

The Need for Promoting Youth Entrepreneurship in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria

American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities

Vol. 4, No. 2, 260-268, 2019

e-ISSN: 2520-5382



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ABSTRACT

This study looked into the need for promoting youth entrepreneurship in the society, with a particular focus to Abakaliki local government area of Ebonyi state. The term “Entrepreneurship” entails the capacity and willingness to develop, organize and manage a business venture along with any of its risk in order to make a profit at the same time remaining self-sustaining. Most factors which include; low purchasing power have crippled the efforts of good number of youth entrepreneurs in the society, particularly Abakaliki. This study adopted survey design research method for its field work and 94 questionnaires were administered to ninety-four respondents. The data collected are presented using simple percentage table plan for easy understanding. Finally, the result of this study reveals that youth entrepreneurship when promoted is the possible solution to unemployment, poverty, and crime in the society and also the most effective means for the attainment of economic growth. In conclusion, if the youth entrepreneurs are provided with all the support and cooperation they need, over all development will be achieved in the society.

Keywords: Youth, Entrepreneurship, Promotion, Self-sustaining, Unemployment, Economic growth.

DOI: 10.20448/801.42.260.268

Citation | Onwe Friday; Eze Ogonnia Eze; Mbam, Philip Ekene (2019). The Need for Promoting Youth Entrepreneurship in Abakaliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, 4(2): 260-268.

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Funding: This study received no specific financial support.

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

History: Received: 3 May 2019/ Revised: 6 June 2019/ Accepted: 15 July 2019/ Published: 3 September 2019.

Publisher: Online Science Publishing

Highlights of this paper

- This study looked into the need for promoting youth entrepreneurship in the society, with a particular focus to Abakaliki local government area of Ebonyi state.
- The result of this study reveals that youth entrepreneurship when promoted is the possible solution to unemployment, poverty, and crime in the society and also the most effective means for the attainment of economic growth.

1. INTRODUCTION

Onyeike (2012) asserted that Entrepreneurship is the act of initiative and creative thinking, risk bearing and the activities that involves loss and profit making which takes place within or outside companies. This shows that Entrepreneurship can take place anywhere at any level, though it usually starts from micro to macro level. The most obvious example of entrepreneurship is the starting of new business. Entrepreneurship however in economics, includes; land, labor natural resources and capital which produce profit. Entrepreneurial spirit is characterized by innovation and risk-taking, and also an essential part of a nation's ability to succeed in an ever changing and increasingly competitive global market place. Entrepreneurship as a means of earning which usually start from small and grow to big enterprise depending on the individual's competency, requires young and vibrant people for effective performance. Youth or young entrepreneurs however are said to be more productive and active than their older counterpart (Chinedu, 2012). Research revealed that more than 280 young entrepreneurs in the 14 European countries bridge the gap between academic and the real market. In addition, over 22,000 students in Europe are practically involved in running of non-profit business. This helps them to build their entrepreneurial skills and learn how to become successful entrepreneurs (CNBC, 2013).

In Germany, youth entrepreneurship has been adopted by German Youth Apprentice Scheme (GYAS) as weapon against youth unemployment in the country. With regard to increased awareness of Entrepreneurship culture in Germany, more than 65 percent of the youths after school begin careers with vocational training (CNBC, 2013). However after this training, thousands of them flourish in different enterprises they engaged themselves and this has reduced Germany's youth unemployment rate to 7.5 percent which is the lowest among European countries (Holly and Mohren, 2012). In Africa, Nigeria in particular, youth unemployment is lower compare to other countries of Africa. Omebe (2014) noted that about 65.2% of youths in Nigeria are self-employed and self-reliant through the help of Entrepreneurial activities. Onyeike (2012) maintained that youth owned enterprise in Nigeria flourish in different cities of the country most especially in Abakaliki of Ebonyi state, Ngwa, of Abia state, Onitsha, Nnewi of Anambra and other areas in Nigeria. He also added that youths ranging from the age of 18 to 28 years in Abakaliki excel in different entrepreneurial activities such as shoe making, tailoring, motor mechanic, hair dressing and barbing, welder (metal work), furniture work and so on. Chinedu (2012) noted that youths who are skilled workers such as mechanics, tailors, barbers, spare parts dealers etc., are well to do and self-reliant. Studies had dealt with cases circling on impact of entrepreneurship on economic growth, relationship between entrepreneurship and economic development, but there is huge gap created by the fact that not much work has been done on the very need to promote entrepreneurship, especially in a third world country like Nigeria which has formed the need for this study.

