c. **Technopreneurship in India:** The Indian government realised early enough that their over 1.3 billion population could not wait for wage employment to survive and hence focused much attention on assisting start-ups through creating awareness, providing training and guidance to youngsters with a view to creating their own enterprises. The ruling party in India, Start-up India, has a deliberate policy of encouraging massive start-up initiatives to boost employment and wealth creation and this has paid off in recent years as India becomes the third country in the world with the highest number of start-ups after the US and the UK (Paramasivan & Selladurai, 2016). Engineering graduates account for about 35% of new start-ups in India while MBA graduates account for 26% and average age of those engaged in new start-ups in India is 28 years (Paramasivan & Selladurai, 2016). Many agencies such as Technology Innovation Management and Entrepreneurial Information Service (TIMEIS), which is a joint project between the National Science and Technology Development Board and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce is one of such initiatives to assist technopreneurs find technology, funding options, information about policy environment and other business advisory services.
- d. **Technopreneurship in China:** The momentum of becoming a global technology giant is gathering strength in China as innovation takes centre-stage across the country. The enthusiasm is further boosted by government's initiative to encourage a "new pattern of innovation by the people" as contained in the 13th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) which is set to promote mass entrepreneurship and innovation as a deliberate strategy to facilitate growth. Chinese companies and individuals are frequently encouraged to proactively re-invent themselves through innovation in order to add value to their business activities. Between 2010 and 2014, new businesses created in China grew by 98% which was the highest anywhere in the world due to the encouragement that individuals and organisations received from the government to start their own companies (HKTDC Research, 2016). The success story of the transformation of Chinese technopreneurship can be found in Yuantiao Tech, a Rmb100 million business venture that specialises in big data analytics (HKTDC, 2016). The company recruits PhD graduates from several renowned universities as part of its R&D team aimed at helping organisations and governments in satisfying their quest for big data. It also has collaborative arrangements and joint laboratory facilities with Zhejiang University and Shanghai Jiao Tong University in a bid to transform its state-of-the-art big data technology into commercially viable products and services.
- e. **Technopreneurship in Nigeria:** Like every market economy, Nigeria has also keyed into the global shift to technopreneurship as the vehicle for curbing youth unemployment and wealth creation. Various efforts have been made by successive governments to encourage technopreneurship over the years and these include the numerous technology incubation hubs

across the country. Nigeria has the highest number of such incubation hubs on the African continent with 85 followed by South Africa (80), Egypt (56), Kenya (48), Morocco (31), Tunisia (29) and Ghana (25), Adeoti (2019)

. Lagos has gained a reputation for warehousing the largest number of technology hub ecosystem in Africa, with 31 tech hubs, followed by Cape Town (26) and Nairobi (25). The Yabacon tech hub in Yaba, Lagos is regarded as Africa's Silicon Valley. The first and most successful technology hub in Nigeria is the Co-Creation Hub in Yabacon Valley which was founded by a team of young Nigerian technopreneurs in 2011. With the establishment of tech hubs across Nigeria, thousands of digital jobs are being created and several young Nigerian technopreneurs are making waves on the international scene. A good example is PayStack, a fintech start-up company founded by two young Nigerians (Ezra Onubi & Shola Akinlade) in 2016 which was sold to an American company, Stripe for \$200 million in October 2020 (Ososanya, 2020).

Research Methodology

The research is a qualitative design that reviews both theoretical and empirical literature, specifically on technopreneurship, technology, innovation, entrepreneurship, unemployment and COVID-19 pandemic with its impact on global businesses. As a conceptual study, the philosophical foundation is interpretivism while the ontological orientation is subjectivism. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) opine that interpretivism supports the view that researchers, as a matter of necessity, should appreciate differences between humans in their role as social actors. The resort to the choice of method is based on the fact that social constructs such as technopreneurship, unemployment, wealth creation, entrepreneurial orientation, creativity and innovation in this study are subject to the individual interpretations of social actors in the world of business. According to Chidi and Shadare (2017), qualitative research emphasises words rather than quantification in collecting and analysing data.

Thus, the research attempts to analyse and explain phenomena from data obtained from secondary sources including written texts, journal articles, published materials on the internet and other public sources such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the African Development Bank (AfDB) among others. Such materials were then subjected to a rigorous content analysis from which informed projections were made regarding the impact of the COVID-19 on employment, businesses and national economies. Based on these premises, the study was able to address how technopreneurship and innovation diffusion can become the panacea for youth unemployment challenge in post-COVID-19 African continent.

Discussion

Findings from this study have revealed that those countries which have substantially reduced youth unemployment have embraced technopreneurship as a deliberate policy for employment generation, wealth creation and economic prosperity. From the comparative analysis done on some of the countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, China and India, it is instructive to note that youth unemployment has been drastically reduced since their national governments adopted policies aimed at promoting technopreneurship (Paramasivan & Selladurai, 2016). For instance, unemployment in Malaysia only increased to 4.7 % in 2020 due to the corona virus pandemic. Same goes for China that now has 5% unemployment rate, South Korea, 3.9 %, India, 7% and Singapore, 3.6%. For African countries that have not fully embraced technopreneurship, unemployment rates are double digits with Angola having 34%, Namibia, 33%, South Africa, 23%, Mozambique, 25%, Senegal, 19%, and Nigeria, 28% (tradingeconomics.com, 2020).

Youth unemployment is a major cause of social unrest on the African continent as exemplified in the recent ‘#ENDSARS’ protests in Nigeria. Similar unemployment induced protest had earlier taken place in North Africa, dubbed ‘Arab Spring’ which started in Tunisia in 2010, and spread to Egypt in 2011. It is instructive to note that these protests occur as a result of poor living conditions of the unemployed youths who throw caution to the wind and mobilize their friends and sympathizers to demonstrate against the mostly corrupt African leaders. When governments pretend to address youth unemployment issues with measures that are deliberately intended to siphon public funds and leave the vast majority of the youth population worse off, social unrest cannot be avoided. In Nigeria, and many other African countries, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed how unprepared most national governments were in handling national emergencies and the anger and frustration generated by latent despondency culminated in unprecedented display of resentment by the youths albeit through peaceful protest which was however, hijacked by the poor, hungry and deprived youths that were not initially part of the protest.

Technopreneurship and innovation have the potential to reduce unemployment and lift majority of Africans out of the poverty trap. SENTRYO (2019) as cited in ADEOTI (2019) argues that the first industrial revolution used water and steam to power production, the second industrial revolution used electricity to improve productivity while the third utilised computer and information technology to automate the production process. In the present fourth industrial revolution, emphasis is on digital technology and the knowledge revolution that combines the gains of previous knowledge with present learning to create novelty and transform the ways things are done (ADEOTI, 2019).

To succeed as a technopreneur, the individual must be prepared for hard work and sacrifice. Such a person must be ready to take calculated risk and should not be afraid of failure. Technopreneurs are generally technological pioneers who are intelligent, creative, imaginative, highly innovative and possess conceptual skills. They are capable of harnessing available skills and knowledge that they do not readily possess from sources within reach to complement their own abilities in new venture formation. What technopreneurs require for success include providing leadership and team spirit, flexibility in order to embrace change and alternative ideas, focus without allowing fear of failure to distract them from achieving set goals, personal discipline to ensure commitment to set goals and a clear strategy to differentiate themselves or their brands in the marketplace (ADEOTI, 2019).

Technology and innovation offer hope in tackling the African unemployment challenge. Recent breakthroughs in such fields like robotics which can be deployed in several areas like agriculture, waste management, factory work, entertainment and a host of other uses offer a lot of promise for innovative technopreneurs. Artificial intelligence which has come to change the ways businesses are conducted worldwide (DELOITTE, 2017; EHIOROBO, 2020; & SHABBIIR & ANWER, 2015) is yet to be fully tapped in Africa. Machine learning, big data, data science, 4D printing, internet of things (IoTs) and drones technologies are yet to be fully appreciated and developed for production and business uses in Africa. With so much opportunities for technopreneurship, all that is required is a conscious, genuine and committed national policy to promote technopreneurship in order to enable the youth express their creative ingenuity for curbing unemployment and for the rapid transformation of the African continent.

The business opportunities requiring innovation and novel approaches and where technological tools such as drones, robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning and data science can easily be deployed include agriculture and food security, waste management, e-payment systems, customer service, banking transactions, insurance transactions, traffic management, solar power and alternative energy sources, the automobile and aeronautical industries, space technology, software development, smart homes, industrial safety, smart phones and accessories, internet, health services and the educational sector offer huge opportunities for technology deployment. With the huge uncontested markets that abound on the African continent, technopreneurs only have to develop truly innovative

products to generate viable businesses to create jobs and thus, mitigate the unemployment challenge that almost every African country is currently faced with.

Conclusion and Recommendations

African youth unemployment challenge is a reality that national governments around the continent have been unable to proffer adequate solutions to. With the social unrest that is usually associated with high rates of youth unemployment, there is an urgent need for recourse to innovation and technopreneurship to facilitate job creation and wealth creation in the continent. The situation has been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic which has ravaged the world and shut down national economies causing many hitherto lucrative businesses to close shop with the attendant job losses. In a precarious situation like we have in Africa, only a radical approach to job creation through innovation and technopreneurship can leapfrog the continent out of the present youth unemployment quagmire. However, there are abundant opportunities for African technopreneurs to invest and create wealth if only the right policy framework is put in place by the various national governments and the technopreneurs are given the necessary assistance to venture into businesses through risk mitigation and funding assurances. Opportunities provided by such technological tools like drones, robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, internet of things (IoTs), big data, data science and 4D printing technology have numerous usage options in the resource-rich African continent. Some areas where investment opportunities abound include agriculture, courier services, e-payment systems, waste management, banking and insurance services, traffic management, solar power and other alternative energy sources, automobile and aeronautic industries, software development, industrial safety, machine tools fabrication, industrial machinery, oil and gas industry machinery and equipment, mining equipment, internet and data management services, smart phones and accessories as well as health care service equipment. It is hoped that when youths across the African continent unleash their latent creativity and innovation through technopreneurship, the unemployment dilemma would have been eliminated, thus giving way to a peaceful and prosperous continent.

Based on the foregoing, it is hereby recommended that African governments should:

- Provide an enabling environment for technopreneurship and innovation to thrive among their youths in order to facilitate employment generation and wealth creation;
- Promote and encourage technology acquisition through education and incubation hubs;
- Provide access to cheap capital for technology-based enterprises;
- Provide the requisite infrastructural backbone that can reduce cost of doing business and facilitate technopreneurial ventures; and
- Create agencies that can facilitate access to markets or the outright absorption of excess products to encourage price stability and business continuity.

Limitation and Suggestion for Further Research

This study tends to over generalise the expected benefits of technopreneurship and innovation across the African continent without regard for specific technological skills that are domiciled in each country. Moreover, the research is a qualitative design that lacks empirical validation. Perhaps, a quantitative study of how technopreneurship and innovation can mitigate unemployment in different African countries may produce a different outcome.

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Challenges and Coping Strategies of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Unemployed Youth In Nigeria

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Abstract

It is the obligation of every responsible government to ensure adequate employment for the youths who are the future of tomorrow. Youths are considered the driving force behind the future of a nation if programmes and policies are put in place to improve their opportunities. Consequently, the future of a nation in accomplishing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depends on the basic skills of young person's contributing their ideas, efforts and abilities to the development of the economy. Thus, the rate of unemployment designates how well a nation's human resources is managed as an index for economic growth. The major objective of this study was to examine the emerging literature on youth unemployment and the coping strategies imbibed by the youth and the government. Over the years, Nigeria has recorded and experienced unemployment in every sector of the economy, but presently, in a precarious condition due to the increasing unemployment rate as a result of Covid-19 crisis. Therefore, the study concluded that youth are a challenge and also an opportunity for Nigeria to grow and invest in their increasing population. It was then recommended that efforts should be intensified in all levels to fight corruption in both the public and private sectors for transparency in employment activities and creates institutions to monitor funds allocated for empowerment programmes.

Keyword: Covid-19; Nigeria; SMEs; Unemployment, and Youth

Introduction

The state of a nation's economy can be judged by the level of unemployment (Oviawe, 2010). Youth are the greatest investment for a country's development. They are the key element in the inclusive recovery and achievement of the SDGs; therefore, the response and recovery stages of the pandemic should be aligned in a way to protect their human rights. However, the future of every nation in achieving SDGs is on the basis of skilled young person's contributing their abilities, expertise, ideas and efforts. The United Nations defined unemployment as the situation in which young people between the ages of 15-24 are looking for jobs but can't find jobs. Also, unemployment occurs in a situation where individuals capable and willing to work are unable to get suitable paid jobs (Fajana, 2000). On another hand, unemployment is a situation whereby one is jobless, actively looking for work and available to take a job. Thus, this category can be denoted as NEET "not in employment, education and training". This sums up to people who are not receiving income, not gaining any experience in the labour market, not enhancing their skills or education and finally not receiving any income. Consequently, an individual without a job is enforced into idleness especially those who are willing and have the enthusiastic to work but cannot get any. In a society like Nigeria, in which most persons earn a living majorly by working for others, being unable to get an employment is a very serious issue. However, the higher the rate of unemployment, the higher the poverty level in such an economy. Unemployment is therefore seen as a developmental problem dominant in both developed and developing economies. Its impact is felt more by the youth since they are newly introduced into the existing labour market.

Young people in the global world felt the greatest economic shocks as a result of the pandemic but most especially in Africa where the youth are more likely to be unemployed and lack social protection

in times of crisis. There is long lasting “scarring effect” on being unemployed at a young age, it causes career path and future earnings uncertain. Youth in this situation face lesser career development opportunities, poorer visions for better jobs, low wage levels and lower or no pensions (OECD, 2016). The Covid-19 pandemic has not only endangered the SDGs but has deteriorated the agreed SDGs (World Bank, 2020) as the pandemic initiated massive economic interruption across the globe. However, it has been predicted that Covid-19 could result into a global recession (Ozili, 2020). As a young Nigerian citizen, opportunities for jobs are scarce and hardly available which is very challenging. With the occurrence of Covid-19 pandemic, numerous numbers of young persons are out of work and most have no alternative means of survival. There is absolutely an exponential increase with the outbreak as the country is already experiencing upsurge in unemployment. Of one in six young people have lost their jobs since the onset of the pandemic while those working have experienced a cut in working hours by 23 percent (ILO, 2020). It is certain that in periods of crisis, young persons are amongst the first to lose their jobs. By the way, so many of them are in the informal sector, because majority of them work in the transportation, tourism and hospitality sectors which were most vulnerable in the era of Covid-19.

Youth unemployment is a vital issue because having a large number of young persons out of work will negatively affect a nation’s growth and development if not promptly attended to. Youth in this category feel left out, and thus, this can lead to anxiety, lowliness, social exclusion and lack of hope and positivity for the future. This will certainly push them to frustration and poverty in the long run. In other words, the consequences of unemployment make some youth go into drugs and engage in grand related violence in the society. This eventually hinders their progress and renders them useless for themselves and the society at large. The role of individuals, family, community leaders and government are essential in securing suitable employments for the youth of the country. Government and private sectors are partnering with young people around the world to support their communities in responding to the pandemic through several methods. The endemic really affected young people faster than other groups. It made them face tough situations like interruptions in employment and income loss, training and education, difficulties in getting a job and assistance from the government. Recently, OECD (2020) reported that the “youth as the future generation will shoulder much of the long-term economic and social consequence of the crisis, their well-being may be superseded by short-term economic and equity considerations”. In other words, the major route out of poverty for the youth is sustainable employment which provides adequate source of income. But unemployment hinders the goals of sustainable development and raises the level of poverty, crime, violence, and above all, reduces a country’s GDP. It is unfortunate that the youth between the ages of 15-35 have witnesses two major global shocks of their life. They experienced the 2008/2009 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) together with the Covid-19 pandemic. These events either affected them indirectly (through its effect on their families) or directly (as a student, graduate job seeker or employee). These experiences will have a long-lasting effect on access to decent health, employment and wellbeing. The “lockdown generation” are the young persons (especially youth) faced with multiple shocks as a result of Covid-19 endemic which increased their vulnerability to depressions and anxiety.

The level of unemployment in Nigeria has escalated to the point that the government might no longer be able to control if not adequately addressed. It requires the combined efforts of both the individual, the government and world interventions to formulate a lasting solution to this menace. The problem of unemployment has greatly impaired the socio-economic activities and overall development of the country. An increase in the rate of unemployment creates room for increase in criminal activities which endangers the life’s and properties of the citizens. It also leads to hunger and poverty increment in the

country. Unemployment has always been an important macroeconomic objective of the government which constitutes a serious developmental problem which is on the increase every year. The major policy by the government is targeted at reducing unemployment but the increasing rate is bringing about a major setback. This has generated two important factors- limited relevance on education and training and low growth rate in the economy. However, this has been the trend in many African countries like Nigeria as policies to foster youth employment and empowerment programmes needs to be addressed especially in the period of the present pandemic.

Global Issues on Covid-19 and Unemployment

With the upsurge of unemployment and over 64 million unemployed youth worldwide, unemployment is a global challenge. According to a New York Time article titled “7.7million young people are unemployed”. The article also verified that most American young workers lesser than 30 years are presently unemployed while 3 million are out of labour force in the past months. America is now experiencing the highest rate of unemployment since the U.S started tracking the rate of unemployment (by age) in 1948. The global unemployment rate was 8 percent between 2010 and 2011 which has been increasing over time. In a survey carried out in 148 countries, it was showed that unemployment was lowest in Asia (5 percent) followed by sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) (17 percent) and highest in the Middle East and North Africa (22 percent) (World Economic Outlook 2013). In addition, one out of five youth have the NEET status while some may be contributing through unpaid jobs to the economy (mostly women), others full potentials are not utilized. The present global youth unemployment rate is at 13.6% (ILO 2020) and the factors contributing to high rate of unemployment are the lack of employment opportunities as population is increasing and barriers to entering the labour market. But in Africa, youth are about one fifth of the population, but, due to unemployment issues, 95 percent of young people ventured into informal businesses for survival.

The outbreak of Covid-19 is expected to cause a substantial slowdown of economic activities (The International Monetary Fund 2020a). It was predicted that a contraction of about 3 percent in the global economy which is expected to be greater than that of the 2008/2009 GFC is expected. However, in June, 2020, the IMF (2020b) forecasted a 4.9 percent contraction in the present year. This was ascribed to low economic activities during the lockdown, decrease in productivity, greater unemployment and uncertainty. The World Bank on the other hand projected a 5.2 percent contraction in global GDP while the OECD (2020) predicted a decrease in global GDP by 6 to 7.6 percent on the emergence of a second phase of Covid-19. Preceding the outbreak of Covid-19, youth were three times unemployed compared to adults, however, approximately 126 million youth worldwide lived-in extreme poverty due to unemployment while 77 percent are informally employed globally (ILO 2018; 2020). Furthermore, OECD (2020) found that from the beginning of the crisis, young people between the age 15-24 were the most affected between February and March 2020.

The global lockdown which suspended all economic activities as a result of the endemic led to dysfunction of the economy. Even though the prevalent global economic performance was predicted to cause a great contraction in GDP across the world, that of Africa is presumed to be the largest (OECD 2020). Young people mostly working in different sectors were severely affected by the crisis (hotels, restaurants, gig industries, schools, travel and tours) and are presently facing a high risk of income and job loss. Even though most were offered low-payment and temporary employment, the situation is now worse-off. Consequently, there are approximately 40 million SMEs in the country where young people proffer an alternative for employment. This sector is also greatly hit by the pandemic due to closure of global businesses which hindered commercial activities. Nevertheless, access to healthcare is one of the critical aspects of Covid-19 pandemic, but healthcare insurance services are linked to the employed. Young people who are unemployed, working in informal sector

and the working poor are denied accesses. It is therefore the right of all persons to have access to the highest standards of health (United Nations 1996).

The economic downturn aggravated by the pandemic affected young people in the labour market and this led some youth to taking up temporary or part-time jobs, working in non-standard employment, higher risk of jobs and loss of income in the long run (OECD, 2019). On another hand, the UNICEF is working with partners to expand training, education and employment opportunities for youth between the ages of 10 to 24 through generating global multisector partnership. But without targeted policy intervention towards the youth, they will be disproportionately affected by the crisis as a higher percentage are unemployed compared to adults. Also, this can generate a slow rate of employment activities during the time of recovery.

African Issues on Covid-19 and Unemployment

The issue of unemployment is a crucial developmental subject for every developing country (Patterson et al., 2006). Presently, majority of African youth do not have stable jobs, out of almost 420 million youth between the ages of 15-30 in Africa, a third of them are vulnerably employed, one-third are unemployed while one out of six are in wage employment (African Development Bank Group 2016). The youth face almost double the unemployment rate faced by adults with variations by countries. Every year, it has been recorded that 10 to 12 million youth are added to the workforce, unfortunately, only about 3.1 million jobs are available, leaving a massive number unemployed. Consequently, unemployment affects about 67.6 million young people while the global youth unemployment rate amount to 13.6%, although these figures varies by regions. In North Africa, youth unemployment is the highest with an alarming rate of 30% which is two times that of the global rate. In SSA and Northern American sub-regions, low unemployment possibilities occurred but the rate of youth unemployment was close to 9% in 2019. This number infer that young people need to be assisted to gain and remain in employment. But the global economic challenges and the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic further complicated the issue in which over half of youth in labour force are in low-income countries (ADBG 2016).

The outbreak of Covid-19 had eventually made life unbearable for youth in Africa. Youth under 35 years make up 75 percent of Africa's population. The endemic has caused practically 20 million job loss in the informal and formal sectors. The potential for social unrest in Africa dwells on the disproportionate youth demography in which youth unemployment doubles that of older persons. If adequate solution is not imposed to solve the problem of unemployment, about 263 million youth will be deprived of economic stake in the system by 2020 (ADBG 2016). In 50 years, the pandemic could contribute the largest GDP contraction of about -2 percent in African countries in 2020 and put about 20.4 million persons in extreme poverty (The Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa 2020). The most critical of the pandemic shocks is the contraction in oil prices as crude oil account for 40 percent of Africa's export (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa 2020). African youth living in low- and middle-income countries account for close to 90 percent of African population and the greatest challenges they face is lack of formal jobs. However, 10-15 percent youth get wage employment, while 30-50 percent are employed vulnerably. But the case is different in Algeria and South Africa which are upper middle-income countries. They have lower vulnerable employments with higher wages but very little. They also have a higher unemployment rates obvious in one out of every youth (ADBG 2016). The majority of employed youth in the informal sector face numerous challenges, though, the inadequate formal jobs pushed many into the informal sector which account for about 80 percent job in some developing countries.

Africa's working population from 15 to 64 increased from 443 million to 550 million between 2000 to 2008. On the other hand, the bulk of Africa's unemployed youth are under 25 years (World Bank 2011). In comparison with other developing regions, SSA's population is majorly made up of youth

and they are projected to exceed 75 percent by 2015 (African Development Bank 2012). As the population of African youth is speedily growing and projected to double to over 830 million by 2050, if properly harnessed, the increasing population could be of advantage in increasing productivity and promoting inclusive growth across the continents (ADB 2016). It is of the expectation that the number of youths will not decrease for 20 years. It was envisaged that creating opportunities for an increasing number of youths is a necessity but cannot be singly handed at a country level (Kararach, Hanson, and Léautier 2011). The high economic growth in some SSA regions have not transmitted to low unemployment rate. The increasing unemployment rate has resulted into double the number of adults in the region (ILO 2012). The consequences of youth unemployment in Africa are severe, its instigating migration out of Africa (brain drain), poor living condition, conflicts among citizens and no hope for a better future for talented and brilliant youths. It was inferred that unemployment is a global inclination that is mostly dominant in developing countries (Okafor 2010). Consequently, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) inferred that there are approximately 200 million unemployed youth between the ages of 15-20 which is expected to double in 2025 in Africa. Furthermore, the rate of unemployment before the outbreak of Covid-19 was about 23.1 percent while unemployment rate is expected to increase at about 33 percent by the end of 2020 (NBS 2018; NSEG 2019).

The Impact of Covid-19 on Educational System

Young people were particularly at risk in the event of the outbreak as they are lacking in health and educational wellbeing in their crucial stages of life development. The pandemic generated an unprecedented impact on educational system all over the world and caused series of social consequence by moving education and vocational training from a face-to-face tradition to online mode. This drastically changed the learning and living conditions of children and youth during the endemic (UN 2020). These interruptions exhibited a long-term effect on young persons but favourable to those who possessed the facilities involved. About 191 countries implemented nationwide closure of schools whereby 1.5 million students were unable to return to school. This caused disruption in the education of young people whereby negatively affecting their learning conditions. Subsequently, it resulted to difficulty for poor students who had no alternative nor internet facilities at home. Hence, in elevating the out of school situation, government should be able to provide support for continuity in learning by introducing and promoting high-technology, low-technology and no-technology solution to aid education. (UNESCO 2020).

The outbreak of the virus made e-learning the best option for the educational sector. Online educational system gave the students the opportunities to study at their comfort from home. With the lockdown policy as a containment measure for the virus, various schools adopted online education system to continue with academic activities. Remarkably, several schools in developed countries had already adopted online education system before the outbreak of the virus. Nevertheless, irrespective of the obligations and flexibility by some teachers and schools in safeguarding the educational system during the school closure, not all the students were able to cope or participate in the programme. The OECD survey across 59 countries showed that even though most countries generated an alternative means of learning, only half of the students could meet up with the curriculum. It was also envisaged that a lost school year is equivalent to a loss of about 7-10 percent lifetime of income (OECD, 2020). In alternative to school closure, the conditions and quality of home learning environment is of significance. A digitized environ and access to digital devices further widening the inequalities among students during the pandemic. Nearly all the teaching and learning skills, the delivery systems and teacher's responses to the pandemic will have a lasting effect on the global education system.

There was great loss in the development of human capital, social implications and long-term economic crisis for every week of school closure (OECD, 2020). About 191 countries implemented the nationwide shutdown of schools and this decision put about 1.5 million people out of school (UNESCO

2020). Young people from primary, secondary and tertiary education faced disruptions in their education with varying alternatives to support themselves. This impacted negatively on poor children without access to stable internet facilities to meet up with the rich with sufficient and sustainable opportunities (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020). In this situation, students from poor home were denied access while children from less well-off families were denied the opportunities due to lack of financial and digital resources. Crosswise OECD countries, mostly one in ten (15 years) from socio-economically disadvantaged school lack an internet connection and a quiet space for home study. One out of five do not even have access to a computer (OECD, 2020). The digital environment would have complimented students stay at home if the government had made provisions for the facilities. The teachers and educators of schools and university will have continued their teachings and courses at home but due to circumstances beyond their control, they all stayed at home while the schools were closed.

In order to reduce the spread of the virus, one of the measures was closing down of schools. In Nigeria specifically, this suspended academic activities and academic calendars were interrupted. On another hand, tertiary education was kept on hold due to the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike embarked by the lecturers. This is putting an entire generation at risk which will have a long-lasting negative effect on the career path and future of the students. A lot of students have lost hope and diverted their anticipations into informal education while some stay home idle doing nothing. It is not easy getting a job as a graduate compared to one with an incomplete educational career. Its immediate effect is poor outcomes from the students due to the limited internet facilities and inadequate access to digital services. Presently, primary, secondary and some private universities including colleges of education are presently back to school with coping strategies to reduce the virus but the students of tertiary institutions till date are still at home due to partial resolved issues between the federal government and ASUU coupled with the second phase of the pandemic. This will have a long-term implication as students are at home idle and will not be able to graduate at the expected time. Also, students who study and work in the institutions are now temporary unemployed with no alternative to fall back on. However, the shutdown of schools and tertiary institutions has affected over 1.5 billion children and youth worldwide (Otache 2020).

The increasing demand for higher education with over 97 universities in Nigeria (public and private) and the varieties of graduate produced every year with no suitable employment calls for immediate government and foreign intervention. This is a serious issue as there are no sufficient vacancies to absorb the large number of graduates produced twice yearly. The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) which is the largest mobilizers of youth and graduates in Nigeria is another major problem. Most young graduate after the programme are pushed into the labour market that has no provision for 20 percent of the increasing population yearly. During their programmes, the graduates are used as cheap labours by organisation, firms and industries who abandon them after each year because another set in on queue for that same experience. In this condition, government can mobilize these graduates to identify entrepreneurial skills of their choice. Those who want to remain in sectors can be properly trained so they can practice at different levels. This will be of advantage at the end of their programmes while each graduate will have had a focus; get certified if it's a choice, apply for a white-collar job or set up an SME or a company and be self-sufficient. This can gradually reduce the issue of youth unemployment and increase sustainable development. But the vulnerable persons in this category later fall into groups of lower wages, low opportunities and poor prospects for a better future. This will eventually give a widening gap between the rich and the poor (Petrie et al., 2020).

The present crisis procured opportunities for idleness and restlessness among students and youth who were mandated to stay at home with no provision for welfarism due to weak governance and poor leadership system. This was actualised is the glaring issues as to the strike embarked by ASUU which

has caused millions of students to stay at home for so long. The disruption in education and training, income and employment, coupled with great difficulty in getting another job is also an issue. This propels a serious implication as the state of unemployment which rages into violence and engagement in dangerous activities in the society like theft, fraud, criminal acts like robbery and self-destructive behaviours like drug use and sex workers. In addition, the youth advocated to claim their right as citizens of the nation whose right should be protected. This was substantiated during the “ENDSARS” protest claimed to be a retaliation to brutality from the security operatives whereby youth cannot stand up to their rights, unemployment, neglect of commitment to youth of the nation, absence of policies to empower jobless youth in the country and many other political reasons. According to Oviawe (2010), a well-planned and implemented policies will enable Nigerian youth to be fulfilled. This will generate productive youth as employees or employers of labour to meet the national goals of the country.

The Impact of Covid-19 on Nigerian Unemployment System

Unemployment is a major concern in most African continents especially Nigeria as it has imposed serious problems which keeps increasing every year. Unemployment is virtually dangerous as it sends alarming signals to all sectors of the economy. The government and international agencies have organised several programmes to reduce unemployment but the continuous increase in population in developing countries and insufficient jobs is paramount. The pandemic caused a high level of unemployment among youth in Africa especially Nigeria where many youths lack the facilities and support to alleviate the problem (UNDESA 2020). Since the era of Structural Adjustments Programmes (SAP) in African countries (Nigeria), there had been decline in employment in the public sector while the private sectors do not have enough capacity to absorb the working population in the urban-informal sector and the great multitude in agricultural sectors. The rate of unemployment was high even at the period of oil boom in the 1970s (6.2 percent), 1980s (9.8 percent) and the at (11.5 percent) in the 1990s (Alanana, 2003). Yet, presently, the rate is even higher compared to previous years, this makes it a crucial issue to be addressed to foster sustainable development.

The youth were already made to face a tough labour market before the outbreak of Covid-19. This will increase unemployment rate to about 33 percent at the end of 2020 (Obiezu, 2020). The endemic has worsened the rate of unemployment in Nigeria as countless number of persons lost their jobs and many jobs are presently in danger. The unemployment rate which stood at 23.1 percent before the pandemic has drastically increased (National Bureau of Statistics 2018; CSEA 2019; NSEG 2019). As a result, the endemic will push an additional 39.4 million Nigerian youth (15-34 years) into unemployment by December 2020 (ESC 2020, Obiezu 2020). This data not only include youth but approximately half of the nation labour force which include SMEs and other sectors. The toughest stage of unemployment is that of young graduate who never worked before or young person without prior experience. This caused a large number of inexperienced pools of potential labour seeking for jobs as prominent among young graduate who after their NYSC are majorly victims. On the other hand, the frequency of unemployment in Nigeria is getting higher and wide spread, cutting across all age group but prevalent among the youth (Obadan and Odusola, 2010). Furthermore, the increase in job loss affected small businesses with small and microbusiness owners who have limited access to capital, markets, financial aid and technical know-how as job loss increases and consumption rises.

The global lockdown, closure of borders and businesses with movement restriction affected the informal sectors as thousands of youth loss their businesses. Most of the youth in this category lived on daily income by engaging in daily trading activities like taxi workers, cyclist (motorcyclists and tri-cyclist), artisans, garbage collectors, petty traders, hairdressers, street hawkers, daily labourers etc. The sector makes up about 60 percent of the global labour force (ILO 2020). However, the containment measures to contain the spread of the virus had subjected them to hunger by threatened their means of livelihood. The Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) really felt the effect of the pandemic due to their limited resources and vulnerabilities. The measures of social distancing, closure of markets,

prohibition of social gatherings negatively impacted on their sales and operations which exposed them to demand and supply shocks (Otache, 2020).

Nigeria is an environment where most people earn a living majorly by working for others. This poses a serious problem when an individual is unable to secure that opportunity. Nigeria is presently in a hazardous condition whereby the rate of unemployment is on the increase yearly, but then, with the unforeseen circumstances of the Covid-19 crisis, the economy will be tough. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the number of unemployed youths was estimated at 5 million in the third quarter of 2015. It increased to 13.1 million in 2018. Therefore, Nigeria has experienced 8.1 million youth unemployment between 2015 and 2018. Meanwhile, about 11.4 million youth (25.7 percent of labour force) are underemployed (The Africa Report 2020). In other words, if better and alternative skills are provided, youth can be moved from underemployment to full employment. But inadequate statistics and documentation of information on youth makes it difficult for deliberations on the future of young persons. Also, it will be difficult in allocation of funds suitable to supply the unemployed and make provisions for developmental intervention to foster economic growth. Likewise, lack of professional network and labour regulations that only favours job holders (adult) but hostile to jobseekers (youth).

The inadequate numbers of formal jobs in Nigeria tends to prevent large numbers of potential youth in securing employment. Some graduates of over 5 years are still roaming around the street in search for job, some venture into car snatching, armed robbery, oil bunker, pipeline vandalization, prostitution, illegal migration syndicates, in addition, deadly activities like kidnapping, money rituals and yahoo plus. The lack of employment has given an alternative means to crime and fraudulent activities which is more of an attractive option for Nigerian youth. This problem is particularly dominant among the educated persons in the cities as they have high anticipations for formal jobs. Consequently, the slow growth of informal sectors can be linked with low productivity and little earnings. But the sector has been the major employer of labour force in the urban areas while the agricultural sector employs most labour force in the rural areas. Unemployment institute political unrest for a nation together with economic waste (Ipaye, 1998). The unemployment condition in Nigeria is disheartening that the economic condition poses a constraint to absorbing an optimal proportion of its labour force. This condition has caused increase in crime rate and other social vices due to indolence and psychological disturbances (Ezie 2012).

Empirical Review

The increase in unemployment in the US was partly due to social distancing and lockdown policies (Rojas *et al.*, 2020). According to Gupta *et al.*, (2020), unemployment rate in the US dropped by about 1.7 percent for every 10 days of the mandated stay-at-home and business closure policy between March and April. Coibion *et al.*, (2020a) found that unemployment in the US is intense compared to increase unemployment insurance (UI) which claim to be based on low coverage rate for UI regimes. There was also a severe fall in labour participation rate together with increase in “discouraged workers” in the long run. This can be attributed to the inconsistent effects of Covid-19 on the elderly ones in the population. In examining the inequality of job loss based on individual characteristics and job type for the US and UK, Adams-Prassl *et al.*, (2020) showed that workers who cannot perform their tasks from home are prone to lose their jobs. It was also revealed that youth and persons without a university degree are more likely to experience decrease in income. However, the firms in the US have drastically reduced job vacancies as at March 2020. This can be attributed to decline in job vacancies when UI claims amplified (Kahn *et al.*, 2020). Also, the decline in labour market was uniform across states, with no difference between the states that experienced an earlier and late spread of the pandemic compared to where the stay-at-home orders were implemented before others. It was also found that decrease in job vacancies was even across occupations and industries. Dingl and Neiman (2020) examined the effect of Covid-19 on employment in the US labour force as a result of work from home

and social distancing. The study revealed only about 34 percent job could be performed from home which accounted for 44 percent of their wages. Furthermore, due to the jobs that cannot be performed from home, increase in unemployment benefit in the country was observed.

A number of organisations working on youth programmes have examined the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on SDGs. They have pointed out that youth-related obligations in the SDGs are at risk of not been accomplished due to the crisis (OECD 2020). On the other hand, workers with low level of education, immigrants and middle age adults are concentrated on task that are less likely to be completed from home (Yasenov 2020). Also, the pandemic has inexplicitly affected parents with young children who were the most financially vulnerable populations as the shocks in Norway has greatly affected socio-economic activities (Alstadsaeter *et al.*, 2020). The economic crisis in Portugal resulted in increase in unemployment rate as a result of rise in minimum wage, closedown of existing firms which led to increasing number of temporary workers in the country (Carneiro; Portugal & Varejão 2014). In the United Kingdom, Gustafsson (2020) carried out a survey on unemployment. The result show that 18 percent of UK employees had stopped working whereby the younger age group were mostly affected. Between the ages of 18-24; 33 percent; between 25-29; 20 percent and between ages 30-34; 19 percent had stopped working since the beginning of the outbreak of Covid-19. In addition, the payment of one in three employees between the ages of 18-24 had reduced.

In documenting and analysing the predominance of informal employment in Africa, Golub and Faraz (2014) found that the main reason for underemployment is inadequate demand for labour and not work. It was further recognised that export of labour-intensive products and integration is essential for boosting the demand for labour in Africa. It was concluded that development in businesses were essential in enhancing technology transfer and investment which increases employment and demand for labour. In Ghana, unemployment rate is 14 percent while in South Africa, unemployment rate is currently at 25.2 percent but in Nigeria, it stands at 37 percent. The statistics by the World Bank showed that Nigeria's unemployment rate is at 22 percent while youth unemployment rate is approximately 38 percent. It was also reported that about 4 million persons are absorbed into the labour market yearly (Subair, 2013).

Unemployment is the one of the most critical problems in Nigeria, according to Economywatch (2005), it was verified that Nigeria is endowed with numerous human and material resources but years of carelessness and opposing policies led to underutilization of the resources. If the resources have been judiciously utilized, it would have yielded maximum economic benefits for the future generation. But the failure on the part of governance was the major cause of unemployment in Nigeria. On the issue of school lockdown due to the pandemic, higher institutions in Nigeria have been drastically affected. The disruption of academic calendars, occurrence of teaching and learning gap, postponement and cancellation of local and international conferences, reduction of international education, cut in budgetary allocation to higher institutions and these are fundamental challenges (Jacob; Abigeal & Lydia 2020). Energy sector which usually complimented the activities of other sectors in providing essential services in production activities was also affected. Similarly, manufacturing, mining and agricultural sectors which serves as opportunities for employment was not left out. Hence, the consumption and supply of electricity is critical for improving other sectors like education and health which is a tool for socio-economic development of a nation (Onakoya; Onakoya; Jimi-Salami & Odedairo 2013).

Emeh (2012) examined how much the youth development programmes in Nigeria has improved development using Lagos as a case study. Primary and secondary data was employed and descriptive statistics was used for analysis. The study found out that unemployment in Nigeria was very high and alarming. In addition, it was inferred that youth empowerment and development can help to curb unemployment in Nigeria while the government of Lagos state has enrolled many youths in

development and empowerment programmes. Furthermore, Kayode; Samuel & Anyio 2014) investigated the factors responsible for the increase in unemployment rate in Nigeria by exploring the economic, political and social factors. The findings showed that corruption at the individual, private and public levels; neglect of the agricultural sector; industrial decay and other factors are responsible for the increase in unemployment. The study also revealed that prevalent youth agitation, criminal activities, poverty and great rate of social vices due to unemployment might be predominant if not cautioned. It was then recommended that sensitive sectors of the economy should be put in order and the fight against corruption should be deepened. According to Asaju (2010), Nigerian public service remains a hindrance to effective implementation of sustainable programmes and policies. It was found out that since the First National Development Plan (1962-1968), quite a lot of other development plans have been carried out. Nevertheless, none has brought about overall development of Nigeria nor improved the standard of living of the citizens.

Factors responsible for unemployment in Nigeria

It is worrisome for a great country like Nigeria, the giant of Africa to be having about 37 percent unemployed persons while over 70 percent of the population are living below the poverty line. Anyadike, et al (2012); Okafor (2011); Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) identified the causes of unemployment in Nigeria to be rural-urban migration and rapid educational development. Okafor (2011) specified the push-pull factors as one of the pressures in the rural areas and underemployment from seasonal cycle of climate.

This study itemizes the major factors responsible for unemployment in Nigeria, which are as follows:

- (i) Low Level of Labour Absorption into the Economy: Labour supply have greatly increased compared to the economy's absorption capacity. Growth has intensified in skill-intensive sectors while the rising unemployment rate is due to lack of professional skills.
- (ii) Poor Educational System: The poor system of education whereby Nigerian universities are not ranked among the best in the world. The system is not well equipped to disseminate adequate knowledge needed by the students. In addition, poor salary structure for primary, secondary and tertiary education in public schools. Likewise, the unreviewed curriculum to meet the present standards and lack of educational facilities to upgrade students to global standards (Ndifon 2009). Moreover, educational system lay more emphasis on certificates rather than skill and knowledge application to meet the challenges of unemployment in Nigeria (Samuel 2011).
- (iii) Lack of Access to Information: Majority of youth are not aware of empowerment and entrepreneurship opportunities organised by the government. Awareness which is the key channel need to be made public as information on employment opportunities by the government is not disseminated through varieties of media to sensitize the youth in their different locations.
- (iv) Poor Management Practises: The mismanagement of resources for the development of the country is one of the factors responsible for unemployment in Nigeria. It is believed that if resources are properly utilized and managed, it harnesses the development of a country. But the misallocation of resources to different sectors and lack of good economic planning for the future is a major issue. The procedure of implementation of policies are handed over to incompetent and corrupt persons who have failed several times.
- (v) Corruption: This has caused incurable damages in every sector of the economy and retarded economic growth and development including poverty amidst excess resources. It has hindered progress in the social, economic and political areas thereby increasing the rate of unemployment in Nigeria (Samuel, 2011). According to late Gani Fewehinmi (SAN), corruption has denied millions of Nigerians rights to education, health, infrastructure, food and housing (National Standards 2007)

- (vi) The Culture of Ascription and Nepotism in Job Placement in both the Public and Private Sectors of the Country: The norm of “whom you know” and “how much you can pay” determines the chances of securing a job in prominent companies while those that merit it are deprived of their privileges. All these have denied the determined, energetic and qualified persons’ employments in Nigeria.
- (vii) Unfavourable Conditions on Job Placements: The present issue of age limit and years of experience is another serious issue in securing jobs in Nigeria. There is no doubt that productivity and efficiency of a worker can be linked to the years of experiences. But the culture age limit and extension of years of experience as a criterial for employment is alarming. On the other hand, the existence of over-aged workers in the industries and public services has also hindered the absorption of younger graduates into various sectors in the country. The energetic, agile and vibrant youth are left out while the old ones have refused to retire thereby rendering the youth useless in their fields of specialisations.
- (viii) High-skilled Technological Labour Market: The global world has moved from labour intensive to capital intensive production development. Also, from primary and secondary to technological era. This has resulted in few employment opportunities particularly for unskilled workers. Presently, the labour market is dependent on high technological skills which is excluding so many youths from the labour market. Another issue is higher wage demand by the youth in securing new jobs which makes the labour market flexible in employment.
- (ix) Weak Governance and Leadership: The political will to carter for the welfarism of the citizens in Nigeria is lacking. Every administration tends to initiates good strategies and ideas for better condition for the people but the political will to transform their ideas into concrete results are weak. Every administration comes on board with professional plans to improve the state of the economy but most are just documented and not implemented (Asaju 2010). The effort to combat unemployment by successive administration have failed due to corruption, bad governance and lack of political will. These has aggravated economic instabilities and rendered millions of youths jobless.
- (x) Low Participations of Youth in Policy Formulation: A very low number of youths are involved in administrative and political activities in the country which gives room to less attention to issue concerning youth. When youth are involved in policy implementation and authoritative positions, the issue of increasing unemployment will be of great concern for debate.
- (xi) Instability in Economic Growth: The unstable economic growth has intensified unemployment in Nigeria. The economy has been growing slowly with less employment availability over the years (NPC 2012). In addition, the unsustainable GDP growth over the years have been an hinderance to employment in Nigeria.
- (xii) Low Entrepreneurship Participation: The low level of entrepreneurship involvement by the youth even with the various initiatives by the government of Nigeria is poor. Most youth want to be involved in the formal sector rather than tapping the great opportunities in entrepreneurship. This has reduced the supply of management and leadership skills needed to initiate economic growth.
- (xiii) Neglect of Agricultural Sector: Agriculture was the major source of income before the discovery of crude oil in the 1970s. It was the largest employer of labour as it absorbed over 90 percent of the labour force. But the oil boom which ushered in foreign income led to the neglect of agriculture which has suffered a substantial decline till date. This resulted in rural-urban migration in which farmers migrated to the urban cities in search for greener pasture. However, agriculture is an engine that can reduce unemployment and poverty in Nigeria.

- (xiv) **Deterioration of Infrastructural Facilities:** If infrastructure is improved, youth and other groups will have the opportunities to make use of their talents thereby empowering themselves in several sectors of the economy. The sector like textile is capable of absorbing both semi-skilled and skilled labours (Abbah, 2009). The inability of several administrations to tackle the problem of power in the energy sector has incurred harm to all aspects of the economy. This has jeopardized the manufacturing, mining, health and educational sectors.
- (xv) **Poor Facilitation of New Entry into the Labour Market:** Implementation of policies to support new entry into the labour market and the required standards for employees' support is lacking. The preference for youth by the public and private sectors coupled with goal-driven interventions is poor. This exposes the youth to non-structured intervention programmes with proper monitoring.
- (xvi) **Disequilibrium between the Acquired Skills by Graduates and the Labour Market Requirement:** This gap hinders youth development and retard the development of a country. In other words, youth empowerment and development are vital stages for building human capital which provides a sustainable life void of poverty.
- (xvii) **The Issue of Power Generation:** In spite of the numerous efforts by the past and present administration to generate constant power supply, the situation is getting worse. The poor state of electricity has made foreign businesses like institutions, agencies, industries and investment portfolios to relocate to other countries with constant electricity generation. Presently, numerous companies have relocated to neighbouring countries as a result of unstable electricity supply and unfavourable government policies in the proper functioning of their businesses. This is killing employment of workers in such companies as this companies absorbed excess labour that could not be carted for by the government.

The major manufacturing sectors based in Nigeria have relocated to neighbouring countries due to insufficient infrastructural facilities. To mention a few: The United Textile Mills, Michelin, Dunlop Nigeria PLC, Exile Battery, United Textile Mills (UNT), Leventice have all shut down. These companies have rendered millions of persons unemployed in Nigeria and embedded in poverty. Similarly, ShopRite was about leaving Nigeria but an intervention was rendered in order to reduce the unemployment state of youth in the country. According to the United Nation Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), it was inferred that close to 170 textile companies have shut down while over 120 thousand employees are jobless due to lack of infrastructural facilities like water supply, power supply, high cost of fuel, smuggling of products from Asia into the country and unfavourable government policies (Kolade-Otitoju, 2009).

Challenges of Unemployment in Nigeria

One of the utmost challenge confronting Nigeria presently which has continued to witness an increasing trend over the years is unemployment ((Torruam and Abur, 2014). This menace is responsible for high level of inequality, low standards of living, increase in crime rate and poverty. The upsurge in the rate of unemployment in Nigeria rose from 13.1 percent to 14.8 percent in 2000 and 2012 and subsequently increased to 23.9 percent in 2012 respectively (IMF 2016). According to National Population Commission, (2001), about half of Nigerian population is under 30 years of age. This ascertain that Nigeria is a youth economy (Oviawe, 2010). But the problem of unemployment, poverty, lack of skills and entrepreneurship insight is a crucial problem.

The poor infrastructural facilities such as unreliable energy supply, poor road network, ineffective telecommunication and substandard hospitals are some of the serious obstacles in business operation in Nigeria. In terms of electricity, energy is the greatest source of wealth creation and the engine of growth for all sectors of the economy in Nigeria (Onakoya *et al.*, 2013). However, the lack of

infrastructural facilities in the rural settlement makes the youth rush to urban areas with the intention of securing lucrative employment. In addition, the availability and concentration of social amenities in the urban areas. On another hand, the lack of access to finance by the young generation. This is a major constraint of informal sectors in Nigeria. Most financial institutions are reluctant to offer loans to SMEs because of high transaction cost and the risk of return. Also, the collaterals to support loans are lacking which discourages transactions. The cost of business registration is high in Nigeria and this discourages many small businesses to remain in the informal sector (World Bank 2004a).

Many youths in Nigeria possess little or no skills which excludes them from a productive and economic life. Those with education usually exhibit skills that is inappropriate to the labour market. This situation leaves millions of youths unemployed as education and skill advancement are increasing yearly. The capacity to generate employment is low in Nigeria due to the rising population and a lower labour force participation. This is because the capacity of the sectors that have the potential to generate jobs are not adequately managed. Sectors like agriculture which can absorb excess labour; industrial sector which can create jobs for millions of youths; informal sector which could mop up unemployment faster than expected and other productive sectors in the economy are neglected. Furthermore, the few available manufacturing sectors also have less capacities for employment and this has also contributed to the increasing numbers of unemployment in Nigeria.

The issue of unemployment represents massive waste of manpower resources, it generates loss in output and causes retarded growth in the economy in future (Afolayan, Okodua, Matthew & Osabohien (2019). The limited educational capacities to create requisite skills; the increasing population which places more pressure on the educational sector in SSA. The mismatch between the labour market and education plays a significant role in high youth unemployment. Nevertheless, the educational sector is an area that needs to be developed to ensure high quality system to meet the labour's competitiveness. Therefore, support from individuals, corporate bodies and international aid will play a significant role in restructuring schools, companies and factories to boost employment in Nigeria.

Another great challenge faced by youth is the absence of accessible and relevant information relating to youth development, employment and empowerment programmes. This makes it demanding for stakeholders to shape the projection of youth programmes and employment policies. But creating awareness on ongoing development programmes will make youth attentive to strategies and issues of reducing unemployment. Hence, in solving the problem of unemployment, the social, economic, political, ethnic and educational environment needs to work together. There is need to support policy strategies to address the unemployment rate in Nigeria in order to drive sustainable growth. Although social safety nets which has helped some countries to reduce unemployment can be adopted by the Nigerian government for sustainability in the long run.

The Coping Strategic by Government and Youth in Nigeria

It is of the believe that effective investment in youth is the surest way to guarantee the future development of a country and youth are the major resources for a country to attain significant development. The youth must be developed morally, intellectually, socially, financially with pertinent skills to adapt to the advancing world technology. The increasing unemployment rate is anticipated to surpass the rise in unemployment rates from the outcome of the 2008/2009 GFC, this was due to lack of targeted intervention policy wherein youth were greatly affected during the pandemic with high numbers being unemployed. This resulted into a global recession and a slower rate of uptake of employment during the recovery stage. Developing countries like Nigeria needs to come up with strategic plans to foster employment and sustainability. In the first case, most people are dependent on income from labour as a source of livelihood while the increasing population of the working age is another case. According to IMF (2010), more than half of SSA population will be below age 25 in 2020. Therefore, pressure should be put on government to create more jobs and boost economic

growth. But the Nigerian government is increasingly finding it difficult to curb the high rate of unemployment, in other words, the desperate desires on the part of youth to acquire a university education irrespective of the course content and not delving into other opportunities to sustain their source of livelihood is pertinent.

The present government in collaboration with international organisation having given more consideration to youth by initiating the National Youth Development Policy with the aim of tapping resourceful and energetic youth for growth and development. In these regards, government has established various support programmes to cope with youth unemployment such as support programmes for various youth empowerment initiatives, training and development programmes, funding and financial support for youth in agricultural sectors. All these programmes have not led to improvement in the rate of unemployment among Nigerian youth. Recently, the Nigerian government focal point was creation of awareness on self-employment and vocational training for self-sufficiency. The federal governments subsequently injected billions of naira into the programmes to create employment opportunities for the youth in the country. Some of the coping strategies embarked by the government to tackle the problem of unemployment are as follows:

- (i) Empowerment programmes: These programmes were organised for the youth to boost self-employment in the country. The government put up different packages as a coping strategy and intervention programmes for job creation in Nigeria. These include the following: (a) National Directorate of Employment (NDE): This was designed as an intervention programmes to battle mass unemployment in Nigeria through organisation of skills acquisition programmes. (b) Poverty Alleviation Programmes (PAPs) (c) National Poverty Eradication Programmes (NAPEP) (d) Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P) (e) YOUWIN programme. (f) Npower empowerment programmes: The N-power was a programme initiated in 2016 by the federal government to lift 100 million youth out of poverty by creating employment in the educational, health and agricultural sectors. The purpose was to provide skills and training for youth while participant were offered a monthly stipend of 30,000 Nigerian naira (\$85). But the present issue is that the 100 million youth have now been exited from the programmes and back to their unemployed and poverty situations (g) Special Public Work Programme (SPW) was launched recently by the federal government to promote mass employment strategies by attachment of graduates to willing employers of labour. It was designed to create more jobs in the country in order to address the economic downturn.
- (ii) On the part of strategies by the government to sustain unemployment in the nation (a) The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) offered a low rate on loans for businesses (b) 30,000 jobs with payroll support (c) N200 billion support for artisans (d) 774,000 federal government jobs (e) N50 billion payroll support extended to SMEs (f) Extension of deadline and suspension of practices for filling tax reforms (g) Incentives up to N2 trillion of pension funds.
- (iii) The federal government as part of Covid-19 pandemic survival intervention to support micro and small business (MSMEs), offered free registration of 250,000 free Business Names in each 34 states and the Federal Government Territory (FCT) for provision of loans in the long run.
- (iv) Recently, the federal government of Nigeria in December 2020 through the CBN launched another portal for empowerment programmes for the existed N-power beneficiaries.
- (v) In the events of Covid-19 outbreak, several strategies were carried out by the federal government to assist the youth and other groups in the countries. (a) Provision of palliatives to the most vulnerable in the society. (b) N500 billion Covid-19 intervention fund to improve health care facilities (c) Cash transfers to vulnerable and poor Nigerians (d) USD90 million regional Disease Surveillance System (REDISSE) in all the 36 states and the FCT (e) Stimulus package of about 2.3 trillion naira. (f) Debt and interest rate moratorium on federal government and CBN loans (g) The FG provided another USD150 million intervention funds from the Nigerian Sovereign

Investment Stabilization Funds (h) Finally, the 2020 Appropriation Act was amended whereby the 2020 budget of US\$57/barrel was reversed to US\$30/barrel.

On the part of Nigerian youth, most of them are forced to explore alternative and innovative ways of coping with unemployment situations and the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. The following are the coping strategies by the youth

- (i) Foreign and rural-urban migration: This is one of the strategies pooled by the youth to survive in times of unemployment in Nigeria. In search for greener pasture, youth migrates to foreign countries and urban areas where their needs of unemployment can be met.
- (ii) Underemployment: Since the number of new vacancies tends to supersede employment opportunities in the formal sectors, youth rather remain partially employed while some engage in alternative activities. Most Nigerian youth resulted to underemployment in many sectors of the economy. Most of them tends to pick up jobs that are low to their levels of education just to survive and forge ahead to meet their goals in future. Some venture into informal sector occupations that require on-the-job skills.
- (iii) Vocational skills, Entrepreneurship and SMEs: Most unemployed youth have ventured into skill acquisitions and vocational training like event planning, catering, baking, decorations, makeover, tailoring etc. Some have small businesses that employs other youth for sustainability
- (iv) In the period of the pandemic, many were responding to the crisis by assisting through volunteering, public health promotions and innovation.
- (v) Online businesses and networking: Online business and networking is presently common as the world is moving into online trade. Networking and online businesses is majorly employed by youth while some venture into forex trading to make money at the comfort of their homes.
- (vi) Multiple Sources of Income: The need for multiple sources of income by the youth is a great lesson derived from the outbreak of the pandemic. Putting all eggs in one basket could be disastrous when job loss occurs. Youth with multiple sources of income were able to fall back on something while those with only one source lived in poverty.
- (vii) Odd jobs: Nigerian youth venture into various odd jobs just as a means of survival and livelihoods.

Conclusion

This study points to the fact that youth are a challenge and also an opportunity for Nigeria to grow and invest in their increasing population. The most important thing presently is to put millions of young people in employment so that they can channel their productive energies and potentials into substantial undertakings to foster sustainable development. A lot of lessons have been learnt from the endemic as the present time is a digital world whereby business organisations and schools digitalize their procedures with new technologies adapted for sustainable activities. The e-business was adopted in caring out businesses which gives opportunities for creating linkages between business partners, employees, suppliers and customers. Also, the non-participation of Nigerian youth should be cautioned in order to build a more resilience environment because youth can act as a “connective tissue” in decision making, public consultations, inclusive policy outcome and overall sustainable development of the nation. In addition, it is paramount for the government to venture into sustainable employment opportunities with strategies to blend social protection programmes to ease the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. This will procure opportunities for increase in employment for the youth to foster sustainable economic growth and lifts million out of poverty.

The study therefore suggests that government should implement adequate policies to provide sustainable jobs and financial support for the Nigerian youths to reduce unemployment and fight poverty. On the part of education, Nigerian government should adopt online education system in addition to the classroom system by providing online learning resources and environment. Secondly, government should implement policies and strategies on restoring the infrastructural facilities which are the main mechanism for diffusing global opportunities and provide an enabling environment for foreign industries in order to restore the collapsing private companies who had rendered millions of people jobless. Also, policies for an enabling environment and policies to improve SMEs in terms of finance and start up supports for self-reliance and efficiency. Thirdly, adequate awareness of youth on government empowerment programmes to reduce unemployment and provision of statistics and proper documentation on youth so as to include them in future planning of the nation. Fourthly, effectiveness of labour policies for sufficiency and sustainability to encourage adequate employment creation and workers' protection and equity. Finally, efforts should be intensified at all levels to fight corruption in both the public and private sectors for transparency in employment activities and creates institutions to monitor funds allocated for empowerment programmes.