1.1. Theoretical Foundation to the Study

Onah (2000) pointed out that national decision makers have discovered that productive entrepreneurship is key to national economic development by enhancing employment creation, economic growth, adoption of new technologies and innovation capabilities. But not minding the relevance attached to entrepreneurship and the

national development agenda set previously by various governments across Africa, the outcome has been seen not to have much impact in the society (Brixiova, 2010; Worlu, 2011; Ajagbe *et al.*, 2012).

Kennedy (2011) opine that with the huge data base of youths without jobs and underdeveloped private sector, Nigeria is principally interesting for analyzing matters concerning youth entrepreneurs. Oteje (2012) added that encouraging small and medium enterprises become a priority for decision makers. The emergence of youth entrepreneurs as a viable livelihood alternative is thus high on the policy agenda of the government. The study also provides new evidence on the longstanding factors hampering private sector development, including heavy government bureaucracy, widespread corruption, and limited access to finance (Kennedy, 2011; Worlu, 2011; Oteje, 2012). Carree and Thurik (2010) identified in their study that entrepreneurship has shown its importance as a key policy issue in economic development across countries. They further stated that it creates self-employment which is important for creating flexibility and productivity of the economic system and equally contribute to a higher degree of job satisfaction. And also it increases insecurity for those who are involved. Henrekson and Sanandaji (2019) discovered that entrepreneur brings about change in that it will displace the standing status quo and at the same time push the economy toward a new equilibrium when successful. They equally identified that it will generate entrepreneurial profits that exceed the risk adjusted market rate of return.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

This study examined issues in:

- The role of youth entrepreneurship to the nation's economic development.
- How entrepreneurship culture among youths affect crime in Abakaliki.
- The challenges which youth entrepreneurs encounter and the way forward.
- How entrepreneurial activities among youths can reduce youth unemployment and poverty among youths in the society particularly in Abakaliki.
- The positions of different institutions, agencies and organizations such as; governmental and Non-governmental organization (NGOs) in promoting youth entrepreneurship in the society.

2. METHOD

The study adopted survey design method as its research plan and strategies for the field work. And because of the various categories of age, class and gender that constitute the study population, the study dealt with both educated and non-educated youth entrepreneurs including both male and female population. The 2006 population census for Abakaliki local government area was 2,176,947 which were administratively projected to 2, 880, and 400 in 2016 which was utilized.

With Yaro Yamane formular of $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$ the number came to 400 respondents. But because of cost and areas selected, 94 respondents were adopted for the research, standing very representative of the sampled zone. 94 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents; the educated filled it themselves, while the non-educated were guided and helped to fill the questionnaire. The study applied the simple random sampling, where every member of the respondents stood equal chance of being selected in the sample. And 94 questionnaires were properly filled and used for the analysis. The study employed administration of questionnaires from shop to shop, market places and the other designated study areas for data gathering. The researchers employed descriptive method of data analysis and used simple percentage table plan and frequencies.

3. ANALYSIS

3.1. Respondents Personal Data Presentations

Table-1. Gender distribution of respondents.

Gender	Frequencies	Percentage
Male	58	61.7%
Female	36	38.3%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

The data in the **Table 1** shows that 58(61.7%) of the respondents were males, while 36(38.3%) were females this means that majority of the respondents were male.

Table-2. Age range of the respondents.

Age range	Frequencies	Percentage
14-18 years	10	10.6%
19-23 years	15	15.9%
24-28 years	28	29.7%
29-33 years	24	25.5%
34-38 years	17	18.1%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 2 shows that 10(10.6%) of the respondents fall within the age range of 14-18 years, 15 (15.9%) of the respondents fall within the age range of 19-23 years, 28(29.7%) of the respondents fall within the age range of 24-28 years, 24(25.5%) of the respondents fall within the age range of 29-33 years, and finally, 17(18.1%) of the respondents fall within the age range of 34-38 years.

Table-3. Marital status of respondents.

Marital status	Frequencies	Percentage
Single	70	74.5%
Married	16	17.5%
Married with children	8	8.5%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 3 indicates that 70 (74.5%) of the respondents are single, 16 (17.5%) of the respondents are married, while 8(8.5%) of the respondents are married with children. This means that majority of the respondents are single.

Table-4. Educational status of respondents.