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Public-Private Partnership and Job Creation: Evidence From Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in Lagos State

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Abstract

Governments policies at all levels seek to reduce the level of unemployment but the indisputable reality is that it is an intricate task that needs the collaboration of private investors. The resources at the disposal of public sector cannot sufficiently tackle the myriad of unemployment challenges in its domain. Bureaucratic bottlenecks, political disruptions, and inadequate resources are some of the factors that often render it altruistic efforts ineffective and inefficient. The essence of Public-Private Partnership is to utilize the power embedded in the synergy of both public and private sector organisations. Therefore, the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme – a Public-Private Partnership initiative - was instituted by the Lagos State Government, in 2008, as part of her efforts to reduce the notorious traffic congestion in the state, ease the flow of traffic and mitigate the undue emotional and physical pressure suffered by the citizens. This study seeks to examine the job creation potentials of public-private partnership (PPP) scheme in an emerging global city such as Lagos. Lagos State is the preferred for this study, because it is the economic epicenter of Nigeria. The study uses the qualitative research method, particularly the case study method in order to establish a deeper understanding of how the BRT scheme is fostering the creation of jobs across Lagos State. Primary data were collected with the support of a structured one-on-one interview among the management staff, employees and customers of the operating company (Primero Transport Services Limited -TSL). The analysis of the data, showed the relative efficiency in the operations of the Bus Rapid Transit system and the various innovative steps taken by the operators have resulted in the increment of jobs creation. Consequently, Lagos State government established the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund partly for the reduction of unemployment rate in the state. The success output of the Bus Rapid Transit arrangement has also facilitated a renewed focus of successive government on the modes of urban transport which has led to the creation of more and better job opportunities. This study clinches with relevant findings and recommends that government at all levels should embrace more Public-Private Partnership opportunities as a catalyst for rapid reduction in the unemployment levels in their domains. Though, PPP may not be a perfect arrangement in itself, but it provides a beautiful opportunity for policymakers to make judicious and thoughtful utilisation of the scarce (limited) public resources available to them.

Keywords: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT); Job Creation; Lagos State; Political Disruptions; Public-Private Partnerships

Introduction

Job creation is a key economic index (Brixiová, Kangoye & Yogo, 2020). A productive economy creates job. The world around us is changing. The world's population has grown immensely with recent estimates placing it at 7.8 billion; it is projected to be 9.9 Billion by 2050 (Weeks, 2020; Aguilar & Sumner, 2020); an increase of more than twenty-five percent. This dynamic shift was not in isolation, the world's economy has undergone significant changes. This has shaped economic policies over the years from the industrial revolution of 1760 to the present information age of the 21st century. There has been a cogent need for an economic policy that appropriately harnesses the economy of the present day. With a teeming population, there comes the burden of the judicious use of available resources. This implies that what is available should be channelled to critical areas that directly affect the populace. One of such areas is job creation.

An economy that creates job is self-sufficient and self-reliant - the end goal of a sound economic policy. As the economy presents new trends, seeking avenues of job creation is key in staying afloat despite economic turbulence. In recent times, the resources available to deal with these critical areas have been deemed to be insufficient. Notwithstanding, the burden of attending to these issues has not yet been lifted. Governments at all levels are tasked with the responsibility of alleviating unemployment through job creation using available resources. This is in addition to the myriad of challenges that besets the society. If the resources available cannot suffice, a sound policy should be adopted to cater for the inadequacies. In recent years, the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) has gained prominence and has been effective in filling up the inadequacy.

Public-private partnership is defined as a long term contract between a private party and a government entity for a public asset or service, in which the private party bears significant risk and management responsibility (Biygautane, Clegg, & Al-Yahya, 2020). Remuneration is linked to performance. The concept of PPP in Nigeria gained relevance towards the end of 1990 (Ibem, 2011; Idris, Kura & Bashir, 2013; Babatunde, Perera, Zhou & Udejaja, 2015; Muhammad & Johar, 2019). Its emergence in Nigeria has been linked to the need to make key investments to close the infrastructure gap due to years of neglect. This occurred during the period of the end of the military rule and the commencement of the civilian rule.

The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission Act (ICRCA) enacted in 2005 provides for the participation of the private sector in financing the construction, development, operation or maintenance of infrastructure or development projects of the federal government through concession or contractual agreement. The core essence of a public-private partnership is to harness the efficacy of the synergy of both public and private entities. Public infrastructures that are subject to PPP transactions includes roads and bridges, seaports, airports, railways, educational facilities, solid waste management, educational facilities, urban transportation systems, housing and health facilities.

It is important to note that the ICRCA does not cover any project undertaken by the state governments. This is because no federal asset or ministry is involved. A state can formulate its own framework for PPPs. A number of states have been very successful in this regard. Lagos State is a very good example. Lagos State, a rapidly developing urban coastal city and commercial stronghold and economic nerve of Nigeria and West Africa is home to five ports with internally generated revenue between \$32-\$52 million (Filani, 2012); contributes about 60% of Nigeria's non-oil revenue (Adelakun, 2011). As a flourishing coastal city, it shares a boundary with the Atlantic Ocean in the south and Benin in the west. Ogun State in the North and East. The climate of Lagos state is characterized by two major vegetation; freshwater swamp and lowland wet tropical rain forest and two minor vegetation; dry lowland rain forest or southern guinea savannah.

The Lagos State Government passed its Public-Private Partnership law on 24th June 2011. A major provision of this law is the establishment of the Office of Public-Private Partnerships. The Lagos State Government has recorded tremendous success in delivering public infrastructures through this partnership. Its novel Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme; a public-private partnership instituted in 2008 has delivered to the state a world-class urban transportation system. This initiative was driven by the state's commitment to easing the severe traffic congestion encountered in the state. A way of alleviating the undue physical as well as emotional stress imposed on the citizens due to this situation. The scheme employed the use of dedicated service lanes across routes of economic significance for branded buses under the management of a private sector.

In an emerging global frontier, this partnership lived up to its job creation potentials. Its success further confirmed the resolve of policymakers in the belief that PPP is a tool to effectively utilize the resources available to the public and private entities in job creation and economic advancement. This is

confirmed by the decision of the Lagos State Government to establish the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund. One of its objectives is to reduce the unemployment rate in the state. BRT success has introduced new ideas for running a smooth urban transportation system to successive governments; helping to fulfil the role of PPP as a job-creation tool. PPP in itself may not be the ultimate game-changer but it avails policymakers with a blueprint to utilizing the scarce public resources available judiciously and appropriately.

Problem Analysis

The inability of the government to effectively undertake the responsibility of job creation due to inadequate public resources. Public resources as defined by Law Finder is any property or asset owned by the state or any local agency, including but not limited to, lands, buildings, facilities, funds, equipment, supplies, telephones, computers, vehicles, travel and state compensated time.

It constitutes the bane of resources from which the governments fund its projects. Projects are the building blocks of development. For the betterment of the populace, Government embarks on certain projects aimed at improving the standard of living. Inadequacy of public resources has impeded the success rate of consecutive projects. This is in addition to bureaucratic bottlenecks and political disruptions (Cervero, 2013). Though inadequate resources constitute a major stumbling block, poor management practices have eaten deep into the system.

An ineffective project planning and preparation is a key flaw common to all project failures (Sage, Dainty & Brookes, 2013; Rondinelli, 1976). An unstable economy poses the risk of inaccurate market assessment. This can result in a poor distribution of resources and most cases over-investment in a particular sector. Setting out to execute a project requires a thorough background analysis; a conscious effort to etch out an accurate design to guide the implementation process. This cannot be achieved by insufficient preparatory analysis, sectorial, assessment, feasibility study and technical appraisal.

When there are a faulty appraisal and selection process, there is a gap between objectives and expected outputs. This presents the risk of the goal being distorted. Emphasis is no longer placed on the productive outputs of the project proposal rather projects are selected on the basis of the total amounts available for investment. A faulty appraisal makes it difficult to estimate the true costs of capital in the appraisal of individual projects or in comparing sets of alternative projects (Sucher & Gupta, 2018).

Execution of a project is a critical aspect that requires adequate supervision. When supervision is inadequate, the operation is derailed. This brings about issues of inability to sustain information flow that notifies the achievement of specific performance targets. There is a tendency to incur cost overruns as a result of setbacks in project construction, completion and implementation. Execution is imperilled with the incompetence of local contractors and a shortage of adequately trained and effective project managers.

Bureaucratic bottlenecks presenting as excess disintegration of implementation responsibilities amongst government agencies slowing down the execution phase. After the completion of a project, proper evaluation of project results and follow-up action is required. When it is done poorly, it is evidence of a substandard internal reporting and monitoring procedure. This does not bode well. If the resources being utilized are limited, it is important to carefully understand how it was expended, to what extent was the set goal achieved and if it was well achieved, what was the method used in that instance and can it be applied to other sectors. When the evaluation is poor, it brings about the failure to adopt appropriate project outputs and techniques to other developmental activities.

Poor evaluation creates an inability to anticipate as well as a plan regarding the political and social impacts of projects on local populations. A project in motion can be terminated as at when necessary

if the evaluation is thorough. This means there are proper internal monitoring and reporting procedures. It also sets the stage for a good to follow up action. Personnel can be trained and retrained to enhance capacity building thus mitigating the cost of subsequent projects. There will be a much-reduced demand for expatriates; the local contractors are now competent.

Adequate public resources are central to project success. The inability of government at different levels to commit adequate resources to feasible projects is the leading cause of ineffective project planning. Failure to implement projects means a major setback in the quest for development. This ultimately hurts the populace. There is no improvement in the standard of living. A critical example is the imminent critical water shortage in Lagos State.

According to a contemporary study by Balogun, Sojobi and Galkaye (2017), except practical measures are put in place to bridge the public water supply-demand gap there is going to be a severe breakdown in the water sector in Lagos State. Lagos State is burdened by a high and increasing population, high pipe leakages, poor coverage of existing waterworks, high pipe leakages, poor coverage of existing waterworks, inadequate number of waterworks and poor collection of water fees which limits expansion. This gives credence to the fact that public resources are very inadequate and signals a clear and present danger to the livelihood of the populace.

Absence of improvement in the public water supply will impede the development and the quality of lives in the state. The need for realistic steps cannot be overemphasized in mitigating the severe consequences of the inadequacy of public resources. A working policy that fills the gap is a top priority. This issue not only affects the populace, but the continued survival of the government is also at stake.

The wellbeing of the populace is a function of the quality of life. A good indicator of how public resources are being appropriated. With increasing population, public resources have become inadequate. The resources are not sufficient to satisfy the spread. Inadequate economic policymaking which is partly due to the arbitrary government changes is another major cause of insufficient public resources. Political disruptions have crippled economic planning. As a result, the continuity of a working economic policy is not guaranteed to bring about an inefficient public administration. This impairs the implementation of government policies. There is a breakdown in the planning, organization, direction, coordination and control of government operations resulting in an inability to determine the policies and programs of the government. Lack of financial control affects public resources. This is aggravated by inadequate public finance statistics. Creating an avenue for the difficulty in ascertaining which sector requires more investment as well as which sector requires little investment. When there is a lack of financial control, there is a decline in public sector savings. There is the possibility of financial wastages which further diminishes the already inadequate public resources.

There is an urgent need to improve the management of the available public resources. Doing so is vital to economic growth and solidifying the gains made by working on economic policies. With this need comes the call for practical and realistic solutions. There should be good financial control, responsible use of economic power and encouragement of economic cooperation. It has become apparent that despite efforts by governments at all levels to tackle salient issues using available resources, the obvious reality is that they cannot fully undertake all; at least to the point of making a substantial impact. Hence, the need for partnership, especially one that seeks to appropriate the available resources to produce a much better result. One which is aimed at making effective use of what is available.

The Public-Private Partnership is the way forward. The economic cooperation entailed bolsters a robust and vibrant economy. One that solves the critical issue of job creation PPP is instrumental in averting the dire consequences imposed by the shrinking state of public resources. With this

partnership, projects aimed at improving the quality of life have a higher possibility of achieving success. The government will now be able to satisfy the demands of an ever-increasing population. The setback imposed by the limited resources can be gradually scaled back. The Bus Rapid Transit scheme of the Lagos State Government is evidence of the development potentials of a Public-Private Partnership.

Aims and Objectives

This study seeks to examine the job creation potentials of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) scheme in an emerging global city such as Lagos. Lagos is the preferred city for the study due to its status as the economic capital of Nigeria.

Literature Review

This is a cooperative agreement that exists between two or more public or private sectors in most cases of a long term nature. It describes a framework that involves governments and businesses working together to complete a project and provide services to the populace (Muhammad & Johar, 2019). A mutually beneficial agreement directed towards serving a social purpose. Public-Private Partnerships has been implemented in not a foreign concept to Nigerian socioeconomic rejuvenation of key sectors, including transportation (Idris et al., 2013). Essentially for infrastructure projects such as transport systems, health facilities, water and sewage systems and the equipping of schools. PPPs employ the concept of a 'shared service delivery' where the public sector entities team up with the private firms to provide services to the citizens (Biygautane et al. 2020).

Governments have used a blend of public and private endeavours in the course of history. In the early 1800s, Muhammad Ali of Egypt utilized 'concessions' to secure public works for minimal cost. A significant number of the early infrastructures in the United States were built by what can be regarded as public-private partnerships. The late 20th and 21st century saw a clear trend towards government across the world employing greater use of PPP arrangements. Though since the global financial crisis of 2008, there seems to be a reversal. While PPP was being utilized in the first world countries, it immediately received major interest in third world countries due to its potentials to new sources of funding for infrastructure projects which in turn translates to job and growth.

One key advantage of having the private sector provide public resources is that it allows public administrators to concentrate fully on planning, policy and regulation (Biygautane et al. 2020). Under this arrangement, the private sector is empowered fully to do what it is versatile in and most importantly improve the efficiency and quality of service. With PPP, there is increased funding for infrastructure. The project cost for the public is spread over a longer period in accordance with the expected benefits. This frees up public resources for input into sectors where private sector involvement is inappropriate and impossible. Ensuring a sensible resource utilization. In a publicly financed project, an initial investment is made by the public sector which is recovered from the community via project benefits. In a privately financed project, the community cost is obtained through payments to the private sector over the entire duration of the project operation phase. This can be through payments from the government or road user charges, more often tolls.

There must be a clear difference between the financial source of investment that would come from the private sector in the form of debt or equity and the source of revenue that would pay back this investment as well as that which must come from taxpayers. Increased funding is achieved if additional sources of revenue, in this case, user charges are mobilized or if PPP investment is regarded as off-budget for public accounting. If an initial investment in a PPP project lies outside the public budget, this makes it possible for the private sector to accelerate investments in infrastructure which to an extent might not have been possible. Therefore PPPs are instituted in addition to other forks of public sector investments and not in place of it.

Collaborating with the private sector introduces private sector efficiency into the system. The efficient practice of the private sector is acknowledged by conventional procurement practices which are responsible for outsourcing construction, maintenance, and design activities to the private sector. PPP significantly increases the efficiency of the private sector as evident in the life cycle approach of the PPP contract. This approach enables the private sector to achieve efficiency in the area of work planning and organization. Long term contract nature of public-private partnerships allows the private sector to improve in the planning and programming of work. Gives it much better flexibility in altering its resources; personnel, equipment and materials to the continuously changing situation which greatly influences a timely performance.

In a well-designed PPP contract, the construction and rehabilitation-maintenance talk are given required attention hence the contractor can balance expenditure for the project duration and make necessary trade-offs between investment, maintenance and operation cost which are under the influence of environmental, social and economic considerations. With proper risk identification and allocation, international observations have shown that projects executed under PPP contracts are prone to meet cost predictions and deadlines much better than the conventional contracts.

Partnering with the private sector introduces innovation (Amiegbebor, Akarakiri, and Dickson, 2016). The life cycle approach of PPP creates a platform for contractors to craft out alternative solutions to meet project requirements at lower costs and higher efficiency. Research and development provide an opportunity for the improvement of the quality and efficiency of construction techniques, processes and equipment. It is also instrumental to note that the least cost solution may also be the environmental solution as they are primed to require to least the lowest use of resources. On heavily trafficked roads where congestion and safety is a crucial factor. Private sector involvement can deliver more manifold services enhanced to respond to road users' needs and expectations. The Bus Rapid Transport Scheme of the Lagos State Government is an ideal example of such innovation (Amiegbebor, Akarakiri & Dickson, 2016).

The public private partnership serves the need of reforming the public sector. It introduces transparency and accountability into the sector. A PPP makes crystal clear the cost of a project thus preventing the situation of the cost being buried in public accounting. It reveals the whole life cost of a project including its operation and maintenance in a very transparent way. This compels the public sector to make decisions about how services are to be delivered and paid for. With public sector accounting, the cost of public infrastructure is not dealt with in an integrated manner. Transparency brings about accountability. Public sector officials cannot shield the cost of choices, they are required to justify them however the discomfort.

The process of PPP sharpens the procurement skills of the public sector. In the PPP set up, requirements are analyzed and set out beforehand, such that, once agreed upon cannot be easily changed. This is in contrast to public sector wholly financed projects where there is the possibility of cost overruns due to the fact that the public authority (Government) does not accurately outline its requirements hence keep altering details during the execution phase of the project. Though cost overruns are not impossible with PPP, they are very unlikely. Also, the public authority has to consider the long term cost service delivery, operation and maintenance of the project as inclusive of the total cost when the PPP is being negotiated rather than considering only the capital cost. In a long run, lessons learned from PPP procurement can be applied to the public sector in a much wider context thus eliminating cost overruns associated with public sector sponsored projects.

A PPP enables the public authority to serve in the capacity of a regulator giving room for concentration on service planning and performance monitoring rather than being involved in the daily delivery of services. A public-private partnership can be used to investigate the efficiency of public sector service

delivery. If small projects are undertaken under the PPP scheme, these can serve as benchmarks against which the costs and service delivery as regards major projects still under the supervision of the public sector can be compared. This results in improvements in public sector service delivery. Countries like Norway have embarked on PPPs for the sole purpose of examining them against public sector procurement as opposed to budgetary reasons.

Reducing the risk for the public sector is a major advantage of public-private partnerships. It gives rise to improved results; there is good control of the public sector of the total project cost, delivery time frame and quality of products. In general terms, commercial risks are placed in the private sector. This includes a lack of demand for the services or product provided by the project. In addition to risks associated with the cost of service or product and variations in foreign currency rates or inflation. Appropriating risk to the sector best suited to manage and ameliorate them, the public sector achieves the goal of reducing the likeliness of the risk taking place and the effect in the scenarios in which it does take place. In doing so, the overall efficiency of the project is guaranteed. This is further highlighted by a lower overall cost over the lifetime of the project.

The public private partnership advances economic and social stability; the private sector is committed to the efficient use of resources and materials over the project life cycle; enhances economic and social growth by private direct investment. PPP facilitates the transfer of modern technology to domestic public and private sectors; although PPP brings about immense benefits. It also has its own shortcomings. There has been much opposition to the use of PPP as a funding tool, majorly due to concerns that the returns on investment for the public sector are much lower than the returns for the private investor. There are also fears that the long term nature of PPP projects agreement in addition to its inflexibility could make it impossible to envisage and evaluate all particular events that could influence the future activity. In PPP, service procurement is longer and more costly in comparison with traditional public procurement. Infrastructures and services made available through PPP could be more costly.

The Case of Lagos Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Scheme

In March 2008, the 22 Km project connecting Lagos mainland with the island emerged the first dedicated bus route in Sub-Saharan Africa. A Public-Private Partnership under the operation of Primero Transport Services Limited. The BRT operates a 16-hour operation employs the use of 220 buses to convey more than 200000 passengers daily. In its initial 2 years of operation, it transported more than 120 million passengers. The World Bank provided technical advice and a US\$ 100 Million IDA credit (World Development Indicators, 2014).

By virtue of this scheme, the journey time was cut short by an average of 25 minutes from end to another coupled with a significant decrease in transport fares. The BRT transports 25% of all trips along the corridor whilst accounting for just 4% of vehicles. The BRT generated 2000 jobs for drivers, bus conductors, inspectors, ticket sellers and mechanics (Gbadamosi, 2010). Furthermore, 10000 informal jobs were also created to oversee formal and informal park and ride facilities and mini-food facilities.

The BRT project has helped to reduce the CO₂ emission by 13% and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission by 20%. Besides, wait time has been reduced from 45mins to 10mins. This has helped to reduce the exposure of passengers to pollution hence providing good health benefits by virtue of reduced respiratory diseases. The BRT project in Lagos State has been able to solve the need for improvement in urban transport systems as demanded by the status of a megacity. Since high class and economically burdensome systems such as underground subways are not affordable by many large cities in the developing world, the BRT project has greatly mitigated the problem of traffic congestion.

Job Creation

Job creation is the process by which the number of jobs in an economy increases (Brixiová et al. 2020). Job creation often refers to the government policies intended to reduce unemployment (Ram, Aghahosseini & Breyer, 2020). Job creation programs may present in a variety of forms. For instance, a government may lower taxes and reduce regulation to make hiring less expensive. In another instance, a government may hire workers itself, for example, to build a road. Of recent public-private partnership has become a pivot driving job creation.

Creating more and higher quality jobs is crucial to boosting growth, alleviating poverty and enhancing social cohesion. Job creation demands a stable macroeconomic framework together with structural policies that encourage innovative, skills and business development (Albert, 2020). For effective job creation, it is important to boost skills supply and demand to create quality local jobs. Support enterprise development and growth. It is essential to build adaptable local economic strategies and systems. Spending on public infrastructure is a job creation strategy. Public infrastructure generates a job due to the fact that it places people right at work (Boyce, 2010). A recent Amherst Study by the University of Massachusetts found out that there is inequality in government spending and the most cost-effective expenditure is building infrastructure (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2020). This encompasses road construction, transport systems, health facilities and other infrastructures. For instance, \$1 billion expended on public infrastructure yielded 19,795 jobs (Tomaskovic-Devey, 2020).

Increase in job creation is considered as a coincident economic indicator. This is because the increase is closely aligned with the GDP and the economy as a whole. Information about job creation combined with unemployment statistics and other States of labour markets equip analysts with tools for observing the health of labour markets. Job creation is important in the bid to reduce poverty more jobs being created lifts a significant amount of people out of poverty. More people working increases the likelihood of being able to provide for their respective families. Job creation can serve as an avenue for revenue generation for the government. When there is a high percentage of the working population, the amount generated from taxation is much higher. More people working means more tax revenue generated availing the government with more resources to fund welfare and public services.

Unemployment is solved by an aggressive job creation policy. It is imperative for the government to seek out ways to continually create jobs, this is necessary to sustain the economy. Due to the fluctuating nature of the world economies, policies that have potentials to create Jobs should be considered by the government at all levels and where possible such policies should be adopted and effectively overseen to yield the expected results of job creation. The economy should be productive if it must be able to provide any form of resistance against unexpected occurrences which can alter the economy in a negative direction. An example of such is a Recession. A period during which there is a decline in economic performance across an entire economy spanning several months. If a sound economic policy is not already in place before such occurrence, there will be a major setback in job creation and by extension the economy itself. This further prolongs the period of recession and risk retrogressing the economy such that previous gains earlier made will be erased.

Job creation is ideal for economic stability. A stable economy is a requirement before people can initiate big investments in themselves and their wards. Creating jobs uplifts the private sector. People are able to raise funds to set up private enterprises which also serve as a tool of job creation. Job creation is an economic policy whose results have far reached positive effects on the sustainability of the economy and the welfare of the populace.

Unemployment

This is defined according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as persons above a specific age not being in paid employment or self-employment but currently

available for work during the reference period. It is studied using the rate of employment. This is the number of people who are currently unemployed as a percentage of the labour force. Unemployment has a significant influence on an entire nation. Outlining the cause can provide useful information that can be used to proffer appropriate solutions

There are many reasons for the state of unemployment. Lack of jobs is a major factor; this is the result of a failed attempt at job creation. Furthermore, the issue of job performance is another reason. An employee's job can be terminated as a result of poor job performance. Another is lack of job's skills; this indicates a poor hiring decision. It could be due to excess of workers in relation to the positions available. Also, jobs available not being filled due to lack of skilled worker situations where the employee lacks a good understanding of the job duties can lead to job loss. This is most often due to failure on the part of the employer to be clear on job expectations.

The consequences of unemployment are encompassing. Its effects are felt by the employees, employers and the economy. Unemployment imposes financial, emotional and psychological hardships on the employees. There is a case of reconsideration of personal worth, values and position in the society. Relationship with family and peers experiences developments that are not so positive. The employer's standing in society can be affected. This can result in a harrowing experience luring new employees as there are already fears of possible layoffs. The remaining employees suffer a drop in morale. According to the Harvard Law Review, survivors of a just-concluded layoff will experience a 20% job performance decline. The economy is also not left out. The high unemployment rate is a grave concern for growth and social integration. People lose their source of income and government has to endure a decline in collected taxes. Economic growth is slowed down. Investments post not so significant returns. The working population is gradually being reduced. The economy is not giving back rather it is demanding more to fill up the void created by the high rate of unemployment.

Extended periods of unemployment evoke the breakdown of social structures. There is negative feedback from the populace stemming from existing hardships. The populace are no longer committed to preserving existing social structures. The psyche of the populace is affected greatly. There is a much lower faith in government and industry. Persistent unemployment adversely affects economic growth in the long run. Unemployment brings about waste of resources, creates redistributive pressures and accompanying distortions, propels people to poverty thereby downgrading self-esteem and advancing unrest and conflict. An unemployed person cannot generate money to take care of financial obligations. Unemployment increases the likelihood of coming down with life-threatening diseases such as cardiovascular disease.

Political Disruptions

Political disruptions have a tremendous influence on the allocation of public resources. These are politically driven activities which are characterized by non-uniform typically violent activities targeted against the governing authority and its associated policies. These activities fall beyond the expectations of the acceptable social norms of a society. Forms in which political disruptions presents include terrorism, political violence, military coups, a street demonstration in as well as assassination and revolution. The impacts of these politically sensitive events on the workability have and performance of the economy is severe.

Political disruptions are a good indicator of resistance to government and its rules, its structures and regulatory policies. In view of political disruptions, public policies should be resilient. Key considerations are given to the act of decision making in governance. This comprises of stakeholder participation and institutional accountability. Resilient public policies are related to the ability of the government to have a concise knowledge of all relevant information in the policymaking process. Lack

of proper understanding of the key economic index introduces a wrench in the quest for resilient public policies. Since political disruptions are more likely to occur in a society fazed by fluctuating economic trends and a democracy characterized by political tensions, policies formulated should be flexible; this is to accommodate the unstable nature of the society and should provide long terms as well as providing a framework for more innovation.

Information harnessed should be incorporated towards producing working policies. For much better results, the involvement of non-state actors for instance the private sector is strongly advised. Their expertise can help to make informed decisions. Also, the decision made will be thorough as all possible scenarios will be considered including those oblivious initially to government. This manner of approach to formulating policy is key to establishing a culture of evidence-based decision making. A realistic approach to problem-solving and a good step towards creating a resilient public policy that can mitigate the effect of political disruptions.

The success rate of a resilient public policy is a function of the commitment of all concerned stakeholders. The execution of a resilient policy requiring full participation and cooperation of all relevant stakeholders; the administrative capacity of public officials at all levels is a major factor. The ability to deliver the expected results lies greatly on an administrative capacity. Hence much attention should be paid to optimizing the administrative capacity of public officials. This is important to prevent the inability to consolidate on quality information analysis, good interpretation of key economic indexes and a productive public-private partnership. With a poor administrative capacity, there is a wide gap between policy expectations and policy results. This frustrates the goal of formulating a resilient public policy.

Political disruptions stemming from failed government policies. Inability to institute an efficient public administration greatly increases the frequency and likelihood of such occurrences; when society is run on policies that are not working. There is a growing sense of frustration which has the tendency to escalate significantly. This is further compounded by the hardship that is imposed by a failed economy due to unproductive policies. This drives the populace to express their displeasures in the strongest possible terms.

A Common means through which the populace decides to this is by taking actions to force a stop in the present governing authority. This is no surprise being that the catalyst for the imposed hardship is the result of the policies imposed by the present authority. These situations are very detrimental to the good of the economy. The hardship which was the catalyst has the very possibility of being deepened. The economy which was as it was heading in a negative path will now be much accelerated in this direction more so to a downward spiral. But the big issue, while the present authority is ephemeral, the economy survives the authority hence should be protected against destructive influence.

When the administrative capacity of public officials is effective, there would be the accelerated implementation of policies with a higher degree of flexibility. The gap between policy expectations and policy results, when there is the rapid implementation of policies, the confidence and faith of the populace in government is at an all-time high. Policy implementation using a flexible framework is proof of its resiliency. The economy is poised to stay afloat even in the event of a disruption. Hence, the long term goal of the policy is achieved. Such a policy survives a governing authority and can be innovated upon by an incoming administration. This is the expectation of a resilient public policy.

The well-designed protocols and use of transparent rules are core features of a flexible framework; allowing smooth and rapid implementation of policies in a manner that gives room for accountability thereby securing public trust. The mechanism by which a policy will be implemented is laid out.

Everyone is fully aware of the rules that guide the process and are abiding by. These features are crucial to achieving policy expected results.

In executing policies, some instances require cooperation in certain aspects. This could be between government agencies or as in the case of a public private partnership. Conflicts could arise in either of these alliances therefore it is expedient that there should be a clearly defined mechanism for conflict resolution amongst the aligning parties. This is to forestall an impediment to the rapid implementation of policies. An effective conflict resolution mechanism tackles the issue of conflicts swiftly. Public policies are tailored to the purpose of solving the need for judicious use of public resources. Appropriation is accompanied by the risk of misappropriation. This risk has far-reaching consequences of invalidating the good intentions of a good public policy. To avoid these consequences, it is imperative to institute a well-functioning system for the monitoring and sanctioning of corruption. This is to avoid misappropriation of public resources and to prevent eliciting mistrust from the populace which can serve as a possible trigger to the political disruption this crippling the economy. Since political disruptions have dire consequences making the case for the resilient nature of public policies.

Theoretical Review of the Literature

The Keynesian Monetary Theory of Production

The private sector is an agglomeration of individuals and corporate entities that are not under the direct control of the economic policymakers. But as the responsibility and role of state actors dictate, they are saddled with the authority to decide on the sort of monetary and fiscal policies and measures to embrace to direct the economic affairs of the polity. The Keynesian monetary theory of production asserts that to encourage the engendering and growth of economic activities within an economy, the macroeconomic policies adopted by the state policymakers must be one that reposes confidence in the private sector participants like entrepreneurs. Keynes (1973) suggests that the intervention of the policy makers in the economy should principally be geared towards providing the enabling environment for private investors to commit their resources through the introduction of socioeconomic policies that foster trust in the entrepreneurs.

The theory upholds that it's only when consumer demands for economic products must be able to balance a downward turn of lower private investment to achieve a relatively stable economic conditions. It also posits that it's only when private economic actors are convinced of the safety of their investment through the exhibition of a forthright governmental institutions and reliable policies that they can sustain and improve their contributions to the continuous running of the economic engine (Arellano, Felgueroso, Vázquez & González, 2008). One could readily deduce that private sector involvements in economic affairs cannot be underestimated as far as gaining economic stability and expediting economic progress is concerned. And of course, it is obvious that through the intervention of these risk takers – the entrepreneurs – more jobs can be created within the economy.

The Theory of Neoinstitutionalism

A substantial number of modern institutionalists believe that institutions are not to be regarded as undeviating and fixed entities with attributes that remain the same even as the peculiarities of the host society continue to evolve (Lang, 2018). A common theme in the positions of neoinstitutionalists is that an institution is at liberty to evolve itself and become a more responsive entity to the society through the re-evaluation of its values and their appropriateness for determining its own future and response to the myriads of problems bedevilling its host society. To March and Olsen (1984), institutions would do better and be in good stead to sustain itself if they pay a due recourse to the society in which they operate.

Public institutions cannot continue to be shouldered with the responsibility of designing economic realities. Intervention from private sector participants must be recognized as the ‘external force’ that introduces a new dimension to the way and manner economic policies are introduced, and implemented upon to tackle the myriads of challenges facing the society such as job creation. There has to be some fundamental shift in the thinking of the policy makers towards the adoption of the Public Private Partnership model as an elixir to the realization of a rapid economic growth and development.

All institutions exist to achieve a purpose. Political, religious, and economic institutions are established to fashion out means to achieve specified objective and goals. The inherent fear of the possible emergence of unforeseen realities as a result of this collaborative is understandable. But no institution can gain a relatively perfect equilibrium without relinquishing its ability to become more flexible in the face of external circumstances. The government cannot hope to safely provide more jobs to the populace without relinquishing some liberty and control of the economic forces to private hands.

Empirical Review of the Literature

Adebayo and Ayegbusi (2017), in studying the efficacy of public private partnerships as a tool for fostering the availability of more jobs, discovered that government and its policymakers must be responsive enough to the provisioning of an investor-friendly environment for private enterprises to become more confident in the safety of their investments. They also submitted that the political landscape and atmosphere must be fair and conducive enough for business practitioners to commit their resources.

Arellano, Felgueroso, Vázquez and González (2008) posited that the collaboration of public and private sector organizations towards the provision of remedies and solutions to socioeconomic maladies is most effective at bringing to the fore how the various attributable strengths of each institution can be harnessed for the ensuing purpose. For instance, the public sector usually promises more reliable job security than private establishments. And private organizations are renowned for their flexibility in the face of competitive struggles which has typically driven them to seek efficiency in the use of resources. So, these attributes have been discovered to present a possible mixture for improving the efficacy of a PPP in attempts to create more jobs for the unemployed.

The World Bank Implementation, Completion and Results Report on the BRT project provides basic information, Key dates, Ratings Summary and Result Framework Analysis (World Development Indicators, 2014). The report notes that the Lagos Urban Transport Project was developed in Challenging circumstances. The Lagos Metropolitan area had a population estimated at over 10 million in 2000 with a growth projection of more than 25 million in 2025. Notwithstanding, the transport infrastructure and services were at levels that supported a population of not more than 6 million people. The report revealed that the main beneficiaries of the project includes the Lagos State Government, Public transport users, General traffic and population along the corridor, Bus transport operators, Bus drivers, vendors along the corridor, Bus suppliers, Pedestrians and Commercial banks. Lagos State received the primary benefits of enhanced productivity and improved job creation ability. The BRT scheme has created direct employment for over 1500 people mostly graduates and indirect employment for over 500000 people in Lagos.

The project was set up as a public-private partnership (PPP) with the public sector financing the infrastructure and the private sector undertaking the responsibility of financing bus procurement and operations. The success of the project was largely dependent on the private sector generating financing for buses. Lagos State took up the landlord model of PPP where the implementing agency, Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) is in control of the infrastructure, depots, routes and shelters while the operators have the ownership of the buses and are given legal rights to operate in specified routes (Alcorn, & Karner, 2020; Buhari, Aponjolosun, Oni, & Sam, 2020).

Ecobank finances the procurement of buses. For the avoidance of losses on the investment made, the bank is also involved in producing ticket fares which are then made available to appointed ticket dealers. The dealers make payments for the ticket fares in cash. Having obtained the ticket fares, the ticket dealers then resell this fare to commuters at the bus terminus. The ticket dealers bear the financial risk of ticketing. Maintenance falls under the jurisdiction of motor operators which involve the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). LAMATA through the operational arrangement of the PPP periodically organises capacity building workshop for BRT operators in the bid to bring about efficiency in BRT scheme. The rating for the quality of supervision was highly satisfactory. This was due to the task team's forthrightness during the phase of project implementation high success rate in attaining project objectives. It is worth mentioning that the BRT project received the World Bank Africa Region Award for Excellence in 2010. The performance of the implementing agency, Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) was highly satisfactory.

Adama (2018) examined a paper titled: Urban Imaginaries: Funding mega infrastructure projects in Lagos, sheds light on the public-private partnership model adopted by Lagos State. This model involves the allocation of roles based on the ability or capability of each party who is best suited to bear certain risks. As a result, the functions allocated to the private sector comprises of the provision of technical support and skills, provision of capital, operations and management, maintenance, innovation as well as creativity to optimize service delivery. The state is expected to monitor, serve in the capacity as a regulator to ensure that the private sector complies and provide financial cooperation as at when necessary. The Lagos State Government is aware of the fact that despite the traditional roles carried out by the two parties. There are scenarios where there could be an altering of roles based on negotiations. Also, sanctions in accordance with the penalty as detailed in the concession agreement are in place when there are shortcomings on the part of one of the parties. If need be the private entities are given a period of grace after which there will be reviews and necessary adjustments made. If this does not yield any form of reprise, the contract will be terminated.

In the paper "Urban Governance and Turning Africa Cities Around: Lagos Case Study, by Agunbiade and Olajide (2016), a thorough technical analysis of the BRT scheme was made. The paper examined the political, institutional, financial, leadership and manpower dimensions of the Lagos State BRT scheme. It concluded that the BRT project is founded on established on sound technical and intelligent backgrounds and also make up a vital component of a larger strategic transport master plan. Also, the operating environment of LAMATA is productive and world-class but noted that local and foreign partners are key to the agency's ability to deliver the BRT project.

The BRT project has exhibited a good show of accountability. The system in place for revenue collection promotes financial accountability to private investors and the introduction of electronic ticketing will most likely further improve the system. A policy of separation of powers amongst in functions related to transportation has helped to advance democratic relations with LAMATA and helping to reduce the occurrence of conflicts. This paper did not highlight how PPP was crucial to the eventual success of the BRT project. It did not expound on the job creation potentials of this partnership but delivered a good technical analysis.

PPP is a driving force for job creation (Oluwasanmi & Ogidi, 2014). The BRT project in Lagos State is evidence of the job creation potentials of a public-private partnership. The project had a positive impact on the well-being of the populace; users survey showed an improvement in passenger satisfaction from 40% to 80% over the project period. In addition, the ambient concentration of pollutants which are hazardous to public health has been greatly reduced.

A partnership that creates jobs positively influences the economy (Adebayo & Ayegbusi, 2017). The public-private partnership entailed in BRT was highly efficient. An ex-post economic analysis was

carried out for routine maintenance, rehabilitation, bridge repairs and traffic management components. A 67% rate of return was gotten as opposed to a 56% rate obtained at appraisal. This can be interpreted as having greater economic benefits ex-post and not ex-ante. The bus enhancement scheme funded by the project had an economic rate of return of 45% in comparison to 28% for the ex-ante analysis. The key Benedict's are the reduction in travel time and a significant cut to bus operation cost due to optimized bus services (Oluwasanmi & Ogidi, 2014).

The BRT project also served as an avenue to improve the public sector. During the initial phase of the project, LAMATA were employing the services of a consultant to help with the aspect of procurement as well as build the capacity of its procurement unit. Subsequently, as the project proceeded, personnel of LAMATA took part in clinics organized by World Bank on the issue of procurement both within and outside the country. This equipped the agency with the effective skill set and knowledge of procurement which can in turn to other project's implementation.

By helping to establish a transport fund, the BRT project had a tremendous financial impact, the funds generated from user charges, thus sustaining financial stability. The combination of financial investments into the transport infrastructure together with a conducive environment for private sector participation in bus operations has aptly demonstrated the workability of a public-private partnership. The BRT scheme aided poverty alleviation, enhanced access for women and children and made public transport within the reach of the majority of the populace including those earning in the lowest percentile.

Methodology

The study employed the qualitative research method, particularly the case study method in order to establish a deeper understanding of how the BRT scheme is fostering the creation of jobs across Lagos. Lagos is the preferred city for the study because it is the economic epicentre of Nigeria. Lagos as a metropolitan is burdened by a high and increasing population. The state is a rapidly developing urban coastal city and commercial stronghold and economic nerve of Nigeria and West Africa is home to five ports with internally generated revenue within \$32-\$52 million (Filani, 2012). In addition, the state contributes approximately 60% of Nigeria's non-oil revenue (Adelakun, 2011). Primary data were collected with the support of a structured one-on-one interview amid the management staff members, employees, practitioners and customers of the operating company (Primero Transport Services Limited -TSL). More so, desk review encompassed (i.e. reviewed of the prior literatures and findings so as to be familiar with an extensive understanding of the subject matter), thus, this formed part of the instrument utilised for the accomplishment of this research.

Discussion

A state of shrinking public resources places a high demand on innovative ideas. By innovation, it means deviation from norms; government establishing and funding public infrastructure fully (Olufemi, 2008). New realities mean a new approach to tackling issues. Despite the fervent efforts by government at all levels to reduce the unemployment in their respective territories. The irrefutable truth is that the resources available are just not adequate and I make bold the claim that they cannot do it on their own.

Job creation is a top priority; it has to be attended to. Failure to do so is simply setting the stage for a surge in the unemployment rate; a situation that predicts doom for the economy and the state of living in society (Adebayo and Ayegbusi, 2017). The hardships associated with this situation on those that fall into this category are a potential trigger for political disruption. This ugly decline can be averted if we recognize the fact that resources at the disposal of government are not sufficient. It is expedient that policymakers come to terms with this fact and formulate economic policies that put into consideration this present reality.

Like never before, it is very crucial to ensure that public resources are judiciously appropriated due to its inadequate condition. If they have to be expended, there must enough guarantees that they will yield meaningful economic returns. There cannot be an avenue for wastages. With a teeming population, more resources than before are now required to provide the most basic form of public infrastructure. Also with successive comes the emergence of the novel needs further increasing the demand for public resources. A smart economic move will be to invest resources in programs that promise great returns. Job Creation is a revenue-generating programme in itself by empowering the people who in turn contribute to growing the economy. The Government obtains significant returns in form of an increase in tax collection. This is the great potential of public-private partnership. It has a tremendous ability to generate high-quality jobs.

The study examines the job creation potentials of a public-private partnership. The success of the public-private partnership undertaken by the Lagos State Government in the delivery of the first urban transportation system in Sub Saharan Africa, the Lagos State Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme is evidence of the job creation potentials of PPP (Adebambo & Adebayo, 2009). Under this partnership, more than 1500 direct jobs have been created and over 500000 jobs have been created indirectly (World Bank, 2014) making prove to the claim that public-private partnership accelerates economic development through the use of both public and private resources resulting in the creation of more jobs thus providing the perfect opportunity to policy makers to make prudent use of the very limited available public resources.

Conclusion

The state of insufficiency of public resources makes it impossible for the government alone to solve the problem of unemployment. Therefore, private sector partnership with government is the way forward to enable any government to fulfill its mandate of job creation. However, the simple act of correlating job creation with the economic viability of a public project is complicated by second-tier economic activities such a project makes available. In the case of Lagos BRT project, while the project affords Lagosians an easier means of transportation across the megacity, it was designed to attend to the needs of less than 30% of the citizens.

Also, the economic viability of the project cannot be summarized by the obvious indexes private companies that provided financial support for the project would take seriously. Instead, the less quantitative indicators such as the effect of BRT on the psychological wellbeing of an average Lagos worker, the job creation power of the BRT project and how it actively affects job creation in similar establishments like private transport companies and NURTW work ethics.

Recommendations

Drawing from the success of the BRT scheme, government at all levels should adopt public-private partnership in sectors of the public economy as a tool to drive economic growth via job creation and reduce the rate of employment. Existing projects which are still under the sole supervision of the government should be operated by standard project management practices in order to avoid the possibility of incurring cost overruns. Economic policies should have a resilient nature to mitigate losses due to political disruptions. Public administration capacity should be enhanced so as to ensure the smooth implementation of public policies. In adopting the public-private partnership, the Lagos model of flexibility is highly recommended.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has revealed the benefits derivable from the incorporation of private business entities into the management of resources towards the economic development of the society. Through the employment of a functional case example – the Bus Rapid Transit scheme – it has been shown that public institutions and private organizations can join forces towards the effective utilization of scarce

resources to achieve common goals while fulfilling the desires of the specific stakeholders in the ensuing relationship. Indeed, it has also been exhibited that economic activities can be engendered thereby leading to the evolution of more job openings for potential unemployed population when these two distinctive entities establish a working relationship.

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Female Entrepreneurship and Informal Sector Employment in Southeastern Nigeria: Mitigating the impact of unemployment in the post Covid-19 era

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Abstract

This study empirically examined the relationship between female entrepreneurship and informal sector development in Southeastern Nigeria based on neo-Schumpeterian framework that relates higher growth and development to entrepreneurial skills in the economy and is also an extension of the endogenous growth model to explain how knowledge is converted into economically useful firm-specific knowledge and its influence on development. The study adopted a sample survey research design. The data needed for sample survey research were obtained from individuals and, therefore, is subjective. A sample of 500 female entrepreneurs were selected for this study. This includes entrepreneurs in all the sub-sectors of the informal sector such as the trade and services sub-sectors in all the five states in the region. The study made use of the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique to examine the impact of female entrepreneurship on informal sector employment. The justification for the use of OLS is found in the BLUE properties which its estimator yields, which means it has the Best, Linear, Unbiased, Estimators. Other reasons include that its computational procedure is fairly simple as compared with other econometric methods. Empirical results showed that female entrepreneurship had a positive and significant impact on informal sector (male and female) employment. It also revealed that financial assistance to female entrepreneurship has a positive and significant effect on informal sector employment. Specifically, an increase in female entrepreneurship assistance financially brings about 0.13 per cent increase in aggregate employment in the region. On the basis of the above, the study recommended the establishment of the Southeastern Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence (SECEE) so that female entrepreneur could receive sufficient attention and support. A forum can also be created to serve as a bridge between policymakers and female entrepreneurs to discuss their concerns about entrepreneurial policies, and intentions of the policymakers to help them in new ventures expansion and the development of major subsectors of the informal sector that are underserved presently, especially with regard to the procedure of job creation to mitigate unemployment in this post Covid-19 era.

Keywords: Female Entrepreneurship; Informal Sector; Unemployment; Southeastern Nigeria

Introduction

The informal sector is often seen as a major component of economic growth and development. The sector can be described as, the segment of the economy where most new employment takes place. The informal sector comprises the self-employed and employee segment of the economy. Rodriguez-Oreggia (2007) described the informal sector as a market economy; perfect, however, segmented and has no connection with the modern sector. It is a collection of businesses that are not registered and regulated, and in most cases, not taxed. These include street vendor sales, production enterprises as well as enterprises that provide services (Spring, 2009). All over the World, the growth of the informal sector is, witnessed in size and value. The formal sector is not able to generate enough jobs; therefore, those that are excluded have to look for a second appropriate option. Also, the increasing migration from rural to urban areas, lack of skills of most migrants, national economy mismanagement, resulting

to retrenchment of workers in the formal sector are some of the reasons that could determine the informal sector of economies size.

The sector size is a sign of the level of inefficiencies of the economic system. The size of the informal sector in the economy in the year 2000 according to the report of the National Planning Commission (2013) was 41 and 38 per cents respectively for developing and transition countries. The sector is important to the lives of millions of people both in the developing and the developed countries. It is a vital source of livelihood for communities, families, and individuals, especially in developing countries. In fact, informality goes with the way of life of individuals, influenced by belief system, than with a deliberate plan to stay away from the formal sector. The sector reduces unemployment by creating a survival means to the large majority of the poor and the extremely poor individual and, therefore, improves the quality of life of the people and reduces crimes.

Also, the informal sector as pointed out by Blaauw (2011), enables developing countries to successively adjust to globalization and structural reforms and, as well as open up the potentials of entrepreneurs. The sector employs non-agricultural workers by 72 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. The informal sector contributes 58 per cent to the national economy in Nigeria. Women make up to about 84 per cent of those that are non-agricultural workers in the informal sector in sub-Saharan Africa (Blaauw, 2011). As stated by Fazalbhoy (2014), in modern economies, the empowerment of women is a 'Sine qua non of progress' for any nation. Women economic empowerment is an indispensable and essential condition or ingredient for sustainable economic progress, especially for developing nations (Jawaharlal Nehru in Fazalbhoy, 2014).

The informal sector, especially in developing countries is dominated by female entrepreneurship. Fazalbhoy (2014) described female entrepreneurship as an initiation, organization, and operation of entrepreneurial businesses by women or a group of women. Female entrepreneurs explore the possibilities of going into new entrepreneurial businesses. They take risks, bring in new business ideas, coordinate and control the administration of the business and ensure effective leadership in every area of the business. Female entrepreneurship is a prerequisite, catalyst, and an important untapped source for informal sector development. They make available to the society varying solutions to management and organizational problems and ensure the efficient use of entrepreneurial opportunities.

Female entrepreneurship is beneficial in that it raises the income of women, increases their self-worth and confidence as well as their social and economic status in life. An increase in income enables women to increase their consumption and confidence in sustaining trend and improves their standard of living. Self-worth and confidence, on the other hand, make women identify with a greater capacity to lead, work in groups, give them the freedom to make decisions in life, take risks, get recognition, and influence others in the society. Whereas, social and economic status projects create a positive image of women, reduce gender inequality, promote sociability (networking), and, act as a source of motivation to other women to entrepreneurship (Fazalbhoy, 2014). Also, to the national economy, female entrepreneurship as stated by Ayogu & Agu (2015), contributes over 50 per cent to the economic growth of most developing and developed countries. They are a source of local capital formation vital for propelling innovation and competition in developing economies.

In Nigeria, just like most other developing countries, the majority of the entrepreneurs is micro and small-scale in nature and contributes about 46.54 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country (Ekwujuru, 2013). They are found majorly in the informal sector, both in the rural and the urban areas in the country. Common among micro-entrepreneurs are the multitude of trade and service providing female enterprises such as hairdressing salons, fashion designers, beauty and skin sailors, crafts making among others. Female enterprises in the informal sector as described by Ukonu & Tafamel (2011) depend on indigenous resources, owned by a family or individual and majorly labour-

intensive and adapted technology. They are unregulated and can acquire entrepreneurial skills outside formal education. Unlike the formal sector, entry into entrepreneurship businesses in the informal sector does not need formal education requirements. Little start-up capital is needed to establish most of the businesses, and women can combine domestic duties with business activities. This is also a reason for the increasing number of female entrepreneurship in Nigeria's informal sector.

Female entrepreneurs are 43.32% in the ownership structure of microenterprises in Nigeria, having between 1-10 employees in comparison with the 22.75% in small and medium enterprises having 11 - 50 employs (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria, 2013). More than 70 per cent of the enterprises do not have patent rights and, therefore, cannot protect their intellectual properties. Female entrepreneurship in Nigeria reacts to the growing demand for best practices and tools to incorporate the gender in the development of the informal sector (Ambepitiya, 2016). There is a tremendous improvement in women's education and health which has enhanced their economic power, this notwithstanding, the gap between female and male economic power is still outstanding. Men are seen to be superior to women and, this has restricted women from receiving equal economic opportunities with men. In addition, the inability of the formal sector to generate enough jobs has made women increasingly go into informal sector entrepreneurship as a second appropriate option to raise income, increase their self-worth and confidence and social and economic status in life.

Concerted efforts are made by the federal and state governments especially in Nigeria, to enable entrepreneurs, most especially women, to make better entrepreneurial choices, transform their entrepreneurial businesses into competitive enterprises, and advance opportunities and employment skills that will generate income for themselves and employment for the teeming youths seeking for jobs. There have been massive initiatives and innovative approaches aimed at boosting entrepreneurial capacities of female-owned entrepreneurial businesses in Nigeria especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). These include the establishment of agencies and schemes like the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS); World Bank's Women's Leadership in Small and Medium Enterprises (WLSME) programme - introduced in 2011; Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Scheme (SMEES); and the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED). Also, is the introduction of entrepreneurship studies into the educational system to provide entrepreneurial, innovative, and management skills. In addition, through the Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises initiative, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) provided training to over 12,000 young women and over 5,000 schoolgirls in different entrepreneurial skills.

In addition, the high level of infrastructural deficit, particularly roads and electricity as well as the newly developing shakily polity of the country, constantly experiencing civil intolerance and increasing religious extremism is a major aspect of the problem. Female entrepreneurs especially in the Southeastern region, face the challenge of a shortage of financial resources, marketing challenges and poor management and technological skills among others. Majority of women have already developed the mindset that entrepreneurship in the informal sector is just a temporary means of survival and financial independence. This mindset is due to the struggle for survival of female entrepreneurs in the sector. The contribution of female entrepreneurship in the Southeast to the development of the informal sector is in doubt, considering the increasing number of stagnant or slowly growing female enterprises that hardly survive for more than five years.

The issue is not about continued government efforts because governments at various levels have made efforts (though, may not be enough) in the form of policies and programmes over the years. There have also been individual and organizational direct interventions through the provision of skills acquisition programmes and other assistance like the purchase of equipment for intended and existing entrepreneurs. How long can efforts been made without yielding the expected success of developing entrepreneurs and the informal sector? Empirical evidence is needed to show the exact problems faced

by the informal sector entrepreneurs, and their contributions generally to development of the informal sector if the government, organizations, or agencies want to actually tackle the issue of survival struggle of especially female entrepreneurs and encourage their contribution to the informal sector's development. An empirical introspection of female entrepreneurship in the various regions and states within regions and an articulation of a way forward defined in clarity and alacrity is appropriate to enhance ongoing efforts by organizations, individuals, and governments at the regional and state levels.

However, with several past and present policy efforts, the main question is whether the initiatives have yielded the desired results. The focus of this study is to examine the impact of female entrepreneurship on informal sector employment in Nigeria. This paper will be of importance to policymakers generally in Nigeria, state governments in designing policies aimed at boosting entrepreneurship, the management of entrepreneurship development schemes, organizations, and private individuals that are interested in informal sector Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) development, the academics and researchers. The paper is divided into five sections. Section two follows the introductory section, which reviews related literature. Section three is for the methodology of this study, while section four presents the results of the study. The study is summarized in section four with policy recommendations also proffered in the section.

Conceptual Literature

Female Entrepreneurship

Bawa, Idris, Idris, & Leonard (2017) defined entrepreneurship as the process of discovering opportunities and exploiting the opportunities. To Kpelai (2013), entrepreneurship is a process of having and managing a new business venture or adding value to an already existing business. An entrepreneur can also be described as an individual who owns and operates a business, takes risks, exploits market opportunities, and eliminates market supply and demand disequilibrium (Ezeibe, Diogu, Eze, Chiaha & Nwokenna, 2013). An entrepreneur could be a male or a female. In this study, however, female entrepreneurship is our main focus. Female entrepreneurship is defined by Fazalbhoy (2014) as a woman or a group of women that initiates, organizes, and operates an entrepreneurial business. It could also mean a wide range of female-owned/managed enterprises. It is a business headed by a female, who carried on the initiative of introducing a new business venture in consideration of the risks associated, financial administration and social responsibilities, as well as effective management of the daily business activities (Bawa, Idris, Idris, & Leonard, 2017).

Informal Sector Development

Spring (2009) stated that the informal sector depicts unregistered, unregulated, and untaxed businesses, which include entrepreneurial production activities, services providing enterprises and street vendor sales. In addition, Dahlquist (2014) described the informal sector as a collection of commercial activities that are unregulated, which takes place outside the official or mainstream economy on a small scale, self-employed and casual, or non-regular basis. The informal sector is defined as the sector without binding official regulations but is under official regulations that do not force report of official returns on its or productive process (Onyebueke & Geyer, 2011).

According to Oghator & Okoobo (2000), development is beyond per capita income increase or just economic growth, but also encompasses sustainable improvements in individuals' standard of living, ensured through providing gainful employment alongside with availability of social and economic infrastructures.

In this study, the informal sector is defined as a collection of activities that do not bind to strict rules of how to behave or do things in nonadherence to the norms. It could also be described following

Williams & Youssef (2014) as those activities where monetary transactions are not declared to the government for tax payment, social security or labour law purposes but which are legal in all other respects.

The relationship between female entrepreneurship and informal sector development is on the basis that female entrepreneurs contribute diverse ideas and a lot of energy and capital resources to their various communities and regions, generate jobs and other spin-off business linkages relevant for the growth process of the informal sector.

Theories of Entrepreneurship

Schumpeter's Theory of Entrepreneurship

The Austrian economist, Joseph Schumpeter (1949), propounds this theory. It is sometimes called the theory of innovation and entrepreneurship. Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship described entrepreneurs as agents of change, such that through their actions economic growth and development takes place. The theory sees entrepreneurship as the true activity of entrepreneurs, irrespective of whether the entrepreneurial operation is done by a single person or an organization. In his theory, Schumpeter distinguishes between innovation and invention, pointing out that entrepreneurship comprises of creating innovations and, that the actual status of entrepreneurs can only be achieved through innovation.

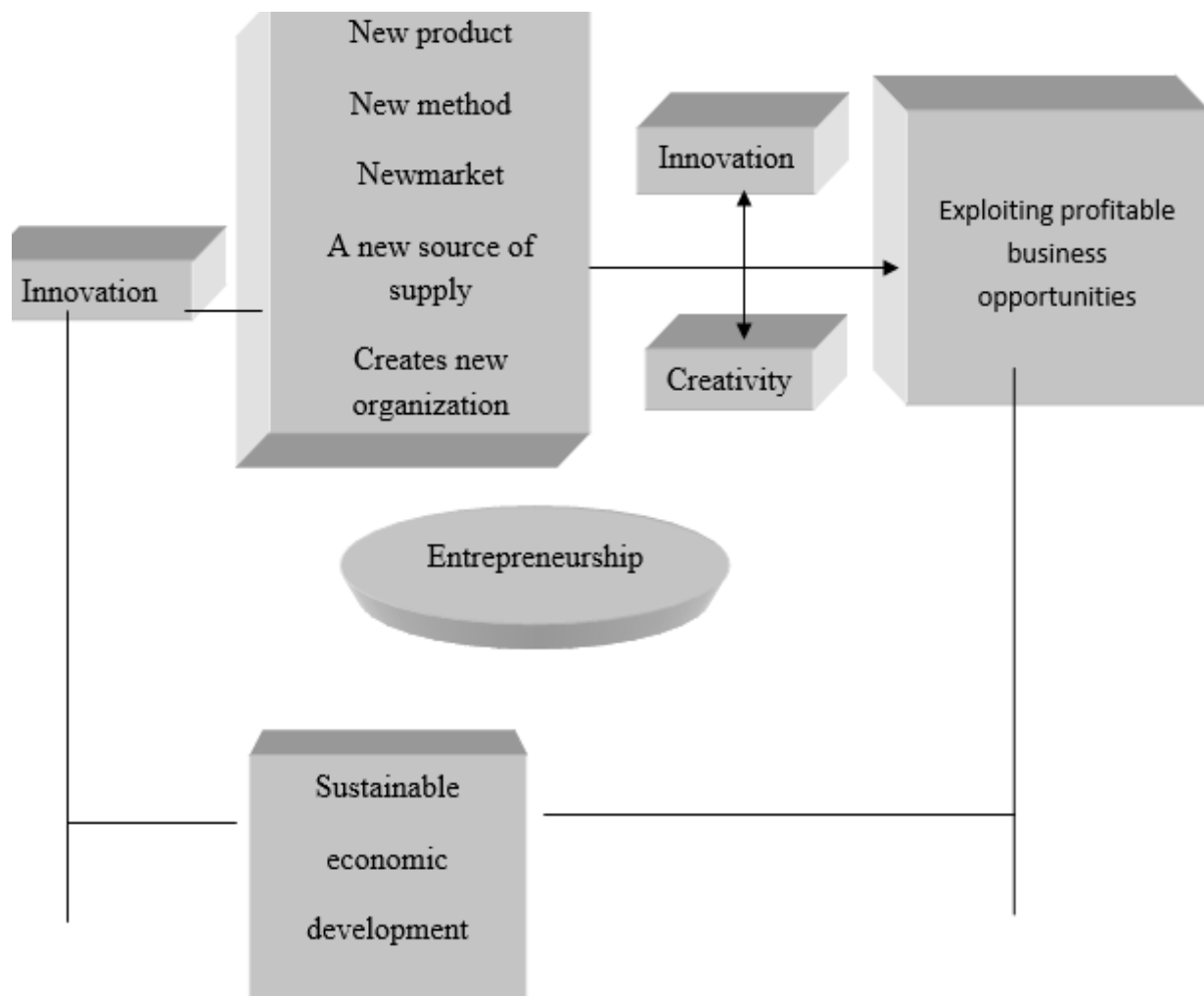
Joseph Schumpeter sees the entrepreneur as a prime mover in the development of an economy based on his function to innovate or conduct new combinations. He clearly differentiates between an innovator and an inventor, which according to him, an inventor finds out new methods and new materials. Whereas an innovator is someone who uses or applies inventions and discoveries so as to make new combinations, an inventor is focused with inventing while the innovator (entrepreneurs) changes the inventions into economic performance; going the additional mile to commercially exploiting the invention.

Schumpeter believes that entrepreneurs are motivated by their will for power. They have peculiar characteristics, which are their inherent ability to make correct choices, energy, will and mind overcoming challenges and ability to withstand social opposition. Joseph Schumpeter's theory, in other words, is of the view that money is not what motivates entrepreneurs to go into entrepreneurship and, therefore, seen entrepreneurs as a non-economic man in the theoretical perspective. Joseph Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship is criticized on this basis. Money is in fact, a major driver for entrepreneurial operations. Majority of entrepreneurs, especially at present days see entrepreneurship mostly in the informal sector as a source of livelihood. Therefore money represents the only driver for entrepreneurship.

One can say that Joseph Schumpeter's (1949) theory of innovation entrepreneurship played a major role in the development of the present-day capitalism. Entrepreneurs are undoubtedly the prime movers of the modern economic development process. This theory is especially important to developing countries where innovation is needed in the quest for economic growth and development. In an effort to transform our society into a developed one, a lot of initiatives and changes on the part of the small, medium, and large entrepreneurs are needed.

This theory is criticized on the bases that too much emphasis is given to innovative functions, as if it is the only vital factor, ignoring the important aspects of risk-taking and organizing in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs do not have innovation as the only function, but also risk-taking and assembling of resources and putting them to efficient use.

Figure 1:



Source: <https://ecestudy.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/theories-of-entrepreneurship.pdf>

David McClelland Need for Achievement Theory

This theory, which was developed by McClelland states that entrepreneurship in society is propelled mostly by the sense of doing and getting things done and the need for achievement. As pointed out by McClelland, need for achievement is a stable personality feature that originated through family socialization in middle childhood and practices of child-learning that portrays standards of excellence, maternal warmth, self-reliance training and minimal parental dominant (Vasant, 2009). An individual requires three kinds of needs according to this theory. This is because of life experience.

- i. Achievement need: This is a motivation to excel in life, advance and grow
- ii. Power need: This is motivation to dominate, take control and influence other individuals and situations in the society
- iii. Need for affiliation: This is a motivation friendly and close interpersonal relationships

Frank Knight Risk Bearing Theory of Entrepreneurship

Frank Knight postulates the difference between risk and uncertainty in entrepreneurship in 1921 (Montanye, 2006). According to him, there is a risk if outcomes are not certain but can be predicted with a given level of probability, which is insurable. Uncertainty, on the other hand, occurs when it is impossible to estimate the probability of outcomes, and true uncertainty arises when in addition to not

knowing the future, there are known and unclassifiable instances and no distribution of outcomes. He pointed out in his theory that entrepreneurship is majorly characterized by action under actual uncertainty, stating that such uncertainty results in "pure profit", which also is the lifeblood entrepreneurship (Montanye, 2006).

Theories of Development

Linear Stages of Growth Theories

After World War II, the first set of economic development theories were propounded. These theories were in support of the use of capital to achieve economic growth and development. Two popular theories are the Rostow's stages of growth theory and the Harrod-Domar growth theory.

Rostow's Stages of Growth Theory

The American economic historian Walt W. Rostow (1960) popularized this theory. The Rostow's stages of growth theory state that any transition from underdevelopment to development would go through a series of steps or stages, which every country must proceed. The stages are the traditional society, the preconditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity and the age of high mass consumption. The decisive stage among these stages is the take-off. It is at this stage that developing countries would transit to a developed state from an underdeveloped state (Todaro & Smith, 2009).

Harrod-Domar Growth Theory

This theory was propounded by Roy F. Harrod in 1939 and Evsey Domar in 1946. The theory explains the growth rate of an economy in terms of the savings rate and the productivity of capital. This model emphasized that investment is the prime mover of the economy. Therefore, every economy requires capital for investment generation (Dang & Sui pheng, 2015). It is of the view that no natural reason is behind an economy having balanced growth. The Harrod-Domar growth theory states that the growth rate of the economy is jointly determined by the national saving ratio (s) and the national capital-output ratio (k). In other words, it states that the economic growth rate is positively determined by the savings ratio and negatively determined by the capital-output ratio. The more an economy is able to save and invest, the more will be the growth rate of the economy. Also, the higher the capital-output ratio, the lower will be the economic growth rate.

Structural-Change Theory

The structural-change theory focused on how policies could be used to change the economic structure of developing countries from being majorly a subsistence agricultural practice to become a more modern, more urbanized and industrially diversified manufacturing and service-based economy (Hussain, 2007). Structural changes are the "average" patterns of development among countries. The basic point of the structural-change theory is that development is a growth process that is identifiable among countries and that the main features are similar in all countries (Todaro & Smith, 2009).

Lewis Theory of Development

This theory is propounded by the Nobel laureate Arthur Lewis in the mid-1950s and was later modified, formalized, and extended by John Fei and Gustav Ranis (Fei-Ranis). The Lewis two-sector model makes its way through to the theories of the development process in surplus labour in the Third World nations during most of the 1960s and early 1970s (Todaro & Smith, 2009).

In its theory, Lewis classified the sectors of underdeveloped nations into two sectors. These according to him are:

- i. A traditional and overpopulated rural subsistence sector. A common feature of this sector is a zero marginal labour productivity, which is the reason Lewis classify it as surplus labour because it can be at any time withdrawn from the agricultural sector without any loss of output
- ii. A high-productivity modern urban industrial sector, from which the subsistence sector is transferred slowly.

Structural Change and Patterns of Development

The patterns-of-development analysis of structural change by Hollis Chenery majorly concerns the sequential process that would transform the economic, industrial, and institutional structure of an underdeveloped economy after a period in order to allow new industries to replace old traditional agriculture as a propeller of economic growth. It was the views of Hollis Chenery's patterns-of-development analysts that increase in savings and investment are just necessary conditions and not sufficient condition for economic growth to take place. Apart from capital accumulation (including physical and human capital), other forms of interrelated economic structural changes are needed for the transition from the traditional economic system (Todaro & Smith, 2009). Empirical structural-change analysts put much focus on domestic and international constraints on economic development.

The International Dependence Theories

The international dependence theories gained ground in the 1970s because earlier theories (the stages and structural-change models) failed to partway to widespread successes in international development. The origin of international dependence theories is traced to developing countries and, the theories see development challenges as mainly external to nature rather than internal. These theories are of the view that developing nations depends both economically and politically on the developed counties. Three major international dependence theories are the neocolonial dependence theory, the false-paradigm model and the dualistic-dependence model (Todaro & Smith, 2009).

Empirical Literature

On the empirical front, studies on female entrepreneurship include Akpodono (2016) who examined the relationship between female entrepreneurship and economic development. The study tried to expose the factors that motivate female entrepreneurs to start personal entrepreneurial businesses, their challenges, and contributions made to employment generation and the role of government in supporting female entrepreneurs. A sample size of 553 entrepreneurs was primarily collected using questionnaires and direct interviews. The author employed the Pearson, Kendall and Spearman correlation and simple regression techniques. The findings of the study showed that the contributions of female entrepreneurs significantly and positively affected employment generation. In addition, the study found that challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in managing their businesses affected food security, but the effect was found insignificant. A similar study was conducted in Kenya by Ahmed (2016) on the level of participation in entrepreneurship activities as well as challenges facing informal sector female entrepreneurs in Mvita Constituency, Mombasa County. A sample of 114 entrepreneurs was used, and it was found that the lack of loans and real security were the major challenges facing female entrepreneurs in the informal sector.

Employing a qualitative approach and using semi-structured interviews with 90 informal sector female entrepreneurs in three regions (Kathmandu, Pokhara & Biratnagar) in Nepal. Karki & Xheneti (2016) examined Nepali women entrepreneurs' motivations to engage in the informal economy and their future aspirations about their business activities. Lack of alternatives by women as a result of their socio-economic conditions was found to be one of the key reasons females engage in entrepreneurial activities in the informal sector. The low requirement of financial capital to invest was found to be due to a lack of education and entrepreneurial skills. The study also revealed that new business, small in size, and business sustainability are the main associated characteristics of female entrepreneurs

remaining in the informal sector. The study also reported that formalization of informal sector enterprises was a burden and costly exercise.

Conducted in four cooperative societies in Enugu state, Ayogu & Agu (2015) examined the motivating factors of female entrepreneurship development, challenges, as well as their contributions. The data was obtained through a questionnaire administered to 176 entrepreneurs. The technique of data analysis was descriptive, while Pearson chi-square statistical tools were used to test the hypotheses that were stated. The study found the desire for independence and self-fulfilment as significant motivators of females to go into entrepreneurial businesses, while financial constraint and government regulations were identified as key challenges facing female entrepreneurship development. Job creation and poverty alleviation were also found to be responsible for female entrepreneurship development in the informal sector.

Studies were also conducted on the impact of women entrepreneurs on economic development. Notable in this study includes Lock & Smith (2015) who analyzed the impact of female entrepreneurship on economic growth in Kenya. The data were collated through face-to-face surveys with female entrepreneurs in Kenya in the informal sector as well as some other sectors. Using descriptive analysis, the study found less and decreasing barriers to starting micro-enterprises by female entrepreneurs, indicating the development of the informal sector of the economy. Similarly, Iyiola & Azuh (2014) examined the impact of female entrepreneurs on the economic development of Ota. Specifically, the study examined the contributions of female small and medium scale enterprise (SME) operators to the development of the city. The data were obtained through a questionnaire administered to 146 female entrepreneurs. The data were analyzed using simple frequency tables and regression analysis. It was found that the activities of female entrepreneurs had a significant impact on the poverty level. The study also found that female entrepreneurs lack business technicalities to drive growth in their businesses. Impact of women entrepreneurship on economic growth was examined by Kpelai (2013) using data obtained through a questionnaire from 60 female entrepreneurial businesses. The techniques of data analysis adopted was the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Analysis of Covariance and Regression and Correlation techniques and the study found no significant impact of women entrepreneurs on the growth of Benue State economy. The study also found a weak positive relationship between public policy support and women entrepreneurs in Benue State.

Dahlquist (2014) has examined the force of women in development through engagement in informal small-scale entrepreneurship in Babati, Tanzania. The data for the study was sourced through a semi-structured interview with informal women entrepreneurs. The technique of analysis was narrative. The findings of the study showed that informal female entrepreneurship significantly determines the development of Babati. It was also revealed that female entrepreneurs' sources of challenges were economic, social and gender-related conditions like poverty, lack of education and capital.

Lame & Yusoff (2014) studied the role of female entrepreneurship in Malaysia, focusing majorly on small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs). Review of literature and the analysis of secondary data were the methodology adopted in their study. The findings of the study showed that low levels of education and gender inequality were the contributing factors to the low level of female entrepreneurship in developing countries. Veena & Nagaraja (2014) examined the problems faced by women entrepreneurs in the informal sector of the Mysore District in India. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain data from 240 female entrepreneurs, while descriptive, simple statistical tools were employed for the data analysis. The study found five major constraints faced by female entrepreneurs in the Mysore District. These were a financial constraint, inadequate institutional support, marketing challenges, social attitude and non-availability of honest employees. Using descriptive statistical analysis, the study by Ekpe (2011) examined the relationship between female entrepreneurs and economic development in Nigeria, with a specific focus on characteristics for success. 158 female

entrepreneurs who were clients of 4 micro-finance institutions in the Northern region of Nigeria were interviewed, and the responses were analyzed. Motivation, foresight, and achievement were found to be the important characteristics for success. It was also found that the majority of the enterprises were new entrants into business, which was attributed to the unemployment situation in the country.

In a comparison of Nigeria with Sweden, the study by Eriobunah & Nosakhare (2013) examined the problems associated with entrepreneurship business. The source of data was primary in both countries. The authors employed a descriptive technique of analysis. The findings of the study showed that the two countries differ in terms of challenges faced by entrepreneurs. In Nigeria, the challenges of entrepreneurs according to the findings of the study include inaccessibility of finance, political instability, poor technology, marketing challenges, and poor infrastructure. Whereas, in Sweden, the study found that high tax rate and falling profit were the major challenges facing entrepreneurs.

Methodology

Sources of Data

The source of data for this study is primary which will be sourced from personal interviews and questionnaire to be distributed to the female entrepreneurs who will be the direct primary providers of information for the study. A little manual of instruction will also be prepared to explain in details all that will be required to fill the questionnaire properly and serve as reference material for the field staff.

Model Specification

The functional form of the model for estimation is presented as follows:

$$No_WORKERS = f(ENT, ENEX, ENT * ENEX, ASS, BUS_CAPITAL) \dots\dots\dots \text{Equ. 3.1}$$

Where,

No_WORKERS = Number of workers (Informal Sector Employment)

ENT = Female Entrepreneurship

ENEX = Years of Entrepreneurial Experience

ENT*ENEX = Interacting Years of Entrepreneurial Experience with Female Entrepreneurship

ASS = Financial or other forms of Assistance

BUS_CAPITAL = Business Capital

The model to be estimated is:

$$no_workers = a_0 + a_1ent + a_2enex + a_3ent * enex + a_4ASS + a_5bus_capital + u_1\dots 3.2$$

Where all the variables remained as defined above with the lowercased variables representing log transformed, and u_1 is the error term. The a 's respectively are the parameters to be estimated. ASS is a dummy variable, which takes the value of 0 if the entrepreneur does not get any form of support and 1 if the entrepreneur gets any form of support. All the explanatory variables are expected to have a positive impact on the explained variable.

The Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression technique would be employed to estimate equation (3.2). OLS estimator is Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE) in the class of all available estimators if the

assumptions such as linearity, zero value of the expected disturbance term among others hold. A multicollinearity test would be carried out to ascertain the linear relationship between the explanatory variables. This test is necessary to avoid the consequences of the presence of multicollinearity in a regression such as in incorrect variances, and, therefore, estimation precision.

Results

In line with objective of the paper, the impact of female entrepreneurship on informal sector employment was examined, and the result is reported in Table 4.1a below.

Table 4.1a: Impact of female entrepreneurship on informal sector employment

VARIABLES	(1) Informal Sector Employment (Aggregate Employment)	(2) Informal Sector Employment (Male Employment)	(3) Informal Sector Employment (Female Employment)
Ent	0.2022 (t = 2.94) (p = 0.003)	0.2823 (t = 3.28) (p = 0.001)	0.0248 (t = 2.08) (p = 0.037)
enex	0.1200 (t = 2.20) (p = 0.029)	0.0079 (t = 2.22) (p = 0.027)	0.1226 (t = 2.13) (p = 0.034)
ent_enex	0.0721 (t = 1.22) (p = 0.223)	-0.0288 (t = -0.39) (p = 0.700)	0.1561 (t = 2.50) (p = 0.013)
ASS	0.1305 (t = 2.01) (p = 0.045)	0.0396 (t = 2.30) (p = 0.022)	0.1442 (t = 2.07) (p = 0.039)
bus_capital	0.1221 (t = 2.94) (p = 0.004)	0.1133 (t = 2.09) (p = 0.037)	0.0669 (t = 2.14) (p = 0.033)
Constant	0.0125 (t = 0.02) (p = 0.981)	-0.5701 (t = -0.84) (p = 0.404)	-0.0203 (t = -0.04) (p = 0.971)
R-squared	0.7734	0.6456	0.6355
Adj R-squared	0.6628	0.5325	0.6238
F(5, 435)	6.89 (0.0000)	3.49 (0.0043)	3.03 (0.0107)
Ramsey RESET Stat F(3, 432)	0.77 (0.5126)	1.09 (0.3539)	2.27 (0.0796)

Source: Authors computation from field survey, 2019

Table 4.1b: Variance inflation factors (VIFs) of all the variables

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
ent_enex	1.91	0.522888
enex	1.71	0.586311
ent	1.18	0.846755

bus_capital	1.01	0.988162
ASS	1.01	0.991827
Mean VIF	1.36	

Source: Authors computation from field survey, 2019

From all specifications, the entrepreneurship (ent) coefficient is positive. Also, the coefficients of years of entrepreneurial experience (enex) – which is the research-based entry R&D-variables by incumbents, financial or other forms of assistance (ASS), which captures support for entrepreneurship development, and business capital (bus_capital), which captures the impact of business capitalization, are all positive.

In regards to each specification, the baseline OLS specification is presented in column (1) with the aggregate employment as the dependent variable. In column (2), the employment variable was changed from the aggregate employment to male employment only, and the estimation was done in the same way as column (1). The reason for the change was to provide extra evidence of the impact of female entrepreneurship on informal sector employment. Column (3) follows column (2), but the male employment variable was again changed to female employment. Even though the employment variables were different, a similar (positive and significant) result was found for the coefficients of the entrepreneurship variable, as well as other variables such as years of entrepreneurial experience, support for entrepreneurship development and business capitalization.

The coefficients of female entrepreneurship are 0.2022 in column (1) with a t-value of 2.94, 0.2823 in column (2) with a t-value of 3.28, and 0.0248 in column (3) with a t-value of 2.08. An increase in female entrepreneurship by 1 per cent means 0.20 per cent increase in aggregate employment, 0.28 per cent increase in male employment and 0.02 per cent increase in female employment. Since the t-values of 2.94, 3.28 and 2.08 respectively in columns (1), (2) and (3) are greater than 2 in an absolute sense, the null hypothesis of no significant impact of female entrepreneurship on informal sector employment is clearly rejected. The significant p-values of 0.003, 0.001 and 0.037 in columns (1), (2) and (3) respectively also confirmed that there is an insignificant error in rejecting the null hypothesis at the 5 per cent level. Therefore, female entrepreneurship has a positive and significant impact on the informal sector (males and females) employment in Nigeria.

Similarly, the coefficients of years of entrepreneurial experience (the research-based entry R&D-variable by incumbents) are 0.1200 in column (1) with a t-value of 2.20, 0.0079 in column (2) with a t-value of 2.22, and 0.1226 in column (3) with a t-value of 2.13. An increase in years of entrepreneurial experience by 1 year means a 0.12 per cent increase in aggregate employment, 0.01 per cent increase in male employment and 0.12 per cent increase in female employment. Since the t-values of 2.20, 2.22 and 2.13 respectively in columns (1), (2) and (3) are greater than 2 in an absolute sense, the null hypothesis of no significant impact of the years of entrepreneurial experience on informal sector employment is rejected. The significant p-values of 0.029, 0.027 and 0.034 respectively in columns (1), (2) and (3) also confirmed that there is an insignificant error in rejecting the null hypothesis at the 5 per cent level. Therefore, years of entrepreneurial experience has a positive and significant impact on the informal sector (males and females) employment in South Eastern Nigeria.

The interaction of the R&D-variable (years of entrepreneurial experience) with female entrepreneurship (ENT) – ent_enex showed coefficients of 0.0721, -0.0288 and 0.1561 with t-values of 1.22, -0.39 and 2.50 respectively for columns (1), (2) and (3). This means that an increase in knowledge (R&D) spillovers for female entrepreneurs leads to an increase in aggregate employment by 0.07 per cent, a decrease in male employment by 0.03 per cent and an increase in female

employment by 0.16 per cent. Since the t-values of 1.22, -0.39 and 2.50 respectively in columns (1), (2) and (3) are less than 2 in absolute sense in column (1) and (2) and greater than 2 in column (3), the null hypothesis of no significant impact of increase in knowledge (R&D) spillovers for female entrepreneurs on informal sector employment is accepted for male employment and rejected for female employment. The insignificant p-values of 0.223 and 0.700 in columns (1) and (2) also confirmed that there is a significant error in rejecting the null hypothesis at the 5 per cent level. While the significant p-value of 0.013 in column (3) confirmed that there is an insignificant error in rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, an increase in knowledge (R&D) spillovers for female entrepreneurs has a positive and insignificant impact on aggregate informal sector employment, negative and insignificant impact on male employment and positive and significant impact on female employment in Nigeria.

The variable for financial assistance (ASS) shows coefficients of 0.1305, 0.0396 and 0.1442 with t-values of 2.01, 2.30 and 2.07 for columns (1), (2) and (3) respectively. The t-values are all greater than 2 in an absolute sense, therefore, indicating significant financial assistance variable. Also, the probability values of 0.045, 0.022 and 0.039 respectively for columns (1), (2) and (3) shows that there is an insignificant error in rejecting the null hypothesis. This means that financial assistance to female entrepreneurship has a positive and significant effect on informal sector employment. Specifically, an increase in female entrepreneurship assistance financially brings about 0.13 per cent increase in aggregate employment, 0.04 per cent increase in male employment and 0.14 per cent increase in female employment in the region.

Business capital (bus_capital) also shows a positive sign in all the three columns. Coefficients are 0.1221 with a t-value of 2.94 for column (1), 0.1133 with a t-value of 2.09 for column (2) and 0.0669 with a t value of 0.033 for column (3). The respective p-values are 0.004, 0.037 and 0.033. Therefore, the significant t-values in all the columns point to the rejection of the hypothesis that business capital has no significant effect on informal sector employment. The significant p-values on the other hand, mean that there is an insignificant error in rejecting the null hypothesis. A percentage increase in female entrepreneurial capital means 0.12 per cent increase in aggregate informal sector employment, 0.11 per cent informal sector male employment and 0.07 per cent informal sector female employment in the Southeastern region.

As shown in Table 5.3b below, the variance inflation factors of the variables are very low. They are far lower than the conventional value of 10. This means that the variables are free from the problem of multicollinearity. For each of columns (1), (2) and (3), the coefficients of determination (R²) values are 0.7734, 0.6456 and 0.6355 respectively. This means that the explanatory variables account for 77.34 per cent of the total variation of informal sector employment in the Southeastern region, while 64.56 per cent and 63.55 per cent of the variation in male and female employment respectively were accounted for by the explanatory variables. The F-statistics in all the columns indicated that the variables jointly significantly affected employment generation in the region. The Ramsey RESET Statistics also showed that the model was properly specified.

Conclusions

This study has provided empirical evidence on female entrepreneurship and informal sector development by focusing on the specific case of the South Eastern region of Nigeria, on which limited research has been conducted. The study has shown that Female entrepreneurship is capable of providing informal sector (male and female) employment, and positively affects informal sector capitalization, indicating that female entrepreneurship leads to informal sector development of the South Eastern region.

Government and donors should encourage (female) entrepreneurs and support them through grants and aid. Also, it can partner with other countries around the world so as to leverage economies of scale

and innovation from across the World, provide mentorship and counsel at start-up, expanding market for entrepreneurs, support entrepreneurship development programs, and show more concern in new ventures expansion and the development of major subsectors of the informal sector that are underserved presently, especially with regard to the procedure of job creation.

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Youth Unemployment in Nigeria: Available Options for The Rescue

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Abstract

Youths are energetic individuals, highly endowed and hopeful for a promising future. They are the pillars in every society and future leaders. However, the appalling economic conditions and political environment in Nigeria imposes lots of constraints and setbacks on them compared to their fellow counterparts in advanced economies. One of such constraints is the high and increasing unemployment rate, which having been left unaddressed over the years, continued to deteriorate and have rippling effects on the Nigerian populace. Hence, the economic conditions and standard of living among Nigerian youths have continued to plummet. Critical to eliminating these menaces is understanding and addressing the root cause of growing unemployment as well as the remote and proximate causes of other related problems that adversely affect youths, the general populace, and ultimately hinder economic growth. Hence, the study was conducted to improve the understanding towards addressing the remote and immediate causes of growing unemployment among Nigerian youths. The causes and effective solutions to youth unemployment were examined by critically reviewing qualitative and quantitative findings from the extant literature, and anecdotal sources. The findings highlight methods used by individuals, policymakers and relevant stakeholders to curb unemployment. The findings also suggest that adopting good cultural practices, imbibing entrepreneurial orientation, and promoting entrepreneurial activities from the grassroots are some of the rescue options, which have brought about tremendous changes and proved effective over the years in many economies. The findings further provide roadmaps for rescue options that address not only the menace of unemployment, but also other seemingly salient but harmful practices in Nigeria. Hence, given the relative importance of job creation among Nigerian youths and the urgent need for prompt action, policy-makers and relevant stakeholders' attention are drawn to some core areas to channel their necessary interventions.

Keywords: Cultural Practices; Entrepreneurship; Entrepreneurial Orientation; Nigeria; Youth Unemployment,

Introduction

The recent lockdown imposed as a result of the outbreak of Corona virus has heightened the depressing economic situation in Nigeria (Ikwe, 2020; Aderemi, Ojo, Ifeanyi & Efunbajo, 2020). Household incomes have declined, unemployment levels have increased, and the risks of social exclusion, domestic violence and poverty have risen in many countries, Nigeria included. Among the badly hit are the youths whose unemployment rates have increased and skill mismatch has become more severe (Gonzalez, Gardiner & Bausch, 2020). Unemployment has negative multiplier effects not only on the individuals but also on the society as a whole. Youth unemployment has been identified as one of the core causes of the rising level of social disorder and insecurity permeating the entire country of Nigeria.

Before the Covid 19 pandemic, the causes and concept of youth unemployment was not only a Nigerian, but also a global issue with various intensities across countries. Youth unemployment rates have been significantly high in both advanced and merging economies since the 1990s and lots of things have been done to solve the problem. The causes and consequences as well as the possible solutions of youth unemployment have been argued to vary by country (ILO, 2010; ILO 2012 & 2013). Also, the issue has been discussed on many platforms, in numerous business and policy forums, and has received media attention. Yet, some nations are still lagging behind in their attempts to tackle youth unemployment and the dire consequences are unavoidable. Youths are the pillars and future leaders of every economy. Little wonder, economic drivers and policymakers concerned about their countries' welfare, and having long-term visions for the growth and development of their countries always seek the best ways to integrate their youths in their countries' labour force. Hence, the importance of tackling youth unemployment cannot be overemphasized.

Nigeria, popularly known as the “Giant of Africa”, is a nation filled with lots of history, has experienced lots of turbulence and gone through various stages of economic recession to boom (Agri, Mailafia & Umejiaku, 2017; Lasisi & Olayinka, 2017). Many authors have argued and presented different reasons why Nigeria’s youth unemployment problem has remained persistent over the years. There is the need to critically examine the root cause of the problem as well as the available solutions. There is also the need to identify the most effective solution to the identified problem of youth unemployment. Hence, the purpose of this critical review is to highlight the factors that brought about this devastating condition, examine the possible solutions as well as the most effective way to tackle this precarious condition among Nigerian youths.

Literature Review

Youths

The world population of youths in the world has continued to increase sporadically. The world population estimates reveal that almost half a billion young people aged 15-24years live in low income economies, indicating that nearly half of all the young people in this age bracket in the world (United Nations 2004:75; Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). The world youth report also opines that the increasing population of people who are classified as youths are often confronted with various challenges: collectively, the youths comprise 42% of the world’s unemployed, 133million are illiterates, and over 200million youths live in poverty (United Nations 2004:2). These figures suggest that the state of young people in a society does reflect the society’s well-being or lack thereof (Wamucii and Idwasi 2011:189; Agbalajobi, 2014).

There is no universally accepted definition of the term “youth” as many nations and cultures have their own definition of the concept. However, some fundamental words used to describe them include strength and vigour, passion and zeal, and excessive drives towards realizing their personal goals and objectives. The term youth has been defined severally, and a host of them use the psychologist Stanley Hall’s (1904) concept of adolescence as the benchmark for their definition (Shanahan, Erickson & Bauer, 2005; Grinder, 1969). The concept “adolescence” established a biological platform to the understanding of the phases involved in human ages (14-24) moving from childhood to the onset of puberty (Agbalajobi, 2014; Shanahan, Erickson & Bauer, 2005; Grinder, 1969).

In advanced economies such as the United States and United Nations, youths are categorized as people between 15-24years (United Nations 2004:75; Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010), whereas variations exist in the categorization of youths among African countries. In South Africa, youths are generally categorized as people between 15-24years while in East Africa, Kenyans define youths as people between 15-30years (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2006) and in Uganda, youths are people between 12 to 30 years (ILO publication, 2005). In general, over 200 million Africans (aged 15 to 24years) are officially described as youths. This group comprises about 40% of Africa’s working age population, out of which 60% are unemployed (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010).

In Nigeria, The International Labour Organization (ILO 2005) defines youths as people between ages 18 and 35years. They constitute about 60% Nigeria’s population (Agbalajobi, 2014). The youths are the major stakeholders and vital resource in nation building. Hence, it is essential to ensure that challenges facing such a percentage of people in any society be tackled with urgency, so that they can mold their thought line, and channel their energy and strength in the right direction. Bearing in mind that their actions and inactions are important stimulus for economic growth, and will eventually affect national development, it is therefore necessary that adequate measures be made to eradicate youth unemployment to the barest minimum, and ensure conducive environment for youths to actualize their dreams.

Unemployment & Unemployment Rates

The extant literature suggests that there is a relative consensus on the definition and explanation of the concept ‘unemployment’. The International Labour Organization (ILO) proposed some guidelines in 1954 to facilitate the comparisons of unemployment rates across countries (Brandolini, Cipollone & Viviano, 2006; Byrne, & Strobl, 2004; Lloyd, & Leibbrandt, 2014). These guidelines have been adopted by many developed and developing nations, and has also enabled ILO to assemble large chunks of data, and compare the labour market

statistical series across countries over a long period of time. According to the ILO guidelines, a person is unemployed if the person is currently available for work, seeking work, and not working.

Although ILO's definition of unemployment has since 1954 been periodically revised, the basic components and criteria remain intact whereby, a person is to be considered unemployed if one, (s)he is not involved in any paid or self-employment. Two, if (s)he is available for paid or self-employment, and three, (s)he has taken specific steps to seek paid or self-employment during the reference period

The youth unemployment rates vary significantly across nations. In Europe, it had increased from 15% in year 2007 to 23% in 2014 (Barneji, Saksonovs, Lin & Blavy, 2014; IMF 2014). The hardest hit European countries such as Ireland and Spain experienced unprecedented increase in youth unemployment rates from an average of 25% to 43% respectively within 2007 to 2013. Whereas the youth unemployment rates increased marginally in countries that fared better economically (Netherlands, Austria) and even fell in Germany (IMF 2014). In Nigeria, unemployment increased in 2011 from 21.1% in 2010 to 23.9% with youth unemployment at over 50%. And there was an increase of 16% unemployment growth rate from 2011 to 2013 (Uddin, 2013) as well as increase in youth unemployment and poverty levels (Aiyedogbon & Ohwofasa, 2012).

Causes and Effects of Youth Unemployment

There are various arguments and a relatively fair amount of consensus regarding the causes of youth unemployment. Gorlic, Stepanok & Al-Hussami (2013) discussed some of the causes of unemployment in Europe and the world as well as the consequences and solutions. They identified poor macroeconomic performance as the most significant cause of youth unemployment. Arguing that lack of economic growth affects everyone in the economy and youths are the most affected because their unemployment is often super-cyclical and fluctuates stronger than adult unemployment. Youths' unemployment are more volatile than the adults' because youths have lower job experience and job protection (Ryan 2001). Most business organizations have not invested so much in training them when compared to the experienced adult workers and therefore would not lose much when laying them off. Besides, severance packages usually increase with worker's tenure and make it less costly to lay-off young workers (Montenegro (2007)

On becoming successful entrepreneurs, Coenjaerts et al. (2009: Pg 6) noted that youths encounter more barriers while trying to enter the labour force due to their lack of experience. They added that issues such as lack of access to business networks and shorter credit history make it difficult for youths to succeed in their entrepreneurial drives. Also, youths are often badly hit during recession because firms first stop hiring additional workers before laying off people. Hence, youths are often disproportionately affected by the slowdown in the hiring process since they constitute a large proportion of the searching individuals (O'Higgins, 2001).

Biavaschi et al. (2012) identified the rising youth population as another cause and contributor to youth unemployment especially in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA), and in the Southern and Sub-Saharan Africa, where the limited labour demands prevent many youths from finding proper jobs. In essence, the mismatch between the demand and supply of young workers' skills contributes to the higher youth unemployment rates identified in these nations (Coenjaerts et al. 2009).

Some authors warn that unemployment, if experienced early in life, may have tenacious negative effects on an individual's future career, as it may weaken the individual's productive potential, reduce subsequent wages and employment prospects by increasing the probability of future unemployment spells (O'Higgins 2007; Nordström Skans 2005; Ryan 2001). Apart from the afore mentioned scarring effects, youth unemployment has also been found to be connected to upsurge in crime and drug use (Fougère, Kramarz, Pouget 2009; O'Higgins 2007).

Causes & Effects of Youth Unemployment In Nigeria

Many authors have flagged the causes and effects of the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria (Oduwale, 2015; Babalola, 2014; Olayungbo and Oladipo, 2014; Uddin, 2013; Obumneke 2012; Okafor 2011) and most of them linked the root cause(s) to colonization, the seemingly hidden and uncontrolled corrupt practices, and the unsavory ways of doing things both at the communal and national levels.

Babalola (2014) argued that the root of Nigeria's problems can be traced back to misfit between her inherited colonial, dependent, capitalist economic system and the feudal, communal and paternalistic socio-political system, carried over into the post-colonial and independent political economy. Also, the change in demand and consumption pattern, which heightened the cravings for foreign goods, increased the importation of foreign goods at the expense of indigenous businesses.

Olayungbo and Oladipo (2014) posit that the unemployment problems facing Nigerian youths cannot be disassociated from the various economic, political, and developmental crises that Nigeria is experiencing. Okafor (2011) identified and anchored the main causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria on the neo-liberal theory that created economic and social dislocations. He further argued that the upsurge in social vices and anti-social activities evident among the unemployed youths are threats to the stability of democracy in Nigeria. He concluded that there is much to be done and the relevant stakeholders must be actively involved in order to stabilize and entrench democracy in Nigeria.

Also, Obumneke 2012 examined the causes as well as the socio-economic implications of youth unemployment in Nigeria.. The paper anchored the explanation of the causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria on neo-liberalism that created economic and social dislocations. The paper also identified issues such as poor implementation policies, the neglect of the agricultural sector, poor enabling environment, and poor educational planning as some of the main causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria. The paper argues that the increasing anti-social activities such as restiveness, militancy, political violence, and other social vices evident among the unemployed and jobless youths are real dangers to the stability of the country.

Uddin 2013 also examined the origins, consequences and solutions to youth unemployment problems in Nigeria. The findings suggest that six major problems and six major effects, which brewed tension and animosity between the haves and have not, caused youth unemployment in Nigeria. It has caused communal clashes and given rise of terrorist groups such as the Niger Delta Militant and Boko Haram. It has also increased the frequency of prostitution, armed robbery attacks and child trafficking activities among citizens, and has continued to increase the threats to security of human lives and properties.

Agnes (2010) identified high degree of geographical mobility, increasing population growth, non involvement of youth in decision making processes, lack of employable skills, as well as the youths' and policy makers' perception about employment as the major causes of youth unemployment in Nigeria. The author observed that many Nigeria youths are being affected by unemployment brought about heightening socio-economic crises.

Available Solutions

Numerous possible solutions have been suggested to tackle the problem of youth unemployment. These solutions can be described as emanating from either macroeconomic or microeconomic levels. For instance, Gorlich *et al* (2013) and Coenjaerts *et al* (2009) suggested improving the macroeconomic environment by promoting the growth of paid employment, which involves implementing some policies and seeking ways to stimulate the economy. Also, O'Higgins (2001) recommended steady economic growth as the effective antidote.

Solutions at Macroeconomic Levels

At the macroeconomic levels, various policies and intervention programmes have been implemented to solve the problem of youth unemployment. In advanced economies such as the European Union and United States of America, youth unemployment has been a top priority on their policy agenda and efforts are being made to reduce it to the barest minimum. For instance, the European Commission launched the "Youth Opportunities Initiative" in order to support their unemployed youths (Barneji *et al*, 2014). The purpose of the initiative was to supply funds for apprenticeship and entrepreneurship schemes, assist the youths with company placements, and provide guidelines or advice for youths having innovative business ideas. Other notable examples include the Youth Guarantee Scheme and the Youth Employment Initiative, aimed at providing European Union funds to support young people

not in education, employment or training (NEET) in regions with high youth unemployment (Barneji *et al*, 2014)

Coenjaerts *et al* (2009) argued that youth employment interventions should be linked to each country's broader economic development frameworks, and posits that policymakers should target youth-friendly sectors and sectors with high employment growth potential such as ICT, tourism, environmental management or basic and social services. Unemployed youth in rural areas of developing countries may benefit mostly from reforms of the agricultural sector moving it away from subsistence farming and towards commercial use (Coenjaerts *et al* 2009). Moreover, it is important to provide jobs in the formal sector, as a high degree of informality in these countries hinders young people to find continuous employment.

The Internet offers numerous possibilities for individuals to become part of the global value chain. Tasks, that can be transmitted electronically, can be performed anywhere in the world. The youth, who are typically open to new technologies can offer their services on central electronic platforms and thereby reach a much larger market. This would open up new opportunities for both work and training globally and may have a particularly strong effect in remote, rural parts of the world.

Reductions in pay-roll taxes and wage subsidies were also suggested with the aim of increasing firms' incentives to hire young workers (Coenjaerts *et al* 2009). And, in terms of the effects of minimum wages on youth employment, Ryan (2001) noted that they have slightly adverse effects while O'Higgins (2007) claims that they do not damage youths' employment prospects. However, Neumark & Wascher (2004) noted that the effects are stronger in the countries having slightly regulated labour markets. This implies that there is the need to take cognizance of the impact of the various policies on youths while coordinating the overall labour market institutional setting.

Furthermore, active labour market policies such as career guidance (Coenjaerts *et al* 2009), entrepreneurship training (Coenjaerts *et al* 2009), and job-hunt assistance programs (OECD 2006) have been widely suggested even though they seem to have small impacts on youths employment prospects and their effectiveness depends majorly on the state of each economy (O'Higgins 2007; Ryan 2001). Effectiveness can sometimes be improved when participation in the program is voluntary but OECD (2006) advised that it be made compulsory for youths who have been searching for jobs for more than six months in order to reach those who stand the risk of experiencing social exclusion.

There is also the need to target youth employment policies towards specific groups among the youth population because unemployment is mostly a problem of minorities and not often evenly spread (O'Higgins 2007). For instance, there is the need to distinguish between young adults and teenagers (OECD 2006). Young adults need support in securing work experience while teenagers need help in staying in (or returning to) school.

The implementation of a dual scheme linking education and training has been noticed to alleviate youth unemployment and improve school-to-work transition (OECD 2006). A strong linkage between work-based training and apprenticeship, and school-based education characterizes the dual system. Examples of such successful dual systems are those found in Germany and Japan. A dual system is very different from a purely school-based vocational education. Hence, in developing economies, it is essential to design the dual system around informal markets, and assure that skills, which were acquired informally, are acknowledged and endorsed (Coenjaerts *et al*. 2009). Establishing a dual system can be challenging because it requires the involvement of all social partners, and powerful employer associations before it can be effective (OECD 2006). Additionally, there is a continuous struggle to ensure that the contents and types of training meet the ever-changing labour market demands (OECD 2006).

According to Kiel Policy Brief 59, a cursory look at the trends in work organization shows a drift from task specialization to multitasking. Meaning that occupational borders are becoming blurred (Görlich, Stepanok, & Al-Hussami, 2013). In other words, jobs that were previously linked to specific tasks now involve large number of tasks and require more versatility from employees. If occupational borders are blurring and occupations become broader, youths would need more diverse and broader skills than they used to in times past.

In general, employment policies targeted towards youths need to take into account the possible crowding-out effects for other age groups. The implementation of such policies requires careful balancing with other potential goals. Reducing youth unemployment is indeed a challenging task. However, numerous solutions abound: some are more specific and applicable to particular environments, others more general and adaptable; some are more widely accepted while others are disputable. As the causes of youth unemployment differ across countries, so the potential solutions do.

In Nigeria, efforts are being made to ameliorate the menace among the teeming population of unemployed youths but much is to be desired as the effects of the policies and intervention programmes are yet to be felt at the grassroot levels (NEEDS, 2004). For instance, the Lagos State government has been providing youth development and empowerment programmes and creating enabling environment by making business registration process a lot easier (Emeh, 2012; Kofarbai & Bambale, 2016; Solicitors, 2016). Also, the Federal Government set up the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in November 1986, which was saddled with the responsibility of promoting vocational skill acquisition programmes; facilitating the spirit of creativity, independence and self-reliance among Nigerian youths (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010; Omoruyi & Osunde, 2004). Many vocational skills' training centres were established and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS 2004) were established. Also, about 28 projects and programmes targeted towards reducing poverty were embarked upon between 1975 and 2001 (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010). Other programmes such as DFRRI, Community Banks, Better Life for Rural Women, People's bank, and Family Support Programme were some of the projects established to address poverty and youth unemployment issues. Sadly, the NEEDS (2004) document concluded that the programmes did not have lasting, significant and sustainable positive effects, though some of the programmes recorded little success.

Solutions at Microeconomic Levels

In addition to the various policies and government efforts put in place to curb youth unemployment in both advanced and emerging economies, the extant literature shows that the efforts made at individual and household levels to ameliorate youth unemployment problem have gone a long way to stimulate many economies and are making lasting impacts. The entrepreneurial process of moving from need identification to idea generation and business startup activities put in place by certain individuals have not only served as catalysts, but have also created jobs for their youths and citizens, and have helped to advance their economies. For instance, as shown in Figure 1, who could ever imagine that an entrepreneurial activity could grow from a mortar to the globe? And who could ever imagine that a stress-free drink from a little kettle would one day reach the four corners of the earth?

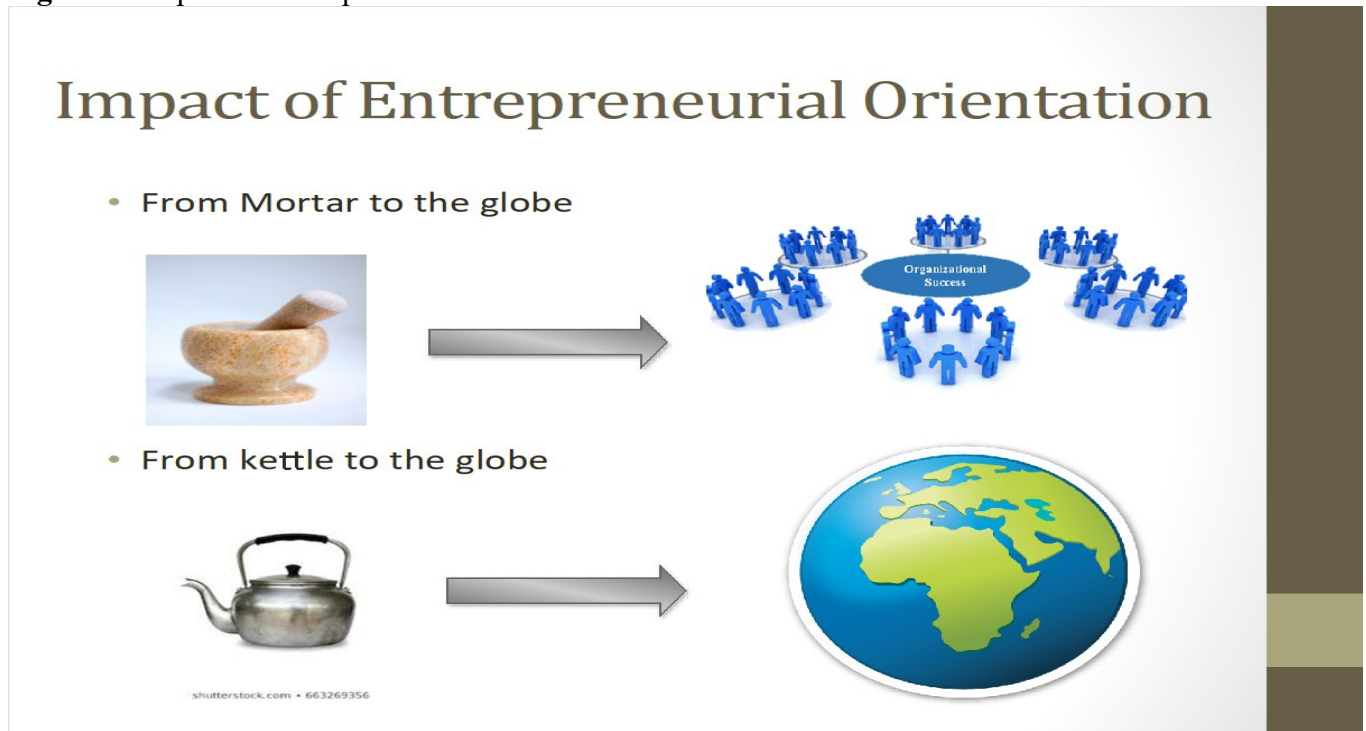
Kudos to John Cadbury, a 22year old man in 1824, who opened his first shop at 93 Bull Street, next to his father's shop, in the then fashionable part of Birmingham. The entrepreneurial activity was triggered by John Cadbury's passion and innovative ability in experimenting with his mortar and pestle in order to make chocolate drinks (Akinyemi, 2016; Cadbury World, 2014). John sold tea and coffee, hops and mustard seeds, because he believed that alcohol was a main cause of poverty, and hoped that his products will serve as an alternative. He wanted to produce a non-alcoholic and healthy drink so he did not stop experimenting with his mortar and pestle till he produced a range of cocoa and chocolate drinks.

The popularly known and well enjoyed chocolate products of Cadbury Ltd, which began as a one man business more than two centuries ago, has grown become a multinational company with over 70,000 employees, and over \$15billion annual sales value (Cadbury World, 2014). And even though it's almost two centuries after John Cadbury, the entrepreneur, passed on, yet millions of people enjoy, and are still enjoying, the rippling effects of job creation, scholarships, economic growth and development sparked by one man's passion.

Also, many thanks to John Pemberton, a young Atlanta pharmacist in 1886, who started his invention in a three-legged brass kettle. The highly consumed and globally acknowledged product, coca cola, started as a result of a John Pemberton's curiosity (Bellis, 2014; Watters, 1978). After inventing many drugs that brought him no money, he decided to explore the beverage market. This was when Coca Cola was born. Today, more than one billion Coca Cola drinks are consumed daily (Bellis, 2014; Pendergrast, 2013).

Other notable and highly commendable individuals from Advanced Economies are Bill Gates (Microsoft), Henry Ford (Ford Vehicles), Walter Elias Disney (Disney World) and Mac zukerberg (Facebook} to mention but a few. These entrepreneurs, despite their humble backgrounds and various challenges, have helped to reduce unemployment problems both in their local communities and across borders. Notable examples from emerging economies are Jack Ma (Alibaba), Adebayo Ogunlesi (Gatwick Int'l Airport), Sir Isaac Adeagbo Akinpade (1941-2018) who invented Satchet Water Business in Nigeria, Aliko Dangote (Industrialist), Wale Adenuga (Glo)

Figure 1: Impact of Entrepreneurial Orientation



Source: Author's compilation (2020)

Solutions For Nigeria's Youth Unemployment Crisis

Considering the peculiarity and complexity of Nigeria's case, Salami (2013) proposed a reorientation whereby youths are advised to be innovative and creative, be hardworking, and embrace the culture of honesty and nobility of character. The paper established a link between entrepreneurship and youth unemployment, and advocated for a change of mindset among youths from being job seekers to job

creators, while efforts are being made at the macroeconomic level to create enabling political and socio-economic environment.

Also, Babalola (2014) and Abidde (2012) suggested the need for a reorientation, and imbuing the citizenry with nationalistic spirit, creativity and resourcefulness. As expecting God or some deities to come and resolve Nigeria's crisis is sheer self-delusion and foolhardiness based on fanatics (Abidde, 2012; Babalola, 2014).

Agnes 2010 recommended that Nigerian youths be trained to possess skills that are harmonious with the labour market demands. The author also suggested that youths be involved in Nigeria's decision-making processes in order to minimize their exclusion costs and ensure the successful implementation of the various policies and programmes. The author also suggested that loan and credit schemes be made available to enable Nigerian youths get enough capital to set up their businesses. Lastly, the author advocated for the formulation and implementation of sincere policies that will enable youth pursue their dreams.

Uddin 2013 requested for government intervention and recommended that the government should create labour market that promote the employability of youths, invest heavily on youth education tailored towards skills acquisition and development in order to promote self-reliance among youths. Obumneke (2012) suggests that provision of enabling environment and effective policy measures such as re-prioritization of the Agricultural Sector, as well as reformation of educational system as some of the measures that will drastically reduce the menace of youth unemployment. The paper also concludes that addressing the problem of youth unemployment must involve not just the policymakers but all the relevant stakeholders in the economy.

Anyanwu (2014) estimated the effect of Africa's intra-regional trade on the escalating youth unemployment in the Continent and investigated both the aggregate and gender-specific impacts using available cross-sectional time series data between 1980 and 2010. His findings suggest that higher levels of intra-African trade reduce both the aggregate, male and female youth unemployment in Africa. Furthermore, the results show that economic growth, domestic investment rate, secondary education, institutionalized democracy, higher urbanization and inflation tend to reduce youth unemployment both on the aggregate and gender-differentiated levels. And therefore, are good for youth unemployment reduction in the continent. Conversely, he also noted that higher real per capita GDP and credit to the private sector have significant positive effect on youth unemployment in Africa. And finally, that foreign direct investment and government consumption expenditure have insignificant effect on both the aggregate and gendered level of youth unemployment in Africa.

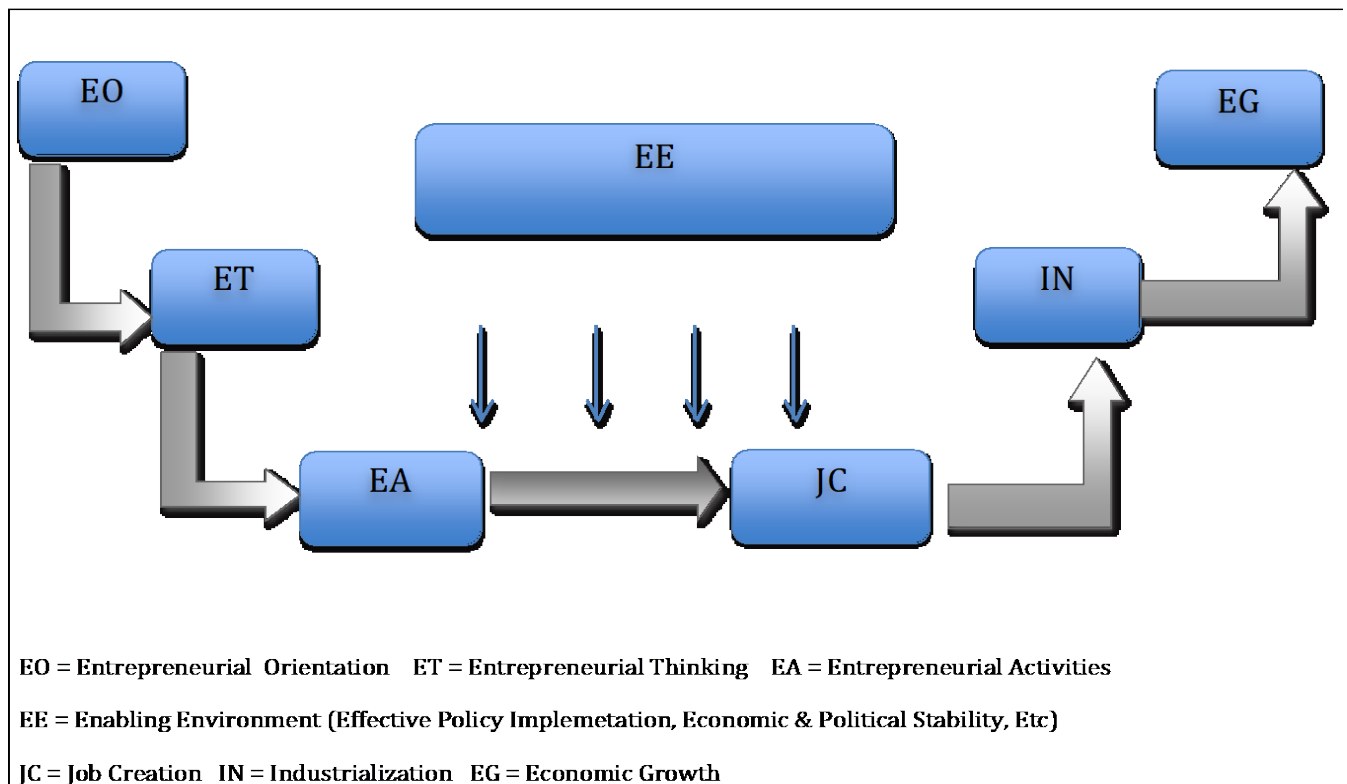
The available options to the rescue and elimination of youth unemployment include but are not limited to good policy implementation and intervention programs, entrepreneurial orientation, employment and labour market policies. Various attempts have been, and are still being made both at the macro and micro levels to address the problem of youth unemployment. However, the most significant and impactful of them all is Entrepreneurial Orientation (Lechner & Gudmundsson, 2014; Callaghan & Venter, 2011; Kropp, Lindsay & Shoham, 2008; Avlonitis & Salavou, 2007; Jantunen, Puumalainen, Saarenketo & Kyläheiko, 2005).

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial Orientation, as shown in Figure 2, gives rise to entrepreneurial thinking, which gives rise to entrepreneurial activities, and invariably leads to job creation (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005; Wang, 2008; Hindle, 2010; Jack & Anderson, 2002; Lee & Peterson, 2000; & Wiklund, 1999). EO is basically about being mindful of ones environment, identifying problems, taking risks and seeking

ways of making things better wherever one goes (Lomberg *et al*, 2017; Naldi, Nordqvist, Sjöberg & Wiklund, 2007; Jantunen *et al*, 2005; Lumpkin & Dess, 2001 and 1996). While the governments and relevant stakeholders are making policies at the macroeconomic level, it is important that citizens do their parts to complement these efforts by adopting an problem solving mindset, which can in other words be referred to as being entrepreneurial. Findings from the industrialized economies show that entrepreneurial activities were at the bedrock and major catalyst of the various levels of industrialization and economic advancement experienced by many nations (Sarma, 2014, Moufawad, 2012; Baumol & Strom, 2007). Some individuals, often called entrepreneurs, identified needs in their communities, were stimulated to meet those needs, and made efforts to solve the identified problems.

Figure 2: Importance and Impact of Entrepreneurial Orientation



Source: Author's compilation (2020)

The story behind the popular “Praying hands” painting emphasizes the fact that no one ever makes it alone (Desy, 2014 & 2018; Akinyemi & Adejumo 2018). However, one cannot overrule the fact that it takes proactive thinking and an entrepreneurial mindset to maximize the little opportunities that life brings. And entrepreneurial traits such as need for achievement, innovativeness, proactive personality, tolerance for ambiguity, internal locus of control, and self-efficacy, (Rauch and Frese, 2007; Cools & Van Den Broeck, 2008) make some individuals bring out the good from their seemingly uncomfortable experiences and environments.

Nigerian youths cannot make it on their own, they need the help of policymakers and other relevant stakeholders. However, they also have their parts to play in nation building by being patriotic, and imbibing problem-solving mindset, for instance. Besides, waiting for foreigners to come and solve the problem of unemployment in Nigeria may be a futile exercise. Hence, all hands must be on deck and there is the need to look inwards and make deliberate efforts to ameliorate the problem of unemployment in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study examined the root cause, effects and various solutions to addressing the menace of youth unemployment in Nigeria. Using the findings from numerous studies and anecdotal sources, the study identified possible solutions and concludes that the fundamental and most effective solution is changing the mindset and thought process of the youths by encouraging them to adopt entrepreneurial orientation and become more proactive right from the household and communal level.

This study is a clarion call for Nigerian citizens and policymakers to stimulate the entrepreneurial traits and orientation among the youths. The study also flags the need for everyone to complement the efforts of the policymakers towards creating enabling environments for entrepreneurial activities. While clamouring for the government and other relevant stakeholders to create enabling environment, it is expedient for citizens to work on their mindset, adopt entrepreneurial methods and patriotic ways of solving identified problems. In essence, it is essential to complement governments and policymakers' by working from the grassroots to bring about a tremendous change in the society.

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UNILAG FabLab: A Centre for Ideation, Research, Innovation and Development - A framework for Connecting the Town and Gown

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Abstract

A fabrication laboratory (FabLab) is a technical prototyping stage for innovation and invention. It is a place to: learn, invent, create, mentor, play and provide tools for digital fabrication. Additive manufacturing, also called 3D printing, is a computer-aided process of manufacturing physical objects from designs, by successive layers deposition of selected material. The tremendous transformation of manufacturing processes by 3D printing across almost every sector has brought about incredible advances in research and innovation. However, the penetration of additive manufacturing and use of artificial intelligence in the country is currently shallow. To address this challenge, the French Embassy recently commissioned a fully equipped additive manufacturing workspace at the University of Lagos (UNILAG FabLab) to build appropriate capacity in members of the university community and permit digital fabrication across borders using 3D printing. This facility offers an opportunity for patrons to acquire cutting edge competence in the process and technology of additive manufacturing and solve challenging problems using machine learning models and artificial intelligence. The UNILAG FabLab is structured to serve the research and innovation needs of experts, members of the university community, students and enthusiasts. The equipment for printing design ideas include the Creality CR10s and Micro-delta while electronics and sensors are available for use in monitoring the climate and evapotranspiration of the soil. Other units such as welding, CNCs, and robotics are also present in the laboratory. It is envisaged that the products of technology such as prototypes for covid 19 prevention and weather station, that will continue to emanate from the UNILAG FabLab will contribute significantly towards enhancing manufacturing processes and making the laboratory a resource domain for other additive manufacturing centers around the world. The UNILAG FabLab therefore, presents itself as a welcome space for patrons to actualize their awesome idea.

Keywords: 3D Printers; Artificial Intelligence; Climate Monitoring; Computer-aided Process; UNILAG FabLab

Introduction

FabLabs are unique, moderate workspace for digital fabrication and rapid prototyping. The possibility of additive manufacturing with 3D printers in FabLabs enables parts and objects to be created in a step. This is growing better than the traditionally methods of manufacturing especially in cases where immediate prototypes are required. As a result, some researchers had referred to additive manufacturing as the third industrial revolution [1], based on its capability to produce items that immediately attend to the needs of users. The growing trend of additive manufacturing has made some

department of education in the United Kingdom to include the use of 3D printers in the school curriculum [2]. Similarly, Ramírez et al., [3] employed 3D printing as an educational device for augmenting teaching skills in engineering and basic design courses. They concluded that the inclusion of the concept has encouraged leaning of modelling, mathematics, science and engineering.

The significance of additive manufacturing in higher learning has resulted in new education proficiencies and learning outcomes that are targeted towards the development of unambiguous educational programs [4]. Furthermore, the application of 3D printing to architectural works [5] and engineering design [6] has brought about state-of-the-art projects. Consequently, Casqueiro et al., presented a survey on creativity using innovative technology. They focused on students' reaction to the novel concept of additive manufacturing. From the assessment, it was revealed that the use of approaches interrelated to design and 3D printing greatly improved concepts comprehension. The survey was concluded with a note that the acquired knowledge is vital during projects execution [7]. A contemporary illustration of the repositioning of manufacturing processes has materialized during the recent pandemic (COVID-19) in Spain. During this crisis, a group of researchers developed prototypes of personal protective equipment and made it available to the public on request by healthcare personnel [8, 9].

Recently, Marques et al., [10] considered the profitability and impacts of FabLabs in Portugal. The review section of their presentation shows that among the recent manufacturing techniques, the concept of 3D printing or additive manufacturing is impeccable. However, the inclusion of these ideas in project management is usually hindered by the users' (like students, enthusiasts) lack of familiarity with 3D printing. This necessitates the need to adequately create awareness about FabLabs and also update education programme with some basic additive manufacturing courses especially in Nigeria where the number of FabLabs is limit although fast growing. Motivated by the aforementioned, this paper is aimed at creating awareness about the UNILAG FabLab and also to present it as a center for ideation, research, innovation and development with a framework for connecting the town and gown.

Methodology

The UNILAG FabLab

Globally, there are more than 1750 FabLabs serving as platforms for learning, knowledge exchange and stimulus for entrepreneurship at local scales. In Nigeria, there are five of them with locations in **University of Lagos (UNILAG FabLab)**, University of Ibadan, Bayero University, Kano, Alex Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike, University of Jos. The UNILAG FabLab was established on the 9th of October 2020 following the commissioning (figure 1) by the French Ambassador to Nigeria with sections of the FabLab, objectives, vision, mission, logo and location illustrated below:

- ❖ **Objective:** To build appropriate capacity in members of the University of Lagos community and permit digital fabrication across borders using 3D printing.
- ❖ **Vision:** To be a world class center for providing solutions for adaptation to climate change.
- ❖ **Mission:** To provide climate smart solution through digital manufacturing and prototyping for the Academia, Government, and Industry towards Innovation and Infrastructural Development.
- ❖ **Location:** 1st Floor, C Wing, D.K. Olukoya Central Research and Reference Laboratories.

Figure 1. Commissioning of a fully equipped additive manufacturing workspace at the University of Lagos (UNILAG FabLab) by the French Ambassador to Nigeria



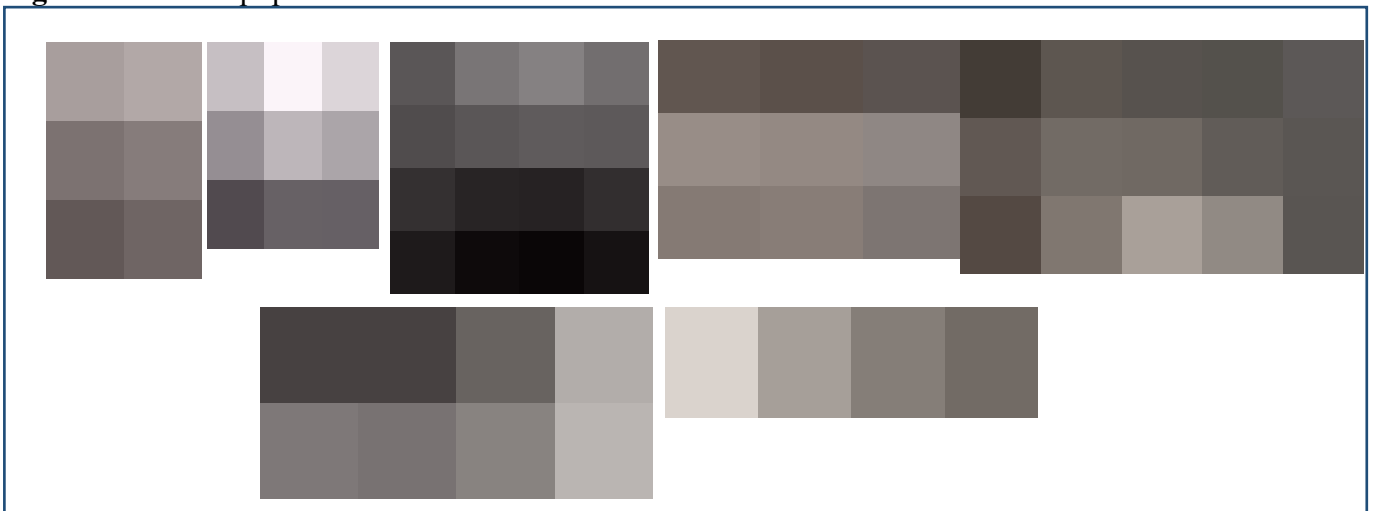
Source: Authors' compilation (2020)

What the UNILAG FabLab offers

The equipment in the FabLab as depicted in figure 2 include:

- ❖ 3D Printer such as Creality CR10s, Micro-deltas, 3D Pens, 3D Scanner
- ❖ Electronics such as Raspberry pi, Arduino, Sensors (temperature, humidity, wind, soil, ultra sound), Mini drone and robotics
- ❖ Other units are welding sections, Computer numerical controls (CNCs) and thermos folder.

Figure 2: Some equipment in the UNILAG FabLab



Source: Authors' compilation (2020)

Consequently, the UNILAG FabLab can now offer and support research and innovation opportunities on rapid prototyping, weather station to monitor climate change, robotics and surveillance, laser cutting, forming, welding, face shield, prosthetics and dental braces.

Activities so far and results obtained

This section is divided into two subsections: the design and evolution stage, the 3D printing stage using the equipment in the Lab.

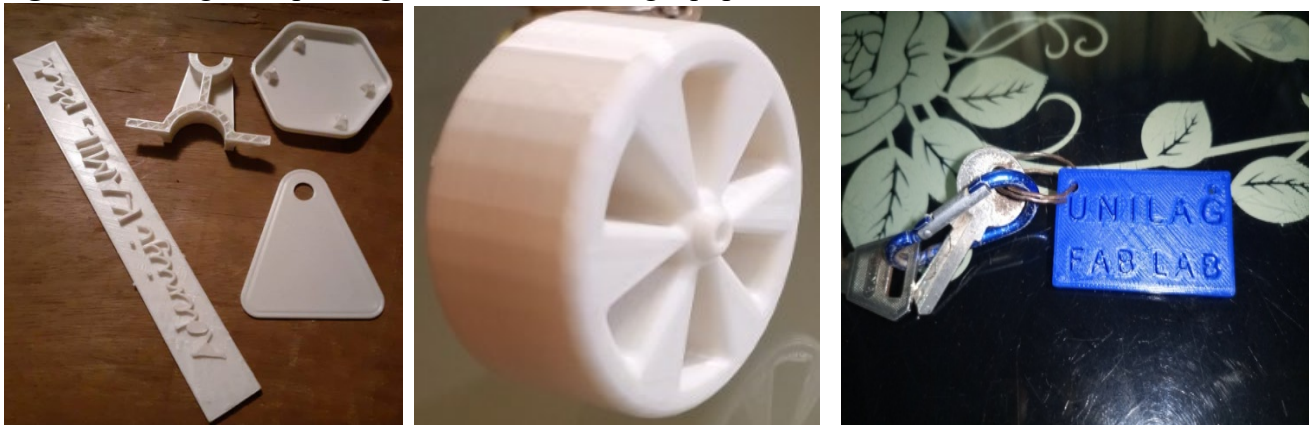
Design and evolution stage

After conceptualization of ideas, the objects or parts to be printed are designed using available CAD tools like fusion 360 and Autodesk inventor. Some successful designs that evolve from the FabLab include: key holder, wheel, cup, dog, cat, name plate and weather station housing.

Printing stage

Once the design stage is accomplished using the preferred CAD tools, the next will be to prepare the part for 3D printing. The CAD design is first exported as **stl.file** and then sliced in **Cura engine** or **Reppetier**. After slicing, the object or part is then saved as a **gcode** which is the language understood by the 3D printers. This **gcode** is passed to the printer using an external drive or via a cable connection and the object or parts are 3D printed as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3: Design and printing of some items using equipment in the UNILAG FabLab



Source: Authors' compilation (2020)

Furthermore, the UNILAG FabLab through the support of the French embassy and University of Lagos has been involved in the training of personnel – nationally and internationally as well as participation in Hackathon such as the recent Africa 2020 SDG Challenge held in December 11, 2020. Correspondingly, for the purpose of connecting town and gown, the UNILAG FabLab aim at creating networks and collaborations among students, academia, health practitioners, manufacturers, environmentalist and government in order to come up with awesome solutions that benefit the world.

Conclusions

The UNILAG FabLab is an additive manufacturing workspace that aids turning innovative ideas into products. The FabLab offers cutting edge competence in additive manufacturing technology, solve challenging problems using machine learning models and artificial intelligence. The possibility of a printed design has been expedient during practical sessions in scenarios where enthusiast are expected comprehend physical procedures. Likewise, the addition of FabLab in engineering appears to be of tremendous importance in bridging the gap between theoretical contents and physical reality. One of

the main goals of the UNILAG FabLab is to be a contributor and not a consumer. Consequently, the UNILAG FabLab presents itself as a welcome space for patrons to actualize their awesome ideas.

Acknowledgements

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Youth Entrepreneurship: A Panacea For Unemployment In The New-Normal Era

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship as a concept requires knowledge, creativity, innovation, ingenuity, risk-taking and time bound. Therefore, the positive utilization of knowledge acquired through formal, informal and non-formal education to meet the needs of mankind and better its existence is key to human survival. Else, the acquisition of functional education has always been the goal of every society. This has been one of the persistent concerns where education teaches how to live and earn a living. And for any society to attain economic growth and development, the youthful prowess must be productively engaged. However, the prevalent rate of increase in the number of unemployed youths in Nigeria necessitated a viable option of 'The Entrepreneurial Education Intervention' to cater for this outbreak especially in this era through the various vocational skill acquisition programmes by the government and some private individuals. The study examined the various entrepreneurial skills youth can be empowered with and other ways to support, monitor and evaluate its success in drastically reducing unemployment of youths especially in this era. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Five research questions were raised. Random sampling technique was adopted with a sample population of 400 participants. A Self-developed structured questionnaire was used as a means of data collection. Mean, standard deviation and weighted mean score were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that youth unemployment can drastically reduce if youth are conscientiously empowered (either by government or private individuals) through entrepreneurship education, thereby making them useful both for themselves and the society.

Key words: Youth Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship education, unemployment, new-normal era.

Introduction

Every society has its unique system for training and educating the youth through formal, informal and non formal ways. Education was generally for immediate introduction into the society and a preparation for adulthood. African education particularly emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual and moral values (Omordu and Amaele, (2014), Fafunwa, (1995). In other words, education teaches how to live and how to earn a living (Dike, 2009). The former is a general education for all while the latter involves the acquisition of skills in the form of academics, technical or vocational education for various practical occupations.

The aims of education in traditional African society are character-training and job-orientation which in the history of vocational education in Nigeria is as old as the existence of Nigeria as a part of the African society. The traditional vocations in Nigeria can be divided into three groups namely agricultural education; trades and craft, and profession.

Vocational skills are practical or first-hand skills that help a person master a trade or a job e.g. barbing, hairdressing, tailoring etc. These skills may be obtained on the job (like apprenticeship) or at vocational schools. These skills equip people with the practical skills necessary to begin or enhance a career, (Fafunwa, 1995).

The educational system in Nigeria combined manual activities with intellectual training which prepared youths for useful and sustainable adulthood. This is synonymous to vocational education

which refers to those aspects of educational process involving general education, acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of the economy and social life (NPE, 2014).

The NPE (2014) also stated that the specific objectives of quality education are to develop manipulative skills, respect for dignity of labor and the student transition into the world of work. Unfortunately, the social prestige accorded academic inclined careers such as medicine, law, engineering, accountancy amongst others has led to the rush and preference for university education. This also made the youth to study courses that are of no particular interest to them and sometimes made them drop-out of school. In other words, the youth end up becoming unemployable after graduation.

Entrepreneurship refers to practical creativeness which manipulates opportunities and resources for advantage in new ways. It involves the ability, capability, the resolve and the willingness of an individual to explore an opportunity, establish a business or an enterprise as a result and runs it profitably, effectively and efficiently (Ejiogu, 2013).

In entrepreneurship, the individual or the entrepreneur engages in the task of identifying some gaps, lack or vacuum in the socio-economic environment and fill such gaps/lack through his creative, innovative and risk-taking abilities, (Ejiogu, 2013).

Sometimes, entrepreneurs positively disrupt a normal process to create convenience, meet needs, save time and attract intrinsic and extrinsic value while providing solution to an existing problem. This process is called Disruptive Technology. Therefore, it is about identifying a need that can be commercialized.

According to Fafunwa (1995), Entrepreneurship is a larger umbrella under which vocational, technical and apprenticeship skills can be embedded. The vocational training in formal and informal settings are meant to ultimately create employment and financial independence to the youth involved. Therefore, at high school level, vocational skills are taught: at out-of-school level, it is called apprenticeship while at tertiary institution level it is referred to as entrepreneurship. All aim toward the same goal but at different levels to accommodate the youth. Moreover, apprenticeship has always been an option for youth who are out of school to prepare them also for the world of work. This training is an agreement between the trainer and the trainee to teach and learn a skill (trade or craft) within a specified duration whereby the trainee serves or pays the trainer for such training. It is a time honoured and a wide education process through which the indigenous societies of Nigeria pass on their cultural heritage from one generation to the other.

COVID 19 pandemic incident in Nigeria on the 27th of February 2020 led to a total lockdown where everybody stayed in their homes to forestall the spread of the virus (Alhassan, 2020). As a result, many businesses were not functioning, companies downsizing, loss of jobs and employment, drastic cut in some workers' salaries, work at home options etc leading to NEW-NORMAL era. It is evident that the pandemic dealt a hard blow on the people by increasing the rate of unemployment.

The aftermath of the pandemic leads to the reality of the new-normal era leading to the increased rate of unemployment. This era can be termed NEW-NORMAL as Covid pandemic has caused disruption in the lives and activities of humanity. This disruption has led to the adaptation of new ways of doing things such as online training, online teaching/learning, work at home options and so on which ultimately leads to keeping safe at all times to flatten the pandemic curve.

Statement of the Problem

In the last few months till date, the COVID pandemic has left a bitter taste in the mouth of Nigerians, its resultant effect characterized the new-normal era. The unemployment in the land became complicated with the loss of jobs and the rate of unemployment becoming so alarming among Nigerian youth. However, it should be noted that government has established so many empowerment programs which included N-power, Trader Moni with the mission to make Nigerian youth self-employed and financially independent as much as to reduce poverty rate. Despite government, corporate and individual efforts in giving micro and small medium loans to few entrepreneurs for the establishment of progressive businesses so as to increase employability, the rate of unemployment is getting higher in this era. Furthermore, a Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneur Development (SAED) program was integrated as part of the National Youth Service Corps orientation exercise for fresh graduates yearly in which all corps members are to participate actively with the hope of achieving specified objectives to ensure they can be employers of labour.

Despite all the skills, exposure, training, government and individual interventions given to the Nigerian youth, unemployment is still on the rise. In other word, entrepreneurship requires not only skills but the ability and capability to think out of the box, identify societal needs, to harness all the given opportunities to create jobs and become employable. Therefore, entrepreneurship more than ever before is a panacea for youth unemployment.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to find out how youth entrepreneurship can solve unemployment while the outcome would of course be expository and equally cover a knowledge gap.

Specifically, the objectives of this study were to:

- 1) Identify the justification for entrepreneurship skills in this new-normal era.
- 2) Identify vocational skills that can empower youth to create employment and earn extra income in the new-normal era.
- 3) Identify entrepreneurship skills that can create employment in the new-normal era.
- 4) Examine necessary youth support for entrepreneurship.
- 5) Examine the monitoring and evaluation options.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide this study:

- 1) What are the justifications for entrepreneurship skills in this new-normal era?
- 2) What are the vocational skills youth can be involved in?
- 3) What are the entrepreneurship skills youth can be involved in?
- 4) What are the necessary supports to encourage youth involvement in skills acquisition in the new-normal era?
- 5) How can youth involvement in the skills be monitored and evaluated in this era?

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was Descriptive Survey. The population of the study was all 500,000 youths (between the ages 20-40 years) in Lagos State. The sample of the study was 400 youth using Taro Yamane formula to determine the minimum sample size. Convenience/Accidental sampling technique was used for selection of the sample for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researchers. It was titled “Youth Entrepreneurship: a panacea for unemployment in the new-normal era” (YEPUNE). The instrument had 25 questionnaire items and adapted the four point Likert scales which included:

SA- Strongly Agree = 4points

A- Agree = 3points

D- Disagree = 2points

SD- Strongly Disagree = 1point

The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by experts in test and measurement while reliability of the instrument was determined by administering 30 copies of the instrument on youths who did not participate in the main study and the data obtained was analysed using the Cronbach alpha reliability technique and a coefficient of .86 proved the instrument was reliable. The research questions were answered using frequency count and percentage.

Results

Research Question One: What are the justifications for entrepreneurship skills in this new-normal era?

From the data in table 1, Extra income tops the rating with a frequency of 115 and 28.8%; this confirms that the justification for youth entrepreneurship is to make extra income. Also, 94 respondents agreed that youth entrepreneurship will engage them temporarily while waiting for paid job (if that ever comes) which makes it rated 2nd with 23.5% as the percentage. Creating job for self and others was however rated 3rd with a frequency of 83 and a percentage of 20.8% youth agreed to it as a justification for youth entrepreneurship in this era. Whereas, Building sustainable business outfit was rated 4th with a frequency of 59 and a percentage of 14.7%. Contribution of quota towards the development of Nigeria’s economy was rated 5th with 12.3% and 49 as percentage and frequency respectively. All 400 youth agreed with the identified justifications for youth entrepreneurship.

Table 1: Justifications for Youth entrepreneurship in this new-normal era

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	Extra income	115	28.8	1
2	Build sustainable business outfit	59	14.7	4
3	Temporarily engaged while waiting for paid job	94	23.5	2
4	Contribution of quota towards the development of Nigerian economy	49	12.3	5
5	Create job for self and others	83	20.8	3
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors’ compilation (2020)

Research Question Two: What are the vocational skills youth can be involved in, in this era?

Data on table 2 shows that 45% of the youths prefer fashion designing which made it 1st in the ranking with 180 as its frequency. Also, 18.5% of the youth agreed to go into catering, event planning and management; this made it 2nd in the rating with 74 as its frequency. Also, 14.3% of the respondents chose photography making it 3rd in the rating, with 57 as its frequency. However, Hairdressing and makeup artistry had 51 and 12.8% as its frequency and percentage which made it come 4th in the rating. And only 9.5% preferred arts and design to make it 5th with 38 as its frequency. Generally, all 400 youth agreed to the vocational skills identified that youth can be involved in this era.

Table 2: Vocational skills Youth can be involved in, in this era.

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	Fashion designing	180	45	1
2	Catering, event planning and management	74	18.5	2
3	Photography.	57	14.3	3
4	Artwork and design.	38	9.5	5
5	Hairdressing, makeup artistry.	51	12.8	4
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors' compilation (2020)

Research Question Three: What are the entrepreneurship skills youth can be involved in?

The table 3 above presents the findings on the entrepreneurship skills Youth can be involved in, in this era. Comedy & online skits tops the rating of youth with 142 as its frequency and 35.6%. Also, Music, dancing and acting is the second possible entrepreneurship skill that youth can be involved in, with 78 as the frequency and 19.5%. However, Cleaning service was rated 3rd, with 63 as its frequency and 15.8%. Whereas, school /coaching classes' ownership was rated 4th with 61 as its frequency and 15.4%. Human resources outfit was rated least with 56 as its frequency and a percentage of 14. All 400 youths agreed to the involvement of youths in the identified entrepreneurship skills, in this era.

Table 3: Entrepreneurship skills Youth's can be involved in, in this era.

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	Comedy and online skits	142	35.6	1
2	Cleaning (dry cleaning and house cleaning) service	63	15.8	3
3	Music, dancing and acting	78	19.5	2
4	School/coaching classes ownership	61	15.4	4
5	Human resources outfit	56	14.0	5
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors' compilation (2020)

Research Question Four: What are the necessary supports to encourage youth involvement in skills acquisition in this era?

Table 4: Necessary supports to encourage youth involvement in vocational & entrepreneurial skills.

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	Good and stable electricity supply	120	30	2
2	Security of lives and property	169	42.3	1
3	Tax waiver /reduction	28	7.0	4
4	Interest-free loans	63	15.7	3
5	Entrepreneurship seminars and workshops	20	5.0	5
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors' compilation (2020)

From table 4 above, security of lives and property was rated 1st with 169 and 42.3 as the frequency and percentage. The second most rated necessary support to encourage youth involvement in entrepreneurship is availability of good and stable electricity supply with 120 as the frequency and 30%. Whereas, availability of interest-free loans was the 3rd rated with 15.7% and 63 as its frequency. However, tax waiver/reduction had 28 as its frequency and 7% which rated its 4th. Whereas, the 5th rated is the entrepreneurship seminars and workshops with 5% and 20 as the frequency.

Research Question Five: How can youth involvement in the skills be monitored and evaluated in this era?

Table 5 above shows identified mentoring and evaluation platforms for successful young entrepreneurs. Mentoring programs/platforms was rated 1st with 42.3% and 169 as its frequency. Also, trade fairs had the second ratings with 30.0% and 120 as the frequency. Awarding successful young entrepreneurs was rated 3rd with 63 as its frequency and its percentage was 15.7. Consequently, periodic town hall meeting was rated 4th with 28 and 7.0 as its frequency and percentage. Lastly, Government established organisations for mentoring and evaluation was rated 5th and a frequency of 20 with 5.0 as its percentage.

Table 5: Monitoring and evaluation of youth entrepreneurship success.

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	Periodic town hall meetings	28	7.0	4
2	Government established organizations for monitoring and evaluation.	20	5.0	5
3	Awarding successful young entrepreneurs	63	15.7	3
4	Trade fairs	120	30.0	2
5	Mentoring programs/ platforms	169	42.3	1
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors' compilation (2020)

Discussion of findings

Justification for Entrepreneurship in this new-normal era

To make extra income was the highest justification for entrepreneurship skills in this era. The survival instinct in man always propels him to work and satisfy his physiological needs of basic necessities like food, clothing, and shelter according to the Maslow theory of needs; while the insatiable nature propels for more income to achieve relevance, secure positions, self esteem and self actualization.

The youth preference for extra income also buttresses the SDG 1 and SDG 2 of No Hunger and eradication of poverty respectively. Consequently, temporarily engaging in these skills while waiting for a paid job, creating jobs for others and suitable business for oneself follow as a result of seeking relevance once physiological needs are met. Youth unemployment seeks immediate solution for the individuals in those categories while contributing developmental quota to the economy is the least in this era as survival, gainful employment, and financial freedom are of utmost important.

Vocational skills youth can be involved in, in this era

Fashion designing tops the list in this category, followed by catering, event planning and management; followed by photography. It is obvious that these are set of skills that are complementary. Nigerians by nature are fashion conscious, party freaks and merry people. Every occasion demands the services of fashion designers, foods, drinks, event planners and photographers. These can be referred as “total package” for a typical occasion in the Nigerian society despite the pandemic. Hairdressing which follows has competing alternatives particularly in this era as social distancing is a recommendation for keeping safe in this pandemic. Artwork and design made the least. This finding is validated by the report of Oluase, Brijlal and Yan (2020), that entrepreneurship must be aligned with contextual realities to yield the desired outcome.

Entrepreneurship Skills Youth can be involved in, in this new-normal era.

All entrepreneurship skills in this category have one thing in common, and that is rendering services in exchange for money. These services are skills, abilities, capabilities, talents, and have identified needs in the society. Only, an entrepreneur identifies the needs and opportunities for sustainable business growth and embraces the risk therein. Therefore, entrepreneurship is not linked to acquiring skills alone but the ability to identify a need, creativity, ingenuity, risk taking, and oftentimes thinking outside the conventional ways of doing things to create comfort, convenience, and provide solutions that generate income. This result is in tandem with Simmons (2003), where it was revealed that entrepreneurs are those who discard conventional mindset.

Necessary Support to Encourage youth involvement in vocational and Entrepreneurship Skills

The security of lives and properties attract foreign investors who gainfully will employ the youth. This insecurity threats to youth necessitated the #EndSARS struggles recently in Nigeria. Stable and affordable electricity will resurrect a lot of businesses in Nigeria. It is the cheapest source of energy compared to generators that consume so much financial resources for fuel, and maintenance. These are extra burdens that have killed many businesses in Nigeria. Similarly, interest-free loans are also a positive push for investment. Tax waiver or reduction encourages investment and potentials to grow businesses. While government involvement in organizing seminars and workshops will sensitize, orientate and encourage youth into entrepreneurship. This result corroborates the rippling effect of government policies on entrepreneurship activities, according to Kreft & Sobel, (2005) and Oliyide, (2012). But practically, agro-allied businesses are exempted from paying tax in the first five years of operation (Ngerebo & Masa, 2012; Odusola, 2016).

Monitoring and Evaluation of Youth Entrepreneurship Ventures

Monitoring and evaluation of programmes; trade fairs exhibition; award giving; periodic town hall meetings and Government established organizations are progressive ways to measure the degree of success or failure of young entrepreneurs. According to Wholey, (2010) states that evaluation is used

in government to increase transparency, strengthen accountability and improve performance, whereas performance management systems, established outcomes, oriented goals and performance target, monitor progress, stimulate performance improvement and communicate result to higher policy level and the public.

Conclusion

Youth entrepreneurship is a viable option for combating unemployment in this new-normal era. This will equally make them profitably relevant both to themselves and their society. Some entrepreneurial skills have been identified for their engagement and also the possible ways of supporting, evaluating and monitoring youth entrepreneurship success.

Recommendations

- Government should be actively involved in the sensitization, orientation and provide enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship to thrive in Nigeria to combat unemployment in this era.
- Government should actively work on improving electricity supply in the country to forestall the mass exit of businesses to neighbouring countries.
- Government should regulate the involvement and activities of NGOs and private individuals to ensure effective training and mentoring of young entrepreneurs.
- Security of lives and properties must be a priority to forestall massive youth migration and avoid a repeat of #EndSARS protest.

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Analysis of Formal and Informal Sources of Entrepreneurial Financing on the Performance of MSMEs in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have been recognised as one of the drivers of economic growth in developed and developing economies. It contributes significantly to employment generation and Gross Domestic Products (GDP). However, in view of the current financial crisis experienced by many economies, due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, many economies have witnessed significant decline in finance flow to MSMEs, thus creating a funding gap for their operations. The study analysed the effect of formal source of finance (Bank Loan) and informal source of finance (Trade Credit) on the performance of MSMEs. The study's objectives are to examine the effect of Bank Loan (BL) on profitability of MSMEs and effect of Trade Credit (TC) on sales turnover. Survey research design was employed on registered MSMEs in Lagos State with a sample size of six hundred and sixty-five (665) determined using Cochran's formula from the population of registered MSMEs in Lagos State. Data were obtained through Primary sources with the use of structured questionnaire using simple random technique. Analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that TC had $\beta = 0.891$; $R^2 = 0.828$; t-value = 35.642; $p < 0.05$ while BL with $\beta = 0.775$; $R^2 = 0.638$; t-value = 33.894 and $p < 0.05$; respectively. This revealed that TC has stronger effect on MSMEs' performance than BL indicating that MSMEs make more profit through TC than BL. The study recommends that, financial policy that ensures availability and accessibility of loans to MSMEs through Deposit Money Banks should be developed as well as creating awareness for alternative micro credit schemes that could cushion the effect of Covid-19 on the performance of MSMEs.

Keywords: Bank loan, Finance, GDP, MSMEs, Profitability, Trade credit

Introduction

There has been a significant reduction in equity and debt finance flows to MSMEs as a result of the current financial crisis faced by many countries. (Bhaumik, Fraser & Wright, 2015). Consequently, there are concerns that these financing gaps may be hindering enterprise performance as a result of an on-going economic recovery especially due to outbreak of Covid-19 recently experienced globally. It has been identified in literatures that one of the problems associated with the entrepreneurial decision-making strategy on the adequate choice of external source finance to enhance business performance is to identify the right financial sources either formal or informal (Bhaumik, Fraser & Wright, 2015; Chemmanur & Fulghieri, 2010). In addition, there has been extant literature on entrepreneurial finance, its methodology and approach to business enterprise which could enhance business performance, however, there is a gap that less attention has been given to various techniques of financing business enterprise and financial options that are available for the entrepreneurs to adequately finance their business operations to achieve optimum performance (Maleki, 2015).

In Nigeria, MSMEs constitute 90% of businesses, 84% employment and contribute 48% of the national Gross Domestic Products (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) & Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), 2019; Olukanni, 2020). MSMEs have also been described as the engine room for economic transformation and industrialization (SMEDAN, 2019). According to Price Water Coopers (2020), contributes 96% of the total businesses in Nigeria; 50% to GDP; 76.5% employment, 32.1% financing gap for MSMEs.

Despite the contributions of MSMEs to Nigeria economy, challenges such as inadequate working capital, intense competition from large enterprises, difficulties in accessing raw materials, low capacity utilization, inadequate managerial skills, low literacy level of the business owners, unconducive business environment, political instability among others hinder the development and performance of MSMEs (Olukanni, 2020; SMEDAN, 2019; Ayedun & Asikhia, 2018). Most of these businesses find it difficult to access the funds as a result of insufficient collateral and bureaucratic processes when applying for loans. (Olukanni, 2020; Ayedun, 2019). Notwithstanding all these challenges which are enormous before the outbreak of the current pandemic that affected the performance of MSMEs, the financing of businesses becomes more worrisome. The lockdown as result of Covid-19 became “new normal” which eventually hinder most of these MSMEs to experience business failure as a result of inability to access required finance for the business, unable to access needed raw materials for production which eventually make some of them to shut down operations, thus affecting their performance.

One of the major sources of financing for small business enterprises is Trade credit (Ayedun & Ashikia, 2018). The problem of inconsistent track record of profitability by small businesses and inadequate assets that can be used as security have been addressed by past researchers (Bitler *et. al.*, 2001; Laitinen, 2017; Odebunmi, Afolabi, Agboola & Adekunle, 2017; Osano & Languitone, 2016). Trade credit as a strategy of increasing sales turnover by many suppliers have discovered that smaller enterprises that are usually cash constrained do not have adequate capital to make payment on purchase and are essential to collect their goods. (Coleman, 2005). Consequently, the flow of goods from the supplier is unpredictable and this affects the sales turnover of the entrepreneur. The cost of transaction of trade credit which is relatively high (supply side) that is available to enterprises negatively affects the volume of stocks to be released to the entrepreneur as well as the sales turnover.

This is as a result of cost associated with ascertaining the credit worthiness of less established business enterprise as well as information asymmetry (Chemmanur & Fulghieri, 2010; Coleman, 2005; Cowton & San-Jose, 2016; Fatoki & Odeyemi, 2010). The challenge of short-term tenor associated with trade credit is also a hindrance to effective performance of MSMEs. The tenure of trade credit availed to business enterprises ranges between 1-3 months. Wilson and Summers (2002) posit that trade credit is considered to be a costly financing source if payments were not made within the given credit window of “2/10 net 30”. It implies that 2% discount payment within 10- day discount period, the net period ends on 30 days. The gap identified in the literature as regards trade credit is that its effect on sales turnover was only considered and addressed from the supply side. However, the effect of trade credit on sales turnover on the demand side (entrepreneur) has not been properly addressed, thus necessitating the research question that how does trade credit influence the sales turnover of MSMEs in achieving enterprise performance? Is it causing a decrease, increase or no effect on the sales turnover of the business enterprise?

The financing gap being experienced by MSMEs to boost their performance has been a challenge, also, access to finance by entrepreneurs has become a serious issue as they have to rely on Deposit Money Banks (DMB) and other financial institutions for investment financing. This constraint is more pronounced among the very small enterprises, with 59% of small enterprises reporting difficulties in accessing finance. About 35% of medium firms and 11% of the large enterprises are facing difficulties

with access to credit (CBN, 2014). As a result of high rate of default, liquidity crunch and absence of collateral by MSMEs, Deposit Money Banks do not want to lend to MSMEs unlike other sectors (Mordi, Anyanwu, Adebuseyi, Odey & Amoo, 2014). Records have shown that the DMBs prefer to lend to other sector of the economy than MSMEs sector and this usually has negative effect on enterprise performance. The statistics from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) report (2017) show that Deposit Money Banks' (DMBs) loans and advances to MSMEs' sector have been on the decline over the years in Nigeria. The issues of high interest rate on commercial banks' loan, liquidity, information asymmetry, bureaucratic credit process have negative effect in accessing bank loans to support their performance and profitability (Akinola, 2013).

The study sought to analyse the effect of formal sources of finance (Bank Loan) and informal source of finance (Trade Credit) on the performance of MSMEs. The study's objectives were to; examine effect of Bank Loan (BL) on profitability of MSMEs and effect of Trade Credit (TC) on sales turnover.

Hypotheses

Cole (2010); Cunat and Garcia- Appendini (2012) affirmed the significant relationship between trade credit and firm's liquidity. Supporting this view, Beck, Pamuk, Uras and Ramrattan (2015); Coleman (2005); Fatoki and Odeyemi (2014), established a positive relationship between managerial competencies, business size, availability of business plan and previous relationship on access to trade credit by MSMEs. The firm's owner characteristics by Coleman (2005); working capital, demand cost and inventory decision by Luo and Shang (2014); Socio-economic characteristics have a positive relationship on sales. In addition, a positive relationship has been established between trade credit and credit worthiness of an entrepreneur for bank loans (Burkart, Ellingsen & Giannetti, 2011; Garcia- Appendini & Montoriol-Garriga, 2013; Fabbri, Maria & Menichini, 2010; Saito & Bandeira, 2010; Yano, Shiraishi & Hu, 2013). A positive effect of trade credit on private firms' performance have been established by Sun and Sun (2011) measured by return on asset. On the other hand. Collombatto, Melenik and Monticone (2011) established a negative relationship between trade credit and perceived risk. Also, a negative relationship has been established between trade credit and business policies and regulations (Breza & Liberman, 2013). As a result of these conflicting findings from various studies, it is thus hypothesised that:

Hypothesis One: *Trade credit does not have effect on sales turnover of MSMEs.*

Bank loans have been found to be consistently associated with positive long-term outcomes (Shaffer & Sokolyk, 2013), bank size and credit flow to business of different categories (Berger, Frame & Miller, 2005; Morris, Basat, Das, Ramachandran & Koshy, 2001; Sufians & Habibullah, 2010), bank competition and credit availability for MSMEs (Banerjee, Cole & Duflo, 2013; Carbo-Valverde, Rodriguez-Fernandez & Udell, 2009; Thampy, 2010), bank loans, age and size of the business (Olotula & Obamuyi, 2008; Venkatesan & Nagarajan, 2012). Also, informal sources of financing such as credit cards and trade credit from banks have been found to be positively affect the working capital of MSMEs (He & Baker, 2007). Corroborating this position, Abiodun, Peter and Utomi (2015) showed that there exists a positive relationship between banks' investments and financing working capital policies and profitability of MSMEs. However, Durkin, McGowan and Babb (2013) identified that the relationship between small businesses and their banks appears to be much damaged resulting in low profitability with the use of bank loans (Bhattacharya, Faiz & Zohir, 2000). Supporting this position, Shahchera and Taaheri (2015) found a negative and significant coefficient of loans to MSMEs on banks' profitability. The efficient use of bank loans as a measure of profitability of MSMEs has not been properly investigated. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis Two: *Bank loans do not have significant effect on the profitability of MSMEs.*

Review of Literature

Alhabeeb(2015) defines Entrepreneurial finance as the application of fundamental financial principles and theories in the domain of businesses. The author further stated that Entrepreneurial finance involves adopting those principles and theories for planning, starting up, operating, growing and sustaining, valuing and harvesting businesses. The need to raise capital to actualise business objectives have been realized by many business owners (Maleki, 2015). Thus, investors, banks, business angel, a venture capital fund trade credit and other sources of financing must be sought for by business owners. (Chen, 2010; Moghadam, Salamzadeh & Yousefiyar, 2014).

The underpinning theory of this study is Resource-Based-View (RBV). The proponents of RBV are Wernerfelt (1984); Hamel and Prahalad (1989); Barney (1991) in his work on firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. According to the theory, an organisation must have distinctive, and non-substitutable resources to have a sustainable competitive advantage, and everything internal to the organisation must be included in this resources that enables them to achieve greater organisational performance. Asikihia (2016) notes that RBV is one of the strongest theoretical foundations used to explain MSMEs performance. Supporting this position, Jurevicius (2013) also states that the RBV is a model that sees resources as key to superior firm performance. The author further stated if an organisation shows distinctive and non-substitutable attributes, it enables the organisations to achieve sustainable comparative advantage.

Empirical evidences by BurkDepartment of Financeart, Ellingsen and Giannetti (2011); Garcia-Appendini and Montoriol-Garriga (2013); Fabbri, Maria and Menichini (2010); Saito and Bandeira (2010); Yano, Shiraishi and Hu (2013), trade credit, to ascertain credit worthiness of businesses revealed that, there is a positive significant effect on the availability of trade credit is used by banks as a certification of the creditworthiness of a firm (Garcia-Appendini & Montoriol-Garriga, 2013), the use of trade credit is related to the nature of the transacted goods (Burkart, Ellingsen & Giannetti, 2011). Fabbri, Maria and Menichini (2010) found that firms may be using trade credit as a way to foster sales and also find some evidence of trade credit given and trade credit taken being strongly correlated. Supporting this view, Yano, Shiraishi and Hu (2013), in their studies, found that trade credit has a positive effect on entrepreneurial investment, while development of bank finance has low impact on promotion of private investment. Saito and Bandeira (2010), also found that trade credit can be used to denote the quality of a firm and a means of facilitating accessibility to bank loans as trade credit seems to be a substitute for bank loans. This corroborate the findings of Alphonse, Ducret and Severin (2006) who established that registered organisations use bank loans and trade credit as two major formal sources of financing.

Furthermore, Fraser, Bhaumik and Wright (2015); Kerr and Nanda (2009); Tang (2014); Wilson (2014) carried out a study on the use of bank loans and trade credit in enhancing the profitability. A positive significant effect was established that MSMEs make use of make use of trade credit as a substitute for bank loans. Subsequently, Kerr and Nanda (2009), found that enterprise plays a linking role in a country's financial market performance to its economic growth.

Similarly, empirical evidences showed that finance contributes to a reasonable extent to the success of MSMEs. (Asikihia, 2010; Mbaegbu & Gbandi, 2014; Ogujiuba *et al.*, 2004). In Nigeria, majority of MSMEs do not have sufficient capital to sustain their businesses due to their inability to access funds and may lead to the death of businesses. Mbaegbu and Gbandi (2014), in their correlational study on commercial bank's credit to MSMEs and sustainable development in Nigeria, found a positive correlation the percentage of commercial banks' credits and the GDP rate over a period of two decades

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted in analysis the effect of formal source of finance (Bank Loan) and informal source of finance (Trade Credit) on the performance of MSMEs. Primary data were collected from registered MSMEs in Lagos State with a sample size of six hundred and sixty-five (665) determined using Cochran's formula from the population of 3,224,324 registered MSMEs in Lagos as at 2017 (SMEDAN Report 2019). Administration of structured questionnaire on the respondents using simple random technique. Data were analysed using descriptive (mean, frequencies) and inferential Partial Least Square (PLS-2.0 M3) statistics.

Results of Findings

From the data collected for this study, responses on awareness of trade credit as informal finance source for MSMEs in Lagos Nigeria showed that 90.5% were aware of trade credit which suggested that the MSMEs owners were not ignorant of existence of TC. However, few of the respondents (9.5%) disagreed with the use of TC.

Responses from the respondents on issue of getting TC from suppliers as external financing source for their businesses showed that an average of 71% of the MSMEs accessed trade credit from suppliers, while 29% claimed that they have not been using TC to boost their sales turnover. This established that most of the MSMEs in Lagos State Nigeria are getting financial support in form of trade credit from the manufacturers or the suppliers in enhancing business performance. In Nigeria, it was found that the average credit window of TC offered by suppliers is 30-90days. Majority of the respondents agreed that TC has improved their businesses greatly. This corroborated the result of Yano and Shiraishi (2012) that MSMEs have the opportunity to thrive as a result of access to TC. The findings also showed that increase in volume of sales turnover as a result of trade credit had availed them the opportunity to access bank loans because of improved transactions with the banks and inventory turnover.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of the effect of TC on SL

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
TC	665	1.00	6.00	4.2788	1.17170
ST	665	1.00	6.00	4.0255	1.20342

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2020)

The result of the descriptive analysis in this study revealed that variable trade credit had mean of 4.279; SD of 1.172; sales turnover had mean of 4.0255; SD of 1.20342. In line with the rating scale, the result indicated that the MSMEs partially agreed with the effect of trade credit on sales turnover, revealing that it partially has high influence on sales turnover.

On the effect of bank loans on the profitability of MSMEs, majority (69.8%) of the respondents have business relationship with Deposit Money Banks, while 30.2% did not have relationship with banks which may be attributed to size of the business, low literacy level and lack of collateral. The results further revealed that 53.9% of them have accessed loans from banks at one time or the other. On the contrary, 46.1% stated that they have not accessed loans from banks as a result of interest rates on bank loans which are not moderate and affordable. Furthermore, the study found that bank loan is a good alternative formal source of finance for MSMEs as a result of strong capital base of the DMB. Although, the study affirmed that it is not cheaper to finance MSMEs through bank loans with 53.1% of the respondents supporting this view, while 46.9% of them considered it to be a cheaper financing source.

This could be attributed to higher interest rates and other administrative costs attached to it. Information gathered from this study revealed that 54.5% of the MSMEs agreed that financial support

from banks had improved their profitability. On the contrary, 45.5% of the respondents claimed that financial support from banks has no effect on profitability of the business. The findings showed that bank loan (BL) on profitability (PR) showed a moderate effect of loans on profitability of MSMEs. Majority of entrepreneurs have business relationships with the banks and have accessed loans from them to improve business performance. Although, it was generally agreed that interest on loans is relatively high and loan processes are cumbersome. As a result of high cost of funds attached to bank loans and other conditions, the profitability level of MSMEs is being affected.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of effect of BL on PR

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev.
BL	665	1.00	6.00	3.4835	1.46000
PR	665	1.00	6.00	3.6385	1.33520

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2020)

Findings on the effect of bank loans on profitability of MSMEs in Nigeria showed that bank loan had a mean value of 3.4835; SD of 1.4600 while profitability had a mean value of 3.6385 and SD of 1.33520 (see Table 2). This showed that there is a moderate effect of bank loans on profitability of MSMEs. The result for the test of hypotheses using Partial Least Square (M3) is represented below:

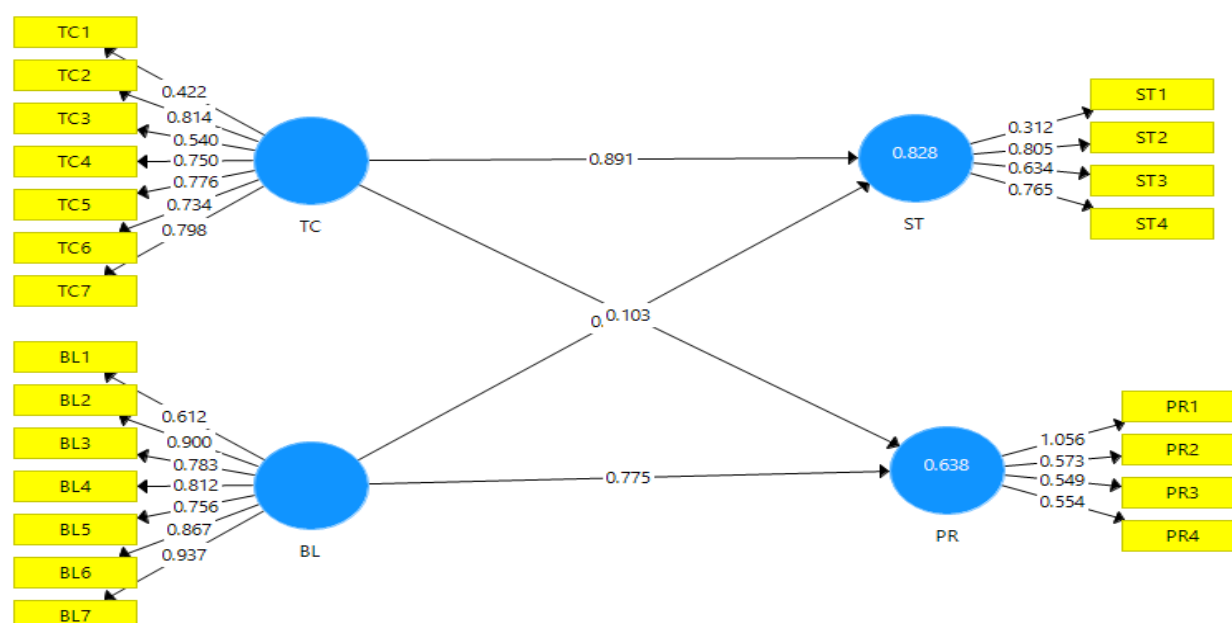


Figure 1: PLS M3, 2020

Source: Survey Research, 2020

In figure 1, the results revealed that the effect of Trade Credit (TC) on independent variable, Sales Turnover (ST) demonstrated an evidence of significant effect with ($\beta = 0.891$; $R^2 = 0.828$; $t\text{-value} = 35.642$; $p < 0.05$). The p-value signifies that the model using the predictor did a good job of predicting the outcome of the variables (see Table 3). It also showed a significant effect of TC on ST. Since the t-value was greater than or equal to 1.96 at 5% significant level as the decision rule for this study with their p-values ($P < 0.05$), therefore, hypothesis H_{01} is rejected. The result indicated that the higher the volume of trade credit, the higher the sales turnover.

Table 3: Results of hypothesis i - effect of trade credit on sales turnover

Hypothesis	Beta	Std. Error	R ²	T-Statistics	P-Value	Decision
TC -> ST	0.891	0.021	0.82848	35.642	0.000	Supported

Source: Researchers' Field Survey Results, (2020)

Note: * P<0.05, Indicates the item is significant at 5% significant level

Table 4: Results of hypothesis II

Hypothesis	Beta	Std. Error	R ²	T-Statistics	P-Value	Decision
BL -> PR	0.775	0.025	0.63843	32.894	0.000	Supported

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2020)

Note: * P<0.05, Indicates the item is significant at 5% significant level.

Table 4 displays the result of the test of hypothesis two. The effect of Bank Loan (BL) on Profitability (PR) revealed a positive significant effect among the variables with ($\beta = 0.775$; $R^2 = 0.638$; $t = 32.894$; $p < 0.05$). The result revealed that 63.8% of the variation in Enterprise Performance (EP) of MSMEs is explained by the variation in bank loan. Therefore, 36.2% of variation in enterprise performance is described by other factors not in the model. It was obvious that the above hypothesis met the decision criteria earlier set for this study and thus, showing evidence of significant positive effect since $p < 0.05$ which signifies that the model using bank loan did a good job of predicting the outcome of the variables.

Since the t-value of 32.894 was greater than 1.96 at 5% significant level as the decision rule for this study with their p-values ($P < 0.05$), thus, hypothesis H_{02} is rejected that, bank loan does not have significant effect profitability of MSMEs. The result indicated that the greater the volume of loans available to MSMEs, the higher the profitability of the business enterprise.

Discussion

Trade credit could be regarded as a reliable informal source of enterprise finance that could be harnessed by MSMEs in Nigeria. The results emphasized the position of Abdulaziz and Worthington (2013); Fatoki and Odeyemi (2010) that TC is a good alternative source of finance for enterprises as a result of agreement for a delay in payment for goods and services. In addition, the results corroborated the findings of Nguyen (2011) who found provision of TC has a significant influence on growth of sales turnover, and business enterprises that benefit more from trade credit realise higher growth rate and sales turnover. The results further emphasized the position of Krugon, Nagaraju and Narayanan (2014) who found that it has become customary for manufacturers to provide TC to retailers as part of enhancing the sales turnover. With the relatively strong contribution of trade credit to sales turnover.

However, there is need for the MSMEs to consider negotiation for favourable terms of payment with their suppliers as emphasised by Lamptey, Frimpong and Morrison (2017). Suppliers of trade credit are somehow conscious about the cost of extending trade credit to MSMEs, and as a result, they tend to spread the cost on the terms of payment in order not to run at a loss. It is thus, expedient for the MSMEs to properly understand the terms and conditions associated with TC. This corroborated the findings of Cunat and Garcia-Appendini (2012) who found suppliers offer TC that allows buyers to delay payment for a specific period of time as a means of financing their businesses. The findings also corroborated the findings of Coleman (2005) that in the absence of collateral by small businesses and inconsistent credit history, sales turnover is These another avenue of accessing financial support from the bank. findings suggest that, considering the economic and financial situation of many developing economies for Post-Covid- 19, the MSMEs can explore use of TC for enhanced performance.

This study further revealed that banks loans contribute significantly to the performance of MSMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. This corroborated the empirical work of Olotula and Obamuyi (2008); Venkatesan and

Nagarajan (2012). They also found that for high profitability, increase in the volume of loans availed MSMEs. In addition, it emphasised the work of Dana, Mertens and Mensah (2017) in their study of MSMEs financing and bank's profitability and found that bank loans have positive significant contribution to MSMEs profitability. This position was further emphasised by Mbaegbu and Gbandi (2014) who in their correlational study on bank's loan to MSMEs and sustainable development, established a positive linear relationship between percentage of commercial bank's loan and GDP rate over a period of two decades which indicated that as the percentage of credits to MSMEs increased, the GDP rate also increased.

The empirical results further emphasised the findings of Bruton, Khavul and Chavez (2011); De Castro, Khavul and Bruton (2014); Fatoki and Odeyemi (2010) who found that existing businesses and start-ups entrepreneurs try to access loans from banks as a result of information asymmetry, higher interest rates, inadequate collaterals and cumbersome credit policies. As a result of the above position, it was established that MSMEs are not finding it easy to get financial supports from banks in order to enhance their performances.

In addition, bureaucratic process of accessing loans from banks could be attributed to the organisational structure and the quality of manpower put in place by most deposit money banks, which serves as a control measures to guide against assets loss or high rate of default. This also emphasised the work of Khartik and Varghesa (2011) who observed that profitability level of a business enterprise depends on utilisation of manpower resources. Other factor that could be responsible for the variation in the level of performance of MSMEs using bank loans is the low level of profitability by banks when dealing with MSMEs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As emanated from this study, it could be recommended that, financial policy that ensures availability and accessibility of loans to MSMEs through Deposit Money Banks at acceptable terms and conditions should be developed by Nigerian Government that could cushion the effect of Covid-19 on the performance of MSMEs. Since many of the MSMEs made use of trade credits than bank loans, the Government of Nigeria should create more awareness about the releases of some intervention funds for MSMEs through CBN and Bank of the Industry (BOI) For example, MSMEs survival funds, MSMEs intervention funds, Trader's Money, fashion funds for operators in the fashion industry, start-up funds for National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) through BOI among others. Furthermore, the formal financial sector needs to further sensitise the operators in the MSMEs sector on the need for them to establish a financial relationship with Nigerian Banks. Although, majority (69.8%) of the MSMEs claimed to have relationship with any of the Nigerian banks, there is a need to improve on this result because evidences of their business activities with banks in terms of their sales turnover from statements of accounts are also important requirement for accessing funds from the government. It is also a basis for establishing credit worthiness of an entrepreneur for a trade credit from their suppliers. Further studies should focus on other sources of financing such as cooperative, micro-credit agency, venture capital, private equity, crowdfunding, business angel among others to support MSMEs' financing in Nigeria as Post Covid-19 measures.

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Fostering Rural Entrepreneurship: A Factor Analysis of Socio-Entrepreneurship Variables among Rural Youths in North-Central Nigeria

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Abstract

The key impediments to youth entrepreneurship in rural and remote places appear to be viewed differently by young entrepreneurs and professionals. Promoting entrepreneurship among rural youths would result in the creation of agricultural businesses, which would help to solve the country's rising youth unemployment rate. As a result, this study was aimed at investigating factors influencing entrepreneurial behaviour among rural youth in Nigeria's north-central region. A multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select 480 rural youth entrepreneurs in the study area. Data were sourced through structured questionnaire from respondents and the collected data were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean, standard deviation and diversity and entrepreneurial behaviour indexes and factor analysis. The results show that almost half of rural youths (46.6%) engaged in many entrepreneurial (on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm) enterprises, with 12.9 and 26.5% having very high and high diversification indexes, respectively. The majority of respondents (44.5%) exhibited a high level of entrepreneurial behaviour, according to the findings. Factor analysis revealed that socioeconomic, production, psychological, and institutional factors accounted for entrepreneurial behaviour among rural youths, with Eigen values of 3.039, 2.647, 1.818, and 1.026, respectively. Distance to market, access to financial institutions, and extension services (institutional variables) were all key factors in rural youth entrepreneurial behaviour, with coefficients of 0.553, 0.521, and 0.517, respectively. Identified factors must be evaluated and enhanced in order to improve the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youths. Furthermore, strategies that will improve rural youth entrepreneurs' access to credit should be encouraged, and such strategies should look into ways to enable young entrepreneurs to access credit even if they do not have prime assets that are currently accepted as collateral by financial institutions.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial behaviour, index, rural youths, factor analysis

Introduction

In rural areas, agriculture and entrepreneurship are effective instruments for decreasing poverty, particularly among agriculturally educated farming households (Osikabor et al., 2011). Entrepreneurship is widely regarded as good to economic growth and development. Over the last three decades, entrepreneurship has made a remarkable comeback in nations that have significantly reduced poverty (Naude, 2013). Low income, low productivity, high unemployment, high population rate, weak technical growth, low infrastructures, high illiteracy rate, malnutrition, and other factors make rural entrepreneurship unique. Entrepreneurship is a critical component of every country's development. Entrepreneurs in rural areas are accountable for taking calculated risks that lead to higher levels of economic growth. They are the veritable backbone of the world's and modern concepts' development.

The majority of evidence-based entrepreneurship studies in Africa have recently concentrated on self-employment in urban settings. The lack of a more solid empirical understanding of rural entrepreneurship in Africa may be a contributing factor in rural development policies' limited success, as well as the fact that rural entrepreneurship is not included in most poverty alleviation or entrepreneurship promotion strategies in Africa (Fox and Sohnesen, 2013). However, encouraging entrepreneurship in the smallholder agriculture sector allows for the fulfillment of community and national economic goals (Bruton, Ketchen, and Ireland, 2013; Díaz-Pichardo *et al.*, 2012; Sinyolo and Mudhara, 2018).

Promoting entrepreneurship among rural youths would result in the creation of farm businesses and farm diversification, which would help to alleviate the country's rising youth unemployment rate. Entrepreneurship allows for the establishment of more work opportunities, which will help to meet the growing demands of young people. It also provides youth with the necessary self-confidence to deal with peer pressure as well as the necessary revenue to support their family. Because there are few opportunities for everyone who needs a job, promoting entrepreneurship is critical. Nonetheless, all young people must learn to cope with societal pressures, develop and recognize opportunities for themselves, and be self-assured and self-reliant. However, there are concerns that progress in promoting rural entrepreneurship will be hampered by a lack of or insufficient awareness of the concept and role of rural entrepreneurship in the rural sector. Adequate awareness of rural entrepreneurship (on the part of youths) and its potential in rural development is required for the establishment of appropriate promotional policies. Government policies and programs, according to Tende (2014), encourage entrepreneurship and new venture investment. However, he discovered that Nigeria's government credit policies and programs have no discernible impact on the country's entrepreneurial development.

Youth engagement and interest in agriculture has been low in Sub-Saharan Africa in recent years, and possible entry into agriculture has come with a slew of hurdles (FAO, 2014). Even eager young people encounter obstacles to entering agriculture, such as a lack of expertise, information, and education, as well as limited access to land, financial services, green jobs, markets, and participation in policy discussions (FAO, 2014). Entrepreneurship education has emerged as a feasible platform for reengaging rural youth in agriculture and slowing rural exodus. Youth unemployment is significant in rural Nigeria due to a lack of opportunity, as well as physical and psychological issues brought on by poverty. Some young people react to these difficulties by participating in criminal or aggressive behaviour, while others become despondent or depressed. Youth participation in the development process has a variety of economic benefits that have a multiplier effect on the national economy. Because youths account for roughly 70% of Nigeria's population, the country cannot progress if they are primarily idle and unproductive. This is the foundation for their successful entrepreneurial endeavours (Lemo, 2013). These issues of unemployment can be addressed by empowering youths through agricultural development programs that provide them with chances for self-employment in the agricultural sector (Agu, 2013). It is hoped that encouraging agricultural entrepreneurship will make farming a more appealing and successful endeavour for young people, making agriculture a valuable tool for lowering rural unemployment and managing rural–urban migration.

Meanwhile, it is now commonly understood that instilling entrepreneurial skills in rural farmers leads to increased production, farm productivity, farm diversity, innovation, and the growth of farmers into self-sustaining persons. Factors such as economic liberalization have created the ideal environment for agricultural entrepreneurs to thrive. Studies on young farmers and farm production have been conducted over the years. However, there is relatively little effort in the research area in the domain of agricultural entrepreneurship. As a result, the objective of this study was to determine the pattern and

drivers of entrepreneurial activity among rural youths in Nigeria's north-central region. The specific objectives were to:

- i. examine various entrepreneurial activities engaged in by rural youth;
- ii. determine the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youth; and
- iii. investigate the variables of rural youth associated with their entrepreneurial behaviour in the study area.

Methodology

This study was carried out in Nigeria's north-central area. The region is made up of six states: Benue, Kwara, Niger, Plateau, Nassarawa, Kogi, and Abuja, the federal capital territory, and is geographically located in the country's middle belt, running from west to east around the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers. It is located between 30 and 14 0E and 70 and 100N latitude. It is Nigeria's food basket, covering around 730,000 km² or about 78 percent of the country's total land mass. The region has a diverse range of natural terrain characteristics and some of Nigeria's most spectacular scenery. The climate of the region is influenced in part by climates in Nigeria's northern and southern regions, while the main vegetation is the Guinea Savannah Zone, which covers 90% of the land mass. Most of north central Nigeria is affected by a tropical savannah climate with rainy and dry seasons. As one moves north, the length of the rainy season decreases. The temperature in the area is normally high. This is due to the fact that the location is located in the tropics, where the sun's apparent movement is restricted.



Fig. 1: Map of Nigeria showing North-central region

Source: Authors' compilation (2019)

Sampling procedure and sample:

The respondents for this study were selected using a multi-stage random sampling process. Stage one involves a random sampling of 50 percent of the states in the region, with Kogi, Kwara, and Benue among the states selected. Stage two: two agricultural zones were selected at random from each of the three states, totalling six agricultural zones. At the third stage, two local government areas (LGAs) were selected at random from each of the six agricultural zones, for a total of 12 LGAs. Stage four involved selecting two (2) rural villages at random from each of the 12 LGAs studied, totalling 24 rural farming communities for the study. Finally, 20 rural youths (aged 18-35 years) were selected at random from each of the selected farming communities, for a total of 480 respondents. The respondents' socioeconomic characteristics, various entrepreneurial activities they engaged in, and

variables related with their entrepreneurial behaviour were all elicited using a structured questionnaire. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, and diversity and entrepreneurial behaviour indices, as well as factor analysis, were used to analysed the data.

Measurement of variables

Both independent and dependent variables were measured for the study. The farm production was thus measured in yield/ha. The independent (socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents) were measured as follows (See Table 1):

Table 1: Description of the variables used in the estimation

Variables	Measurement of variables	Category	Expected sign
Age of the respondent	Actual age of household head in years	Continuous	+/-
Sex	1 if male, 0 otherwise	Dummy	+
Marital status	1 if married, 0 otherwise	Dummy	+
Level of education	Years of schooling	Continuous	+
Household size	Number of people within the household	Continuous	+
Farming experience	Number of years of farming	Continuous	+
Farm size	Total size of land under cultivation (ha)	Continuous	+
Income	Average annual net farm income	Continuous	+
Membership of association	1 if belong, 0 otherwise	Dummy	+
Access to extension	1 if access, 0 otherwise	Dummy	+
Access to land	Have access=1 and 0=otherwise	Dummy	+
Number of years live in community	Actual years of resident in community	Continuous	+/-
Access to varietal information	Have access=1 and 0=otherwise	Dummy	+

Source: Author's elaboration from field survey (2019)

The Simpson's Diversity Index was used to determine the range of entrepreneurial activities pursued by rural teenagers in the study area. The Diversity Index is calculated as follows:

$$DI = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^s \left(\frac{n_i}{N} \right)^2 \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where $N = \sum n_i$ = Total population of all individuals across all entrepreneurial activities

s = Number of entrepreneurial activities engaged into by rural youth

n_i = (for $i=1$ to s) is the number of individuals in the i th entrepreneurial activity

Furthermore, adequate fractile categorization from an assumed probability distribution is required for a meaningful characterisation of the varied levels of entrepreneurial diversity among the respondents. Iyengar and Sudarshan used the Beta distribution, which takes values in the interval (0, 1), as a probability distribution that is acceptable for this study (1982). This distribution is given by

$$f(z) = \frac{z^{a-1}(1-z)^{b-1}}{\beta(a,b)}, 0 < z < 1 \text{ and } a, b > 0 \dots (2)$$

Where $\beta(a,b)$ is the beta function defined by

$$\beta(a,b) = \int_0^1 x^{a-1}(1-x)^{b-1} \dots \dots \dots (3)$$

The Beta distribution is skewed. Assuming $(0, z_1)$, (z_1, z_2) , (z_2, z_3) , (z_3, z_4) and $(z_4, 1)$ be the linear intervals such that each interval the assume probability weight of 20 percent. Therefore, the fractile intervals can be used to categorize the various level of entrepreneurial diversity. Very low (if $0 < \bar{y}_i < z_1$), Low (if $z_1 < \bar{y}_i < z_2$), Medium (if $z_2 < \bar{y}_i < z_3$), High (if $z_3 < \bar{y}_i < z_4$), and Very high (if $z_4 < \bar{y}_i < 1$).

Entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youths was operationally measured using entrepreneurial behaviour index (EBI) as cumulative outcome of nine components namely, risk orientation, innovativeness, achievement motivation, decision making ability, coordinating ability, planning ability, information seeking behaviour, cosmopoliteness and self-confidence. The total obtained score was then converted into the entrepreneurial behaviour index. Each component of entrepreneurship is based on some related statements, which are measured on a five-point scale of strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree with a corresponding rating scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 point, respectively. The minimum and maximum score ranged between 1 and 225 respectively. For scores obtained under each sub scale for each component, the respondents were later grouped into three categories ranging from low to high and poor to good by using a mean of 3.00 as benchmark. Thus, entrepreneurial behaviour index (EBI) is calculated from the formula:

$$EBI = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n SEV_i}{\sum_{i=1}^n MSEV_i} \times 100 \dots \dots \dots (4)$$

Where SEV = Score on entrepreneurial variables

$MSEV$ = Maximum score on entrepreneurial variables.

$i = 1 - n$ number of variables included in entrepreneurship.

Based on this index, the respondents were later classified in to four categories as given below Very low (0 – 24), Low (25 – 49), High (50 – 74) and Very High (75 – 100). Here, the respondents score was multiplied by 100 to give the entrepreneurial behaviour index. And 100 was then divided by 4 to give 25. This 25 was considered as fractile or index interval and used for classification.

Estimation strategy

Factor analysis is a technique for discovering hidden components or factors. Factor analysis, according to Chua (2009), is a process that researchers use to organize, identify, and eliminate large items from a questionnaire to specific constructs under one dependent variable in a study. It's typically used to condense a large number of variables into a smaller number in order to save time and make interpretations easier. There must be univariate and multivariate normality in the data to do a factor analysis (Child, 2006). It's also critical that there are no univariate or multivariate outliers (Field, 2009). When computing correlations, a determining factor is also predicated on the assumption that the factors and variables have a linear relationship. At least three variables are required for something to be designated as a factor, though this varies depending on the study design (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Rotated factors with two or fewer variables should be read with caution, as a general rule. Only when the variables are substantially correlated with each other ($r > 0.70$) but relatively uncorrelated with other variables is a factor with two variables considered credible. At least 300 people should be in the sample, and each of the variables subjected to factor analysis should have at least 5 to 10 observations (Comrey & Lee, 1992). Several factors were obliquely rotated for this study to verify that all variables were assigned to a single factor and none were assigned to two or more factors.

Because unrotated factors are unclear, they are rotated for better understanding. Many extraction approaches are available, including Principal Axis Factor and Maximum Likelihood. The criteria used to evaluate the number and significance of factors are enormous, and factor analysis is mathematically

difficult. Orthogonal rotation and oblique rotation are the two types of rotation procedures. Uncorrelated factors are involved in orthogonal rotation (e.g., Varimax and Quartimax), whereas correlated factors are involved in oblique rotation (e.g., Direct Oblimin and Promax). Rotated factor loadings, rotated eigen values, and the scree test are used to interpret factor analysis. In practice, researchers frequently employ multiple extraction and rotation techniques, relying on pragmatic rather than theoretical reasons. For all of the available variables observed, the data were measured at the interval level of a 5-point Likert-type scale. According to Johnson and Wichern (2002), the factor analysis model is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} X_1 - \mu_1 &= \ell_{11} F_1 + \ell_{12} F_2 + \dots + \ell_{1m} F_m + \varepsilon_1 \\ X_2 - \mu_2 &= \ell_{21} F_1 + \ell_{22} F_2 + \dots + \ell_{2m} F_m + \varepsilon_2 \\ &\vdots \\ X_p - \mu_p &= \ell_{p1} F_1 + \ell_{p2} F_2 + \dots + \ell_{pm} F_m + \varepsilon_p \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

Johnson and Wichern in (2002) stated the orthogonal factor model with m common factors as follows:

$$X = \mu + L F + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (6)$$

$(pX_1) \quad (pX_1) \quad \quad (pX_m) \quad (pmX_m) \quad \quad (pX_1)$

Where: μ_i = mean of variable i

ε_i = i th specific factor

F_j = j th common factor

ℓ_{ij} = loading of the i th variable on the j th factor

Johnson and Wichern in (2002) also estimated the communalities as

$$\tilde{h}_i^2 = \tilde{\ell}_{i1}^2 + \tilde{\ell}_{i2}^2 + \dots + \tilde{\ell}_{im}^2 \dots \dots \dots (7)$$

The principal component factor analysis of the sample covariance matrix S is specified in terms of its eigen value-eigenvector pairs $(\hat{\lambda}_1, \hat{e}_1), (\hat{\lambda}_2, \hat{e}_2), \dots, (\hat{\lambda}_p, \hat{e}_p)$, where $(\hat{\lambda}_1 \geq \hat{\lambda}_2 \geq \dots \geq \hat{\lambda}_p)$. Let $m < p$ be the number of common factors. Then the matrix of estimated factor loadings $\{\tilde{\ell}_{ij}\}$ is given by

$$L = \left[\sqrt{\hat{\lambda}_1} \hat{e}_1 : \sqrt{\hat{\lambda}_2} \hat{e}_2 : \dots : \sqrt{\hat{\lambda}_m} \hat{e}_m \right] \dots \dots \dots (8)$$

And finally, Johnson and Wichern (2002) stated that the estimated specific variances are provided by the diagonal elements of the matrix $S - \tilde{L}\tilde{L}'$, so

$$\tilde{\psi} = \begin{bmatrix} \tilde{\psi}_1 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & \tilde{\psi}_1 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & \tilde{\psi}_p \end{bmatrix} \text{ with } \tilde{\psi}_1 = S_{ij} - \sum_{j=1}^m \tilde{\ell}_{ij}^2 \dots \dots \dots (9)$$

Results and Discussion

Socioeconomic characteristics of respondents

Table 2 represent some socioeconomic characteristics of respondents. The average age of respondents was 29.45 years and standard deviation of 7.66 years old suggesting most of respondents are still in their active and productive age. More than half of the rural youths (56.1%) were male, which could be related to the region's socio-cultural framework, and the majority (79.8%) were married. Only 5.8% of the respondents had no formal education, with the majority (54.2%) having completed high school. The respondents' average household size was 5 people, with a standard deviation of 4 people. Rural youths are primarily involved in on-farm activities (58.7%), with 41.3 percent engaging in non-farm entrepreneurial enterprises. In addition, the respondents' average farm size was 2.15 hectares, with a standard deviation of 1.6 hectares. In terms of farming experience, nearly half of the respondents (56.1%) had more than ten years of experience, with an average of 13.57 years.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by socioeconomic characteristics (n=480)

Variable	Group	frequency	percentage	Explanation
<i>Age (years)</i>	≤20	37	7.8	Min.: 18 Max.: 35 Average: 29.45 Std. Dev.: 7.66
	21 – 25	144	29.9	
	26 – 30	223	46.5	
	31 – 35	76	15.8	
<i>Sex</i>	Male	269	56.1	Mode: Male
	Female	211	43.9	
<i>Marital status</i>	Single	97	20.2	Mode: Married
	Married	383	79.8	
<i>Level of education</i>	No formal	28	5.8	Mode: Secondary education
	Primary	98	20.5	
	Secondary	260	54.2	
	Tertiary	94	19.5	
<i>Household size</i>	≤3	118	24.5	Min.: 2 Max.: 10 Ave.: 5 Std. Dev.: 4
	4 – 6	310	64.6	
	7 – 10	52	10.9	
<i>Primary occupation</i>	On-farm	282	58.7	Mode: On-farm activities
	Off-farm	198	41.3	
<i>Farm size (ha)</i>	≤2ha	366	76.2	Min.: 0.5 Max.: 4.5 Ave.: 2.15 Std. Dev.: 1.6
	2.1 – 4.0ha	107	22.2	
	>4.0ha	8	1.6	
<i>Farming experience (years)</i>	≤5	47	9.7	Min.: 4.5 Max.: 18.0 Ave.: 13.57 Std. Dev.: 8.75
	6 – 10	164	34.2	
	>10	269	56.1	

Source: Field survey, 2019

Entrepreneurial activities of rural youths

Results in Figure 1 show that majority (88.3%) of rural youths engaged in food crop farming. This implies that farming is primary occupation of the majority of the rural youths which also diversify into other economic activities (either off-farm or non-farm). Figure 1 also shows that 38.9% of respondents engaged in produce marketing, 39.5 percent in agro-processing, and over half of the respondents (52.7%) engaged in poultry or livestock farming. Furthermore, 38.4 percent of farm youths engaged in fish farming, 12.6 percent in feed milling, 28.8 percent in government civil service professions, 37.1 percent in motorcycle riding, 22.5 percent in wage labour, and 11.2 percent in food vendor/restaurant work, which is mostly done by females. Furniture/carpentry (20.4%), wood carving (9.5%), and block

mouldings (2.9%) are among the other entrepreneurial enterprises pursued by rural youths, as are petty trading/retail shops (36.4%), tailoring/cloth weaving (25.3%), and hair barbing/dressing (12.9).

The findings imply that rural youth entrepreneurs engage in a variety of on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm entrepreneurial activities as a means of income diversification, which helps to reduce poverty and unemployment among the area's rural youths. This conclusion supports the findings of Lwakuba (2011), who stated that farm production paradigms in Uganda have emphasized choices such as increasing conventional output volume as well as selection and diversity. These possibilities include agricultural and livestock production, agro-input marketing, agro-processing, and farm produce marketing, among others. Also, according to Campaa, Giménez-Nadal, and Molina (2017), the encouragement of growth through entrepreneurship, the effects on household welfare, and the eradication of poverty are among the reasons for the focus on entrepreneurship in developing economies.

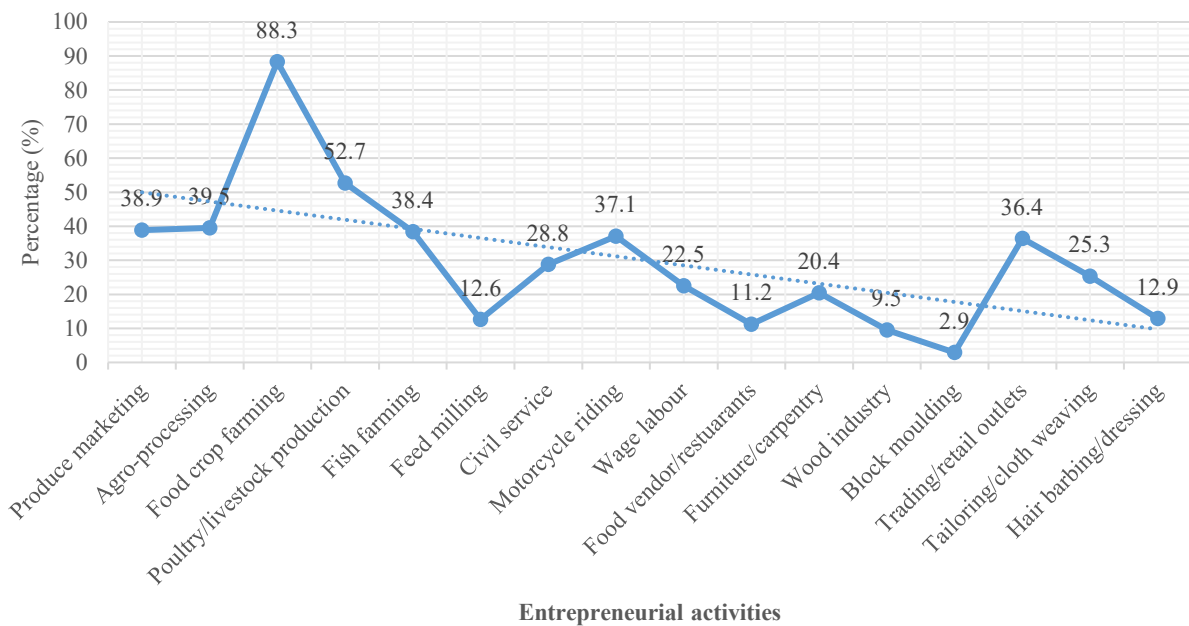


Fig. 1: Distribution of respondents by entrepreneurial activities engaged in

Source: Field survey, 2019

*Multiple response

Level of entrepreneurial diversification among the rural youths

Results in Table 3 present the distribution of rural youth based on their level of entrepreneurship diversification. The resulting entrepreneurship diversification index ranges from 0 to 100, with 100 denoting maximum diversification and 0 denoting no diversification. Findings show that only 12.9% of rural youths had very high diversification, 26.5% of them had high diversification, while almost half (46.6%) had medium entrepreneurship diversification index. The medium level of entrepreneurship diversification as observed among most rural youths may be due to their entrepreneurial behaviour and orientation. Also, finding shows that some 9.4% and 4.6% of the rural youths had low to very low level of entrepreneurship diversification respectively.

Table 3: Categorization of entrepreneurship diversification among the respondents

Categorization	Diversification Index (DI)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
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Very high	0.81 - 1.00	62	12.9
High	0.61 - 0.80	128	26.5
Medium	0.41 - 0.60	223	46.6
Low	0.21 - 0.40	45	9.4
Very low	≤ 0.20	22	4.6
Total		480	100

Source: Field survey, 2019

Entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youths

Table 4 present the component-wise entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youths in the study area. It could be obtained from Table 3 that, 22.6% of the respondents had low risk orientation, 41.2% had medium risk orientation while 36.2% had high risk orientation. This indicates that a significant proportion of rural youths are risk takers. This is in line with Gupta et al. (2003), who stated that in order for a business to flourish, an entrepreneur must be willing to take moderate risks. According to the findings, more than half of the respondents (59.7%) had medium innovation capacity, while 23.9 percent and 16.4 percent, respectively, had high and low innovation ability. Respondents' moderate inventiveness may be owing to their exposition and educational level. In addition, over half of the respondents (51.4%) reported medium achievement motivation, 38.5 percent had high achievement motivation, and 10.1 percent had poor achievement motivation. This indicates that the respondents were inspired by the company's performance.

In addition, nearly half of the respondents (48.5%) had medium decision-making skill, with just 20.8 percent having bad decision-making ability and 30.7 percent having good decision-making ability. Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents (63.3 percent) had moderate coordination ability, 15.6 percent had poor coordination ability, and 21.1 percent had excellent coordination ability. This means that the majority of rural youths who engage in entrepreneurial activities have a moderate level of coordination and management abilities. This is consistent with the findings of Solanki and Soni (2004), who found that the majority of entrepreneurs had a moderate degree of coordination ability. In terms of planning, 42.4 percent were poor planners, 39.3 percent were intermediate planners, and only 18.3 percent were good planners. The information seeking behaviour among the respondents was relatively high (46.2 percent), while 34.2 percent and 19.6 percent had moderate to low information seeking behaviour respectively. An important quality of an entrepreneur is the ability to seek feedback and relevant information on their products. The findings is in line with the studies of Nwibo, and Okorie (2013) who asserted that poor entrepreneurial information and poor enabling environment is the bane of poor entrepreneurial development and drive in agribusiness among farmers in South-east Nigeria.

Furthermore, more than half of the respondents (58.2%) were somewhat cosmopolite, 13.9 percent were low cosmopolite, and 27.9% were extremely cosmopolite. This explains the frequency with which rural youths leave their immediate environment in quest of fresh challenges. According to the findings, over half of the respondents (48.8%) had strong self-confidence, 36.7 percent had medium self-confidence, and 14.5 percent had low self-confidence. The literacy level and exposure to extension services may be the cause of the medium degree of self-confidence (Ahmed et al., 2011). Ahmed et al. (2011) also observed a link between self-confidence and exposure to extension services, as measured by educational level, and literacy levels. The higher the number of years spent in education, the more confident the farmers are. However, in terms of ranking the entrepreneurial components or attributes of respondents using mean score and standard deviation decision making ability (7.58 ± 1.26) ranked first followed by innovativeness (7.26 ± 0.72), followed by cosmopoliteness (6.96 ± 1.05), and followed by information seeking behaviour (6.25 ± 1.33) and ranked 2nd, 3rd, and 4th respectively.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to their entrepreneurial behaviour

Entrepreneurial behaviour	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Mean ($\pm$ SD)	Rank
<i>Risk orientation</i>	Low	108	22.6	5.89 $\pm$ 0.64	5 th
	Medium	198	41.2		
	High	174	36.2		
<i>Innovativeness</i>	Low	79	16.4	7.26 $\pm$ 0.72	2 nd
	Medium	286	59.7		
	High	115	23.9		
<i>Achievement motivation</i>	Low	48	10.1	5.31 $\pm$ 0.49	7 th
	Medium	247	51.4		
	High	185	38.5		
<i>Decision making ability</i>	Poor	100	20.8	7.58 $\pm$ 1.26	1 st
	Moderate	233	48.5		
	Good	147	30.7		
<i>Coordinating ability</i>	Poor	75	15.6	5.72 $\pm$ 1.08	6 th
	Moderate	304	63.3		
	Good	101	21.1		
<i>Planning ability</i>	Poor	203	42.4	3.73 $\pm$ 1.95	9 th
	Moderate	189	39.3		
	Good	88	18.3		
<i>Information seeking behaviour</i>	Low	94	19.6	6.25 $\pm$ 1.33	4 th
	Medium	164	34.2		
	High	222	46.2		
<i>Cosmopolitaness</i>	Low	67	13.9	6.96 $\pm$ 1.05	3 rd
	Medium	279	58.2		
	High	134	27.9		
<i>Self-confidence</i>	Low	70	14.5	5.11 $\pm$ 1.37	8 th
	Medium	176	36.7		
	High	234	48.8		

Source: Field survey, 2019

SD= Standard Deviation

Level of entrepreneurial behaviour of the respondents**Table 5:** Overall entrepreneurial behaviour of the respondents

Level of entrepreneurial behaviour	Entrepreneurial Behaviour Index (EBI)	Respondents	
		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Very high	75 - 100	57	11.9
High	50 - 74	214	44.5
Low	25 - 49	178	37.1
Very low	0 - 24	31	6.5
Total		480	100

Source: Field survey, 2019

The results in Table 5 show the respondents' overall composite entrepreneurial behaviour. According to the findings, 11.9 percent of respondents had a very high level of entrepreneurial behaviour, followed by a high level (44.5%), and 37.1 percent and 6.5 percent had low and very low entrepreneurial behaviour, respectively. This indicates that rural teenagers exhibited good entrepreneurial behaviour, which might be attributed to their achievement, success, and track record in various entrepreneurship activities in the research area. Rahmi's (2015) study found that entrepreneurial conduct has a direct and beneficial impact on business performance.

Factor influencing entrepreneurial behaviour among rural youths

Table 6 shows the results of a post-estimation test, Bartlett's test of sphericity, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures of sample adequacy, and Cronbach's coefficient alpha, which were used to assess the relevance of using factor analysis in the study, sampling adequacy, and data reliability as suggested by (Boohene et al., 2012; Glen, 2016), with the results indicating To see if the variables in the sample are adequate to correlate, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy metric was utilized. For an acceptable factor analysis to proceed, the KMO value must be greater than 0.5. A KMO score of 0.836, as shown in Table 6, indicates that the variables were sufficiently correlated, implying that a good factor analysis was performed. The Bartlett's test, on the other hand, was used to determine whether there was a link between the variables (p-value less than 0.05 indicates relationship between variables). There is no need to proceed with factor analysis if no association is discovered. A p-value of 0.000 in this investigation suggested a link between variables, as shown in Table 6, therefore factor analysis was performed.

Table 6: Sampling adequacy and sphericity of variables used in factor analysis

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.836
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	679.229
	D.f	54
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Field Data Analysis (2019)

Table 7: Extraction of component factors (farm youths)

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Eigen values</i>	<i>% of variance</i>	<i>Cumulative (%) of variance</i>
Socioeconomic	3.039	28.639	28.639
Production	2.647	23.976	52.615
Psychological	1.818	21.039	73.654
Institutional	1.026	17.687	91.341
Cultural	0.688	8.659	100

Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 7 shows the first output from factor analysis, as well as the results of component factor extraction among rural youths in the sample, together with their Eigen values and percentages of variation. On the basis of the researched variables, four factors were extracted: socioeconomic, production, psychological, and institutional. Only factors with Eigen values greater than 1.0 should be considered in future analysis, according to the rule of thumb. Table 7 shows that all of the components have Eigen values larger than 1.0, with the exception of the cultural factor, which is thus eliminated from further analysis. This means that each of the four variables studied had a significant impact on the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youth farmers in the study area. Eigen values greater than 1.0 were found in factors 1-4 (socioeconomic, production, psychological, and institutional variables), with the fourth factor accounting for 98.341% of the variance. Factor 5, cultural factors, is consequently removed from further analysis due to its Eigen value of 0.688 and 8.659 percent of variance. This suggests that cultural factors do not have a substantial impact on rural youngsters' entrepreneurial behaviour.

Table 8 shows the loading of factors for each of the 20 variables studied. Using Kaiser's rule of thumb, variables with coefficients of 0.3 and above can be used to name a factor, variables with high loading from the first factor include level of education (0.884), annual income (0.867), and family size (0.821), and since all of these variables are socio-economic, this first factor was termed 'socio-economic

factors.' Level of education was found to have a significant relationship with respondents' entrepreneurial behaviour, implying that as respondents' levels of education rise, the likelihood of change in entrepreneurial behaviour rises, which could eventually translate into improved managerial skills, self-confidence, and other entrepreneurial attributes. An individual's vision is broadened by education. Educated people have more access to extension services, the media, and development organizations, as well as higher accomplishment motivation, decision-making ability, cosmopolitaness, and economic drive, and are more likely to employ high-risk innovations. As a result, these elements aid in the management of a business.

Table 8: Oblique rotated factor component correlations (factor loading)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Socioeconomic factor</i>	<i>Production factor</i>	<i>Psychological factor</i>	<i>Institutional factor</i>
Age	-0.299	0.184	0.003	0.164
Level of education	0.884	0.135	0.021	0.156
Annual income	0.867	0.049	0.162	0.001
Family size	0.821	0.213	0.185	0.122
Location of enterprise	0.036	0.194	-0.038	0.002
Inadequate production input	0.174	0.776	0.001	0.132
Landholding size	0.128	0.734	0.204	-0.148
Size of enterprise	-0.041	0.715	0.017	0.016
Non-availability of labour	0.239	0.708	-0.003	0.144
Tendency to take feedback	0.262	-0.014	0.299	0.001
Enthusiasm to achieve great things	2.10E-02	0.174	0.679	0.239
High self-confidence and reliance	0.138	0.026	0.646	0.014
Personal creativity/innovativeness	4.21E-02	0.004	0.632	-0.119
Human relations	0.028	0.126	0.605	0.125
Unemployment among educated group	0.158	0.049	0.001	0.282
Distance to market	0.019	0.232	0.018	0.553
Access to financial institution	0.001	0.288	2.20E-03	0.521
Access to extension services	0.152	0.143	0.051	0.517
Trainings and social network	0.062	0.226	0.134	0.502
Poor transport system	0.002	0.197	0.119	0.286

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Source: Field survey (2019)

As a result, education was a determining factor in rural teenagers' entrepreneurial behaviour. These findings are similar to those of Murali and Anitha Jhamtani (2003), who found a favourable association between education and entrepreneurial behaviour. In addition, according to FAO (2014), willing young face challenges to entering agribusiness, such as a lack of knowledge, information, and education, as well as limited access to land, financial services, green jobs, markets, and participation in policy debate. There was a positive and significant link between family size and entrepreneurial behaviour.

This means that the rural teenagers in the area who worked in on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm companies had a relatively high household size, which accounted for the majority of the labour demand. According to Onubuogu et al., (2014), having a large household makes it easier to access production variables like labour, which could boost agribusiness growth in the area. In addition, rural teenagers' annual income had a favourable and significant link with their entrepreneurial behaviour. According to the findings, the income of rural adolescent entrepreneurs has a significant impact on

their entrepreneurial behaviour. Fairlie (2005) confirms this finding, stating that farmers with higher farm income are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities than those with lower farm income.

In the second factor, as indicated in Table 8, the factors with the highest loading include inadequate production inputs (0.776), landholding size (0.734), size of enterprise (0.715), and non-availability of labour (0.708); all these variables are production related, therefore second factor was therefore named '*production factors*'. The inadequacy of rural teenagers' production inputs was found to have a positive and substantial link with their entrepreneurial behaviour. This shows that a lack of inputs or insufficient production inputs will likely damage rural youth's psychological well-being and, as a result, their entrepreneurial behaviour. The inadequacy of rural youths' production inputs was found to have a positive and substantial link with their entrepreneurial behaviour. This shows that a lack of inputs or insufficient production inputs will likely damage rural youth's psychological well-being and, as a result, their entrepreneurial behaviour. In addition, the amount of a rural youth's landholding had a positive and significant impact on their entrepreneurial behaviour. This conclusion shows that respondents with larger holdings had more opportunity and possibilities to experiment with a wider range of technical breakthroughs.

As a result, it's possible that rural youths with larger landholdings are more interested in learning about new forum practices and are more receptive to such ideas, leading to improved knowledge acquisition, economic motivation, achievement motivation, and risk orientation, all of which influence their entrepreneurial behaviour. As a result, the size of one's land holdings must have had a positive and considerable impact on entrepreneurial behaviour. According to Chidi et al. (2015), larger farms have the potential to produce more output and enhance overall profit per hectare by lowering labour costs per unit of land. The size of a rural youth's business should have a favourable and significant impact on their entrepreneurial behaviour. An increase in the size of a rural youth's business would likely enhance their income and so improve their livelihood, influencing their entrepreneurial mindset and behaviour.

This finding is similar to that of Esiobu and Onubuogu (2014), who claimed that larger farm sizes boost agricultural productivity and farmers' technical, allocative, and resource usage efficiency. As a result, in the study area, a large farm size is a positive determinant for agribusiness entrepreneurial development. In addition, the lack of labour availability among rural adolescent entrepreneurs had a positive and significant impact on their entrepreneurial behaviour. Large family sizes could serve as labour for individual entrepreneurial operations in the research area, which is one probable explanation. According to Koide et al. (2015), rice production feasibility is largely dependent on the availability and stability of labour, which can be ensured by bigger family sizes. Stable labour will boost output and trade in the goods produced.

Excitement to achieve great things (0.679), high self-confidence and reliance (0.646), personal creativity/innovativeness (0.632), and interpersonal relations (0.632) are variables that load highly under the third factor (0.605). All of these characteristics are psychometrically examined, and are hence referred to as "psychological factors." All of these variables were found to have a favourable relationship with rural youths' entrepreneurial behaviour. This means that the responders' desire to accomplish great things is the foundation upon which all other motives, drives, and characteristics are created. It is the psychological conditions that enable an individual to orient himself in order to increase his income and productivity. When one develops higher levels of enthusiasm and strives to accomplish it, he can work hard and internalize several aspects of business management in addition to profit maximization. As a result, it's only normal to anticipate a beneficial relationship.

In their study, Wankhade et colleagues (2013) found that a desire to succeed, management competence, confidence, knowledge, innovation, and motivation all had a substantial impact on entrepreneurial

behaviour. The positive and significant relationship between respondents' self-confidence and reliance and their entrepreneurial behaviour could be attributed to a higher level of achievement motivation, economic motivation, and decision-making ability, which leads to increased confidence in an individual's ability to realize the fruits of his or her labours and profit financially. Self-confidence is one of the best predictor variables utilized in entrepreneurial studies, according to Mateja et al. (2009); thus, confidence is still capable of reflecting individual factors. Similarly, Petel's (2014) research found that self-esteem (confidence) can describe a person's personality. Personal creativity/innovativeness is also defined by a methodical approach and strategic orientation in the decision-making process among rural youth entrepreneurs. They become more autonomous and aggressive rivals as a result of these characteristics, which include a stronger marketing, learning, and entrepreneurial attitude.

Furthermore, distance to market (0.553), access to financial institution (0.521), access to extension services (0.517), and trainings and social network (0.517) are factors with high loading under the fourth component (0.502). As a result, these elements are referred to as 'institutional factors.' The distance to market has a positive and significant impact on rural youths' entrepreneurial behaviour. This means that the closer the farm gate is to the market, the better for the business owner. This is because bad road conditions or a lack of transportation, as well as high transportation costs, have an impact on farm products, particularly perishable food, forcing rural entrepreneurs to sell to intermediaries at the farm gate.

In addition, rural teenagers' access to financial institutions had a favourable and significant association with their entrepreneurial behaviour. Due to their inability to access credit or financial institutions, most rural adolescent entrepreneurs rely on personal resources to fund their firms. This finding is consistent with that of Ezike et al. (2009), who concluded that entrepreneurs' lack of financial resources could be a major impediment to turning novel product concepts into marketable products. Furthermore, according to Mhlanga (2010), commercial banks in Sub-Saharan Africa lend less than 10% of their overall credit to the agricultural sector. As a result, young entrepreneurs regard a lack of capital and a competitive market environment to be their most pressing concerns (Dilip, 2014). Extension services are available. It was discovered that rural teenagers' entrepreneurial behaviour had a favourable and significant association.

This shows that providing rural youths with access to extension services will greatly assist them in obtaining firsthand knowledge and equipping them with the most up-to-date technical know-how in order to fully and scientifically assist them in their entrepreneurial endeavours. Extension services such as training programs, demonstrations, exhibitions, field visits, and so on are available. These services helped individuals to be more goal-oriented and confident, which is likely to lead to increased entrepreneurial behaviour. This finding is consistent with Patel et al., (2014), who found that extension contact was positively associated with respondents' entrepreneurial behaviour.

Conclusion

Factors influencing entrepreneurial behaviour among rural youths have been successfully established using factor analysis and are considered important variables in fostering entrepreneurship development among rural youths, according to the findings of this study. These factors include socioeconomic, production, psychological, and institutional factors. Rural youths engaged in numerous entrepreneurial (on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm) activities and had a medium level of diversity, according to an analysis of entrepreneurship diversification. In addition, studies revealed that the majority of rural teenagers in the research area exhibited high to medium levels of entrepreneurial behaviour.

In light of the foregoing, the study advises that identified factors be considered and upgraded in order to improve the entrepreneurial behaviour of rural youth. According to the study, strategies that improve rural youth entrepreneurs' access to credit should be encouraged, and such strategies should look into

ways to enable young entrepreneurs to access credit even if they do not have prime assets that are currently accepted as collateral by financial institutions. Regular entrepreneurship training should be scheduled by relevant government and non-governmental agencies to encourage and motivate rural youth entrepreneurs, as well as acquire new technological skills to face the challenges of global business dynamics, as coordination and planning ability play a crucial role in profit-making.

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Labour Market Institutions and Unemployment in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study explores the analysis of labour market institutions and the unemployment situation in Nigeria. The study was anchored on the strategic aspect of the labour market institutions and considering the fluctuations in the unemployment rate in the country due to the level of educational and flooding of expatriates. The research design used in this study was descriptive. The population covered some selected recruitment agencies and their clients in South-west and North-central, Nigeria stood at 700 from companies' profiles. The sample size of 255 was drawn using the Taro Yamane (1967). A simple random sampling technique was employed because of its relevancy in selecting the respondents. Primary and secondary data were used. Data obtained were analysed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistics. However, multiple linear regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship between the labour market institutions variables and the unemployment situation in Nigeria. The findings revealed that the R^2 value of 0.074 on Durbin Watson indicates that 74% of the variations in the dependent variable which states that educational level have a significant effect on the unemployment situation in Nigeria as evidenced by the p-value of educational level to be (0.001) which is less than 0.05 at 95.0% confidence significance interval. Also, The R^2 value of 0.071 states that the expatriate level does have a significant effect on the unemployment situation in Nigeria as evidenced by the p-value of the expatriates to be (0.001) which is less than 0.05 at a 95.0% confidence significance interval. The study discovered that education and the coming of expatriates' affect the unemployment situation in the country. It was recommended that there is a need to encourage the graduates in both technical and non-technical jobs to discourage the flooding of expatriates in the country.

Keywords: Labour market institutions, unemployment, educational, expatriate, labour policies

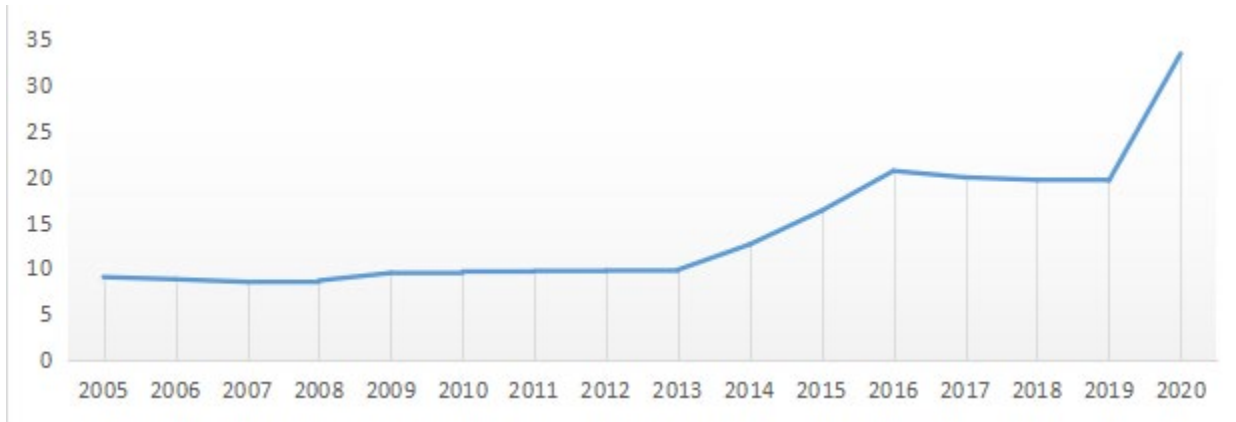
Introduction

The rising incidence of unemployment among tertiary graduates has been one of the disturbing patterns of the recent Nigerian labour market. Akintoye (2008) estimated that graduate unemployment was up from 1% in 1974 to 4% in 1984 as a share of overall joblessness. Besides, Dabalén, Oni, and Adekoka (2000) registered 32% of the total unemployed between 1992 and 1997, reflecting unemployment while the National Bureau of Statistics (2020) projected the rate of unemployment from 9.04% in 2005 to 23.9% in 2019. Given acute capacity shortages, this rising occurrence of graduate unemployment is a paradox that makes labour analytics in Nigerian more difficult. The key goal of Nigeria's macroeconomic policies was supposed to continue to be job growth (or unemployment reduction). Increase the job, production, and procurement capacity of the government is encouraged by all realistic methods, as a continuous strategy and duty of the federal government (Essien & Atan, 2006).

Nigerians are well-known for their horrific and biting presence in their lives because of the awful unemployment in Nigeria. Nigeria has produced about 4.5 million new entrants annually, with a current

unemployment rate of 23.9 and an unemployed youth population of 20.3 million. 2.2 million elementary school leavers that do not go to secondary school, one million high school leavers who do not attend secondary school, and 300,000 graduates who have no employment placements, and over 600,000 graduates annually (Shadare & Elegbede, 2012). The government has placed in place different policies and initiatives, at different stages, aimed at mitigating but without gain this hazard.

Fig.1: Unemployment rate (%)



Source: NBS, 2020

From the line graph in Figure 1, the unemployment rate in Nigeria kept rising sharply yearly. Several efforts were made to keep it checked under controlled at 10% from 2005-2013. The unemployment rate increased more than two folds from 2013-2019. A double-digits unemployment rate at 20% was first optimally recorded in 2016. This marked the beginning of hardship in labour market economy until 2019 when it started decreasing. Another massive rate in unemployment was notably recorded in 2020. The result predicts continuous change in unemployment which proceeded in that trends until drastic efforts were made to curb the upward sloping inclined to absorb the people in Nigeria labour market.

The institutional and regulatory system in Nigeria that concerns, amongst other things, the establishment and security of Labour's law and the protection of marginalized persons are poor (Okoronkwo, 2008). There is also a very broad informal sector in the Nigerian labour market, greater than that which affects the effectiveness of the labour and regulatory frameworks. It is uncertain how much of this has changed labour market results, such as salaries, jobs, incomes, and efficiency. Due to the value of labour, the literature includes hypotheses and analytical studies regarding the relationships between the institutions, the legislative climate, and the effects of the labour market.

The term "unemployment" is measured by Labour market analysts in line with the ILO illustration. The unemployment rates are above average (8.4%) in the developing countries and the European Union; they are below average (4.4% and 5.1% respectively) in Eastern Asia and Southern Asia (ILO 2010). The fact that unemployment is particularly difficult in the developed world shows that the job market is at a deficit. Furthermore, research in this field has mostly focused on industrialized economies, such as the OECD, the United States, and Latin America, with little attention paid to developing countries, particularly Nigeria. This has hampered comprehension of the Nigerian labor market's influence of institutions and rules.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to the analysis of labour market Institutions and unemployment in Nigeria taking some recruitment agencies in the country as a study. The specific objectives are to:

- i. determine the effect of educational level on the unemployment situation in Nigeria
- ii. examine the level of expatriate on the unemployment situation in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Labour Market Institutions

A labour market should be understood as the process by which human work, as a product and a means by which labour, is generated and sold, the amount and type of employment available and the number and type of people available (Grimshaw, Ward, Rubery, & Beynon, 2008; Kenton, 2019). The job market is thus the systemic interaction between employers and working organisations. A basic concern of an organisation is to ensure that it has the best individuals with the proper expertise, experience, and qualities in suitable roles to meet its strategic objectives. There are two ways an organization can get the requisite jobs. Next, an organization should prepare (internal) current staff to maintain long-term services. Secondly, the company can hire the necessary work from outside the company (externally) if required.

Institutions are known as frameworks for tempo and breadth of change to an economic shock, with the conversion by more flexible wages (Hassan, 2010) of economic volatility into work responses. The goal is to connect jobs and unemployment rates to systems and structural arrangements, Dabalen et al. (2000). The core organization involved involves wage-fixing in terms of negotiation cover and centralizing, unemployment insurance generosity, investment in work market policies, taxation and employee contributions, and, last but not least, job-protection laws in the labour market. The key point was that the operation of price and wage-setting processes was skewed by excessively protective labour market institutions, leading to high unemployed individuals and late change after economic shocks (Ogunmade, 2013; Orji & Okafor, 2015).

Unemployment Spectrums

Unemployment is one of Nigeria's main growth issues. Research has shown that unemployment was high in the 1980s, but there are records from different local and foreign agencies, as well as strong signs that unemployment in these decades is as extreme as it has now been in Nigeria's ruthless past. It can not always be concluded that at one stage or another, the government has done little to alleviate unemployment in Nigeria one time or another. In particular, some of the multiple involvement instruments intended at confirming economic development, rich in job generation, have been developed by the national jobs directorate (NDE), the NAPEP, PAP, SURE-P, YUWIN, and N-power programs, just to name a few. Furthermore, from 2005 until 2013, the Federal government has sustained a solid, real GDP growth rate of 6% or 6.5% (Aganga, 2010; Ogunmade, 2013).

Unemployment arises when persons who are competent and willing to work are either unemployed or unable to find work that is both innovative and successful. It may also happen when people pick employment that are incompatible with or inferior to their academic degrees or areas of expertise. For example, a first or second-degree graduate who enlists as an applicant in either of the armed services or paramilitary forces, or a degree holder working as a clerk in an office, is underused and hence might be classified as jobless even when recruited (Olubuyi, 2013).

The demand for labour is generated from the manufacture and sale of goods and services. Its scale and type are also delicate to what takes place in the national economy (Dabalen et al. 2000). In Nigeria, there are no demand variables that originate from production that generate employment. The market for jobs was therefore weak and at best unpredictable in the Nigerian economy. Perhaps the most challenging difficulty is to obtain or protect reliable labour demand information when gathering information on the job market. As Odo, Elom-Obed, Nwachukwu, and Okoro (2017) pointed out, recruitment actions by organizations are usually uncoordinated and sometimes unannounced.

Review of Empirical Literature

A study on emigration and labor market fluctuations in Nigeria was delivered by Olubiyi and Olarinde (2015). A Neo-classical migratory theory based on Stolper-Samuelson proportionate apportionment was used in this work. The study found that when high-skilled individuals leave, earnings for both high and low-skilled personnel rise, with the previous overbalancing. The two types of labor are not always correlated because higher salaries are followed with a rise in unemployment. As a result, emigration of low-skilled employees raises their wages and reduces unemployment, but has no influence on the wages of high-skilled employees.

Soliman (2017) also investigated capacity utilization and unemployment in selected West Africa Countries. The study examined the long-term effect of unemployment on NAIRU (Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate on Unemployment) programmes. This approach supports dislocated people to improve their abilities in order to re-enter the labor market. The data also demonstrate that capacity utilization has a major impact on unemployment. This is important because measures that strengthen the economy can help to reduce unemployment in West African countries.

Odo, Elom-Obed, Nwachukwu and Okoro (2017) conducted a study on the relationship between unemployment and inflation rate in Nigeria within 1980-2015. Unemployment was calculated as a function of rising prices, currency value, and total deficit spending in the model. The causality test, VECM test, and cointegration test were the statistical tests utilized. During the time under consideration, the study discovered that inflation had a considerable influence on graduate unemployment, both in the long and short term. This means that government expenditure decreases unemployed youth to the degree that inflation stays below the single-digit threshold. According to the report, the political establishment should use voluntary control measures such open market operations, discount rates, and special directives to manage the money supply and promote spending in order to lower the country's unemployment rate.

Imoisi, Olatunji, and Ubi-Abai (2013) investigated the population and problem of unemployment in Less Developing Countries (L.D.C). Nigeria's population is continually increasing without the concurrent availability of job opportunities. Many facts and data from notable sources were analyzed and discussed regarding this problem. Rural-urban migration, lack of population reduction, weak cognitive capacity and workability, corruption, and lack of entrepreneurial drive are among the causes leading to an increase in unemployment in Nigeria, according to the authors. To prevent a "worst-case scenario" of the country's unemployment condition, the research proposed evaluating socioeconomic organization, monitoring rural-urban mobility, encouraging agricultural and entrepreneurial programs, investing in human capital, and so on.

Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The design decisions were explained by the fact that the study was concerned in the current state of things in the area, and no variables were changed.

The entire population of study covered recruitment agencies and their clients; such as; Balogun Badejo Consulting Limited, Nigeria. Fexx Agency Limited Kwara State and Global serve Integrated Service Limited Kwara state Nigeria stood at 700 from the companies profiles (see Table 1).

A simple random sampling technique was employed. This technique was considered appropriate for the study because the study deals with three sub-groups that is the Balogun Badejo Consulting Limited, Fexx Agency Limited, and Global Serve Integrated Service which has different opinions about the situation of the variable that investigated.

Table 1: Population of the study

S/N	Company and their clients	Population
1	Balogun Badejo Consulting Limited	242
2	Fexx Agency Limited Kwara State	176
3	Global Serve Integrated Service Limited Kwara State	282
	Total	700

Source: Companies' Profiles (2020)

The sample size of 255 was drawn using the Raosoft Online Sample Size Calculator: In terms of the numbers you selected above, the sample size n and margin of error E are given by

$$x = Z(c/100)2r(100-r)$$

$$n = Nx / ((N-1)E^2 + x)$$

Where N is the population size, r is the fraction of responses that you are interested in, and $Z(c/100)$ is the critical value for the confidence level c .

The questionnaire was chosen to obtain data since it was constructed with opinion and closed-ended statements in mind. In order to collect responses from the participants, the study used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1) for opinion expressions. The questionnaire was tested for face and content validity and reliability by the researchers. The questionnaire was sent to various specialists for assessment and feedback in order to ensure its validity. The instrument's Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is 0.81; according to Nunnally (1978), an alpha level of 0.70 and above is generally regarded as satisfactory.

To better provide data or information, the data was analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics using the statistical program for social science (SPSS v23). The study used a frequency distribution that included both relative and percentage and frequencies. The association between the examination of labor market intermediaries and unemployment in Nigeria utilizing Selected Recruitment Agencies was investigated using multiple linear regression analysis. Below is a diagram of multiple regression.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon \text{ where;}$$

Y = Independent variable

β_0 = intercept of the model

β_1 = Coefficient of the independent variable in the variable

X_1 = Element of the independent variable

ϵ = error term

Data Presentation and Results

This section presents data obtained from respondents via the distribution of questionnaires, analysis and interpretation were done from respondents' responses. Out of 255 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 151 were retrieved, usable, and fit for the study making a total number of 75.5%.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents	Constructs	Frequency	Percentage
Age in Year	18-25	71	47.0
	26-40	28	18.5
	41-50	44	29.1
	51 and above	8	5.3
	Total	151	100
Working Experience	1-5	97	64.2
	6-10	16	10.6
	11- 15	26	17.2
	16 and above	12	7.9
	Total	151	100
Gender	Male	78	51.7
	Female	69	45.7
	4	4	2.6
	Total	151	100
Educational qualification	WAEC/NECO or equivalent	36	23.8
	OND/NCE or equivalent	22	14.6
	HND/B.Sc or equivalent	59	39.1
	M.Sc./MBA/MA or equivalent	34	22.5
	Total	151	100
Marital Status	Single	82	54.3
	Married	69	45.7
	Total	151	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Table 1 indicates that (71) respondents representing 47% were ages of 18-25, (18) respondents signifying 18.5% were ages 26-40, (44) respondents 29.1% were between the age of 41-50, (8) respondents signifying 5.3% were ages of 51-above. This spectacles that the mainstream of the respondents were ages of 18 and 25 with a cumulative percentage of 47%. The Table further indicates that (97) respondents representing 64.2% have work experience below 5years, (16) respondents signifying 10.6% were within the range of 6-10years work experience, (26) respondents signifying 17.2% were within the range of 11-15years work experience, (12) respondents signifying 7.9% have 16years and above work experience. As a result of the aforesaid study, the majority of the staff beneath examination had 1-5 years of work

experience, indicating that they had a feeling of participation and recent necessary knowledge to validate the analysis of Nigeria's labor market institutions and chronic unemployment.

Besides, Table 1 demonstrates that (45) respondents signifying 78% were male, (69) respondents signifying 45.7% were female. The implication is that the temperaments of happenings in the Nigerian labor market were for both males and females, particularly in light of the country's continuous persistent unemployment problem. Also in the table, (36) respondents representing 23.8% were O'Level or equivalent, (22) respondents representing 14.6% were OND/NCE holders, (59) respondents representing 39.1% were BSC/HND holders, while (34) respondents representing 22.5% were MBA/MSc holders. The fact that the majority of the employees have a bachelor's degree or its equivalent, as well as extra credentials, demonstrates that they have the necessary understanding of labor market institutions and persistent unemployment in the nation. Similarly, the data above reveals that 82% of respondents (82%) were single, while 45.7 percent (69%) were married. As a consequence, the sector has a large percentage of people who are mature enough to operate well in a team while also being actively committed to the will of others in discussion, so assisting their companies in reaching fair efficiency findings.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Educational level does not have a significant effect on the unemployment situation in Nigeria.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.271 ^a	.074	.067	1.046	
2	.399 ^b	.160	.148	1.000	1.736
a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality_education_facilitates_employability b. Predictors: (Constant), Quality_education_facilitates_employability, Unemployment_emerges_from_low_competent_poor_education c. Dependent Variable: Educational_qualification					

Source: Authors' computation (2019)

Table 2 is a summary of key statistics measuring the effectiveness of the model. The R^2 value of 0.074, in particular, indicates that educational level explains 74% of the total variations in the dependent variable while the remaining 22% was explained by other factors not included in the model.

Table 3: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.980	1	12.980	11.852	.001 ^a
	Residual	163.179	149	1.095		
	Total	176.159	150			
2	Regression	28.110	2	14.055	14.050	.000 ^b
	Residual	148.049	148	1.000		
	Total	176.159	150			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Quality_education_facilitates_employability
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Quality_education_facilitates_employability, Unemployment_emerges_from_low_competent_poor_education
 c. Dependent Variable: Educational_qualification

Source: Authors' computation (2019)

The ANOVA table 3 shows that the factors under examination are jointly significant in influencing the dependent variable with a P-value of 0.001. This test implied that a single variable of educational level, may not be significant to influence the unemployment situation in the country, but when used together they can jointly influence the employment decision in Nigerian Labour Market institutions.

The results of the estimated regression equation in Table 4 indicates that educational level does not have significant effect on the unemployment. As evidenced by its coefficient values of 0.340. The results indicate that if the educational level goes up by one unit, then the unemployment rate would also go up by 1.000 units which is significant while keeping other variables constant. However, based on the above analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis which states that educational level does have a significant effect on the unemployment situation in Nigeria is accepted, as evidenced by the p-value of educational level to be (0.001) which is less than 0.05 at 95.0% Confidence significance interval.

Table 4: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.017	.190		10.593	.000	1.640	2.393
	Quality_education_facilitates_employability	.244	.071	.271	3.443	.001	.104	.384
2	(Constant)	1.340	.252		5.327	.000	.843	1.838
	Quality_education_facilitates_employability	.207	.068	.230	3.023	.003	.072	.342
	Unemployment_emerges_from_low_competent_poor_education	.313	.081	.296	3.889	.000	.154	.472
a. Dependent Variable: Educational_qualification								

Source: Authors' computation (2019)

Hypothesis Two: Expatriate level does not have a significant effect on the unemployment situation in Nigeria.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.267 ^a	.071	.065	1.162	1.754
a. Predictors: (Constant), Labour_Migration_reduces_employment					
b. Dependent Variable: Expatriate_Level_reduces_unemployment					

Source: Authors' computation (2019)

The R² value of 0.071 in table 5 indicates that 71% of the variations in the dependent variable is explained by expatriate level while the remaining 22% was explained by other factors not included in the model.

Table 6: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15.268	1	15.268	11.302	.001 ^a
	Residual	198.584	147	1.351		
	Total	213.852	148			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Labour_Migration_reduces_employment						
b. Dependent Variable: Expatriate_Level_reduces_unemployment						

Source: Authors' computation (2019)

In the ANOVA table 6, the P-value of 0.001 implies that all of the factors are jointly significant in influencing the dependent variable. This test implied that a single variable of expatriate level, may not be significant to influence the unemployment situation in the country, but when used together they can jointly influence the employment decision in Nigerian Labour Market institutions.

Table 4.2.38 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.752	.284		6.172	.000	1.191	2.313
	Labour_Migration_reduces_employment	.321	.096	.267	3.362	.001	.132	.510
a. Dependent Variable: Expatriate_Level_reduces_unemployment								

Source: Authors' computation (2019)

The above-estimated regression equation indicates the expatriate level does not significant in the effect of the unemployment situation in Nigeria. as evidenced by its coefficient values of 0.321. The results indicate that if the expatriate level goes up by one unit, then the unemployment rate would also go up by 1.000 units which is significant while keeping other variables constant. However, based on the above analysis, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis which states that expatriate level does have a significant effect on the unemployment situation in Nigeria is accepted, as evidenced by the p-value of minimum wages to be (0.001) which is less than 0.05 at 95.0% Confidence significance interval.

Discussion of Findings

The results in hypothesis one implied that a single variable of educational level, may not be significant to influence the unemployment situation in the country, but when used together they can jointly influence the employment decision in Nigerian Labour Market institutions. But based on the coefficient, the results indicate that if the educational level goes up by one unit, then the unemployment rate would also go up by 1.000 units which is significant while keeping other variables constant. Therefore, the educational level does have a significant effect on the unemployment situation in Nigeria. This is inconsistent with the position of (Okafor, 2011) who reported that labour market policies affect employment in Rasht city. Likewise, the study of Soliman (2017) who believed that capacity utilisation and unemployment in selected West African countries cannot be determined using education.

The results also indicated in hypothesis two that if the expatriate level goes up by one unit, then the unemployment rate would also go up by 1.000 units which is significant while keeping other variables constant. Therefore, the expatriate level does have a significant effect on the unemployment situation in Nigeria as evidenced by the p-value of minimum wages to be (0.001) which is less than 0.05 at a 95.0% Confidence significance interval. Imoisi, et al. (2013) supported this view except in the study of Davis (2019) who explored unemployment and economic development in Nigeria (1980-2017).

Conclusion

The study has discovered that the overall findings suggest that educational and expatriates' entry affect the unemployment situation in the country. Similarly, the strong policies enhancement of labour market institutions to reduce the level of unemployment. Simultaneously, this highlights the problem of the structure and probable sequencing of such changes, as well as the enactment of policies targeted at improving employment intensity while minimizing potential short-term negative consequences on retrenchment. As a result, it suggests and thinks that, if done properly, it will go a long way toward lowering the rate of unemployment in Nigeria and its ramifications. First and foremost, the educational system must be made operational.

To do this, entrepreneurial education should be prioritized so that students graduate with the fundamental skills required for self-sufficiency. Second, the electricity industry is one of the country's most sensitive and important industries. This is because a reliable power supply supports a sustainable economy designed of supporting local craftsmen, small industries, and manufacturing businesses. Several industries that have closed their doors, migrated to other neighboring nations, or failed would reopen and resume full production if the power supply was greatly enhanced. Finally, to prevent the influx of expatriates, it is necessary to promote graduates in both technical and non-technical fields.

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Empowering Business Education Students in Nigeria for Sustainability in Post Covid-19 Era: Problems, Process And Prospects

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Abstract

The social, economic, and environmental threats, which necessitated the pursuit of achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs, 2030) were aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The aftermaths of the pandemic revealed the need for sustainability in educational curriculum, especially in a skill-based discipline such as Business Education programme. The COVID-19 pandemic rendered a lot of youth, graduate and adult employees and employers unemployed and miserable since the skills they possess as well as the pattern of business most people run could not stand the test of the pandemic. It is therefore necessary to empower Business Education students who should be productive employees and employers of labour tomorrow with skills and competences that can bring about personal and societal sustainability. The various literature reviewed attested to the fact that Business Education curriculum lacks relevant content and pedagogical strategies for sustainability in the post COVID-19 era. Therefore, the study developed a conceptual framework for empowering Business Education students towards sustainability in post COVID-19 era in Nigeria. Some of the proposed pedagogical strategies for students' empowerment for sustainability are effective collaboration between institutions and Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs), the practice of education for sustainable development (ESD), capacity building workshops and seminars for both teachers and students, and engagement in social entrepreneurial activities. Other strategies include involvement of students in green entrepreneurship, empowerment of students in digital technologies, curriculum revitalization as well as active participation of the government and other stakeholders to provide the financial, material, and expertise support for effective implementation process.

Keywords: Business Education; Post COVID-19 Era; Students' Empowerment; Sustainability;

Introduction

Nigeria, as a nation, is overburdened with diverse social, economic and environmental challenges that threaten her sustainability in the post COVID-19 era. Notable among the crises being experienced in Nigeria is the nagging problem of unemployment among youth and adults. In addition, the sudden eruption of COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the total lockdown of every sector, further worsened the economic situation of Nigeria. This situation rendered a lot of employees and employers jobless, poor and miserable. The hardship and sufferings that accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic brought about violence, unrest, and restiveness among the youth in Nigeria (OECD, 2020). The situation revealed the necessity and indispensability of making the economy sustainable.

Actually, the driving force behind the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs, 2030) of any nation is comprehensive, quality and functional education (FRN, 2014). Examples of such education are vocational and technology education (Business Education inclusive), entrepreneurship education, or any form of education that can empower the recipients with twenty-first century competences and skills to solve both the present and future problems in the nation. The reality of the present (Post-COVID-19) situation, research evidences (Ekpenyong and Edokpolor, 2015; Edokpolor and Owenvbiugie, 2017) as well as the report of the National Bureau of Statistics (2020) show that the rate of youth unemployment

and poverty among Business Education graduates is increasing daily in Nigeria. This situation, therefore, makes it necessary and imperative to review literature and propose the framework for empowering Business Education students in Nigeria for sustainability in post COVID-19 era.

Business Education is a vocational education that offers multiple career opportunities, apart from teaching career, through training and empowerment of students to become highly productive employees, high caliber professionals in business establishment, and employers of labour (NUC, 2018). Edokpolor and Owenvibiugie (2017) also consider Business Education as a vocational and technical education that is capable of providing requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for proper functioning in diverse occupational areas. Inegbedion, Njoku and Ekpenyong (2008) simply explain Business Education as teaching and learning of business concepts and principles for and about business. In other words, it refers to as teaching and learning of business-related knowledge, skills, attitudes and values for making the recipients to become both intelligent consumers, competent business teachers, productive employees and entrepreneurs or employers of labour. Conceptualizing business education programme in the contemporary perspective, Alao (2021) defines business education as a vocational education programme for sustainable empowerment opportunities leading to complete individual emancipation and holistic societal transformation. Empowerment may be referred to as the ability to acquire the needed knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to effect a revolutionary change and improvement on self as well as on the communities. The change brings about self-emancipation and complete societal liberation from the social, economic and environmental ills and threats (Babalola and Tiamiyu 2013). Sustainability or sustainable development, as it is otherwise called, may be referred to as development that satisfies the necessities of today without neglecting the potentials of tomorrow's generations to meet their needs (Patrick, Enakshi and Mandla (2018). The main aim of sustainable development is to balance our economic, social and environmental needs (Ukairo, 2017).

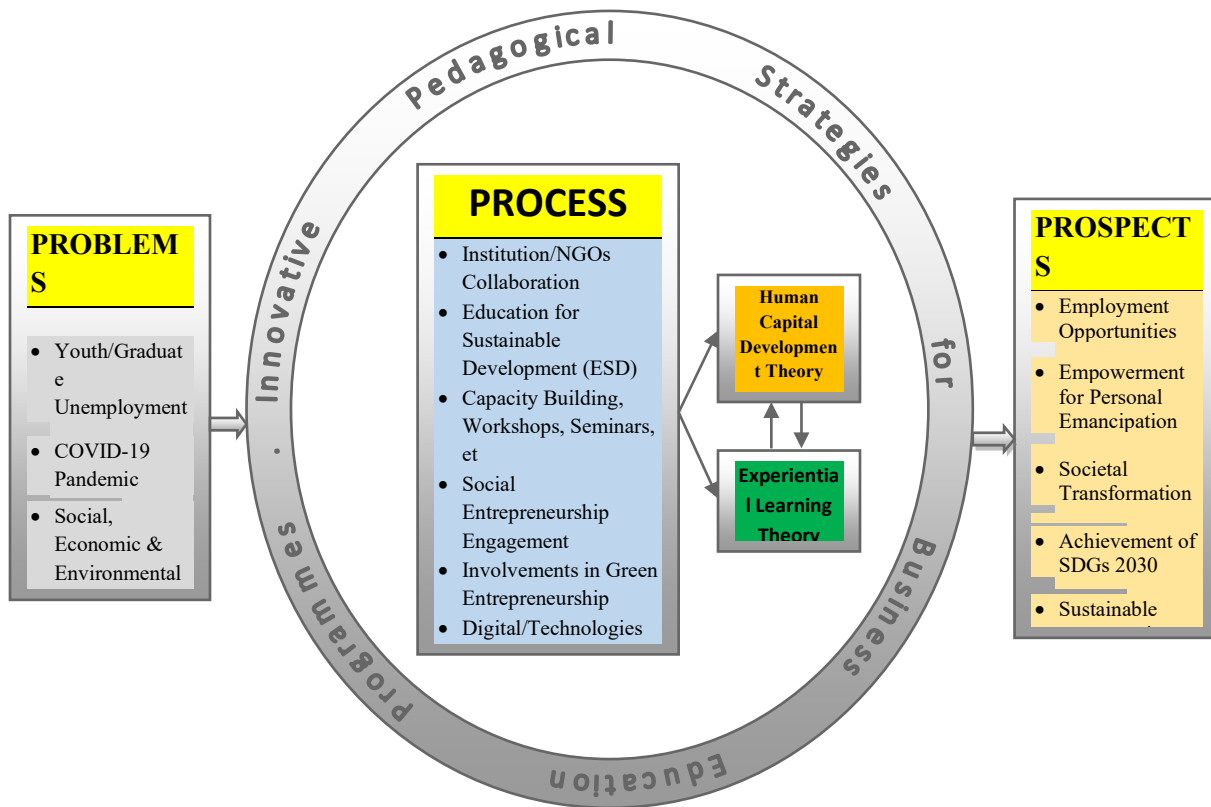
The empowerment of Business Education students towards sustainability in post COVID-19 era is anchored on two theoretical framework in this study. These are the Human Capital Development Theory (Becker, 1964) and Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984). Becker (1964) propounded the Human Capital Development Theory and emphasized on investing less on tangible assets and more on human capital. Becker stresses the importance of education, training, skills, health and other values in human beings. Becker therefore argues that investment of all these values in employees will enhance job satisfaction, greater performance and higher productivity, which lead to profit maximization with less job turnover in the organization. This theory is related to this study in the sense that Business Education students, as human capital asset, must be properly trained through education in order for them to be functional and adequately empowered with requisite knowledge and skills for sustainability in post COVID-19 era. In the same vein, Business Education undergraduate curriculum must be adequate in content for the recipients to become employable, self-employed, and empowered for the achievement of sustainable development goals (2030) in Nigeria.

The Experiential Learning theory lays emphasis on the significant role that experience plays in the learning process. It is learner-centred, learner-directed, and problem-solving focused. Experiential theory aims at the holistic understanding of a discipline and practical application of the course content. It includes interaction among students, instructors, and the environment. Kolb (1984) categorized experiential learning under four-stage process namely: Abstract Conceptualisation, Active Experiment, Concrete Experience, and Reflective Observation. Experiential Learning theory is identified with this study in that it stipulates practical pedagogical strategies appropriate for Business Education curriculum. It starts from abstract conceptualisation stage, which involves reading and receiving lectures from the course lecturers

in the classrooms. The active experiment stage will allow students to be actively involved in the learning by attending and listening to lectures, with theories and principles learnt in workshops, seminars and symposia, and industries in the form of Industrial Training (IT) experiences. The concrete experience stage affords Business Education students the opportunities to visit business organisations and social enterprises occasionally (apart from SIWES) to learn specifically about their packages, values, governance, organisational structure, funding plans and operations. At the reflective observation stage, Business Education students would write a creative, compelling and comprehensive report/proposal, which will be critiqued by classmates and the assessors, on their observations and interviews during the concrete experience stage. This can come in form of project report. The structure of the report/proposal will include: background of the project; objectives to be satisfied; problems to be solved; where the problem is identified; government policy related to the problem; business opportunities related to the intending business venture; key competitors and suppliers; customers and potential employees; and other environmental considerations.

With the support of the two theoretical framework explained above, the conceptual framework for empowering Business Education students towards sustainability in post COVID-19 era is illustrated in the diagram below:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Empowering Business Education Students towards Sustainability (CoFEBESS) in Post COVID-19 Era.



Source: Authors' compilation (2020)

The conceptual framework (CoFEBESS) illustrated in figure 1 above represents the main idea in this study. First of all, is the reality of diverse problems such as youth and graduate unemployment, COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermaths, social, economic and environmental problems, and obsolete curricula especially in Business Education programmes at tertiary institutions, being experienced majorly by developing nations, Nigeria is a significant example. Still on the premise that vocational and technology education, in general, and Business Education, in particular, are viable instrument for solving both personal and societal problems (FRN, 2014), there is, therefore, the need to ascertain proper human capital development as well as experiential learning strategies in these programmes. The combination of these theoretical backgrounds will result in innovative pedagogical strategies for empowering Business Education students towards sustainability in post COVID-19 era. Practical approaches to this innovative teaching and learning will include effective collaboration between institutions and Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs), the practice of education for sustainable development (ESD), capacity building workshops and seminars for both teachers and students, and engagement in social entrepreneurial activities. Other strategies include involvement of students in green entrepreneurship, empowerment of students in digital technologies, curriculum revitalization as well as active participation of the government and other stakeholders to provide the financial, material, and expertise support for effective implementation process. All other things being equal, it is expected that effective application and implementation of this process would yield enviable prospects such as employment opportunities, empowerment of students for emancipation from poverty, hunger and other economic threats, societal transformation, achievement of SDGs 2030, and sustainable economy in post COVID-19 era, among others.

Problems of Sustainability in Business Education Programme

Several research evidences show that Business Education curriculum is not adequate in content and pedagogical practices to equip learners with the twenty-first century competences demands. The research finding of Aquah (2014) showed that Business Education curriculum was not relevant for sustainable employment for the twenty-first century. The study of Eze, Ezenwafor and Igberaharha (2016) also buttressed the inability of business education curriculum at tertiary institutions to equip students with requisite knowledge and skills for employability and societal transformation. Akinbowale (2018) as well discovered that Business Education curriculum is too weak for achieving entrepreneurial empowerment for sustainable economy recovery. The research discovery of Alao (2020) also supported the fact that Business Education undergraduate curriculum lack adequate content and pedagogical strategies to empower students for the achievement of the SDGs of poverty eradication, hunger eradication, and decent work and productive employment for all in Nigeria.

As a result of the issues of obsolete and unproductive curriculum to prepare and empower the recipients for productive and sustainable employment especially in the post COVID-19 era, several social, economic and environmental threats have become the order of the day in Nigeria. Barakabo (2017) recognized the challenges of unemployment and unstable economy as impediments to the entrepreneurial fulfilment in Business Education career in Nigeria. The worst of these societal maladies were experienced at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Obrenovic, Du, Godinic, Tsoy, Khan, and Jakhongirov (2020) citing FitzGerald, et al (2020) reported that the adverse effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the total GDP for 2020 and 2021 worth 9 trillion dollars which is greater than the combination of Japanese and German economies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also reported that the economic decline caused by COVID-19 pandemic was the worst since the experiences of Great Depression of the 1930s (Amaro, 2020). There were also several incidences of

suspension of operations and laying off of workers in business organisations, especially the private-owned enterprises. The report of UNESCO (2020) as cited by Duraku and Hoxha (2020) revealed that more than 1.5 billion of students from about 188 countries globally were affected by the total lockdown and closure of schools and tertiary institutions during COVID-19 pandemic. It was also reported by NCIRD (2020) that adequate learning could not take place due to the suddenness of the pandemic as well as unpreparedness of the parties involved, coupled with limited technologies for effective online learning.

United Nations (2020) also reported that COVID-19 pandemic adversely worsened the educational situation of the vulnerable children, youth and adults in the developing nations. The number of school dropouts were skyrocketed as a result of the pandemic. The fiscal and financial burden of the government to cater for the ills of the pandemic also increased as a lot of people were jobless and in abject poverty. The rate of violence in the communities also doubled since “a hungry person is an angry person”. Oboh and Oboh (2020) recognized the limited availability of infrastructure and instructional resources in schools and institutions of higher learning as a major setback to recovery from the pandemic effect of COVID-19 on the Nigerian educational system. OECD (2020) emphasized that COVID-19 negatively impacted the lives of youth and vulnerable in the aspects of education, income generation, employment, and mental health. The economic and social consequences of COVID-19 pandemic would degenerate into inequalities and intergenerational poverty in the developing nations if the government fails to take a proactive measure to mitigate and recover the losses. Therefore, for Business Education programme and curriculum to become a catalyst for social, economic and environmental transformation and sustainability in post COVID-19 era in Nigeria, certain innovative pedagogical approaches and strategies must characterize its implementation process.

Process of Sustainability in Business Education Programme

Some of the critical approaches to empowering Business Education students towards sustainability in post COVID-19 era in Nigeria are as follows:

Curriculum Revamping

Eze, Ezenwafor and Igberaharha (2016) suggest that more creative and innovative approaches should be employed to include more courses in the curriculum of Business Education to facilitate and motivate students for entrepreneurship ventures on graduation. In the same vein, Agbonlahor (2016) also advised that regular review of Business Education curriculum to promote proper linkage with the real-world challenges of the twenty-first century. Nwokike, Ezeabili and Jim (2018) emphasised that achieving the SDGs through Business Education programme would necessitate the integration of SDGs issues in the curriculum content of the programme. Mustata, Bonaci, Hintea and Neamtu (2013) also carried out a research on sustainable development through Business Education programme in selected Romanian Universities, and suggested that conscientious effort should be made to include the content and practice of sustainability in the curriculum. There cannot be any radical and positive changes in the society if Business Education curriculum is not fully aligned with the sustainable development goals in both content and practice.

Collaboration of Institutions with the NGOs

The only avenue provided by the existing curriculum to link Business Education students with the industries is through Students' Industrial work Experience Scheme (SIWES). Some research findings have shown that SIWES lacks adequate provisions for up-to-date entrepreneurial exposures and empowerment necessary for achieving the sustainable development goals 2030 (Ibegbulam, Ejikeme and Enem, 2017; Oviawe, Uwameiye and Uddin, 2017; Atakpa, 2017). In other words, the interactions between students

and the industries need not be limited to only six months in four years. It is necessary for business students to be acquainted with day-to-day happenings in the industrial world. Empowering students for sustainability will require constant visit and learning from professionals in the industries. Motivate for entrepreneurial intention and behaviour comes through constant interaction and involvement in industrial practices.

Capacity Building Workshops and Seminars

In addition to constant visit and learning from experts at industries, Business Education students, as well as the lecturers would need to avail themselves for capacity building through workshops, seminars, symposia and conferences. Especially in this era of post COVID-19, several online techniques and approaches to teaching and learning as well as managerial or industrial operations need to be learned and the associated competences acquired. Audu, Abdulkadir and Kagara (2013) also buttressed the necessity of capacity building programmes in Business Education by suggesting collaboration with industries and constant organising of workshops and seminars as strategies to bridge the knowledge and competences gaps. Onyido and Duru (2019) also buttressed the fact that attaining sustainable development in Nigeria requires practical involvement of both teachers and students in capacity building and empowerment programmes that can deliver the twenty-first century competences.

Digital Technologies Empowerment

The post COVID-19 era is a digital age, therefore, to successfully impart knowledge and skills in learners, the teachers and lecturers themselves must be well versed with digital technologies competences. OECD (2016) and Ukata and Kalagbor (2015) also emphasized the indispensability of innovations in digital technologies to rightly empower the youth and students for higher productivity in the twenty-first century employment demands. Innovative technologies will engender productive teaching and learning towards the acquisition of critical thinking, creativity and imagination, problem-solving, communication, and other twenty-first century, highly demanded, competences. The teaching and learning of courses in Business Education such as Accounting, Management, Entrepreneurship, Office Technology, Information Technology, among others, must be digital-technologies-compliant, unless we want to continue to produce half-baked graduates that are unproductive in the post-COVID-19 era.

There are a lot new and emerging job opportunities embedded in digital technologies that Business Education students can explore provided the curriculum is rich enough to deliver such opportunities to the learners. OECD (2020) maintained that teachers and students need to make deliberate effort to close the gaps in the digital skills. These gaps include inability to locate and use high-quality digital learning resources and software; inadequate preparation towards blending technology into teaching, and lack of better understanding of the learning goals using digital technologies. The use of game, online laboratories, real-time assessment, experiential digital learning, multicultural online communications, are some of the ways of integrating digital technologies into the teaching and learning of Business Education curriculum.

Education for Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a combination of teaching and learning approaches that are locally relevant, culturally appropriate, and universally sustainable - economically, socially and environmentally (Howard, 2018). Education for sustainable development, as defined by UNESCO (2013) in Pauw, Gericke, Olsson and Berglund (2015), is integrating the key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning using participatory instructional methods that empower learners to change their behaviour and actions towards achieving sustainable development. Solving the economic, social and environmental challenges in the society leading to the achievement of the sustainable development goals

(SDGs 2030) is the focus of education for sustainable development (ESD). Education for sustainable development entails action-oriented and inquiry-based learning; systems-based learning; integrated and holistic approaches; and creative use of technology. Education for sustainable development has the ability to prepare the recipients towards being responsible to take actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society. This category of learners are called sustainability citizens (UNESCO, 2017).

Sustainability citizens are products of an effective ESD. These are twenty-first century transforming agents, whose knowledge, skills, attitudes and values are transversal, multifunctional and context-dependent. Therefore, in the post COVID-19 era, attaining sustainability would demand full transformation of Business Education curriculum and implementation to become education for sustainable development. Marco (2018) also declares that meeting sustainable development goals is a function of adequate acquisition of diverse skills and competences through education for sustainable development. These skills and competences empower the recipients for lifelong learning and for future (post-COVID-19) challenges.

Social Entrepreneurial Engagement

The popular entrepreneurship orientation among business students is the establishment and management of profit-driven ventures. The responsibilities of tackling societal challenges were supposed to be the priority of the government. One can almost conclude that many countries remain developing or less developed today because of lack of proper and innovative entrepreneurial orientation that focuses more on societal values than profit maximization. Social entrepreneurship is a relatively new entrepreneurial practice especially in the developing countries. People engage and remain in business as long as it continues to yield profits. The post COVID-19 era is one of the worst economic experiences that aggravated the poverty and hunger condition of the citizens. Government is also incapacitated to provide and engage the unemployed youth and graduates in productive employment. Therefore, there is the need to have a new entrepreneurial orientation to meet the urgent needs of the society.

This need therefore brought about social entrepreneurship education. The findings of Alao and Alao (2020) showed absence of social entrepreneurship in Business Education curriculum as well as faulty students' awareness and orientation of the same in Nigeria. Social entrepreneurship may be referred to as a selfless entrepreneurship strategy, effort and undertaking geared towards production of social solutions. That is, identifying social problems, creating methods of solving them and designing an action plan to execute the solution identified. Mohammed and Ndulue (2017) described social entrepreneurship as any innovative initiative that focuses on solving social problems, sustaining social value and reducing poverty with or without financial gains. OECD (2011) in Moses and Olokundun (2014) explained social entrepreneurship as identification of social problems in the communities and employment of ground-breaking strategies to solve the problems either in short-term or long-term basis. Ogunyemi (2012) emphasised that social entrepreneurship creates employment and self-employment opportunities for the less privileged, the poor, the homeless, physically and mentally challenged people in the communities.

Oghojafor, Aduloju and Olowokudejo (2011) maintained that social entrepreneurship has the potential of solving the problems of unemployment, poverty, prostitution, human trafficking, and gangsterism pervading the Nigerian society today. Social entrepreneurship education serves as a complementary to business or commercial entrepreneurship education in order to achieve holistic development of Business Education students to solve the twenty-first century challenges in the nation. The combination of these values in Business Education students would empower them to adequately turn every problem to business opportunity while solving societal problems. A Business Education graduate cannot just fold the hands

under the excuses of ‘no jobs’ when many people are roaming the streets of Nigeria for lack of functional skills and competences for self-employment. Business Education graduates can organize tutorial classes for the school drop-outs at a reasonable fee; they can also train the physically-challenged on some entrepreneurship skills that will change their status from being street beggars to job creators themselves.

Business Education graduates can also gather other unemployed graduates that have no entrepreneurship skills and train them on some computer programming or digital marketing packages that can provide them jobs in a company or make them to become self-employed. Turning the waste on the street of Lagos to money-making venture through recycling the waste is another social entrepreneurship opportunities that Business Education students and graduates can explore.

Involvement in Green Entrepreneurship

In an attempt to achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs, 2030), it is incumbent on vocational Business Education students to engage in green businesses such as recycling waste, minimizing energy use, involving in agribusinesses, participating in social enterprises, among others, for the common good of the society. CEDEFOP (2012) explained green skills as any knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes that enable an individual to live in, develop and support a sustainable society. UNESCO (2017) citing UNEP (2008) explained that green jobs contribute to the restoration and preservation of environmental quality while maintaining adequate pay, proper condition of work as well as workers’ right. Empowering Business Education students as catalysts for the sustainability of Nigeria would demand broadening students’ entrepreneurial orientation and curriculum emphasis, in content and pedagogies, towards green entrepreneurship.

The priority of entrepreneurship engagements of students and graduates of Business Education should centre more on societal transformation than profit maximization. Therefore, Business Education programme has a significant role to play in imparting skills and competences in learners for developing green economy, leading to sustainable development, improved human well-being, social equity, reduced environmental risks, and ecological scarcities (UNESCO, 2017). In order to achieve and maintain sustainability in post COVID-19 era, Business Education curriculum should project and promote adequate teaching and learning of green entrepreneurship in Nigerian tertiary institutions. In the occurrence of any pandemic or economic recession which often time result in gross unemployment, Business Education graduates could be employed or self-employed in green jobs for personal and societal sustainability. Environment-related contents and green skills should be embedded in the curriculum of Business Education programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Sustainability should be applied in research, philosophies, content, and standards of Business Education programmes.

Support from Government and other Stakeholders

The financial, material and policies involvements in the process of achieving sustainability in post COVID-19 era requires deliberate and conscientious and collaborative effort of the government and other stakeholders, such as the private companies and the communities. Technological demands of the post COVID-19 teaching and learning can only be met when all stakeholders Business Education programme rise up to their responsibilities. Ezech and Ekemezie (2015) also maintained that efforts should be made by the government to improve the lecturers and students’ motivational packages for active participation and commitment to the teaching and learning of Business Education curriculum. Otekunrin, Otekunrin, Momoh and Ayinde (2019) also advised the government and other stakeholders to support the policy and institutional frameworks formulated towards achieving the SDGs 2030 with adequate resources in Nigeria.

The teachers and the Ministry of Education should ensure adequate inclusion of quality instruction in the teaching and learning of Business Education curriculum (Nwokike, et al, 2018).

The pedagogical strategies expatiated above are the peculiarities of experiential learning. Achieving sustainable development goals through education for sustainable development will require innovative and experiential learning concept (Dima and Meghisan-toma, 2018). Hardin, Bhargava, Bothner, Browne, Kusano, Golrokhian, Wright, ZhuZeng, and Agrawal (2016) explained that experiential pedagogies are problem-driven and solution-focused approaches that encourage strong connections among students, the school management, and practitioners from the industries or outside world. Experiential pedagogies were acknowledge by Hardin, et al (2016) as very suitable for business and medical related disciplines due to their apprenticeship nature. The peculiarity of twenty-first century which is characterized by diverse career paths, professional paths, changing workplace practices, and new technologies, make it imperative to engage learners in more active forms of learning. Mynbayewa, Sadvakassova and Akshalova (2017) acknowledge that twenty-first century information and technological challenges necessitate the adoption of digital technologies in the teaching and learning process.

In other words, teaching and learning in schools and institutions of higher learning should migrate from pupil-teacher interaction (micro level of interaction) to the interaction that involves the pupils, teachers, parents, public organisations, religious oraganisations, economy, and the society (Macro level of interaction). The trend in the twenty-first century pattern of education that can achieve the SDGs is to expand entrepreneurial programmes in the universities through active-learning instructional methods and innovative curriculum content. Some of the instructional approaches for entrepreneurship courses at the tertiary institution level include interaction with entrepreneurs, real or virtual business creations, business plan competitions, the use of games, computer simulations, behavioural simulations, environmental scans, 'live' cases, field trips, the use of videos and films, etc. (Tete, et al, 2014). Experiential pedagogies bring about transformation of experience into knowledge because it affords learners to gather experiences from real-life routines outside the classroom environment (Tete, et al, 2014).

Howard (2018) argued that experiential pedagogies have the potentials of fulfilling the purpose of education, which is solving the social, economic as well as the environmental ills. The essence of functional education is to proffer permanent solutions to the shifting workforce demands and the development of good citizens. Using the right instructional approaches to education will help prepare Business Education students, as trainees in professional business establishments, for the rapidly emerging globalized, knowledge economy and digital society. Expectedly, the effective and efficient implementation of all the strategies explained above should bring about enviable prospects in the post COVID-19 era.

Prospects of Sustainability in Business Education Programme

There are several prospects and achievements of sustainability in Business Education programme. Business Education students' ability to interact with the community will engender their assimilation and demonstration of knowledge, skills and competences to solve social, economic and environmental problems in the society (Mynbayewa, Sadvakassova and Akshalova, 2017). Education for sustainable development has the ability to prepare the recipients towards being responsible to take actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society (UNESCO (2018). ESD contributes to the achievement of SDGs by equipping individuals with knowledge and competences required to bring about the necessary social, economic and environmental transformational in the societies (UNESCO, 2017).

Further, Nwaigburu and Eneogwe (2013) opined that making Business Education programme and curriculum sustainable at tertiary institutions would empower the students with requisite knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that promote and engender self-reliance, resilient economy, higher gross domestic product (GDP), and national development. Anyaeneh and Nzegwu (2015) advocated that business education programme that is sustainably packaged and practically delivered could bring about an economy that is technologically relevant and economically prosperous. There is a strong relationship between business education programme and the achievement of sustainable development of any nation (Nwokike, Ezeabii & Jim, 2018). Buttressing the need to discourage over-dependence on petroleum and crude-oil in Nigeria, Adam, Jibrin & Lukman (2017) and Usen and Udukeke (2019) emphasised its degradation effect on the economy, and the urgency of embracing the sustainable and diversifying entrepreneurial opportunities through Business Education programme that is holistically characterized by sustainability.

Conclusions

The review of the literature in this study revealed the inadequacy of the pedagogical approaches used for Business Education in empowering students for sustainability in the post COVID-19 era. It is also established through the review that Business Education graduates also constitute part of the unemployed youth in Nigeria, in spite of the entrepreneurial nature of the programme. The curriculum of Business Education is found inadequate to cater for the twenty-first century as well as post COVID-19 challenges in Nigeria. The active role of various stakeholders of Business Education programme is sine qua non in the effort towards achieving the Sustainable development goals (SDGs, 2030) in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the recommendations are shown as follows:

1. The Ministry of Education as well as relevant bodies governing tertiary institutions should make conscientious effort to review and enhance Business Education curriculum in order to accommodate appropriate contents and practices for sustainability in Nigeria.
2. Government with other relevant stakeholders should support the process of making Business Education sustainable through adequate policies, financial, material and expertise support.
3. The industries professionals should be readily available to support the training of Business Education students through capacity building programmes in the forms of workshops, seminars, symposia and conferences.
4. The School management should effectively implement the policies and allocation of provided educational resources towards sustainability in Business Education programmes.
5. Business Educators should be open to developmental changes occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic for adequate professional development and productive discharge of their duties as teachers.
6. Business Education students should be physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready to explore all the available opportunities necessary for their ultimate empowerment for sustainability in the post COVID-19 era.

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Covid-19 Pandemic, Household Finance and Youth Employment in Nigeria: A Case of Yaba Local Council Development Area, Lagos State

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Abstract

Covid-19 is an unprecedented shock on global economies. This study investigates the impact of Covid-19 on household finance and youth employment in Nigeria (Yaba Local Council Development Area of Lagos State). It covered three major areas in Yaba LCDA (Iyana-Oworo, Pako and Ilaje). The study employed descriptive and ex-post facto research design as well as survey method in the distribution of questionnaires. Also, a multistage sampling technique was employed to randomly group the population for easy assessment. In addition, four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered while three hundred and fifty (350) were returned (87.3%). Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the research questions while regression was employed to address the hypotheses. The empirical results of the study provide very strong evidence of negative impact of Covid-19 pandemic on youths household finance as well as its employment, For the shock not to have permanent effects on youths' means of livelihood, policy makers should take appropriate actions, especially in the area of digital training, modular entrepreneurship program to help youth reverse the effects of the negative shocks.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Household finance, Youth employment, Yaba LCDA, Nigeria

Introduction

Nigeria's economic growth has been fragile since its recession in 2016 because it relies on crude sales for about 90 percent of its foreign exchange earnings before COVID-19 hit the economy hard, amid low oil prices. The novel global pandemic (Covid-19) which is ravaging the entire world economy has brought unprecedented hardship to humanity especially the youths and the aged. More so, it has led to an erratic decline in global crude oil price, income slash, job losses, increase in crime rate as well as increases in prices of consumable items and drop in stock market prices. COVID-19 pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of coronavirus disease attributed to a severe acute respiratory syndrome. The novel pandemic which crops up in Wuhan China, in November 2019, made most countries to shut down their borders for trade, imposed a total lockdown on movement and instituted social distancing to curtail the deadly pandemic. Some developing countries, for instance Nigeria; experienced drastic declines in their gross domestic product (GDP), increased inflation rate as well as high youth unemployment. According to International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2020), the global pandemic has brought severe disruptions to economies and labour market worldwide, with a disproportionate impact on youth employment. Lagos State, the commercial hub and the fastest growing city in Africa, with an average GDP of 30.0%, had a strict lockdown which affected business activities in the state as well as the livelihood of the citizens, thus restricting access to finance (Andam et al, 2020).

The novel disease first occurred in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in early December, 2019. On January 30, 2020, World Health Organisation declared the outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. Over 49,000 laboratory-confirmed incidents and 1,381 deaths were globally reported as at February 14, 2020. Consequently, many countries of the world instituted a series of control measures to avert risks of acquiring it (Harapan et. al, 2020). Federal Ministry of Health confirmed a coronavirus disease (COVID-19) first case in Lagos State, Nigeria on the 27th of February 2020 (Ehanire, 2020, NCDC, 2020a). The incidence of the pandemic gave way to a chain of policy actions, such as public

health and education campaigns, fiscal and monetary measures, and restrictions on large sections of the economy, etc (Onyekwena & Mma, 2020). The pandemic resulted to external shocks that weakened demand for oil and consequently a global economic recession. Sequel to that, Nigeria's government revenue fell; foreign remittances reduced; and economic activities were restricted within the economy as a result of federal and state-level lock-downs. The lockdown policies reduced Nigerian GDP by US\$11 billion or 23 percent during period (FGN, 2020a).

Many Nigerians have lost jobs as a result of the snowballing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic currently ravaging the world. According to the maiden report of COVID-19 impact monitoring survey released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on employment and income of Nigerians was widespread (Adesoji, 2020). In the same vein, Ajayi (2020) reported that the total income of over 67 percent of households in Nigeria declined in 2020 when compared to the same period in 2019. Lagos State contributes significantly to the Nigerian economy. It contributes about 30 percent to Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP). It is considered, home to almost 10 percent of population of Nigeria. In addition, Lagos state is the economic hub of Nigeria (Financial Times, 2018). However, it is regarded as the epicentre of Covid-19 in Nigeria (NCNC, 2020a). The restrictions imposed on the state as a result of the pandemic drastically reduced its economic output and household incomes for a larger part of its residents who were unable to work and earn income (Andam et al, 2020).

To this end, we investigate the impact of Covid-19 on household finance and youth employment in Yaba Local Council Development Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. Following the introductory part of the study, is review of literature. Section 3 presents methodology while empirical results are discussed in Section 4 and Section 5 concludes the study.

Review of Literature

A number of research has been conducted on the novel pandemic, with diverse results of its socio-economic impact on nations as well as global economy. For instance, the study by Lee & Warner (2005) on the impact of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) on Hong Kong hotel sub-sector, affirmed that the pandemic had negative influence on the sub-sector, as well as other related sectors in the economy. A similar study conducted by Nkengasong & Mankoula (2020) in Africa and China respectively, revealed that the proliferation of the coronavirus had negative effect on trade and air traffic sectors, implying that the countries' trade as well as air traffic sectors were adversely affected, although the authors suggested palliatives to cushion the impending health crisis facing health workers in Africa and China respectively.

Employing preparedness and vulnerability indicators, Gilbert et al (2020), examined the risk of importing and contracting the pandemic in highly vulnerable countries like Africa, where its health sector's performance was porous. The result of the study affirmed that highly vulnerable areas where the health and control for disease sector was poor could easily contract the pandemic, compared to countries that had sound health sector. In the same vein, Ozili & Arun (2020), revealed that the proliferation of the virus, social distancing and lockdown of the global economy in order to curtail the spread, had negative influence on global financial market, businesses, as well as social activities, which created immense nervousness on the part of consumers and investors.

Moreover, Baker *et al* (2020) explored the economic effects of Covid-19 on stock market in United State of America. The result of the study affirmed that the outbreak of the novel pandemic had a negative and

unprecedented impact on the global stock market. Similarly, Olunkwa *et al* (2020), opined that the novel pandemic affected the active population of some countries like Russia, Germany, Mexico, Iran, Ecuador, Pakistan, Brazil, Chile, and New Zealand, suggesting that there was a silver lining for active population that decided to relocate to other regions. In addition, Kim, Koh and Zhang (2020) analysed the short-term impact of Covid-19 on consumption spending and its mechanism in Singapore, with individual-level monthly panel data. The result of the study affirmed that the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the consumption spending by almost a quarter during its peak, with a larger response from households with above-median wealth.

From the foregoing, it is clear that there has been no consensus on the possible effects of the novel pandemic on global economy. Although, some studies have examined its effects on trade and air traffic (Nkengasong & Mankoula, 2020), while few others investigated its impact on global economy, stock markets, financial market, working population respectively (Ozili & Arun 2020; Baker *et al* 2020; and Olunkwa *et al* 2020). However, none of the studies to the best of our knowledge has been able to address the prevailing effects of Covid-19 on household finance and youth employment. Based on this, our study tends to reconcile the inconsistency in previous literature as well as fill the noticeable gaps in literature, by investigating the effect of Covid-19 on household finance and youth employment in Nigeria, specifically focusing on Yaba Local Council Development Area of Lagos State. Another novelty in the study, is that it ran two models: effects of the novel pandemic on household finance and youth employment separately.

Methodology

The study employed descriptive and ex-post facto research design to address the major objective of the study. More so, it further used survey sampling method in administering questionnaires as well as multistage sampling technique to divide randomly the population into groups for easy administering and collection of required data for analysis. Yaba local council development area (LCDA) has a shifting population of about 150,000 by estimation, however, a total of four hundred (400) questionnaires were distributed while three hundred and fifty (350) were returned. Communities covered in the course of distribution were Iyana-Oworo new garage, Ilaje and Pako. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the demographic section as well as the structured research questions while the hypotheses of the study were analysed using ordinary regression analysis. Two models are specified as follows:

$$HF = Covid \quad (1)$$

Where HF represents household finance proxied with finance status, while Covid signified the novel pandemic.

Equation 1 is further linearized as:

$$HF_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Covid_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (2)$$

$$YE = Covid \quad (3)$$

Where YE represents youth employment, Covid signified the novel pandemic.

Equation 3 is further linearized as:

$$YE_t = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Covid_t + \varepsilon_t \quad (4)$$

Data Analysis and Findings

A total of 400 questionnaires administered to the targeted respondents, 350 were returned, giving a high response rate of 87.5 percent. This section deals with the bio-data information of the respondents such as gender, age, religion, educational, status, as well as earnings. The analysis and interpretation of the demographic section of the questionnaire is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Characteristics	Freq.	%
Age	17 – 20	56	16
	21– 35	125	35.7
	26– 30	93	26.5
	31and Above	76	21.8
Gender	Male	182	52
	Female	168	48
Religion	Christianity	127	32.3
	Islam	152	43.4
	Others	71	20.3
Educational Qualification	SSCE	35	10
	ND/NCE	84	24
	HND	89	25.4
	B.Sc.	92	26.3
	M.Sc	50	14.3
Status	Employed	99	28.3
	Underemployed	48	13.7
	Unemployed	126	36
	Self-Employed	77	22
Your current monthly financial earning	N 15,000 - N25,000	115	32.9
	N 25,000 - N45,000	123	35.1
	N 45,000 - N75,000	76	21.7
	N 75,000 and Above	36	10.3
Bank	Savings	167	47.7
	Current	61	17.4
	Fixed	24	6.9
	None	98	28
Personal Investment	Yes	150	42.9
	No	200	57.1

Source: Field Survey (2020)

More of the respondents are within the age bracket 21-35 years, suggesting that more of the active population participated in the study. More so, of the active participants, the male category was more active with about one hundred and eighty-two (182) respondents representing 52 percent while one hundred and

sixty-eight (168) respondents were in female group representing 48 percent. The average mean age of the participants is 2.51 while the standard deviation is 1.05.

Further, the average mean and standard deviation for gender participation is 1.22 and 0.40 respectively. The percentage of religion for Christianity, Islam and others are 32.3% (127), 43.4% (152), and 20.3% (71) respectively. Average mean of religion is 1.74 while standard deviation is 0.55. In addition, from the total population of elites, ninety-two (92), indicating 26.3% are bachelor's degree holders, although most of them are unemployed. This means that one hundred and twenty-six (126) of the total population (350), representing 36.0% are unemployed, although seventy-seven (77) signifying 22.0% are self-employed. Moreover, the result further affirms that out of the number of youths that are gainfully employed, one hundred and twenty-three earned between ₦25,000 and ₦45,000 respectively, without having any domestic investment for augmentation. However, one hundred and sixty-seven (167) representing 47.7% participants, claimed to have savings account with different banks in Lagos state.

Analysis of Research Question 1

The first research question was analysed using percentage and frequency distributions. Table 2 reveals that one hundred and five (105) representing 30.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that the period of the novel pandemic was a blessing in disguise in regards of their finance.

Table 2: Effect of Covid-19 on financial status

Variable	Characteristics	Freq.	%	Mean (SD)
The period of the novel pandemic has been a blessing in disguise in regard to your finance	SA	105	30.0	2.16 (1.02)
	A	94	26.9	
	N	44	12.6	
	D	71	20.3	
	SD	36	10.2	
	Total	350	100.0	
Your financial solvency increased as a result of the lockdown and social distancing strategy employed by government	SA	44	12.6	2.11 (1.08)
	A	69	19.7	
	N	23	6.6	
	D	95	27.1	
	SD	119	34.0	
	Total	350	100.0	
The palliative measure employed by government to cushion the effect of the pandemic in your LCDA went a long way in enhancing you financial status as a person	SA	49	14.0	2.87 (1.12)
	A	60	17.1	
	N	25	7.1	
	D	89	25.5	
	SD	127	36.3	
	Total	350	100.0	
Covid-19 pandemic gave you the opportunities to understand how to manage and invest money during crisis	SA	99	28.3	2.99 (1.16)
	A	84	24.0	
	N	72	20.6	
	D	74	21.1	
	SD	21	6.0	
	Total	350	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2020. Sample size N = 350

This implies that during the pandemic, most of the youths were able to discover their hidden talents. Although, the pandemic affected their finance positively as most of the youths were able to engage

themselves in the domestic production of hand sanitizers, liquid soaps as well as face shields and nose masks. However, seventy-one (71) representing 20.3% believed that it did more harm than good to them. Similarly, one hundred and nineteen (119) signifying 34.0% strongly disagreed that their financial solvency increased as a result of the lockdown strategy employed by the government, since most suppliers and producers were skeptical on granting credits, with the mindset that the customers might default in the long-run. In addition, 127 (36.3%) affirmed that the palliative measures employed by the government to cushion the effects of the pandemic failed to enhance their financial status as individuals. In the same vein, 99 (28.3%), strongly agreed that Covid-19 created more opportunities for them on how to manage and invest money during crisis. Lastly, majority of the participants affirmed that Covid-19 was an opportunity to boost their finances but most of the income generated were also expended on high prices of goods and services for sustenance.

Analysis of Research Question 2

Table 3 above reveals the effects of Covid-19 on youth employment in Yaba LCDA. Based on the analysis, 93 (27.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that Covid-19 created employment opportunities for youths based on managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

Table 3: Effect of Covid-19 on youth employment

Variable	Characteristics	Freq.	%	Mean	SD
Covid-19 pandemic has been able to create employment for youths based on the managerial skills and entrepreneurial spirit they have	SA	67	19.1	3.05	1.28
	A	69	19.7		
	N	59	16.9		
	D	62	16.7		
	SD	93	27.6		
	Total	350	100.0		
Government loans made available for growing businesses at the LCDA during and after the lockdown helped reduced youth unemployment and restiveness	SA	42	12.0	2.90	1.23
	A	67	19.1		
	N	30	8.6		
	D	78	22.3		
	SD	133	38.0		
	Total	350	100.0		
The ease of lockdown after several deliberations by government enhanced youth employment at the LCDA	SA	37	10.6	2.92	1.21
	A	50	14.2		
	N	65	18.6		
	D	78	22.3		
	SD	120	34.3		
	Total	350	100.0		
There are government directives for private organisations to support talent development that can create jobs after the ease of the lockdown	SA	26	7.4	2.98	1.20
	A	24	6.9		
	N	57	16.3		
	D	175	50.0		
	SD	68	19.4		
	Total	350	100.0		

Source: Field Survey 2020. Sample size N = 350

This means that despite their talents, they were not more productive because of inadequate funding from the government. On the other hand, 69 (19.7%) agreed that the pandemic created employment for youths that had management and entrepreneurial skills, but on a lower scale. Further, 133 (38.0%) strongly disagreed that government loans made available for growing businesses during and after the lockdown

were not operational; hence, youth unemployment and restiveness were on the increase. More so, the ease of lockdown after several deliberations by government was not able to enhance youth employment at the local council development area. In the same vein, 175 (50.0%) of the total participants disagreed that government directives for private organisations to support talent development, which could create jobs are not effective, due to the fact that selection by the private firms was sentimental or bias. This led to more unrest among youths rather than quelling problem of youth restiveness. In summary, most of the respondents strongly disagreed that Covid-19 created employment for youths but more youths lost their jobs during the lockdown.

Analysis of Research Objective

In explaining the relationship between Covid-19, household finance and youth employment in Nigeria, focusing on Yaba Local Council Development Area (LCDA), the linear regression model was analysed.

Table 4: Dependent Variable: Financial Status of Youths

Model 1				Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
				B	Std. Error	Beta	T
Constant				0.437	.297		6.073
Covid-19 pandemic gave you the opportunities to understand how to manage and invest money during crisis				-.441	.056	.001	.012
Your financial solvency increased as a result of the lockdown and social distancing strategy employed by government				.132	.059	-.135	2.258
Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate		Durbin-Watson	
1	.673 ^a	.803	.756	1.740		1.97	

Source: Field Survey 2020

In model 1, the regression result of the field survey presented in Table 4, indicates that Covid-19 pandemic has a negative impact on the financial status of youths at Yaba LCDA. This implies that a percent change in Covid-19 pandemic, reduced the financial status of youths by 44.1%. The result further affirmed that although Covid-19 gave few youths opportunities to understand how to manage and invest money during crisis, but people were unable to invest as a result of increase in the prices of consumable goods as well as hike in the cost of transportation. The result also, revealed that government strategies of lockdown and social distancing during pandemic contributed positively to youths' financial solvency. A percent change in government strategy enhanced youths' financial solvency by 13.2%. The result affirmed that the Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.97 suggests no serial correlation in the model. The R-squared shows that about 80.3% explained variation in youth financial status is jointly accounted for by all the explanatory variables while the adjusted R-squared value shows that after removing the effects of insignificant regressors, the model explains about 75.6% of the variation in the dependent variable.

The regression result in model II in Table 5, affirmed that government strategies on youth employment have a positive and significant impact on youth employment. This implies that a percent change in government entrepreneurial strategies increased youth employment by 2.1%.

Table 5: Dependent Variable: Youth Employment

Model 2				Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
				B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant				0.877	.297		4.072	.001
Government entrepreneurial strategies improved entrepreneurial businesses and created employment for teeming youths in Lagos State.				.021	.056	.001	.012	.020
Covid-19 pandemic has been able to create employment for youths based on the managerial skills and entrepreneurial spirit they have.				-.192	.039	-.135	-2.258	.025
Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R Square	Std.Error of the Estimate		Durbin-Watson		
2	.553 ^a	.753	.667	0.782		2.34		

Source: Field Survey 2020

That is government entrepreneurial strategies improved entrepreneurial business and also created employment for the teeming youths in Yaba LCDA. The result reveals that Covid-19 pandemic negatively but significantly influenced youth employment. This connotes that the impact is significant as few youths could create jobs through their managerial skills as well as the entrepreneurial spirit they have. In addition, the Durbin-Watson statistic of 2.34 suggests no serial correlation in the model, also, the R-squared shows that about 75.3% explained variation in youth employment is jointly accounted for by all the explanatory variables while the adjusted R-squared value shows that after removing the effect of insignificant regressors, the model explains about 66.7% of the variation in the dependent variable. Overall, the result confirms that Covid-19 has negative impact on youth's household finance, financial status and youth employment, although government entrepreneurial strategies; such as funds to micro businesses, reduction in taxes and encouragement of private organisations to fund youth talent, boosted youth employment in the LCDA.

Conclusion

The study examined the impact of Covid-19 on household finance and youth employment in Nigeria (Yaba, Local Council Development Area of Lagos). It used descriptive and ex-post facto research design as well as survey method in the distribution of the questionnaires. It also covered three major communities in Yaba LCDA (Iyana-Oworo, Pako and Ilaje) and employed a multistage sampling technique to randomly group the population for assessment. In addition, four hundred (400) questionnaires were administered while three hundred and fifty (350) were returned (87.3%). Frequencies and percentages were used to analyse the research questions while regression was employed to address the hypotheses. The empirical results of the study provide very strong evidence of the negative impact of Covid-19 pandemic on youth's household finance as well as its employment. Overall, the novel pandemic in Yaba LCDA, drastically affected youths' ability to save or borrow to meet their investment needs. More so, the negative effects on youth's employment, coupled with lockdown and social distancing, paved way for youth unrest which escalated the rate of crime in the LCDA.

From the empirical findings of the study, the following are suggested:

- The local government chairman as well as other principal officers in Yaba LCDA should assist the youths on digital training, especially in the aspect of virtual training on trading and

marketing. This idea is classified as wealth-creating technique that can augment their savings and reduce borrowing to meet their personal or family needs.

- ii. On the issue of creating employment, the state government at large and the local government authorities in the State should design a modular entrepreneurship¹ program to help youth reverse the effects of the negative shocks.

The study was constrained by inadequate finance, limiting its scope. Another limitation is insecurity, the areas covered are more prone to youth restiveness. This inhibited researchers from accessing troubled areas in the LCDA, limiting information from the axis. However, the shortcomings do not invalidate the research's findings. The scope of the study can be extended by including more LCDA for comparative analysis.

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¹ The modular entrepreneurship is the process of subdividing or breaking down entrepreneurial business into separate units for easy understanding of the business, not lumping it as one.

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Appendices QUESTIONNAIRES

SECTION A: Please tick [✓] or fill the boxes provided that best suite you.

BIO-DATA

1. Gender:

(a) Male ☐ (b) Female ☐

2. Age:

(a) 17-20yrs ☐ (b) 21-25yrs ☐

(c) 26-30yrs ☐ (d) 31yrs above ☐

3. Religion:

(a) Christianity ☐ (b) Islam ☐ (c) Others ☐

4. Educational Qualification

(a) SSCE ☐ (b) ND/NCE ☐ (c) HND ☐ (d) B.Sc. ☐ (e) M.Sc. ☐

5. Status

Employed ☐ Underemployed ☐ Unemployed ☐ Self-Employed ☐

6. Your current monthly financial earning

(a) ₦ 15,000 – ₦25,000 ☐ (b) ₦ 25,000 – ₦45,000 ☐ (c) ₦ 45,000 – ₦75,000 ☐

(d) ₦ 15,000 – ₦25,000 ☐

7. What type of account do you run with a bank (a) Savings ☐ (b) Current ☐ (c) Fixed (d) None

8. Do you have any personal investment that keeps you busy (a) Yes ☐ (b) No ☐

SECTION B: Please tick [✓] boxes provided that best suite you

SA- Strongly Agree A- Agree D- Disagree SD – Strongly Disagree

COVID-19 AND ITS EFFECT ON FINANCIAL STATUS OF YOUTHS IN YABA LCDA

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	The period of the novel pandemic has been a blessing in disguise in regard to your finance					
2	Your financial solvency increased as a result of the lockdown and social distancing strategy employed by government					
3	The palliative measure employed by government to cushion the effect of the pandemic in your LCDA went a long way in enhancing you financial status as person					
4	Covid-19 pandemic gave you the opportunities to understand how to manage and invest money during crisis					

SECTION C: Please tick [✓] boxes provided that best suite you

SA- Strongly Agree A- Agree D- Disagree SD – Strongly Disagree

COVID-19 AND ITS EFFECT ON YOUTHS EMPLOYMENT IN YABA LCDA

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Covid-19 pandemic has been able to create employment for youths based on the managerial skills and entrepreneurial spirit they have					
2	Government loans made available for growing businesses at the LCDA during and after the lockdown has helped reduced youth unemployment and restiveness					
3	The ease of lockdown after several deliberations by government have been able to enhance youth employment at the LCDA					
4	There are government directives for private organizations to support talent development that can create jobs after the ease of lockdown					

SECTION D: Please tick [✓] boxes provided that best suite you

SA- Strongly Agree A- Agree D- Disagree SD – Strongly Disagree

YOUTHS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Innovation increases as a result of the growth of entrepreneurship in Lagos state, which have transformed to employment.					
2	Government entrepreneurial strategies have helped improved entrepreneurial businesses and create employment for teeming youths in Lagos State.					
3	There are government directives for private organisations to support youth entrepreneurship at the local government level.					
4	Youth entrepreneurship brings about growth in the economy					

Assessment of Surrounding Air Conditions on the Operations of Informal Entrepreneurs in Okitipupa, Ondo State

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Abstract

In the course of economic downturn, entrepreneurship issues become burning national subject in order to provide for loss of jobs. The latest economic recession in Nigeria, caused by the Covid 19 pandemic has produced new economic and social disadvantage. Most family in order to survival have turned to the street with several businesses in order to make ends meet; this however, is not without its attendant negative concern. The environment in which most informal entrepreneurs do their daily business can barely be regarded as garden fresh due to the impasse generated by movement of vehicle along the street. This study focuses on the exposure to hazardous air bore pollutant along major road in Okitipupa, Ondo state, Nigeria and their effect on street entrepreneurs, who subsist along traffic corridor. Questionnaire survey was relied on to harness the health hazard faced by 226 informal entrepreneurs sampled, due to road side pollutant. Likewise, experimental survey was deployed to obtain the true state of some of the common air pollutant in the corridor of study. Results shows, that these informal entrepreneurs are greatly affected by road traffic air pollutant; as 11.95% of the respondents have high nasal discharge, 6.64% of the respondents reported high throat irritation, 9.73% of the respondents cough often, 3.98% reported high level of breathlessness and 5.75% reported high asthmatic condition. While it was observed that between 3.891ppm to 7.506ppm of carbon monoxide, 0.006 ppm to 0.009 ppm sulphur dioxide, 0.019 ppm to 0.043ppm of Nitrogen dioxide and 415.44 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ to 498.289 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ of Particulate matter 10 (PM₁₀) is generated along the corridors of study. The study recommends that entrepreneurs in the informal sectors operating along road corridors should carry out their business at least 150m away from major road traffic path to avoid over exposure to automobile generated air pollutions as this will lead to a decrease in health hazard occasioned by over-exposure.

Key point: Informal Entrepreneurs, Air Pollutions, Road Traffic, Health Hazard.

Introduction

In the appearance of quick societal and technical change due to economic realities caused by economic meltdown and joblessness growth, many individuals nations shifts the effort of their policies from efficiency gains in existing enterprises to facilitating new wealth creation (Igwe, Oyelola, Ajiboshin, & Peluola, 2014) however, this trend have forced individuals to move to the informal entrepreneurial sector most of which are found along road traffic corridors.

Many informal entrepreneurs carry out their business in the informal economy which is well-defined as an economic process which is not covered or insufficiently covered by formal provisions, both in law or in exercise (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2011; Williams & Gurtoo, Evaluating competing theories of street entrepreneurship: Some lessons from a study of street vendors in Bangalore, India., 2012). The surrounding environmental quality of an area describes the state of a surround area subject to the predominate activities within the spatial spectrum (FHWA, 2019). Global trends have shown that fossil powered road automobile contribute to poor quality of the environment

by way of polluting the air, sound and soil around the environment, hence, affecting the people subsisting along these corridors (Getachew, 2015).

The philosophy of entrepreneurship has become an axiom all over the business world. It involves independence and risk-bearing (Doody, Chen, & Goldstein, 2016). Individuals involved in Entrepreneurship are familiar with a stance of innovativeness, testing of new ideals and taking the initiative to pioneer new business markets (Zhang, Groen, & Belousova, 2018). In entrepreneurship research, sociology economists put more attention of their findings on profit-margin, ownership, and business innovations, including what drivers individuals to start an enterprising and what is responsible for success and/or miscarriage of the new firms (Doody, *et al.*, 2016). Entrepreneurship researchers have over the years concentrated on how different traits, organised physical characteristics, and resource configurations affects entrepreneurial output (Companys & McMullen, 2007). However, the understanding of how road side entrepreneurs in an emerging market are affected by the surrounding environment most especially because of the releases from the tile pipe emulsions as vehicle traverses along the corridor in which they subsist to carry out their informal entrepreneurship innovations is still limited (Odesanya, Okoko, & Stephens, 2019). In fact, despite the maturity of the informal entrepreneurship sector, there are not many research works regarding their safety on such road corridor (Lefebvre, De Steur, & Gellynck, 2015). Most of the existing researches in this area dwells more on advance high-tech businesses (Vrontis, Thrassou, Santoro, & Papa, 2017). More studies are also necessary in low-earn enterprising, as the case of entrepreneurship on road side risks is concern (Alfiero, Lo Giudice, & Bonadonna, 2017). The major factor faced by many small medium-sized enterprises as those involved in street ventures are related to how they can substitute active innovation to make more profit (Farsi & Toghraee, 2014). However, there is need for them to be shielded from the negative externality of the transport corridor where they carry out their business.

This paper is aims at addressing this gap, specifically at deepening an awareness of street entrepreneurship and the safety issues surrounding their workspace as it concern air related pollutions. The starting point has been the prevalent premise in the literature that, due to their low educational standards, street entrepreneurs are not innovative and their safety issues are not taken seriously (Reynolds, Bygrave, Autio, Cox, & Hay, 2002; Bhola, Verheul, Thurik, & Grilo, 2006; Matzembacher, Gonzales, & Saldanha, 2019). The question that guided this investigation is: what are the exposure levels to air related pollutant that roadside entrepreneurs in the informal sector are faced with? To provide answers to this question an investigation was carried out with the case study focusing on road side vendors who are involved in selling of their wares along the street such as: petty traders, street hawkers, vulcanizers, roadside shop operators, road side automobile repairers and food vendors (beans cake makers, snacks makers etc) in a developing countryside. It is hoped to contribute to the existing knowledge about street entrepreneurship by developing a better view of the nature and characteristics for entrepreneurial safety. Specially, it is expected to contribute in the understanding of how street entrepreneurs can enjoy safety in times of economic crises which have led many to this mode of family sustainability. This study becomes important at a time like this when nations are been challenged with economic recession and a global variations in job dynamics, while the entrepreneurship discourse returns to the front burner of national discuss, against this backdrop, a new phenomenon related to street entrepreneurship and/or roadside entrepreneur has increase research investigative interest: street ventures, formerly downgraded and generally related to informal work, are now enjoying unprecedented focus by individuals trying to make ends meet with little or no check on the health implications of this kind of venture.

General Concept on Entrepreneur

The word entrepreneurship can be well-defined at this level as business making (Doody, Chen, & Goldstein, 2016). Entrepreneurship has to do with the result of different innovativeness, appetite to

meet target goals and resolve to succeed (Kuratko, 2011). Demographic, networks, proficiencies and perception factors are all related to a compound interest of an Entrepreneurial goal (Khefacha & Belkacem, 2015). These factors should be well blended with consideration to societal, social and behaviour features, such as knowledge, economic, political climate and education (Ozaralli & Rivenburgh, 2016).

Academically, there exist several definitions of entrepreneur, several researchers put in efforts in order to better define and describe this concept. Matzembacher, *et al.*, (2019) describe the perspective to include taxonomy of entrepreneurial theories which they classified into three major ideas: a) Austrian of Menger, Von Mises and Kirzner; b) German or Schumpeterian of von Thünen, Schumpeter and Baumol; and c) Neoclassical of Marshall, Knight and Schultz; (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999).

The Austrians put effort on the capabilities of the entrepreneur to notice profit prospects which many have seen the road side as a place where their items can easily be spotted and bought, usually after some deliberate effort. The “Austrian” entrepreneur conglomerates resources together to attain current unfulfilled needs or to increase market inadequacies and/or deficits. The neoclassical stress the importance of the entrepreneur in helping markets to attain symmetry via their entrepreneurial actions. German or Schumpeterian culture focuses on entrepreneurial sector as an invention due to instability and creative destruction. According to (Nooteboom, 1993) the variance between the (Schumpeterian) and Austrian practise is as follows: the German Schumpeterian entrepreneur engenders the potential while the Austrian recognises it (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999).

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2015) defines the concept of entrepreneur as any attempt to fashion a new endeavour, whether to commence a new business, to enlarge a pre-existing one or even to activate an autonomous action, this concept had been widely accepted. In concept, an entrepreneur can be refer to any sophisticated, formal enterprises with higher benefit, or to those actual simple businesses, whether they be formal or informal, aiming majorly to obtain a different source of revenue, whether to replace or complement the salary.

Informal sector (Road side/street entrepreneurs)

For the purposes of this study, it is essential to point out a very specific kind of informal entrepreneur: the Road side/street entrepreneur. Theoretically, one can define the roadside entrepreneur as somebody who sells wares on the street, with no or without structure built; there are also sellers operating on provisional structures, unplanned sites or movable tools for their business (Williams & Gurtoo, 2012).

Amin (1989) agrees that starting-up a business in the informal sub-sector may not really require any form of formal education. Since operating most informal businesses on the streets requires simple skills, the perception is that the business owner does not need to much educational capabilities to perform better on the venture, although, the attainment of business intelligence is vital to a successful enterprise. Knowledge helps mature the acumen of doing business in an efficient way. Although receiving formal education may not be very important in running the business in the streets, experience should be an influencing factor. Amin (1989) further explained that the easy to start such business only require small amount of initial capital. However, commencing with higher capital is probably going to guarantee better performance. Most informal entrepreneur require labour intensity, competitiveness, may require less advanced technological input and a dependence on domestic inputs. They mostly have access to locally source raw materials to produce their products.

For a broader classification, street entrepreneurs can be termed those who start-up and/or own or manage commercial schemes that provides goods for sale to the general public on the streets, lacking any lasting structure as workplace (Bhowmik, 2007). They either are immobile, sometimes staying in

space on the road way or by public/private workspace, or are mobile transporting their wares on thrust carts or in baskets on their heads (Gurtoo & Williams, 2009).

Conservatively, roadside/street entrepreneurs were always seen as a set of individuals from a pre civilise era that is gradually vanishing, or an enterprise into which downgraded populations are compelled out of necessity in the absence of alternative methods of getting a livelihood.

Recently, however, involvement in roadside/street entrepreneurship has been seen either as a lucid economic choice or as under-rating for cultural reasons (Williams & Gurtoo, 2012). However, this day's roadside entrepreneurship delivers a new lens to life through which to involve with long time attention on small-business ownership (Doody, *et al.*, 2016).

As touching the scope of monetary ambition, given their small scale of its formation, street entrepreneurs provides the likelihood that a commonplace worker could leave his less paid job and start a small family business. Roadside entrepreneurs are quit permitted to make every day working choices and organize the progress of their commerce. They incline to relate to innovative technologies, practices, and every pattern of service delivery as end users rather than designers (Doody, *et al.*, 2016).

Roadside entrepreneurs in spite of being go-getters, risk-takers and business innovators (Doody, *et al.*, 2016) face difficulty. For instance, they now innovate in terms of knowledge and product promotion, since these businesses have meet up in some aspects that are progressively important in terms of contending with challengers. Aspects as the craft, artisanal and local nature of food has become vital to the achievement of several of these businesses, meaning they can no longer contest only based on price rate and hence fore must deliver worth in other ways (Johnston , 2008; Doody, *et al.*, 2016).

Methodology

Okitipupa, Ondo –State, Nigeria was also selected for the study. It is situated between latitude 6° 30' 0" and 6° 47'0" North, longitude 4° 48' 0", 4° 57'30" East of the Greenwich meridian. It has an area of 803 km² and a population of 233,565 at the 2006 census with a projected population of 315,280. It is the single largest industrial cluster involving artisans in Ikale land. Figure 1 is the map of Okitipupa.

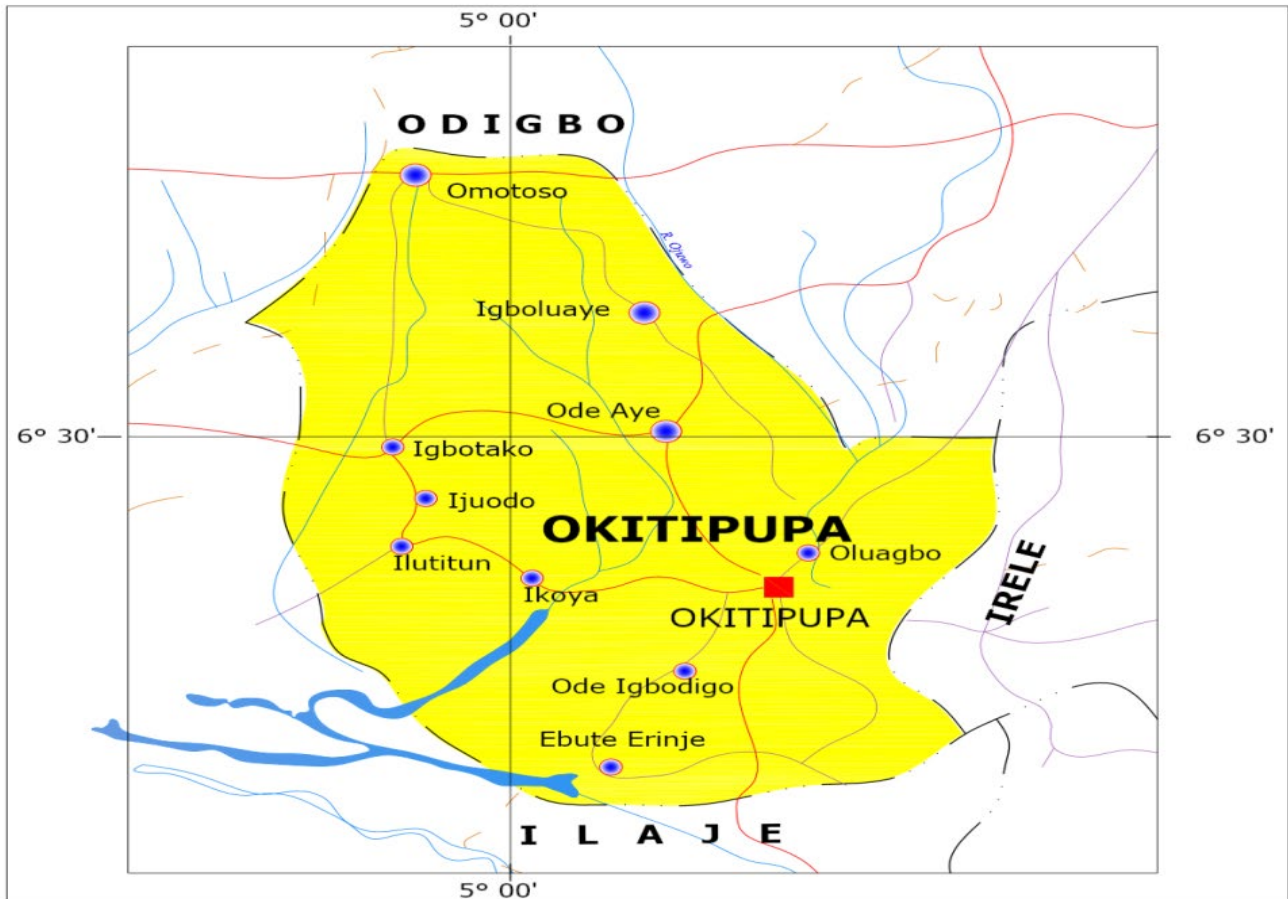


Figure 1: The map of Okitipupa LGA Source: Author's work (2019).

Road network in Okitipupa LGA

The road network system in Okitipupa LGA comprises both earth road in some areas, surface dress road which usually serves as connector to sub-arterial road, and asphaltic concrete roads which are mostly the arterial road that connect streets to other towns in the local government area and by extension other state and urban centre in Nigeria. Okitipupa, is about 126 km from the state Headquarters (Akure South LGA). As of 2011, Okitipupa LGA has 228 km of bitumen road and 434 km untarred road but motorable roads with around 222 new private automobile registered between 2009 to 2011 and 282 new commercial services providing automobile registered between 2009 and 2011 (Ondo State Government, 2012) and an estimated projection of over 117500 automobiles in 2018. Most of the roads are managed and maintained by Ondo State Road Maintenance Agency (OSARMACO). This agency is saddled with the responsibility to manage and maintain the network of road in the state, most especially in the major cities and towns across the state. Figure 3.8 shows the network of roads in Okitipupa LGA with the selected road corridor, land use and auto mechanic spot highlighted for this study

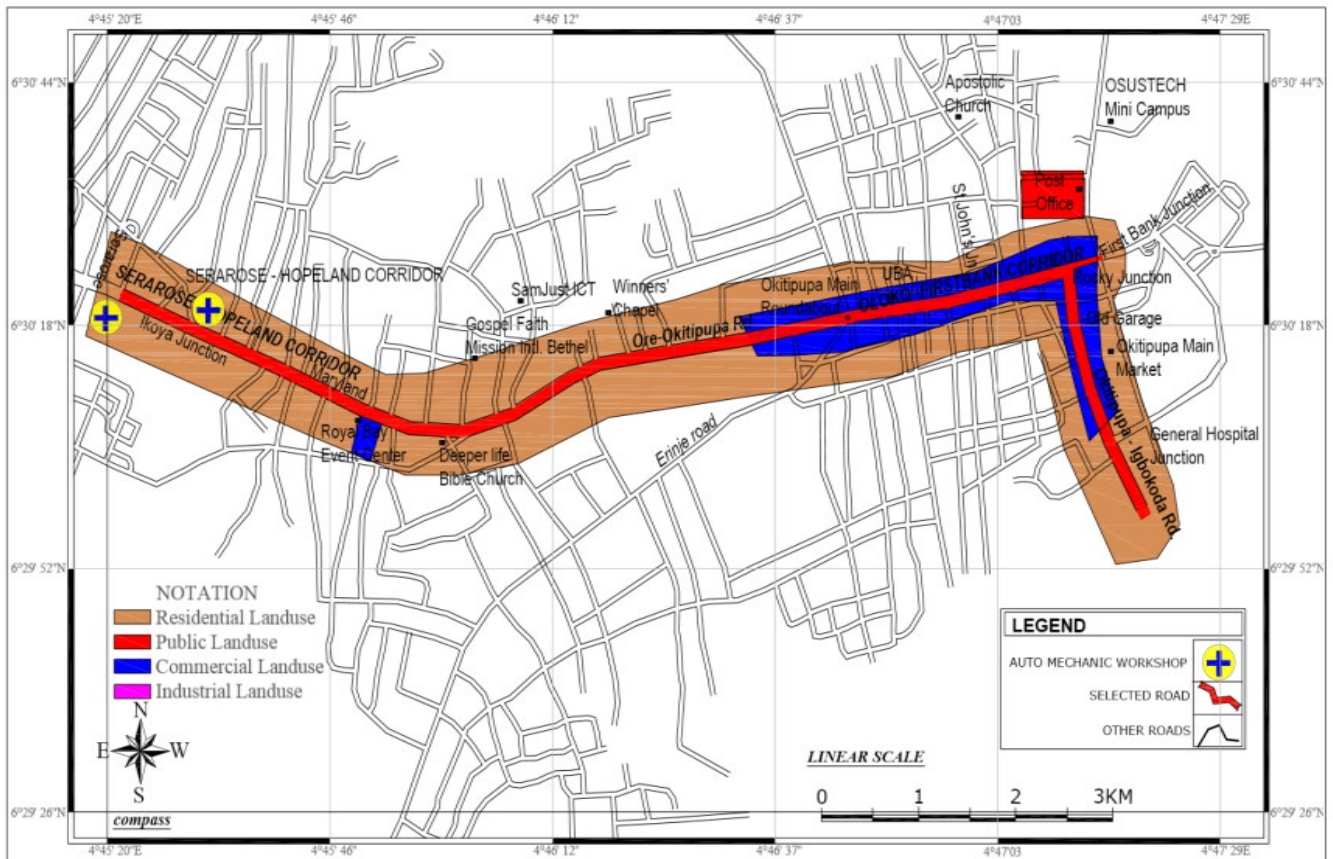


Figure 2: Okitipupa Network of Road Showing Selected Network of Road Corridor: Author's work (2019).

Research Population

A preliminary study was done to count the population of people along the corridors of study (petty traders, street hawkers, vulcanizers, roadside shop operators, police officers and traffic wardens etc.). These populations cover both sides of the roads. The width of coverage was 25 metres from the road median. Investigators were deployed to move along this corridor from 9am to 12 am and count people who subsist along the corridor.

The preliminary survey in Okitipupa LGA, shows that for Roundabout of Okeraye street to First Bank junction the populations of people listed in the above mentioned category were 1640. Also for Rocky junction to General Hospital junction the preliminary survey shows that 1773 people carry out their businesses along that corridor, while for Maryland junction to Sera Rose junction 1108 people were counted, making the total population along the selected corridor for Okitipupa LGA to be 4521. This is shown in Table 1. Hence, the total research population is Twenty-five Thousand, and Eight-seven (25,087) for the three local government area.

Table 1 Population of People in the Selected Corridor in Okitipupa LGA

S/No	Corridor of Study	Population
1.	Roundabout of Okeraye street to First Bank junction	1640
2	Rocky junction to General Hospital junction	1773
3.	Maryland Junction to Sera Rose junction	1108
	Total Population	4521

Source: Author's Pilot work (2019).

For Okitipupa LGA

To make the research scientific, Five per cent (5%) of the whole populace along the road corridor were sampled in Okitipupa LGA. Hence, 226 people were sampled as shown in table 2.

Likewise in Okitipupa LGA, Three (3) corridors and Six (6) spots (ends of the corridors) were considered to examine the level of air pollution and their effect on the roadside/street entrepreneurs. The corridors are:

- a. Roundabout of Okeraye street to First Bank Junction;
- b. Rocky junction to General Hospital Junction;
- c. Maryland Junction to Sera rose junction;

These corridors were chosen because they span the width of Okitipupa Metropolis and are amongst the major busy points in the town. These corridors span out from the Central Business District (CBD) of the town. The experiment to be performed on the nature of air pollutants are to detect: Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), Sulphur dioxide (SO₂), Carbon monoxide (CO) and Particulate matter (PM₁₀) in the surrounding environment.

Table 2 Population of People in the selected corridor to be sampled for Okitipupa LGA

S/No	Corridor of Study	Population	5% Population sampled
1.	Roundabout of Okeraye street to First Bank junction	1640	82
2	Rocky junction to General Hospital junction	1773	89
3.	Maryland Junction to Sera rose junction	1108	55
	Total Population	4521	226

Source: Researchers pilot survey (2019).

Air Pollution

Altair5X air analyser was used to collect data of Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), Sulphur dioxide (SO₂), Carbon monoxide (CO) while Particulate counters detector was used to analyse the Particulate matter of PM₁₀

Operation Procedure for Collecting Pollutant Gases

Apparatus: Global Positioning System (GPS), Altair5x gas monitor and Stop watch

Altair5x monitors gases in ambient air. With the aid of sensors it detects gases. The device was gently turned on by pressing standby button, and waiting for (10 – 15) seconds for the next page to display on screen. 2 red alarm indicators make sound, just to notify that the device is on and ready for collect air for analysis. The inlet pump was blocked for 10 seconds with left finger in order for the pump test to pass. The device (MSA Altair 5x) was then gently pointed to the location/spot where measurement

are to be taken. After a while the READ button is pressed on to simultaneously display data for the gaseous value of each of the gases collected through the inlet pump. Gases measured are Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), Sulphur dioxide (SO₂), Carbon monoxide (CO).

Operation Procedure for Collecting Particulate Matters (PM₁₀)

Apparatus: GPS, CLJ-D Particulate counter and Stop watch

The CLJ-D Particulate counter was used in measuring PM₁₀. The ambient-air, to be analysed, was drawn into the monitor via an internal volume-controlled pump at a rate of 1.2 litres/minute. The sample passes through the measuring cell, past the laser diode detector and was collected onto a filter. The pump also generates the necessary clean sheath air, which were filtered and passes through the sheath air regulator back in to optical chamber. This is to ensure that no dust contaminates with the laser-optic assembly. The sample flow is 1.2 l/min thin of fine dust filter which removes all the dust particles from the sample air. A membrane pump sucks the clean air through a valve, a protection filter, an orifice and a three way valve to the sample outlet.

The sample flow was controlled by a flow controller which monitors the pressure drop over the orifice. Parts of the cleaned air were used to supply the measuring chamber with rinsing air to keep the optic and the measuring chambers clean. This clean air was also used during the functional self-test to calibrate the system for zero particles.

Collection of Data from Respondents

Questionnaire Survey is the instrument used to collect data from the entrepreneurs who subsist near the road to do business on daily basis. It is used as a research instrument for gathering data from research respondents as in order to determine the effect of these pollutants on their health status. These air pollutants have been noted to sometimes be responsible for coughing, breathlessness, Nasal discharge, throat irritation and asthma (Oguntoke & Yussuf, 2008). Questionnaire is administered by field enumerators and/or the researcher to elucidate information relevant to the study.

Result and Discussions

Research conducted in Okitipupa LGA along the first corridor of study (Okeraye Street to First Bank junction) indicate higher Carbon monoxide (CO) value of 7.452 ppm which is less than the daily mean of hourly value proposed by National Ambient air quality standard (NAAQS), Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) value of 0.009 ppm which is less than the recommended standard, Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) value of 0.038ppm which is also less than the recommended standard with a peak average level of Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) value of 500.651µg/m³ in the afternoon, recorded at First Bank junction and is within the recommended limit.. However, result obtained by shows higher values for CO but almost similar results for SO₂. Table 3 show the average air pollutant for Okeraye Street to First bank junction from March, 2019 to May, 2019.

Table 3: Average air Pollutant for Okeraye Street to First Bank Junction (March-May, 2019)

Average air pollutant from March, 2019 to May, 2019. Measurement in PPM while PM ₁₀ in µg/m ³									
Poin t	First bank			Roundabout-Okeraye street			St John Junction		
	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g
CO	6.793	6.462	7.452	6.832	6.274	7.130	6.754	6.169	7.192
SO ₂	0.008	0.007	0.009	0.008	0.007	0.008	0.008	0.007	0.008
NO ₂	0.034	0.032	0.038	0.034	0.031	0.036	0.034	0.031	0.037
PM ₁₀	431.75	500.651	438.36	410.46	475.960	416.74	379.88	440.499	385.69
	6		6	1		5	1		7

Source: Author's Data Analysis (2019)**Table 4:** Average air Pollutant for Rocky junction to General Hospital Junction (March-May, 2019)

Average air pollutant from March, 2019 to May, 2019. Measurement in PPM while PM ₁₀ in µg/m ³									
Poin t	General Hospital			Old Garage			Rocky Junction		
	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g
CO	3.984	3.891	4.327	7.837	6.234	8.447	6.775	6.384	7.167
SO ₂	0.006	0.006	0.007	0.009	0.007	0.009	0.008	0.007	0.008
NO ₂	0.0200	0.019	0.022	0.039	0.031	0.043	0.034	0.032	0.0364
PM ₁₀	415.44	481.731	421.80	429.71	498.289	436.29	399.76	463.559	405.88
	0		0	9		8	8		8

Source: Author's Data Analysis (2019)**Table 5:** Average air Pollutant for Maryland Junction to Sera Rose Junction (March-May, 2019)

Average air pollutant from March, 2019 to May, 2019. Measurement in PPM while PM ₁₀ in µg/m ³									
Poin t	Mary Land			Ogbeyi_Barrack			Sera Rose Junction		
	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g	Mornin g	Afternoo n	Evenin g
CO	4.866	3.572	4.908	5.141	4.248	5.594	3.329	3.115	3.829
SO ₂	0.006	0.006	0.007	0.007	0.006	0.007	0.006	0.006	0.007
NO ₂	0.024	0.018	0.025	0.026	0.021	0.028	0.017	0.016	0.019
PM ₁₀	381.48	442.360	387.32	410.47	434.928	416.76		330.56	311.09
	6		7	6		0	305.44		

Source: Author's Data Analysis (2019)

The second corridor of study in Okitipupa is the Rocky junction to General hospital junction it shows a higher value for Carbon monoxide (CO) of 8.447 ppm which is less than the daily mean of hourly value proposed by National Ambient air quality standard (NAAQS), Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) of 0.009 ppm which is also less than the recommended standard, Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) of 0.043ppm, which is within the required limit and the peak average level of Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) of 498.289µg/m³ in the afternoon, was chronicled at Old garage junction. Table 4 presents the Average Air Pollutant for Rocky junction to General hospital junction.

The third corridor consider in Okitipupa LGA is Maryland junction to Sera rose junction, it shows that the maximum Carbon monoxide (CO) value of 5.594 ppm, Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) value of 0.007 ppm,

Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) value of 0.028ppm was recorded at Ogbeyi Barrack junction while the maximum average levels of Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) of 442.36µg/m³ obtained in the afternoon was documented at Maryland junction. Table 5 elucidates the average air pollutant for Maryland junction to Sera rose junction from March, 2019 to May, 2019.

Road side street entrepreneurs response to Illness due to Air borne pollutants in Okitipupa LGA

Air borne diseases are mostly responsible for lung malfunctioning and could be as a consequence of exposure to pollutants which goes into the respiratory regions (Weiland., *et al.*, 1994). Coughing according to (Oguntoke & Yussuf, 2008) could be signs of some health problems stemming from emission of pollutants from automobiles. Figure 3 show the statistics of respondents to coughing health problems faces by them along the corridor of study. 51.77% of sampled respondents do not cough often while 9.73% of sampled respondents cough often; this is a sign of danger as the prevalence of chronic cough has been estimated at between 3% and 40% of the population Ford, *et al.*, (2006). And 38.50% cough moderately, result from the control population shows that only 5.3% have high coughing problem. These indicate that pollutant from automobile in the selected corridor of study is not really a serious problem. However, result obtained are different from those obtained by those of (Oguntoke & Yussuf, 2008) which reported that 56.4% of the response experience high level of cough in the selected along corridor of studies in Abeokuta metropolis, Ogun State.

Breathlessness is another sign that could be associated to particle in the polluted air. 61.06% of the respondents have low breathlessness, 34.96% has moderate levels of breathlessness while 3.98% have high levels of breathlessness. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of level of breathlessness by these roadside/street entrepreneurs. The result is also in departure to those obtained by (Oguntoke & Yussuf, 2008) in which they obtain 23.4% for respondents in their study.

For Nasal discharge, figure 3 shows the Nasal discharge pattern of response in Okitipupa LGA in the selected corridor of study. 11.95% of the respondents have high nasal discharge which is quite low to assume that these corridors could be the main contributor to it. 52.65% of the respondents have low nasal discharge this result is higher than 3.6% reported by (Oguntoke & Yussuf, 2008) in their work.

For Throat irritation, figure 3 displays the throat irritation pattern of road side entrepreneurs in Okitipupa LGA in the selected corridor of study. 6.64% of the respondents have high throat irritation and 52.65% have low throat irritation suggesting that the effect of the discharge emission from automobile in these corridors is quite low to pose any significant danger on the health of the respondents' base on throat irritations.

Figure 3 displays the distribution pattern of respondents due to asthmatic conditions in Okitipupa LGA for the selected corridor of study. 5.75% of the respondents have high asthmatic conditions and 84.07% have low asthmatic condition. This suggests that the effect of the discharge emission from automobile in these corridors is quite low to pose any serious asthmatic danger to the individual doing business along these corridor. However, The British Broadcasting Cooperation (BBC) recently described low level exposure to excessive automobile fumes due to internal combustion engine near road side as responsible for enlargement of heart in spite of those sampled for the study were exposed to pollution levels below United Kingdom guidelines (BBC, 2018).

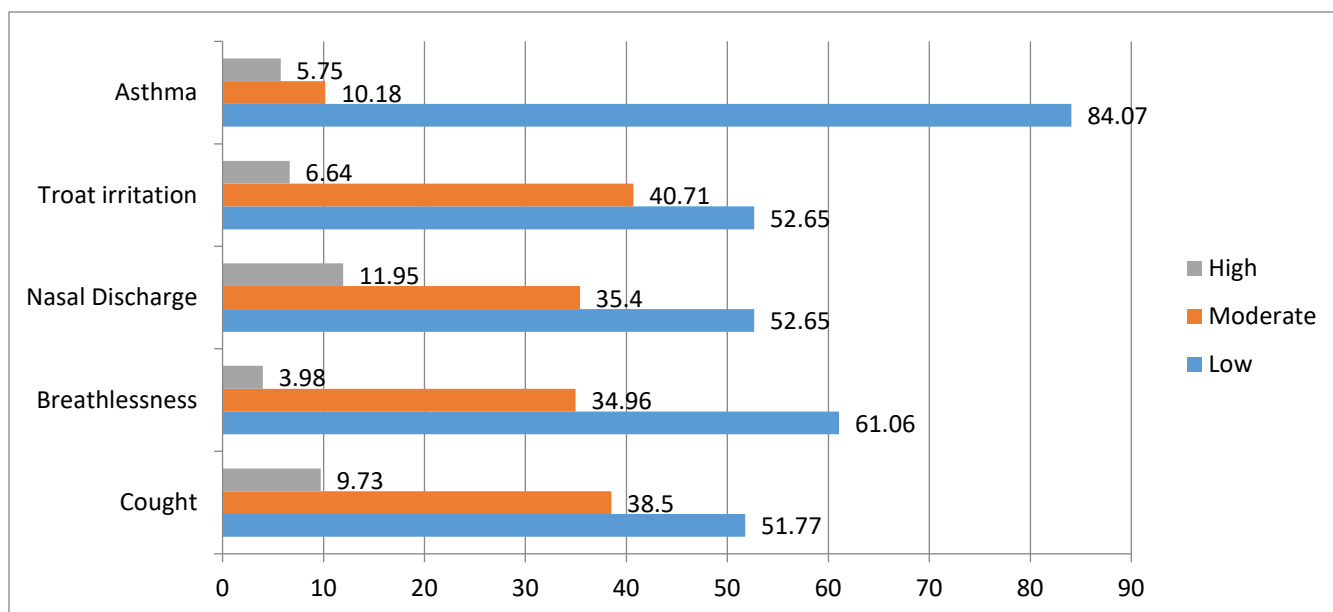


Figure 3 Illness due to Air borne pollution in Okitipupa LGA

Source: Author's Data Analysis (2019)

Summary

Examining the level of traffic flow on air borne environmental pollution at Okitipupa LGA, the study found out that for morning peak period, the rate of CO produce is between 7.837 ppm to 3.329 ppm, SO₂ is between 0.009 ppm to 0.006 ppm, NO₂ is between 0.022 ppm to 0.017 ppm, while PM₁₀ is between 421.80 µg/m³ to 305.44 µg/m³.

It shows also at afternoon off-peak period, CO falls within 6.384 ppm to 3.115 ppm, SO₂ from 3.115 ppm to 0.007 ppm, NO₂ from 0.032 ppm to 0.017 ppm and PM₁₀ from 429.800 µg/m³ to 498.289 µg/m³.

Results obtained for evening shows that in Okitipupa LGA, CO is between 8.447 ppm to 3.829 ppm, SO₂ is from 0.009 ppm to 0.007 ppm, and NO₂ is from 0.043 ppm to 0.019 ppm while PM₁₀ is from 436.298 µg/m³ to 311.09 µg/m³.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Due to high levels of potential health hazard associated to automobile generated pollutant on humans subsisting along traffic corridor as observed from the study, Use of open space besides road for shops should be discouraged in order to minimise human exposure to automobile generated pollutant. The use of noise mask, regular and compulsory medical check-up should be introduced by government. This will also enable data to be gathered on the health effect of near road pollution on road side entrepreneurs.

Based on the findings from the study, it is recommended that entrepreneurs in the informal sectors should carry out their business at least 150m away from major traffic corridor since it has been observed that such distance, the effect of such pollutant wears out greatly so as to avoid over exposure to automobile generated pollutions as this can possibly lead to a decrease in the risk of business health hazard and increase their safety.

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Interrogating the #Endsars Protest as a Metaphor for Social Conflict and Social Discontent: Towards an Egalitarian Nigerian Society

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Abstract

African nations have been increasingly bedevilled by social problems particularly from post-independence era. One of such problems is youth unemployment crises occasioned by socio-economic development, and wealth creation and distribution issues. Nigeria, the nation with the highest youth population in Africa, records one of the highest cases of such crises on the Continent. These crises, within the Nigerian context, include but not limited to youth restiveness, religious and ethnic radicalisations, resource control agitations, radical separatist campaigns, militancy, surging youth illiteracy, and ignorance. The issues, unfortunately, have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which inadvertently, gave rise to the #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria. This paper interrogates critically the #EndSARS Protest as an offshoot of youth unemployment crises in post COVID-19 Nigeria. The paper's position is founded on the Marxian Conflict Theory which projects the inevitability of conflicts in a society, and especially so, in the face of inequitable distribution of its commonwealth. The Protest is analysed as a performed genre of guerilla theatre with sketches done using graffiti, music, dance, mime, and speeches (dialogue) to relay and comment on political, socio-economic, and wealth distribution issues in Nigeria. It is argued that the #EndSARS is a metaphor for social conflict and social discontent with the near comatose situation of development structures, the continuous gerontocracy which excludes the youth, and the attendant poverty, hardship, hunger, etc. that characterise the post COVID-19 regime. The paper concluded that the youth crises may continue at escalated magnitudes except the genuine concerns of the protesting and unemployed youth are addressed. For these concerns to be addressed frontally, the paper recommended that Nigeria's political leadership at various levels should include young people as major stakeholders in policy formulation and implementation processes. Nigeria's youth should be central to decision making in the polity. Their numeric strength, skill sets, competencies, youthful vibrancy, and energies should be viewed as assets to be harnessed for productive purposes rather than been perceived as threats by the government. Gerontocracy, which has been the complexion of Nigeria's political space for decades after independence, should be peacefully and voluntarily retired to mainly advisory and mentoring functions, carried out only from the sidelines.

Keywords: COVID-19, Nigeria, #EndSARS Protest, Social Equality, , Theatre

Introduction

Nigeria, in the turn of the 21st Century, has been increasingly bedevilled from all directions by a myriad of social problems. These problems, which have their tentacles pronged on most facets of Nigeria's national life, affect its family systems, politics, economy, education, security, and the pattern of its development. The escalation of these problems has put the progress of the country on a reverse gear, with no one knowing or able to tell how further backward the nation will drift. From rape and allied sexual violence to banditry, armed communal clashes, and religious radicalism to youth restiveness, kidnapping, and ethnic bigotry to political and economic corruptions, etc., the endless list of these negativities typifies common denominators that Nigerians from all the nation's coordinates can aptly relate with (World Bank, 2019). Not a few approaches have been suggested in the past, some of which were applied at various capacities, whether rightly or wrongly, and have proved unsuccessful.

Nigeria had not recovered, fully, from the economic recession she entered in 2016 when the novel 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic struck. Surprisingly, according to Soy (2020), the recorded number of infections and deaths is low compared to the casualties in correspondingly populated countries of Europe and the Americas. Nevertheless, a report on www.theafricareport.com stated that the effect of COVID-19 on the Nigerian populace, especially those within the youth brackets is atrocious (see Oyeboade: *The Africa Report*: August 5, 2020).

The country boasts of the highest youth population in Africa. However, she is bedevilled with unemployment, corruption, nepotism, and infrastructural deficits, largely caused by incompetent and kleptomaniac leadership (Anazado, Igbokwe & Nkah, 2015). These human-induced crises had the youth bottled-up with frustration, anger, and despondency, which have been the situation for several years before the outbreak of COVID-19. Former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, described this situation as a time bomb waiting to explode (Ozah: *The Guardian*, June 17, 2017). The hardship only reached a crescendo when a total shut down of activities was ordered by President Muhammadu Buhari in March, 2020, following the reported widespread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Palliatives that would have cushioned the effects of the pandemic were either non-existent, or in most cases, allegedly embezzled by government functionaries (Olatunji: *The Guardian*, October 4, 2020). The Federal Government, through the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, announced that it disbursed moneys to indigent people in rural communities (Igomu: *Punch Healthwise*, August 5) and fed school children (supposedly shut at their homes with their parents) during the lockdown (Okwumbu: *Nairametrics*, March 31, 2020). Several televised interactions between members of the National Assembly and some government ministers, and heads of public agencies, showed that billions of Naira could not be accounted for during this period. While these were going on, Sunday (*Vanguard*, November 12, 2020) mourned that the country's public universities' lecturers downed tools for over 8 months calling for adequate funding of that subsector by the government. This put a sizeable population of tertiary schools' students out of schools and in redundant position. Inadvertently, the gradual ease of lockdown by the government happened at a time when most unemployed youth felt alienated and disenchanted with the institutionalised state profligacy.

Consequently, Akinwotu (*The Guardian*, October 6, 2020) reported that the harassment and extortion of citizens by members of the Nigeria Police unit known as the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) assumed astronomical proportions within this period, and therefore, raised a torrential outcry from the public. The police force is a state machinery that is devoid of any political or regional colouration, hence, became the suitable vent for the simmering angst against the polity. A movement advocating for a complete overhaul of the instrument of state oppression was birthed - #EndSARS (*The Cable*, October 13, 2020). The #EndSARS protest, an agit-prop movement assumed the theatrical (guerilla) tactics of utilising music, dance, poetry, painting, and speeches for purgation of the disillusionment of the youth with the sociopolitical and economic status quo and for advocating leadership change. The #EndSARS protest amplifies the Marxian Conflict Theory which postulates the inevitability of conflicts in a society, in this context, between Nigeria's aged rulers and disenchanted youth, and especially so, in the face of inequitable distribution of its commonwealth.

Social Conflict

Social anthropologists would argue that from the moment that there was more than one human being existing on the surface of the earth - an existence which heralded the start of interaction -, conflict also evolved as an element of society. There is fundamental conflict between different groups in the society. This conflict, which by default is ongoing, persistent, and non-temporal, operate mainly through class divisions. Social scientists of the conflict tradition believe that conflict, which is an inevitable and an unavoidable part of human association, constitutes a trigger for revolution and consensus of variegated perspectives (Guclu, 2014). Karl Marx perceived revolution as a product of conflict or fight over

resources. He also held that the concept of “class” emanated from the ideology of exploitation, whereupon, the structural inequalities in society produce classes (see Aspers, 2010, p. 155).

Since societies are dialectic and dynamic, history continues to record the emergence of new classes, as per generations, which lead to the vanishing of older ones (Girdner, 2006). This thesis mirrors the playout of the #EndSARS protests, pitching the older generation of Nigeria’s rulers against the younger idealistic generation who are disillusioned and disgruntled. Human history is constantly redefined by class struggles in the light of Karl Marx’s assertion of man’s hegemonic tendencies which states that, “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (cited in Guclu, 2014, p. 153). These are histories of struggles in all societies between people who are exploited and those who are exploiting them, which, have evidenced footprints on the development patterns of those same societies overtime (Wright, 2002).

Theoretical Leaning: Conflict Theory

The central thesis of conflict theory is that conflict is an inevitable phenomenon. Karl Marx developed this theory on social class emanating from inequality in society (or stratification). According to this thought, in all stratified societies, there are two major social groups – the ruling class and the subject class (Covington, 1994; Tittenbrun, 2013). The ruling class emerges when the productive capacity of society expands beyond the level required for subsistence. The variables that lead to conflict among the classes are: conflict over economic rewards between the classes; physical concentrations of masses of people; easy communication among members of the same class and position; class consciousness and development of solidarity; political organisation; and revolution.

Because social stratification divides society into two classes, the unequal distribution of wealth leads to discontent and, ultimately, revolution in the society. The situation in Nigeria during the ill-fated lockdown occasioned by the COVID-19 regime, and the #EndSARS protests which turned bloody, sit within the context of conflict theory’s core assumption. These dual situations, demonstrably, beamed a floodlight on the magnitude of radical and grossly asymmetric class divisions in the country along socioeconomic and sociopolitical lines.

Further, conflict is fuelled by exploitation of the weak, subsumed in the desire for dominance by the strong (Tittenbrun, 2013). Strange bedfellows, who represent divergent interests, are boxed together within same sociopolitical and socioeconomic spaces, and locked in constant competition for control and influence over limited material wealth, political empowerment, and social advantages. The push by the systematically disadvantaged groups in the mix, to decentralise and diffuse control and access to their society’s commonwealth and powers, revs discontent and dissent in subsistent societies like Nigeria’s.

Guerilla Theatre as an Interventionist Performance

Theatre enjoys symbiotic relationship with the society. Performances of different kinds have always played important roles in the political, economic, and social lives of societies right from the Athenians in the fifth century. Theatre essentially mirrors the society with the primary function of either reinforcing whatever that is portrayed, or condemning it. The philosophical and ideological leaning of a particular society determines the functionality of the theatre of an epoch. The dramatic performances are therefore avenues for interaction among the people – avenues for public discourse. Issues of political and economic concerns, whether already embedded in the folklore of a people or not can be discussed using the instrumentality of drama. A timeline of how theatre was deployed at different times for interventionist roles would help our understanding.

Western civilisation traces its provenance to ancient Greece. Theatre also found and played significant roles in Grecian civilisation. Tragedy, for instance, a drama that emerged out of festivals, was a state

art (Brockett & Ball, 2011). The state nurtured and controlled drama and used it to protect feudal relations, political structures, and to maintain world order (Beer, 2004). Beer further stated that the tragedians did not only contest to win prizes but also were sponsored by the state, and that tragedy as an art was structured to maintain and protect the status quo. As such, an attempt to cross the borderline received severe discipline that could be in a magnitude of death (Beer, 2004). The early tragedians therefore dramatised events that reinforced the inevitability of the orders of the gods or of the feudal lords thereby serving as instruments of coercion to keep the Greek society in a captive state. In Greek tragedy, suffering is redemptive, bringing out the noblest human capacity for learning and for accepting moral responsibility. Catharsis maintains that pity and fear are not merely to be aroused but to be purged, and it produces a healing which allows the subversive elements to be healthily uncovered and aesthetically subdued (Daniel & Scully, 1992). Hence, members of the society would not be free to cultivate their resentment in the obscure antiestablishment. The philosophical and ideological foundations of Greek theatre were critically enunciated in Aristotle's *Poetics* where he, according to (Boal, 1993, p. 4), constructed:

...an extremely powerful poetic-political system for intimidation of the spectator, for elimination of the "bad" or illegal tendencies of the audience. This system is, to this day, fully utilised not only in conventional theatre, but in the TV soap operas and in Western films as well: movies, theatre, and television united, through a common basis in Aristotelian poetics, for repression of the people.

The age of awareness led to the challenge of this classical canon, birthing several perspectives and praxes. Of utmost importance to this paper is Bertolt Brecht's adoption of Marxism into theatre use and discourse. Bertolt Brecht is famous for his revolutionary innovation and experiments in drama. He introduced the idea of 'Epic-drama' with a purpose and to prove the need of alienation or A-effect through drama. He explained his alienation theory along with the concept of epic-drama and with such new experiments with drama, even in actual performance on the stage. To Brecht the aim of performances should not be to leave the theatre emotionally drained but intellectually stimulated and determined to bring about Marxist reforms (Arthur & Beckson, 1991). Brecht was the inspiration for such new experiments in the field of drama after Ibsen. After a long experience, what Brecht created was, according to Raymond Williams (1971, p. 279), "a dramatic form in which men were shown in the process producing themselves and their situations. That is at root, a dialectical form, drawing directly on the Marxist theory of history in which within given limits man makes himself". Brecht felt the need to cater to the taste of newly arising class of audience of his time by providing reflections of social changes through dramatic art, so, he expanded and modified the dramatic art. He aimed at awakening the power of the audience and not allowed them to involve emotionally in the art.

The Brechtian theatre found expression in what could be termed as the 'peoples' theatre' in community theatre, theatre for development, popular theatre, environmental theatre, and especially, in Augusta Boal's theatre of the oppressed. Boal's theatre is anti-Aristotelian and Brecht-informed in manifesto. It enjoins audience to join the drama and interactively change the course of events. The concept of theatre of the oppressed refers to the performances of the downtrodden and the disenfranchised people. Boal's theatre focuses on the action itself: the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place; on the contrary, "he himself assumes the protagonist role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change – in short, trains himself for real action" (Boal, 1985, p. 122). Boal developed a system akin to Brecht's system in which the participants call on basic formats to create spectacles according to their need to discuss certain themes or problems and rehearse certain actions. Music is used as an independent language that can enhance or contradict the meanings of the spoken text or action (Boal, 1985; Bowman & Laurin, 2002). Boal became highly cognizant of the social function and political significance of theatre and, informed by Brecht's similar

cogitations developed a system aimed at exploring “multiple interpretations of diverse realities” (Shutzman & Cohen-Cruz 1994, p. 1) while simultaneously analysing them.

How Boal’s theatre and other forms of performances find expression in different parts of the world and on different issues birthed different nomenclatures. The heterogeneous nature of societal challenges sometimes calls for eclectic adaptation of styles to drive home a message to targeted audience. In Nigeria, for instance, and especially in the #EndSARS protest, what we see is a hotchpotch of conventionally distorted styles. The best description of the performance mosaic during the youth-pivoted protest is Guerrilla Theatre. Guerrilla theatre typifies performances made in the street as against the culturally and theoretically formal dramatic conventions. Models such as the Brechtian, absurd, poor, and agitprop (agitation and propaganda) theatres are sometimes blended to respond to the dynamics of changing patterns of events. It is a hit-and-run theatre that presents unannounced, politically, or socially motivated, performances in public places. The #EndSARS protest is a guerilla theatre with sketches done using graffiti, music, dance, mime, and speeches (dialogue) to relay and comment on issues of political, socio-economic, and wealth distribution in Nigeria.

EndSARS Protest: A Brief Profile

Protests on police brutality in Nigeria, according to Chow (*Time*, October 28, 2020), is not new as it has traces in 2010. In fact, Chow further averred that those announcements on disbanding the brutal unit of the police in Nigeria were made in 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2019. The 2020 #EndSARS movement dates to 2017 when the violent experiences of young Nigerians in the hands of the defunct Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigeria Police, led to the use of the hashtag on Twitter and other social media platforms to call on the Federal Government to carry out police reforms. The movement was resuscitated in October, 2020 following the emergence of a video showing police officers, thought to be SARS members, assaulting an unarmed young man. The spread of the video led to other youth recalling, on social media, their sordid experiences as perpetuated by SARS. The outburst eventually morphed into one of the largest youth-organised protests in Nigeria’s post-Independence history.

At separate occasions, the Presidency, through the Vice President, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, and a member of the National Assembly, Hon. Akin Alabi, representing Ara/Egbeda Federal Constituency of Lagos State, expressed concerns over police brutality with the former filing a motion to dissolve the Federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (FSARS) in the first week of the protest (Ukpe: *Nairametrics*, October 25, 2020). The Inspector General of Police (IGP) announced the ban of tactical squad from carrying out routine checks at road blocks with immediate effect. The IGP, however, announced the total disbandment of SARS and the formation of a new outfit known as Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT) on 13th October, 2020 (*The Cable*, October 13, 2020). This generated dissatisfaction among the youth and it marked the inclusion of other hashtags such as #EndSWAT, #EndBadGovernance, #EndHunger, #EndNepotism, #EndInsecurity, #EndBadroads, #Endcorruption, #EndPoliceBrutality, #EndBogusAllowances, etc., with the youth marching and simultaneously converging at strategic places such as Lekki/Ikoyi, Port Harcourt, Owerri, Benin, Abuja City Gate, Kubwa, and other cities across Nigeria. This too, (Kabir: *Premium Times*, October 19, 2020), marked the morphing of the #EndSARS movement into an agitation against all associated discontent of the youth against gerontocracy as the protest subsisted even after the presentation of the initial 5-point demands of #EndSARS protesters to the President and his expression of readiness to address them.

The organised movement garnered followership and participants (mainly youth) who danced, sang, dramatised, painted, and gave speeches detailing their frustration and dissatisfaction with the near comatose situation of the polity. Protesters erected DJ booths and tents where solidarity chants such as *soro soke* (speak up), national anthem were sung while others held multi-faith prayer sessions. McCarthy (*Global Citizen*, October 15, 2020) reported that several artistes such as Peter and Paul (of

the defunct PSquare), 2Face Idibia, Sound Sultan, Davido, Whizkid, Falz, Burna Boy, Banky W, Tiwa Savage, Yemi Alade, Don Jazzy, Ayo Makun, Mr. Macaroni, Taoma, Yul Edochie, Uche Jombo, etc. either took turns to perform their acts at these venues or lent their supports to the movement through tweets and video messages. Songs that were hitherto proscribed from the airways, due to their scathing criticism of government like Eedris Abdulkareem's 'Nigeria Jaga Jaga' (*The Nation*, 2020), gained repeated play and echo at the protest grounds.

The over two weeks' protest was halted physically following the military's attack on protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate on 20th October, 2020 and the eventual usurpation of the movement by hoodlums to loot and vandalise public and private properties (*Hong Kong News*, 2020). The hydra-headed movement may have deprioritised physical protest and retroceded into online agitation. However, the ingenious utilisation of guerilla performances to vent their belligerence against appalling governance, possessing the possibility of translating into a political cause, or triggering yet another wave of protest, shaped our conversational primacy.

EndSARS Protest as a Metaphor for Social Conflict and Discontent

This paper argues that #EndSARS, a decentralised social movement and series of mass protests is not just a slogan against police brutality, neither is it solely a call for the disbanding of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) as it may appear on the surface. In fact, one of the demands of the protesters is an upward review of police salaries (#EndSARS #EndSWAT, 2020) as poor remuneration contributes to the disdainful practice of police officers augmenting their income with extortion of the masses. #EndSARS is a miniature representation (metaphor) of a performance (theatre) by youth against all forms of ineptitude in governance and positions of authority. Two statements, one by a theatre theorist and the other by a playwright, justify the daily struggles of Nigerian youth to be theatrical and performative: Peter Brooks' "all it takes for performance to take place is to have somebody watch another person passing through an empty space" (Brooks, 1968, p. 1); and William Shakespeare's "All the world's a stage: And all the men and women merely players" (*As You Like It*, Act II Scene VII). It therefore subsists that real life experiences of people are essentially performances and of different categories. Theatre is more than a mere business to play with. In fact, applying performing arts technology energises, motivates, and inspires people to give of their best – to become, in effect, star performers (Leigh & Maynard 2004).

In response to the international declaration of COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria shut almost all sectors down (World Economic Forum, 2020). While some countries made prompt palliative arrangements to cushion the effect of the lockdown on their citizens, the Human Rights Watch (2020) reported that Nigerians were shut in their homes for months without any form of palliative. The National Bureau for Statistics recorded that over 21.7 million and 22.9 million Nigerians were unemployed and underemployed respectively in the second quarter of 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). To better appreciate the tragedy with these figures, Busari (CNN, October 25, 2020) stated that "if Nigeria's unemployed youth were its own country, it would be larger than Tunisia or Belgium" (para. 7). In the face of all this heat, the country was officially announced to have relapsed into another round of economic recession, the worst in 37 years (World Bank, 2020; and National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). It is therefore unsurprising that the protest is notable for its patronage by a demographic that is made up of largely young Nigerians under 30 years, a group that constitutes over 40% of Nigeria's population. They face severe hardship, chronic unemployment, and filthy poverty.

Central to Boal's thesis, as enunciated earlier, is an attempt to bring spectators into active role within drama to not only comment on social situations but also suggest potentials for change. Ojewale (Brookings, 2020) sufficiently stated that:

The protesters' demands at the beginning were straightforward: The Federal government should abolish SARS, provide justice to victims of police brutality, and reform the police. Now, the demands have widened, premised on the pervasive failure of the government to deliver equitable economic prosperity for its citizens.... In short, the message of the #EndSARS protest is that young Nigerians want to take back their country from the entrenched political order that they believe has not served their interests (para. 2).

Boal (1985) argued that 'Spectator' is a bad word. Instead, Augusta Boal opted for creating — spectators and for a new aesthetic that he called — poetics of the oppressed (Boal, 1985, and Boal, 2006). According to him, "we want to stimulate the spectator to transform his society, to engage in revolutionary action, in that case we will have to seek another poetics" (Boal, 1985, p. 47). In this case, perhaps theatre is not revolutionary, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. Again, aligning with this, Ojewale (2020) stated that:

Youth were already incensed by reports of high-level elite's corruption, galloping inflation, and now the government has announced increases in the price of fuel and an(sic) electricity tariff. The #EndSARS protests have become a symbol for broader resentment and opened the path for marginalised Nigerian youths to vent bottled-up grievances against the government (para. 4).

Though the protest had the moral support of veteran activist, Aisha Yesufu, who is popular for her campaign for the rescue of Chibok girls kidnapped by Boko Haram since 2014, the movement, to prevent being compromised, was largely decentralised and devoid of discernable leadership. According to Busari (CNN, October 25, 2020, para. 21):

This is an awakening of Generation Y, who are under 35, and will have a significant impact on the political landscape.... It is years of ongoing social trauma caused by inadequate healthcare systems and institutions of education, systemic corruption, nepotism, electoral fraud, poverty and more.

More so, despite Nigeria's plenteous human and mineral resources, her leadership is notoriously corrupt. Ineptitude, kleptomania, nepotism, and a crop of very old people that are absolutely and fantastically power corrupt suffuse positions of authority. The electoral process that produces this leadership is helplessly subservient to the leadership. Majority of the populace believe the regime of President Buhari is callous and unpopular in policies. On several occasions, the Presidency demonstrated unawareness on issues that needed serious and urgent attention from same. The height of this witlessness is the appointment of dead people into the boards of several agencies when countless youth roam the streets without jobs.

The plague of insecurity in Nigeria skyrockets as days go by. Acts of terror, especially by the mindless Boko Haram, did not only kill haplessly, but displaced people from their ancestral homes. While this goes unabated, kidnapping, robbery, and banditry escalate in torrents. Worse still is that some law enforcement agents are fingered as culprits in this brashness. The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), the arm of the Police that was formed to fight crime, is seen daily harassing innocent citizens and engaging in all manners of highhandedness and brutality. The government is yet to fully prosecute self-confessed Boko Haram members but rather, she is granting them amnesty, scholarship and other sundry government supports that calls to question the sincerity of the government to combat insecurity. Successive governments in Nigeria, both at the federal and state levels, have shown maladroitness in the handling of bandits, militants, insurgents, and other criminal elements. Insecurity has been a pipeline through which people siphon money in the name of amnesty offers. Many of these men of the

underworld turned this approach from government to business opportunities since money and escape from punishment were also on the table, not to mention the corrupt tendencies of bureaucrats, which characterised the processes (Adetayo & Aworinde: *Punch*, October 10, 2020).

To confront the above headlong would arouse persecution from the benefactors and perpetrators of these carnages. Guerilla theatre, a relatively cheap, nonviolent, and non-confrontational approach, becomes a way out. Guerilla theatre is a medium of communication and of socialisation that can speak to people's subconscious and to spur them towards social equality through consensus. It has the power to communicate to members of different sociocultural, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical strata, to not only dialogue, but also to collectively dismantle the symbolic and practical structures of exclusion that characterise the post-Independence Nigeria. The #EndSARS protesters dived into the unlimited malleability of guerilla theatre, fetching particularly biomechanics, in their dramatisation. Guerilla theatre uses whatever properties, including human bodies, that are available to perform. The well-built drama of Aristotelian specification would be too exorbitant and unsuitable for the anti-government and anti-establishment messages it wished to disseminate. Hence, the appropriation of Brecht's epic narration of their stories exemplified in their speeches, the deployment of music, dance, and graffiti reflective of the pop culture of the youth, and the adaptation of Boal's involvement of the oppressed in telling their own stories. In most cities, the youth would, in callisthenic manner, lie on the ground with their bodies joined to spell 'ENDSARS'. This is in addition to the use of paints to inscribe '#EndSARS' on the streets, buildings, people's faces, vehicles, etc. (Akinyele: *Aljazeera*, October 20, 2020). While the hitherto guerilla theatres of the past would have performed and disappeared, the blend of Brechtian analyses of performances required that the youth stay back to get feedback for their agitations. The message is clear that Nigeria's political leadership at various levels should include young people as the major stakeholders in the policy formulation and implementation processes. Nigerian youth should be central to decision making in the polity.

One of the interpretations of Chinua Achebe's *There was a Country* is that, Biafra was a country. According to Achebe, "within Biafra our new nation was a dream that has become reality – a republic" (Achebe, 2012, p. 143). The existence of a well-coordinated military, anthem, flag, currency, diplomatic ties with, and the near recognition of Biafra by some international organisations and countries almost gave Biafra the status of a country within the over thirty months that the war lasted. Similarly, the over 2 weeks of #EndSARS protest was akin to a country that existed for 12 days. A post from Aj-Views LTD (2020) rightly states that:

We protested for 12 days without vandalism. 12 days of rejecting bribe, 12 days of caring and looking out for each other, 12 days of giving free medical care and legal services. Brands, both national and international celebrities, churches all protested...influential people were lobbied to add their voice. At the protest grounds, the Christians gave room for the Muslims to have their jummat prayers. The Christians had their service on Sunday... there was candlelight service held all over the nation for fallen heroes. Youths despite the hard economy spent their personal money cooking for each other. No one knew who was a Yoruba, Igbo or Hausa, or Edo. We ate together and danced together. For 12 days, these were organised without a formal leader, with just social media tweets, retweets, post, shares with hashtag. For 12 days we built the Nigeria of our dreams (para. 10-18).

The youth have a clear roadmap of how to get the country running but have not been given the chance to do that. Their numeric strength, skill sets, competencies, and youthful vibrancy and energies should be viewed as assets to be harnessed for productive purposes rather than been perceived as threats by the government.

Towards an Egalitarian Nigerian Society

Conflicts are commonplace in any given society. Even in animal kingdoms, conflicts thrive. They could be volatile, verbal, symbolic, physical, or ideological in nature. Some members of the Nigerian society feel they have been cheated, not heard adequately, and not given equity. As a result, disagreements abound along the lines of entitlements and of political correctness. In this age of increased enlightenment, many demand to be heard, for their rights to be honoured, and for them to be recognised as members of the (left wing) society. While on the other hand, the *right wing* think they are doing well enough for members of the opposing camps. Consequently, contending voices and viewpoints make common grounds difficult to achieve, brewing pockets of displeasure and dissidence. Social conflicts and social discontent in Nigeria are real problems that require multidimensional, unconventional, yet delicate and subtle approaches to solve. They require socially engineered solutions, rooted within the potentials of the youth, and believed by this paper to be portent in appealing to the subconscious of members of the Nigerian society in tackling these problems without resorting to the use of coercion or of violence.

#EndSARS has opened a vista for a true change that the country yearns for. Achebe stated that debate about a nation's future should continue in small forums, in schools, offices on the radio, on TV, in markets, in our newspapers and on the streets, until we get things right (Achebe, 2012). It becomes retrogressive when same avenues for debate are suppressed or autocratically utilised by the State to promote a narrative that is anti-people and yet unilateral. The media stations, especially the privately owned ones, that attempted to televise the activities of #EndSARS were fined by the Nigerian federal government on the grounds that the footages and stories were fake news (*Sahara Reporters*, October 26, 2020). The independent report of the Lekki/Ikoyi military attack of October 20, 2020 by CNN, was also refuted by the Nigerian government as untrue, calling it a doctored story (Olisah: *Nairametrics*, November 19, 2020; and Oyero: *Punch*, November 19, 2020). The government's spokespersons contradicted all other media reports of #EndSARS, insisting that only their narrative was true. This is a demonstration of lack of readiness to address the issues that drove the #EndSARS movement in the first place, raising fears of the possibility of another protest soon. However, to borrow Achebe's words once more, "I have stated elsewhere that this mindless carnage will end only with the dismantling of the present corrupt political system and banishment of the cult of mediocrity that runs it, hopefully through a peaceful, democratic process" (Achebe, 2012, p. 251).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The war against freedom of expression by the Nigerian State got more vicious with the fining of some broadcast houses for their airing of the #EndSARS protests. The information minister, Lai Mohammed, has vehemently campaigned for the regulation of social media in the country at different fora, in addition to tightening fetters around the mainstream media using agencies under his ministry. This motive thus found more expression in the sanctioning of some television stations, through the instrumentality of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), on accusations of airing fake news. If CNN were to be under the jurisdiction of the minister and the NBC, who knows what its fate would have been by now? That is by the way, and better left to our imaginations. But then, the incoherent accounts and comments by the minister and other agents of government on the ill-fated Lekki Toll Gate shootings, beg for answers to the question as to who, really, was propagating active disinformation. This paper dares to ask: What is the government afraid of when people exercise their rights to freedoms of thought, expression, and association on mediated platforms? Is the government subtly adopting Leninism to curtail and contain idea sharing among citizens? We think that a responsive and responsible government should appreciate criticisms and exploit them for efficient and productive leadership.

The developments in Nigeria at the start of the fourth quarter of 2020, where its citizenry forced its government to the scales of accountability through the theatrical #EndSARS protest, was unprecedented. The pent-up anger, frustration, and overstretched patience of *suffering* but *not smiling* Nigerians, went over the edge unabated. This points to one sordid fact – younger generations of Nigerians have woken from their decades-long docility, self-trade, and apathy towards their country's political affairs. Their social consciousness and demand for their legitimate entitlements, which they hitherto sold to thieving politicians for peanuts, are beginning to be reawakened and reclaimed. This trend may not stop unless and until the political class does the needful, otherwise, the whole system risks a massive implosion under the weight of government's recklessness, highhandedness, and injustices, which could leave both the leaders and the led buried under its rubbles. Therefore, what must be done to avert this imminent apocalypse? There are many things to be done which, unfortunately, are herculean and apparently beyond the cerebral and political capabilities of the normative Nigerian government. Scary as these stark realities may appear, this paper will not shy away from proffering a few solutions.

The youth of this country should be taken as a major block in political and economic matters. They sooner the political class appreciated and appropriated the youth's indispensability as critical stakeholders in the polity, the better for the common and greater good of the land. Their youthful energies and creative capacities are freely at the disposal of the nation to use for positive developments, for the fight against acute poverty, and for vanquishing every form of social unwholesomeness.

The current (and typical) complexion of Nigeria's political leadership, which in addition to being nepotistic, is replete with the aged and dying, should be voluntarily and permanently retired (and peacefully too) while it is still possible. Nigerian-styled gerontocracy has proven time and again to be a colossal failure, and which cannot meet up with the exigencies of a fast-paced and dynamic world that only young bloods and minds are better wired to conquer. The sluggishness and obsolescence towards critical development matters by this leadership makeup, has cost Nigeria and Nigerians many years of severe social and infrastructural deficits. This tragedy leaves her lagging behind nations who were her peers, and some whom she outpaced, only a few decades ago. A youthful leadership is what this country needs now! It would be worthy if the elders in power heeded to their *elderly* advice and took a bow while the ovation was still loudest. They may be lucky to exit the nation's political stage with what is left of their honour, to function mainly in mentoring and advisory capacities. Even these roles must be performed from the sidelines and never, again, from the centre.

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Agro-Allied Value Option to Rescue Unemployment in Covid Era

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Abstract

Agro-allied is an agricultural chain that refers to agricultural products essentially needed as raw materials for the production of other goods and services. In other words, allied sector or industry depends solely on agriculture for survival in their industrial activities. Agriculture is considered to be the oldest occupation in Africa and among the Nigerian people. Nigeria is blessed with good topography, climate, and arable land suitable for agricultural activities which predominantly occur in rural areas. The search for a better life in the cities resulted in the urban/rural movement with its attendant consequences, such as youth unemployment, fraudsters, robbery, prostitution, and other vices in the society as a means of survival. In spite of these, the realities of this covid era are such that some people are out rightly out of employment, work without full salaries, downsizing and leading to unemployment and poverty in the lives of the people. However, opportunities abound in the involvement of our youth in agro-related businesses. Therefore, agro-allied option becomes a necessity to positively engage our youth in wealth creation and possible employment opportunities. The study examined Agro-allied as a value option to rescue unemployment in this covid era. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Four research questions were raised. The convenience sampling technique was adopted with a sample population of 400 participants. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers. The reliability of the instrument was determined by Cronbach alpha statistics. The research findings revealed that youth involvement in agro-allied business is a viable option to combat unemployment in this era, provided certain incentives are put in place.

Keywords: Agriculture, Agro-allied, Covid era, Youth involvement, Youth unemployment

Introduction

Value is a satisfaction guaranteed in the delivery of goods and services. This value is a complete process from the input to the output and the feedback. In agriculture, such phrases as ‘farm to fork’, ‘farm to table’, ...encapsulate a process that started from the farm, having undergone the growth process to harvest and other secondary productions, packaging and finally arrived at the consumers’ tables are a chain of process accompanied by a chain of values expectedly. Similarly, Kaplinsky (2000) succinctly defines a value chain as the full range of synchronized activities required to bring a product or service from conception, through the intermediary phases of production, delivery to final consumers, which further extends to the final disposal and satisfaction of goods and services after use.

The value chain also comprises companies or individuals that interact to supply goods and services. They are variously referred to as productive chains, value chains, marketing chains, supply chains, or distribution chains (Eboh et al., 2012).

According to Miller and Silva (2007), the value chain is the set of active participants in both the private and public domain including service providers and the sequence of value-adding activities involved in bringing a product or service from production to the final consumer. The value chain is concisely described as the entire range of activities required to bring a product from the initial input stage to the supply stage, through various phases of production, to its final market destination. Value is any activity that benefits consumers and increases the market form or function of the product or service; and in today's business climate, there is a need to maximize and optimize materials and human resources and consumers’ values of every process in a business (Jacoby, 2005). According to Hill and Jones (2011),

the term “value chain” refers to the concept that a company’s line of activities is for transforming inputs into outputs with the ultimate purpose of delivering value to the customers.

Agro-allied is a sector that relies on agricultural produce as raw materials for production and sometimes the finished products from this sector are ploughed back into agriculture essentially for better yield and productivity in agricultural practice. We are all part of the value chains which stretch from the farmers, harvesters, buyers, sellers, transporters, storing, processing, packaging, inspection, quality control, distribution, sales representatives, and consumers. In supporting the chains, government policies, agricultural research organizations, banks; all provide loans and ways to successfully participate in the value chains.

This Covid era is characterized by a new normal where limited numbers of individuals can converge within a specified time and space to forestall the spread of the pandemic. Consequently, there was a great loss of jobs and revenues, reduction in salaries leaving able and energetic youth in search of employment where there is practically none.

Statement of the Problem

The search for a better life in the urban areas has necessitated the rural-urban migration leading to the neglect of agriculture practice and development among the Nigerian people. Agriculture has always been the mainstay of survival for humans and industries. In this era, there is loss of employment, downsizing in industries, reduction in salaries or non-payment of salaries, hunger, and the struggles for survival on the increase.

Despite the government’s attempts to return the youth to embracing agriculture as a viable career option, life in the urban setting is appealing to them with a high rate of unemployment. The consequential effect of unemployment is a threat to individual socio-economic growth; and this negates the SDG 1 and SDG 2 of no poverty and zero hunger respectively (UNDP, 2015). Therefore, in this era, agro-allied value chains seem attractive options where youth can operate as intermediaries between the farmers and the industries irrespective of their ages, gender, and educational qualifications. Agro-allied, therefore, provides a viable option to the youth who are not interested in agricultural practice to take up identified opportunities in the agro sector where agricultural raw materials are needed for finished products and services useful for consumption. Hence, the study on agro-allied value chain options to rescue unemployment in this era.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to provide agro-allied value chain options to rescue the youth from unemployment in the covid era irrespective of their ages, gender, and educational qualification.

Specifically, with emphasize on the peculiarity of this era, the objectives of this study were to:

- 1) Examine the perception of youth about agro-allied value chains.
- 2) Identify opportunities in agro-allied value chains
- 3) Identify facilities to encourage youth involvement in agro-allied chains

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study:

- 1) Why is the Agro-allied value chain a viable occupation for unemployed youth in this era?
- 2) What business ideas can unemployed youth build around the agro-allied value chain?

3) What opportunities are available for youth in agro-allied value chains?

4) What are the needed supports for youth participation in agro-allied?

Methodology

The research design adopted for the study was a Descriptive Survey. A convenient sampling technique was used for the selection of 400 youth as the sample for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire designed by the researchers titled “Agro-Allied Value Option to Rescue Unemployment In Covid Era (AVORUCE)”.

The instrument had 20 questionnaire items and adapted the four-point Likert scale which included:

SA- Strongly Agree = 4points

A- Agree = 3points

D- Disagree=2points

SD- Strongly Disagree=1point

Face and content validity of the instrument was determined by experts in test and measurement while the reliability of the instrument was determined by administering 30 copies of the instrument on youths who did not participate in the main study and the data obtained was analyzed using the Cronbach alpha reliability technique and a coefficient of .86 proved the instrument was reliable. The research questions were answered using frequency count and percentage.

Result

Research Question One: Why is the Agro-allied value chain a viable occupation for unemployed youth in this era?

Table 1: Viability of Agro-allied value chains

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	No special training needed	114	28.5	1
2	Suitable for both employed and unemployed	38	9.5	5
3	Little resources needed for startup	102	25.5	2
4	Flexibility in participation	84	21.0	3
5	Modern technology (e.g. telephone) aids participation	62	15.5	4
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors’ computation (2020)

From table 1, no special training needed was rated 1st with 114 and 28.5 as the frequency and percentage. The second most rated was little resources needed for a startup with 102 as the frequency and 25.5%. Whereas flexibility in participation was the 3rd rated with 21.0% and 84 as its frequency. However, modern technology (e.g., telephone) aids participation had 62 as its frequency and 15.5% which rated its 4th. Whereas the 5th rated is the Suitable for both employed and unemployed with 9.5% and 38 as the frequency.

Research Question Two: What business ideas can unemployed youth build around agro-allied value chains?

Table 2: Business ideas around agro-allied value chains

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	Buying and selling raw materials from farmers to industries.	95	23.8	2
2	Buying and selling finished products from industries to consumers.	99	24.8	1
3	Other business ideas can arise for the youth.	80	20.0	3
4	Social media aided agro-allied businesses	50	12.5	5
5	Transportation and logistics business ideas.	76	19.0	4
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors' computation (2020)

From the data in table 2, buying and selling finished products from industries to consumers tops the rating with a frequency of 99 and 24.8%. Also, 95 respondents agreed that buying and selling raw materials from farmers to industries is a good business idea which makes it rated 2nd with 23.8% as the percentages. Other business ideas was rated 3rd with a frequency of 80 and a percentage of 20%. Whereas transportation and logistics business ideas were rated 4th with a frequency of 76 and a percentage of 19.0%. Social media-aided agro-allied businesses was however rated 5th with 12.5% and 50 as frequency.

Research Question Three: What opportunities are available for youth in agro-allied value chains?

Data on table 3 showed that 25.3% of the youth agreed that employment opportunities in industries is an opportunity available in agro-allied which made it 1st in the ranking with 101 as its frequency. Also, 23.5% of the youths agreed that they can be temporarily engaged while awaiting paid job; this made it 2nd in the rating with 94 as its frequency. Also, 18.0% of the respondents believed that agro-allied creates jobs for self and others which makes it 3rd in the rating, with 72 as its frequency. However, extra income had 68 and 17.0 as its frequency and percentage respectively which made it come 4th in the rating. And only 16.3% chose to build sustainable business outfits to make it 5th with 65 as its frequency.

Table 3: Opportunities available for youth in agro-allied value chains

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	Employment opportunities in industries	101	25.3	1
2	Create jobs for self and others	72	18.0	3
3	Extra income	68	17.0	4
4	Build sustainable business outfit	65	16.3	5
5	Temporarily engaged while awaiting paid job	94	23.5	2
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors' computation (2020)

Research Question Four: What are the needed supports for youth participation in agro-allied?

Table 4: Needed support for youth participation in agro-allied

S/N	Variables	Frequency	%	Rating
1	Security of lives and properties.	110	27.5	2
2	Social amenities like good roads, stable electricity.	83	20.8	3
3	Public storage facilities	29	7.3	5
4	Mentoring and monitoring	52	13.0	4
5	Interest-free loans	126	31.5	1
	Total	400	100	

Source: Authors' computation (2020)

From table 4 above, interest-free loans were rated 1st with 126 and 31.5 as the frequency and percentage. The second most rated necessary support to encourage youth involvement in agro-allied is the security of lives and property with 110 as the frequency and 27.5%. Whereas Social amenities like good roads, stable electricity was the 3rd rated with 20.8% and 83 as its frequency. However, mentoring and monitoring had 52 as its frequency and 13.0% which rated it 4th. Whereas the 5th rated is public storage facilities with 7.3% and 29 as the frequency.

Discussion of findings

Viability of Agro-allied value chains

In the face of unemployment, survival is an uncompromised option. Consequently, all the 400 respondents agreed that all the identified viability options are of different degrees of importance according to the result rating. Therefore, his finding is in consonance with Maslow's theory of needs

where physiological needs take the highest priority of man over every other need all in the name of survival.

Business ideas around agro-allied value chains

The whole essence of a value chain is a process from input to output basically meant to satisfy the consumers of goods and services. We are all part of the value chain from the farmer who grows raw materials for agro-allied industries to producers or manufacturers who process the raw materials into finished goods, useful for the consumption of the consumers either in goods or services. There are other value chains in the activities that complete the input/output and feedback process. Therefore, unemployed youth have business ideas all around these chains starting from the farmer who produces raw materials for the agro-allied sector; that is production chain--transportation & logistics chain--supply chain--marketing chain, etc. This is agreed with Adebayo (1999) who opines that youths are not only energetic with the ability to replace the older generation in agriculture but are also filled with new innovations and technological competence to carry out commercial and technological agriculture.

Opportunities available for youth in agro-allied value chains

Opportunities abound in agro-allied options for Nigerian unemployed youth. This sector can only thrive by employing able and energetic youth into the various cadres in the industry. Many Nigerians were employed by industries when agriculture was given the place of pride in the Nigeria of yesteryears. In other words, where industry thrives, unemployment is reduced drastically. Consequently, youth can create jobs for themselves and others and build a sustainable business for extra income. However, temporarily engaged while awaiting paid jobs among our youth is a reaction towards the quest for job security and consistency in financial flow. Agu (2013) posits that building successful businesses require innovative ideas, identifying opportunities, thinking outside the box with the realities within and around. Therefore, framing agriculture within the context of ICT and entrepreneurship skills provides a valuable dimension to the discourse of agricultural modernization.

Needed support for youth participation in agro-allied

Supports for youth participation in agro-allied or small and medium enterprises require financial assistance as primary while another assistance is secondary. Interest-free loans usually set the pace while the security of lives and properties follows according to the result of this finding. Security threats discourage foreign investors and the Nigerian youth have suffered these threats and practically revolted with the #ENDSARS protest in the country. Social amenities like water, electricity, good roads are an impetus to business survival in Nigeria. The government has a responsibility to monitor, sensitize, orientate, organize seminars and workshops to encourage youth involvement in the agro sector.

These results corroborate Ihemeje et al. (2020) that government at various tiers should identify the supportive infrastructure needed to simulate agro-allied businesses in order to prioritize the execution of infrastructure needed to facilitate technological advancement, boost sustainable development of agro-allied small businesses and the economy as well as equipping intending investors with adequate knowledge of agro-allied business due to the specialized and delicate nature of agricultural business in Nigeria to avoid losses of investment. Also, it supported the rippling effect of government policies on entrepreneurship activities according to Kreft and Sobel (2005) and Oliyide (2012).

But practically, agro-allied businesses are exempted from paying taxes in the first five years of operation (Ngerebo & Masa, 2012). Lastly, Lambert (2001) reiterates that the agro-industrial sector remains rudimentary, underdeveloped, and largely without significant institutional, technical and financial support.

Conclusion

Nigeria and Nigerians have benefitted immensely from the dividend of agriculture when agriculture was given all the seriousness it required as our mainstay. The oil boom shifted focus from agriculture which affected the agro-allied industries. This sector needs resuscitation to bring alive all the value chain options which start with the farmer to the consumers. The result of this finding revealed that the youth eke a living out of agro-allied value option as a rescue for unemployment in Nigeria.

Recommendations

- Agriculture must be made compulsory in all levels of education in Nigerian schools.
- NYSC should integrate agricultural practice into their programme for the youth during service.
- Enabling environment should be provided for agro-sector to thrive.
- The security of lives and properties of the youth must not be compromised by giving it a top priority.

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Assessment of Funding Models' Adoption for Skills Acquisition in Government Technical Colleges in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was designed to assess the adoption of various funding channels available for technical and vocational education and training programmes for skills acquisition in technical colleges in Nigeria. There is lamentation that poor funding of technical and vocational education and training programmes is the main cause of unemployment because its products do not possess employable skills. Access to other funding options will reposition TVET and as well improve its products which therefore ameliorate unemployment among youths. The research was a descriptive study of the cross-sectional survey type. The target population consisted of all the 35 public technical colleges in the South-west geo-political zone of Nigeria; it adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. Stratified sampling technique was used to select state-owned technical colleges. Thereafter, simple random sampling technique was used to select four out of the six states in South-west, Nigeria. Respondents in the technical colleges were classified as administrative (principals and vice-principals) and non-administrative staff (instructors). N= 68 administrative staff and 502 non-administrative staff were sampled purposively. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used for data collection. The study concluded that inability to fully adopt TVET funding models by technical colleges contributed to poor funding to acquire adequate training resources. Consequently, transferable skills required to make individuals economically independent are not optimally acquired. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, principals should make efforts to reach out to the alumni, public-spirited philanthropists, Government, and Non-governmental organisations to assist in the provision of training resources for students.

Key words: Funding models; Technical colleges; Skills acquisition; TVET financing

Introduction

In the last two decades, the rate at which unemployment especially among the youths is worrisome. It has even been alleged that the problem is not unemployment parse but increase in the number of unemployable graduates. Magnus (2015) has rightly stated that the nation's educational activity should be centered on students in order for them to acquire maximum skills for self-development and fulfillment in the labour market. It is therefore required that all relevant stakeholders must look for all possible means to develop skills and competence of the students. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is an education sub-sector set up to develop manpower skills and eradicate poverty (Umar & Rashid, 2019). The Nigeria government has also made allowance for TVET in the new national policy on education (F R N, 2013). Skills development as described by the Department for International Development (DFID) (2011) serves industry, focusing in enabling people of working age to acquire skills which are needed by business at present and in the future. the body (DFID) further noted that skills development vary from one country to another but have the same goal which is to

produce well trained workers who enter (self-)employment relevant to their training within few months after graduation.

The increase in the attention given to Technical and Vocational Education and Training in the developed countries can be attributed to the role it plays in workforce production for sustainable economic development and reduction of youth's unemployment. This development is also paving ways for technological advancement. However, in Nigeria, this education sub-sector according to Akanbi (2017) had a slow start and developed less quickly because it is more expensive in terms of personnel and facilities need. So, it was officially incorporated into the first national policy on education in the year 1977. It is believed that if it carefully and sincerely funded, it can serve as a bail-out from unemployment, underdevelopment and can boost the economy (F R N, 2013).

During the pre-colonial era, TVET which was embedded in the African traditional education system was known as apprenticeship programmes, and was funded by the parents of the trainees. However, the arrival of the colonialists disorganised the existing apprenticeship programmes. It was the era characterised by the ability of children to read volume of books (Fafunwa, 1974) . The departure of the colonial government led to re-institutionalisation of TVET by the Nigeria government. Although, this has not been very encouraging as its graduates are relegated and not accorded the much-needed respect. People usually describe it as the dumping site for academically incompetent students.

Acknowledging its great roles, the federal government of Nigeria emphasized that TVET must offer programmes that meet the needs of commerce and industries (Osam, 2013). Unfortunately, this suggestion has not been met in Nigeria as employers still lament that graduates still lack relevant employability skills. Many reasons among which are lack of relevant training resources and funding have been highlighted as the clogs in the wheel of TVET success in Nigeria. Workshops in these institutions have become the showcases of dumps of obsolete machines, equipment and tools (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013; Ijaiya & Adewale , 2017). The issue of inadequate funding of this important education sub-sector is germane to be addressed as it constitutes a roadblock to smooth running of skill acquisition programmes. An attribute that is very common to most of the training system is the need to augment the available amount for funding public sector training (Ziderman, 2016). As such, stakeholders must access various funding channels or sources available for TVET to achieve its goals. Furthermore, Amadi and Johnwest (2016) pointed out that the sources of financing vocational education could be internal or external. This presupposes that funding of this type of education is not limited to what comes from government or the proprietor as the case may be. Extra effort is expected from the college administrators to access numerous channels to fund the vocational education programmes, especially, the external sources. Private sectors, philanthropic organisations/ individuals , informal sectors, alumni and multinational corporations among others are funding channels that can be accessed internally. The question is, to what extent are these funding models put to use in technical colleges in Nigeria.

In fact, the Nigeria government has even affirmed that education is an expensive social venture, which requires adequate financial provision to implement its programmes especially from all the levels of government (F R N, 2013). On the 15th December, 2018 the federal government of Nigeria and the UNESCO jointly signed phase one of a project document and of operation for the support for revitalizing TVET in Nigeria. The objectives were to support the federal and states education authorities in their effort to revitalize, reform and expand TVET to meeting the present and future needs for rapid socio-economic development of the nation (NBTE, 2018). TVET is the powerhouse of the economic growth. Ziderman (2016) informed that government funding of training institutions is made either direct or through a national training fund while donor funding is supplied centrally to the

government and not to individual institutions. Other alternative funding models include tuition fees, sales of students' handcraft and art, private sectors contributions and parent teachers' forum among others (Lawal, 2013; Nwafor & Akani, 2015).

Employers of labour often complain that some of these graduates though professionally or technically qualified are unemployable, in that they lack the requisite, essential skills or competencies needed in the job or for sustainable employment. These skills according to Sodipo (2014) create a gap in their knowledge, which must be filled to make them suitable to compete for few, existing vacancies that crop up from time to time. No doubt, there is a lot of competition for jobs that are not available when the nation is faced with high rate of unemployment. To be found employable, the individual must possess in addition to qualifications or specialist experience, capabilities or competencies such as aptitude (talent) attitude and behavior. The would-be employee must be aware of what the employers are looking for in any employee. The person must be able to show that he is employable, a team member and a contributing member of the organization. Graduate employability has continued to attract special attention from scholars and policy makers all over the world. Notwithstanding, the efforts of universities to help students better understand and articulate their skills, it would appear that many employers are not satisfied with the skills graduates bring to the workplace. It was further reported that 30% (out of 233) of employers have problems with graduate generic employability skills such as team working, communication and problem solving among others (Pitan & Adedeji, 2012). Consequences of skills gap among graduates' lead to waste of human resources, unemployment and social vices thus creating a threat to the stability of the nation (Sodipo, 2014). This indicates that the goals of establishing technical and vocational education and training institutions remain a mirage which must be thoroughly looked into.

Statement of the Problem

The persistence of global discussions on the geometrical increase in the number of unemployable graduates cannot be swept under the carpet. Lack of access to training facilities and funding problems have been identified as the causes (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013; Okoli, Wejinya, Agam, & Asufi, 2016; Ijaiya & Adewale, 2017). It was also found in the study carried out by Okoli, Wejinya, Agam, and Asufi (2016) that Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has not been able to solve the problems of unemployment, ignorance, poverty and other social vices involving youths in Nigeria due to inadequate funding of its programmes. However, there are several potent funding options for educational institutions that can ameliorate this challenge. This study was therefore designed to assess the extent to which technical colleges are aware and utilise the various funding models to finance TVET programmes for skills acquisition in South-west, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to

1. Determine the technical colleges awareness of funding models for TVET programmes
2. Determine the extent at which funding models adopted to finance TVET programmes in technical colleges in South-west, Nigeria
3. Determine the extent of the Implementation of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to achieve TVET Goals in Technical Colleges in South-west, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions

1. Are technical colleges aware of various funding models for TVET programmes?
2. To what extent are the funding models adopted to finance TVET programmes in

technical colleges in South-west, Nigeria?

- 3 To what extent is the Implementation of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for achieving TVET Goals in technical colleges in South-west, Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Resource Dependency Theory (RDT). This was first articulated by Pfeffer and Salanick in 1978 in their book titled “the external control of organisation: A resource dependence perspective (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009). It came out of the study into how organisation’s external resources affect the behaviour of those organisations (Dimunah, 2017).

The main belief of the theory is that organisations depend on resources that originate from their environment. Dimunah (2017) said that there are other organisations that compete for the same resources within the environment. RDT recognizes the influence of external factors on organizational behaviour, but constrained by their context, Manager can reduce the environmental uncertainty and dependence (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009).

The theory is relevant to this study because, TVET institutions compete for resources, and those that seek creative idea by accessing alternative funding options gain flexibility in administering programmes than those that depend only on one source of funding. Dimunah (2017) added that an organisation’s success depends on its ability to compete with its environment while those that fail to compete successfully by solving their critical problems either not accomplish their goals or go into extinction. RDT provides framework on how technical colleges can solve the problem funding its programmes for effective skills development.

Research Methodology

This was a descriptive study of the cross-sectional survey design type. The target population for this study consisted of all the 35 public technical colleges in the South-west geo-political zone of Nigeria. This study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. The State-owned public technical colleges in South-west geo-political zone were considered for this study. Thereafter, a simple random sampling technique was used to select four states (66% of the state population) from the six states that made up South-west geo-political zone in Nigeria. There are 21 State-owned Government Technical Colleges (GTCs) in the four selected states as at the time of this study. In addition, using the stratified random sampling technique, the participants in each of the selected colleges were grouped into two strata, which were administrative (principals and vice-principals) and non-administrative staff (instructors). So, 68 administrative staff and 502 non-administrative staff were selected, totaling 570 respondents. An instrument titled “Funding Models for TVET Questionnaire (FMTVETQ)” which contained 16 items. Experts from academia validated the instrument, while Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire getting coefficient of 0.81.

Analysis of Data

The data collected for this study were collated and analysed with the aid of version 22 IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Frequency count, percentages, mean scores rating, standard deviation and rank ordering were used to analyse the research questions. Decision rule was also set for determining levels of awareness and models adoption. Each of the funding models that has the mean score that falls between 0.01 and 1.99 was low, the mean score that is within the range of 2.00 and 2.49 be moderately adopted by the technical colleges while any item that falls between 2.50 and

5.00 was adjudged very highly adopted. In addition, Results from the statistically analysed data were also presented in tables for clarity purpose.

Results

The data are presented in the following tables:

Table 1: The Level of Awareness of TVET Funding Models in Technical Colleges in South-west, Nigeria

Awareness Level	Principals/ vice-principals		Instructors	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low level of awareness	0.6	1	06	1.2
Moderate level of awareness	4.4	6	42.4	8.4
High level of awareness	63	93	454	90.4
Total	68	100	502	100

Source: Authors' computation (2020)

Table 1 indicated that majority of the principals and the teachers of technical colleges in South-west, Nigeria were aware of funding alternatives. It can be seen from table 1 that none of the respondents was completely ignorant of funding models for TVET. It can also be seen from the table that only 0.6 (1%) of the principals and vice-principals have low level of awareness while only 6 (1.2%) have low level of the funding options' awareness. In fact, a significant and considerable proportion were moderately aware on the side of the principals/ vice- principals and the instructors with 4.4 (6%) and 42.4 (8.4) respectively, while most of the principals/ vice-principals and teachers had high level of awareness 63(93%) and 454 (90.4%) of TVET financing channels respectively. The addition of the two ratings (high and moderate awareness) resulted to 67.4 (99 %) for the principals and vice-principals while the instructors resulted to 496.4 (98.8%). This implies that an approximate of 99 percent of the respondents were aware of the new development in the policy on TVET. The reason for this awareness may be attributed to the effort of the principals and good organisational climate, and the fast spreading of the use of information and communication technology; essentially, social media.

Table 2 showed the channels the GTCs followed to fund TVET programmes in Nigeria. Ranking the mean scores of these funding channels, it was revealed that the production unit of the colleges had the highest mean rating 2.57, which was followed by the private sector 2.41, the Non-Government Organisations (NGO) had 2.28, Donors 2.24, multinational corporations 2.10, Government 2.03, Students 1.73, Alumni 1.63, Informal sectors 1.48 and the parastatals was ranked 10th with 1.11. This means that only the school production unit scored above the standard set for considering what is high while other funding models were still below the expected mean score level which was 2.50. This presupposes that financial resource was not sufficient for TVET to realise it goals. Hence, there is need for collective effort at strategizing the means of operationalizing various funding options to reposition TVET in South-west Nigeria in particular and the whole nation in general.

Table 2: Extent of the Use of the Funding Model to Finance TVET Programmes in Technical Colleges in South-west, Nigeria

Item	N	Mean	Remark	Std. deviation
Students	570	1.73	low	1.047
Donors	570	2.24	moderate	0.951
Private sector	570	2.41	moderate	1.488
NGO's	570	2.28	moderate	0.928
Government	570	2.03	moderate	0.837
Production units	570	2.57	high	0.811
Parastatals	570	1.11	low	0.572
Informal sectors	570	1.48	low	0.658
Alumni	570	1.63	low	0.617
Multinational corporation	570	2.10	moderate	1.599

Source: Authors' computation (2020)

Table 3 showed the responses of the respondents to the extent of adoption of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in technical colleges as the highest frequency of the rating among the participants favoured full adoption of the public-private partnership with 211 (37%), this was followed by responses on high adoption which was 121 representing 21% of the total respondents' responses. The addition of the above stated rating amounted to 332 (58%) of the total rating which implies that public-private partnership as a strategy to actualise TVET goals was adopted averagely.

Table 3: Extent of the Implementation of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to achieve TVET Goals in Technical Colleges in South-west, Nigeria

Adoption Extent	N	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low adoption	570	159	28
Moderate adoption	570	78	14
High adoption	570	121	21
Very high adoption	570	211	37
Total		570	100

Source: Authors' computation (2020)

In addition, the ratings for fair adoption and poor adoption of the Public -Private Partnerships (PPPs) strategy are 78 (14%) and 65 (11%) respectively. The addition of the two ratings resulted to 143 (25%) while no adoption rating was 94.4 (17%). This therefore suggests that more still need to be done by technical college administrators on using the potent strategy if technical and vocational education and training goals are to be realised. The summation of poor adoption and no adoption rate is therefore 42 %. The message this is also sending is that non-governmental organisations, individuals and multi-national organisation still need to be encouraged by government and the principals to contribute their corporate social responsibilities to develop the youths' skills. The reason for none active participation may also be due to unpalatable business operating environment to all these private establishments

which might be making them feel reluctant to fund government project and the risk of losing the capital invested in the partnerships.

Major Findings of the Study

The findings revealed that:

1. Instructors (98.8%) in technical colleges were highly aware of TVET funding models, as many of them were found to be well informed about it. This implies that the respective GTCs' administrators were doing well on information dissemination among the staff.
2. It was found that the awareness has not transformed to action. This is evident in the poor level of adoption of some of the funding channels in technical colleges.
3. It was revealed that the production unit as a funding model of the colleges had the highest mean rating 2.57. This implies that it is most common model adopted to finance TVET programmes in South-west, Nigeria.
4. In spite of a significant roles plays by Public-private partnership as a funding model for TVET, it was still not thoroughly utilised. This was due to inadequate information on the part of school administrators on how to get partners.

Discussion

The study examined funding models and skills acquisition in technical colleges in south-west, Nigeria. It was found that technical colleges' administrative and non-administrative members of staff were aware of varieties of funding models available for TVET programmes. This aligned (Lawal, 2013) that suggested that school administrators need to be more aware of other funding channels available for school programmes. It also conformed to findings of the study carried out by Adebawale and Dare (2012) on teachers' awareness of Nigeria educational policy on information and communication technology and the use of ICT in Oyo state secondary schools that most of the teachers in secondary schools were moderately aware of educational policy on ICT. The implication is that the technical colleges should have been reporting improvement in funding of the programmes in south-west, Nigeria. However, due to the inadequacies in adopting some of the models, the situation remains poor.

The study found that funding models were not fully adopted by technical colleges in Nigeria to make TVET goals achieved. It was found that apart from production units, other funding mechanisms were less utilized. This aligned with Dimunah (2017) study on under-funding of federal universities in Nigeria that though administrators are aware of funding mechanisms for universities but clearly do not know what to do differently to adopt those mechanisms to fund their citadels of learning. Adequate funding is germane to the success of TVET programmes.

Implication for Practice

The implications emanating from this study directly apply to the administration of TVET institutions in Nigeria. Administrators should involve relevant stakeholders in the management of their various institutions and must be prudent and transparent. In addition, administrators can invite financial experts should facilitate workshop on funding models and financial management. This will avail the personnel opportunity for professional development.

Limitation and Future Direction for Research

The results presented above should be considered in the light of some limitations. There might be some other funding models best known to college administrators in technical colleges but not known to the researcher. Therefore, future studies in this direction should employ an open-ended questionnaire or interview to elicit data. Furthermore, the participants in this study were limited to state government owned technical colleges in Nigeria. Whereas, there exist also federal technical colleges and private-

owned which their funding strategies may vary. Future researcher should involve participants from both federal and private technical colleges in Nigeria.

Conclusions

The present study was designed to assess the adoption of funding models for skills acquisition in technical colleges in Nigeria. The work found that poor funding of TVET programmes is due to poor utilization of the numerous funding models. This is evident in the over-dependence on subvention from the government and inability of school administrators to diversify means of financing technical and vocational education (Dimunah, 2017). The poor status of public TVET institutions could be addressed if colleges improve its effectiveness by thoroughly exploring various means of funding its programmes. The adoption of committee method can also ease the task. All instructors should serve in funding models committees. Collectively, all the alternative funding means would be conveniently and effectively accessed.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following were recommended to improve funding of TVET programmes in Nigeria:

- i. Colleges should reach out to the public-spirited philanthropists and the artisans' organizations to assist it programmes financially.
- ii. Colleges should make more efforts to form a formidable partnership with the private industries.
- iii. Government should assure the private industries of friendly policies and a cordial relationship.
- iv. All staff members should be grouped to form funding model adoption committees.

Abbreviations

TVET: technical and vocational education and training; NBTE: national board for technical education; GTC: Government technical college; NGO: Non-government organisation; RDT: Resource Dependency Theory; PPP: public-private partnership; FMTVETQ :Funding Models for TVET Questionnaire.

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Authors' contributions

The authors made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study. The authors took responsibility for data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. The authors read and approved final manuscript.

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**Post COVID-19 Skills and the Employability/Self-Employment of Youths in Nigeria:
Technical,
Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutions to the Rescue**

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Abstract

The 'New Normal' that is created by COVID-19 no doubt, is here to stay. The effects are affecting every facet of the economy and life especially the way things are done in the workplace. The old and young were affected by these effects brought about by COVID-19 which every individual must find ways of adapting to and sustain if the economy and life must go on without hardship. Adapting and sustaining employability for growth in the Post COVID-19 era, is to a large extent, a function of imploring skills and retraining of skills needed. The employability of and self-employment by youths in the Post COVID-19 era, depend on their readiness with skills needed to adapt to the changes and the new ways of doing things and working for sustainability brought about by COVID-19 in the Post COVID-19 era. The Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions were established to produce skilled Manpower in Nigeria. In fact, the 6-3-3-4 system of education which came into being in 1983, placed premium on manual activities, technical proficiency, and respect for the dignity of labour and economic efficiency, in essence, it was to produce self-reliant graduates with better labour market skills and earning potentials but it was replaced with the 9-3-4 system of education, why?. The questions are: what are the skills needed for employability/self-employment in the Post COVID-19 era? Do the Youths of Nigeria have these skills/are they ready to acquire these skills? What is the role of TVET in strengthening /training youths in skills needed for the Post COVID-19 era? Do the TVET institutions in Nigeria have the manpower, infrastructure and will-power to accomplish this role? Using the critical analysis of relevant concepts and literature, this paper attempts to answer these and many other questions and issues raised. This paper concludes that though efforts are made towards making the youths of Nigeria to be employable/self-employed, the skills needed to cope in the Post COVID-19 era are still far from being acquired because the TVET institutions are not well equipped in manpower and infrastructure to produce graduates with such skills.

Key Words: Post -COVID-19 Skills, Youth Employability, Self-Employment, TVET

Introduction

COVID-19 took the world by surprise, changing the way we live, travel and most importantly, the way we work. This change in the way we work, means that it is only those that are ready to adapt, accept and re-orientate themselves that will survive the scourge. The need to recognize Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was stressed by Osidipe (2017) and Mourshed (2012) when they noted that TVET could help youths develop employable skills and advised Government to strengthen the platform to perform and achieve this. As far back as 2000, the Director-General of United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Irina Bokova in Raheem and Ayika (2019;1) noted that 'we are witnessing a young generation frustrated by chronic mismatch between skills and work' because of the neglect of TVET education. International Labour Organization (ILO, 2012) also warned that young people are now three times more likely than adults to be unemployed as a result of the growing mismatch between the supply and demand for skills, which disproportionately affects young people in developing countries like Nigeria. That same year, African Economic Outlook (2012) cried out that there is an unprecedented oversupply of social science and business graduates but a low number of graduates able to fill high vacancies in agri-business or engineering across sub-Saharan

Africa and the World Bank (2012) linked high youth unemployment in sub-Sahara Africa, particularly to poorly conceptualized, inadequate, and ill-delivered technical and vocational education and training.

The National Bureau of Statistics (2020), reveals Nigeria's unemployment rate as at the second quarter of 2020 to be 27.1% indicating that about 21,764,614 (21.7 million) Nigerians remain unemployed. The data also reveals that the worst-hit are Nigerian youths with over 13.9 million currently unemployed. This situation worsened by COVID-19 with no end in sight, calls for actions by all especially the youths who are the leaders of tomorrow and the strength of the workforce in Nigeria to put their destinies in their hands by equipping themselves with employable skills needed for the post COVID-19 era.

It is no gainsaying that the progress of a country and the development of its manpower is the primary aim of education. Through education, citizens can develop knowledge, skills and ability to survive. It has been established by the review of literature that TVET is that aspect of education that can reduce the lack of skills bedeviling the youths of Nigeria for gainful and sustainable employment/self-employment but many of the literature neglected the role of the institutions in the provision of TVET education in helping to make youths skilful and also to enhance skills. This study therefore intends to focus on these TVET institutions with a view to analyzing the infrastructure, manpower and the will power to sustain these institutions if they are to render TVET education that will take care of the skills needed in the post COVID-19 era. To do this, the paper looks at the different definitions of technical, vocational education and training education; skills needed for post-COVID-19 employability/self-employment; the capability of the TVET education institutions in Nigeria to provide these skills as regards infrastructure (Building, equipment), number of staff and qualification of personnel to impact these skills; the political will to make sure that the institutions sustain both infrastructure and personnel to continuously carry out the assignment and finally to give recommendations.

Definitions Of Technical, Vocational Education And Training (TVET) Education

TVET Education is an aspect of education which can be acquired through formal, informal and non-formal education. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004), defined TVET as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of educational process involving, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life in addition to general education. TVET prepares an individual for skillful performance on practical task. It involves the acquisition of skills and competencies that can help individuals to not only function productively in any sector of the economy but also to establish and employ people.

Mclean & David (2018), opined that TVET is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work, to increase opportunities for productive empowerment and socio-economic development in knowledge, economics and rapidly changing work environment. TVET therefore is defined by United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2012), as those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic life. . Indeed, Akhuemonkhan & Raimi (2013) affirmed that TVET is a potent means for fast-tracking technological progress, citizens' capacities, economic growth and national development. Because it is designed to train skilled and entrepreneurial workforces that are needed to reduce unemployment (Maigida, 2014) and cope with the ever-changing pace of the world of work in which individually and collectively we found ourselves.

According to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2006), TVET is classified into three categories: formal, non-formal and informal TVET. The three categories take care of members of the society at different level. The Formal TVET refers to organized vocational education programmes provided within an approved

public or private educational or training institution and it is structured (in terms of curriculum, learning objectives and learning time) in such a way that it constitutes a continuous “ladder” where one level leads to the next and finally leads to certification. In a nutshell, formal TVET covers vocational education programmes provided within an approved public institution. It is intentional from the learner’s perspective, it is school based, it has a rigid curriculum, and the entry qualifications of trainees are fixed. Moreover, teachers in the formal TVET delivery system are required to be trained technical teachers with relevant vocational teachers’ qualifications. This category deals with youths who are yet to be engaged in any occupation and are going through education for the purpose of getting employed or to be self-employed after the completion of their full-time education. This category is provided by higher institutions of learning like the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges owned by either government or the private sector.

Non-formal TVET is the type of vocational education and training which takes place outside the formal school system either on a regular or intermittent basis. It has the advantage of a short-term training period; it is occupation-specific; the main emphasis is on the acquisition of practical skills for self-reliance or direct employment in a related field. For this reason, skilled craftsmen with some pedagogical training are engaged as instructors. This category is meant for another level of youths in the society that are not qualified for the rigid formal TVET education, youths with a particular vocation in mind or are in a particular vocation already but need to be trained and retrained for increased performance or gain new knowledge. The provision of the non-formal TVET education is by both government and the private sector.

Informal TVET is the type of vocational education that is provided by craftsmen of different trades in the informal sector of the economy. It is more appropriately often referred to as vocational training or experience-based learning and is usually carried out in form of apprenticeship system. Thus, the informal TVET is characterized by the non-existence of any curriculum or structure as there is no well-designed scheme and the method of training is not always sequential. The master craftsman decides out of experience what the apprentice should learn. This is for those youths who for one reason or another, found it difficult to attend the secondary education but need to be trained to acquire skills to sustain them for self-employment. This category is made possible by the private sector.

From the categories of TVET education mentioned, it is important to note that TVET education is capable of helping the youths of Nigeria no matter the level they belong to, to be skillful, resourceful and ready to adapt to situations and changes in the world of work like the one brought about by COVID-19. It is note-worthy to state that technical education gives individuals expertise in a technology or group of techniques that relate to the skill/knowledge acquired in the vocation of one’s choice. Therefore, youths with technical and vocational education training are equipped with skills to be employed/self-employed and function well in the workplace.

Skills Needed for the Post Covid-19 Era

The importance of TVET in providing skills to be fully employed/enhance skills to minimizing unemployment and creating self-employment has been stressed by many literature (Jwasshaka & Fadila, 2020; Deebom, 2019; Marcel-Okafor, 2017; Emmanuel, 2014). Unfortunately, unemployment persists in the land and many employers of labour are of the view that many graduates are unemployable, and majority are unemployed because of deficiency of skills Shirama, & Dahiru (2014); Torruam & Abur (2014); Njoku & Ihugba 2011) lamented. It is alarming that a researcher noted this as far back as 2011 and many beyond 2011 when nobody dreamt of COVID-19 which opened many covered-up holes in the employability of our youths. No doubt with COVID-19 pandemic resulting in lock-down in Nigeria as well as many countries of the world, things are no longer at ease in the world of work resulting in changes in the ways we work, thus, new skills have to be acquired and enhanced/upgraded to be employed, stay employed or be self-employed.

Literature reviewed (After School Africa; forbes.com; Dickinson, 2020; Hazenbush, 2020; Flake, 2020; Feld, Reich, Stork & Durth, 2020) revealed that for youths to be employable as well as be self-employed, certain skills (some driven by technology and many soft skills) are vital. These skills include but not limited to the following discussed in this paper are:

1. Adaptability and Flexibility

Adaptability and flexibility are the hall mark of a worker. A worker should be skilled to be able to adapt to situations and be flexible to work correctly under any working conditions. In the post COVID-19 era, organizations can only succeed when their employees can adapt to the changes of working remotely. The dawn of the 21st century brought changes and with the outbreak of the virus, the changes have been accelerated and profound. No doubt, the changes might also result in a continually changing and replacement of employees. In that regard, youths whose hope is to be employed or stay employed or be self-employed in a post Coronavirus world, should be ready to adapt to all working conditions. Such youths must also be prepared to update themselves and continuously refresh their distinguished skills constantly.

2. Technology Savviness

To adapt to changes and be ready for the post COVID-19 era employability is to be fully equipped with skills that are technology related. Digitalization is the key to organizational survival in the post COVID-19 era and youths who are not equipped with the skills that technology has to offer, might not be able to get job or be self-employed. Organizations need skills in robotics, artificial intelligence and many more that can make them stay afloat and be able to deal with any other situation that may arise in future. This means that any youth who wants to serve in any sector of the economy, must be prepared and be comfortable working with technology tools. This can only be done by equipping youths with relevant technology related skills. It is old fashion for an accountant to use excel to balance sheets when there are SAGE, SAP and QuickBook software to simplify and make work easy.

3. Creativity and Innovation

Creativity and innovation came to play a vital role during the lockdown for many organizations and many were able to keep going because of producing new products/rebranding their old products due to the creativity of employees. Such innovation would also be needed in the post COVID-19 era and better ways of doing things around the workplace. Human creativity is essential and a vital part of our daily lives as we live in the 'New Normal' world. It is therefore important that youths of Nigeria should have the skill to create unique quality content because it is the kind of content created that will attract customers to the organization. Youths should be equipped with the skill to build quality content that can drive the organization, bring trust and confidence between the employee and the organization.

4. Data Literacy

It is no news that data is an essential part of every successful organization. With the right set of data, an organization can quickly and correctly predict the future and correct any errors present in any transaction. If youths want to be employed in the post COVID-19 era, they need to be well informed and know how to compile the data, which will help the organization to understand what products and services their customers desire and be able to serve them with the right services and products during or after any possible pandemic. Organizations that understand this business trends and customer needs can respond to the needs of their clients. This will also help them build and fully equip their organizations against future pandemic and outbreaks. However, it is not enough to know how to make data unless it is beneficial. Information is useless if it is not made readable. Data is useful when it is

well composed, readable and understandable to someone reading. If youths possess more data literacy skills, employers will find them more appealing and employable.

5. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking skills is important in the post COVID-19 era apart from being data literate. Critical thinking is a thinking faculty and sometimes a branch of logic that entails reflecting on ideas and making ideas better. Thinkers are always respected and cherished in every sphere of life; one can never live a day without a critical analysis of activities around. One skill that will be essential to a youth who is thinking of being employed in the post COVID-19 era, is one that has a well-informed thinking and analysis skill. In the post coronavirus world, youths who can evaluate information independently and analyze them are those that organizations will be looking out for. Youths need to be able to 'think outside of the box' to solve problem. There is need to understand not just the 'what' but the 'why and 'when' and 'how to relate principles to very different situations. Knowing that not all information sources are valid and original, these organizations will be looking for youths who can deliver trusted and reliable facts. The latter can only be generated from understanding what information is real and thinking critically before relaying such information to others.

6. Coding Skills

As earlier stated, the world is rapidly transforming, and organizations are adopting new ways to make their organizations run better, thereby making use and needing digital and coding professionals. With the outbreak, those who are skilled at coding and with other digital skills will become highly relevant and important than before. Organizations will be more interested in employing youths with practical digital skills who can keep the business running and thriving in the post COVID-19 era. Youths must know how to develop Apps, Websites with security to avoid crimes on the Apps. Ability to build mobile Apps that customers can use for the purchase of products and goods produce by organizations will go a long way

7. Leadership and Expertise Skills

One of the changes in a world that is heavily augmented by the support of machines and where social distancing and home working might continue for the foreseeable future, is that more people at all level of the organization will be in a position where they lead others. Organizations' survival in the post COVID-19 era are those whose employees are working in more fluent teams where people are taking leads at different times. Youths with strong leadership skills, including those who can bring the best out of team- mates, inspire and encourage collaboration will be in high demand. Organizations value and cherish people with leadership skill that can discover hidden talents in others and motivate them to work better. Youths with leadership skill to enhance their other skills have a better chance of being employed in the post COVID-19 era.

8. Emotional Intelligence

A leader without emotional intelligent skill may not probably be armed enough to move employees to the level of commitment. This is because emotional intelligence is not only how you understand your emotions and the way you control your reactions to occurrences, but it is also about how informed you are as a leader of other people emotions and feelings and how you can control and manage them well to get the best out of them. When people feel bad and uncertain about what they do, it is only an emotionally intelligent person that can reach out to them well, manage and lift them up. This is the reason why leaders must also possess emotional intelligent skill with leadership skill.

9. Good Communication Skills

There is so much that can be achieved if a person has a good communication skill. This skill can help youths to pass across meaningful information not only to employers, clients buying their products, but also to team-mates. Therefore, youths looking to get employed/self-employed post COVID-19 in whatever sector, need to be armed with good communication skills alongside the other skills mentioned above.

The above are some of the skills relevant for employability in the post COVID-19 era. The question that comes to mind at this juncture is, is TVET education in Nigeria equipped to provide these skills to the Nigerian youths? A look at the practice of TVET education in Nigeria can help answer this question.

10. Lifelong Learning

One of the things that the 21st century taught human beings is to be a lifelong learner. This suffice that at any point in time, individuals must continue to learn and relearn because knowledge, skills and ability (KSA) obtained today becomes obsolete the next day and only those who continually learn, update and refresh survive. Youths should have the attitude of learning, relearning and refreshing to keep abreast of changes that may occur like the type brought about by COVID-19 pandemic. The World Economic Forum stated that 65% of children who entered elementary school as early as 2016 will end up working in jobs that yet exist and this is also applicable to graduates of 2016. So, youths must learn to always stay on top of their S curve

TVET Institutions to the Rescue

The actions of government to make students and youths equipped with employable skills saw government establishing institutions at different level of the educational system, formulating programmes supported by the private sector with the establishment of centres rendering services to youths, preparing and enhancing their skills for the world of work. These institutions provided technical and vocational training to youths who are unable to proceed to senior secondary schools to youths with higher qualifications. It is the belief of researchers that TVET education offered by these institutions has the capability of providing youths with employable skills needed in the workplace and that in many countries, reforms are being carried out as a result of the recognition of the crucial role of TVET education in providing employable skills among youths (AFDB, OECD & UNDP, 2017; Afloya, 2016; Ayanyemi & Adelabu, 2016, Mourshed, 2012; Zain, 2008). With the affirmation by researchers on the capability of the TVET education provided by TVET institutions, how did Nigeria get to this level of high unemployment rate among youths and can these institutions take care of training the youths for employability or self-employment for the post COVID-19 era?

Challenges of TVET Education Institutions in Providing skills needed for the Post COVID-19 Era

If TVET education is a form of education that prepares individuals for employment in any industry and for specialized education for which there is societal needs which can most appropriately be acquired in schools, where then is the disconnect in the system that brought about the unemployability of youths which resulted in the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria as stated by the Bureau of statistics (2020)?

Studies have identified so many challenges bedeviling TVET education and the institutions in Nigeria in the preparation and enhancing of skills for youths employability (Osidiye, 2017; Jane, Raymond, & Uddin, 2017; Okoye & Arimonu, 2016; Ogbanaya & Ekereobong, 2015; Adesina, 2013; Okoye & Okwelle, 2013; Salami, 2013; Shirama & Dahiru 2013; Uddin, 2013; Sadare & Elegbede, 2012; Dike,

2009; Uwaifo & Uwaifo, 2009; Liimatainen, 2002; Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria, 2005; World Bank, 2000). These challenges were identified before the advent of COVID-19 and if not checked, may affect the performance of TVET institutions in rendering quality education for the acquisition of relevant skills highlighted in this paper for the employability/self-employment of Nigerian youths in the post COVID-19 era as well.

These challenges are captioned under the following sub-headings in this paper as:

Status/Attitude

TVET according to Okwelle, & Deebom, (2017); Ayanyemi, & Adelabu (2016); Chukwuma, (2015); Sulayman & Philo, (2015), suffers stereotyping from parents, students and other stakeholders in Nigeria. TVET is perceived and treated as an education option for early school leavers and learners with less than average intelligence (Amodu, 2011). This negative stereotyping Eze & Okorafor (2012) opined that it may be due to the level of awareness about the role and benefits of TVET by the society. Therefore, parents and students predominantly prefer general education because of the negative public perceptions of the status of blue-collar jobs. The fact that social advancement in Nigeria is dependent on academic career thus, no one is keen on blue-collar careers. Empirical studies conducted by Akhuemonkhan and Raimi (2013); Okolocha (2012), respondents described TVET as an education option designed for students who cannot cope with the rigor of conventional education system, and they perceived TVET to be an inferior education designed for students from less privileged families. In fact, evidence from studies indicates that many youths, parents and even government perceive TVET as not valuable as a general education (Okoye & Okwelle, 2013; Afeiti, 2008; African Union (AU), 2007)

Resources

Provision of instructional materials and infrastructure are germane to how successful or otherwise TVET institutions are in carrying out the assignment of preparing students for the acquisition of skills and enhancing of skills for the post COVID-19 employability. Funding is critical because it hinders or enhances institutional capacity and capability to meet their instructional and infrastructural needs depending on how committed the nation is to the enrichment of education.

Unfortunately, TVET is deprived of fund like other sector in the educational system. The budget allocations to the education sector between 2015 and 2020 range from 10.75%, 7.92%, 7.41%, 7.04%, 7.1% and 6.9% (www.eduplana.com). A look at these figures show a downward trend and it is below the UNECSO recommended 26%.

Akhuemonkhan & Raimi (2013), in their study of the quality of TVET facilities in Tertiary Institutions noted that poor funding resulted in inadequate facilities like workshops, tools, equipment for practical training, computer facilities and so on. If TVET institutions are to come to the rescue of youths for employability, desperate measures must be put in place.

Brain Drain

Closely linked to lack of fund is the movement of highly qualified personnel abroad due to low remunerations, lack of tools to work with, unmotivating working environment, thus leaving personnel that are disgruntled, frustrated and unfriendly. This makes the TVET programmes uninteresting to students, resulting in students just reading to pass and not acquiring skills pass across. If TVET institutions are to prepare and enhance skills for post COVID-19 employability, these institutions must

be well equipped with qualified, motivating, well remunerated, trained and updated personnel who are themselves highly skilled in the skills for post COVID-19 employability of youths in Nigeria.

Policy and Political Will

The irregular and reversal in education policies affect TVET institutions in properly implementing the TVET programmes. It is unfortunate that as a programme is set up in line with a policy pronouncement, such policy is reversed and abandoned to be replaced by another policy. This brings confusion not only to the institutions but also to facilitators of such programmes. Amodu (2011) recounted that at a time, the policymakers gave technology education (TE) its autonomy separated from science education (SE). However, new education policy merged technical education (TE) with Science Education (SE) to form Science and Technology Education (STE). The inconsistent in the policy aggravated the non-performance of TVET institutions in Nigeria. Akindoyeni's (2014), among others, submitted that for any policy to be effective it must address a definitive need, have a legal instrument for the implementation with identifiable and measurable strategies, and that the interpretation must not be ambiguous. Also, there must be provision for periodic review of the policy.

Curriculum/Implementation

Another threat to TVET is ineffective curriculum and poor implementation at institutional and policy levels. Brewer & Comyn, 2015, Ladipo et al., 2013), Okolocha (2012), Okebukola (2004), are of the opinion that institutions are unable to translate curriculum into practical realities at all the three levels of education in Nigeria. The effect of this, is that TVET institutions are unable to implement the curriculum effectively to bring out the required skills in their students, thus, making the programme uninteresting and unattractive to students as the programme are turned into theoretical learning experience instead of hands-on experience (Haan, 2006). Also, curriculum are not geared towards the needs of the society because of the disconnect among policy makers, institutions and the private sector.

The obviously effect of all these challenges is that training of the students becomes grossly impeded. They may end up not acquiring adequate skills needed for getting and sustaining employment.

Overcoming the Challenges/Recommendations

There is absolutely nothing the TVET institutions can do to come to the rescue of youths in the post COVID-19 era with the challenges enumerated above. How can these challenges be reduced to enhance the chances of these institutions in coming to the rescue of youths? The following are profound:

Reorientation and Awareness

The first step is to re-orientate the youths and the general public about the benefit of applying for TVET programmes and to update their skills for better chance of being employed post COVID. If there is reorientation and awareness about what can be achieved through these institutions, this may go a long way in changing the attitude and public apathy to graduates of these institutions. Thus, the image of these institutions may be up lifted, and interest of students regenerated.

Provision of Infrastructure and amenities

A vital factor that must be challenged is that of lack/inadequate infrastructure and amenities. How can skills be enhanced or/and developed if practical classes are neglected to the background because of lack or inadequate tools to practice with. Technical and vocational education tools are not cheap to

come by but if youths must be skilled and highly skilled, they need to be able to use tools related to the occupation of their choice. How do a person who wants to be skilled in analyzing data not be familiar with tools like 'PowerBI or SQL right from school? Many youths are deficient in the use of Excel and they will claim to be computer literates. Being skillful in the development of Apps needed by organizations in the post COVID-19 era is not going to happen overnight. It needs practice and more practice with appropriate tools and proper direction by a superior.

Training and Motivating facilitators

Training of personnel in the TVET institutions should not be taking for granted. They must be motivated to attend training sessions in order to upgrade and refresh their knowledge, skills and ability so as not to become obsolete in the age that the only thing that is permanent is change itself. Motivation is not only monetary, if personnel are provided with tools to work with, conducive and level playing environment to operate, they are motivated, eager and ready to work. If personnel are motivated, they will be better armed to impact relevant KSA into their students.

Higher Remuneration for Graduates of TVET Institutions

Desperate situations need desperate solution. If youths are skilled to take up employment or be self-employed, it will not only benefit them only, the whole nation will benefit as well. Therefore, a look at higher remuneration for graduates of TVET institutions is not a bad idea. In advanced countries of the world skilled personnel are highly rated and paid well. All it takes is to prove that you have the skill and you can apply it. This can make TVET institutions competitive. Then it will be which TVET institution can produce students with not only relevant skills but also students that are able to apply the skills effectively for their organizations to survive any change that may arise in future and have competitive advantage.

Conclusion

Unemployment among youths in Nigeria has become endemic and their unemployability is worrisome to many researchers. This may not end or reduce soon especially in the post COVID-19 period if strategies are not put in place fast enough to address this situation. Desperate situations need desperate solutions that is why efforts must be geared in remedying the situation if youths are to be employable post COVID-19. The good thing about this is that studies have shown that TVET institutions can equip youths with the necessary skills needed for this, if they are strengthened to do so in Nigeria. The institutions need major transformation, alliances with the industry, the private sector and the society at large.

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