Educational status	Frequencies	Percentage
First school leaving certificate (FSLC)	18	19.1%
Senior, WAEC certificate	24	25.5%
Vocational certificate and others	30	31.9%
B.Sc.	10	10.6%
NCE, OND, HND.	12	12.7%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

From **Table 4**, 18(19.1%) of the respondents acquired first school leaving certificate, 24(25.5%) of the respondents possessed senior WAEC certificate, 30 (31.9%) of respondents have vocational certificate and others, 10 (10.6%) of the respondents possessed B.Sc and 12 (12.7%) of the respondents had NEC, OND AND HND.

Table-5. Occupational status of the respondents.

Occupational	Frequencies	Percentage
Student	23	24.4%
Civil servant	10	10.6%
Apprentice	20	21.2%
Sales official	17	18.1%
Workshop owner	24	25.5%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 5 shows that 23 (24.4%) of the respondents are students, 10(10.6%) students (21.2%) of the respondents are apprentice, 17 (18.1%) of the respondents are sales officials, while 24(25,5%) of the respondents were workshop owners.

Table-6. Religious affiliation of respondents.

Religious affiliation	Frequencies	Percentage
Christianity	55	58.5%
Muslim	7	7.4%
Traditionalist	18	19.1%
Atheist	14	14.8%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

The data in Table 6 indicates that 55(58.5%) of the respondents are Christians, 7(7.4%) of the respondents are Muslims, 18 (19.1%) of the respondents are traditionalists, while 14 (14.8%) of the respondents are Atheist.

Table-7. The most effective means by which youth entrepreneurs can access startup capital.

Option	Frequencies	Percentage
Family support fund	30	31.9%
Personal savings	25	36.5%
Friends	18	19.1%
Loans	21	22.3%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 7, indicates that 31, 9% of the respondents chose family support fund to be the most effective means by which youth entrepreneurs can access startup capital, 26,5% of the respondents chose personal savings, while 19.9% chose friends, and 22.3% respondents chose loans.

Table-8. Who do you think is a youth entrepreneur?

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
A Youth apprentice	20	21.3%
A youth who keep steady pocket	10	10.6%
A youth who sales goods	24	25.5%
A youth who runs enterprises	40	42.5%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 8 shows that 21.3% believe that a youth apprentice is a youth entrepreneur, 10.6% supports a youth who keep steady pocket, 25.5% supports a youth who saves goods, while 42.5% support a youth who runs enterprises.

Table-9. Area of enterprise in which Abakaliki youths perform better.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Shoe making	30	31.9%
Cloth designing	34	36.2%
Wood work	10	10.6%
Trading	20	21.2%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

The data in Table 9 shows that 31.9% support shoe making as the best among the entrepreneurial activities performed by youths, 36.2% support cloth designing, 10.6% support wood work, while 21.2% support trading.

Table-10. Reason why some youth avoid entrepreneurship?

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Lack of start-up capital	31	32.9%
Academic pursuit	10	10.6%
Laziness	37	17.0%
Heavy taxation	16	17.0%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 10 shows that 32.9% respondents believe that lack of start-up capital is the reason why some youths avoid entrepreneurship, 10.6% believe academic pursuit, 39.4% believe laziness, 17% believe heavy taxation.

Table-11. Factor needed for entrepreneurial beginning and success.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Idea	43	45.7%
Capital	37	39
Energy	6	6.4%
Moral	8	8.5%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 11 indicates that 45.7% support idea, 39.3% support capital, 6.4% support energy, 8.5% support moral. However, idea has the highest number of respondents meaning that idea is the major factor needed for entrepreneurial beginning and success.

Table-12. Reasons why youths go into entrepreneurship.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
To acquire wealth	33	35.1%
To be self-dependent	29	30.8%
To show they can do it	18	19.1%
Being their own boss	14	14.8%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Data in Table 12 shows that 35.1% support to acquire wealth, 30.8% support to be self-dependent, 19.1% support; to show they can do it, while 14.8% support being their own boss.

Table-13. How do you take your entrepreneurial venture?

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
As a life career	50	53.1%
As a temporary business	10	10.6%
As a salary assistance	20	21.2%
No decision yet	14	14.8%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 13 shows that 53.1% take their enterprise as a life career, 10.6% take their enterprise as a temporary business 21.2% take their enterprise as salary assistance, 14.8% stated no decision yet.

Table-14. Between youth and adult entrepreneurs who is usually more successful?.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Youth entrepreneurs	41	43.6%
Adult entrepreneurs	37	39.3%
Equal success	16	17.0%
No success	0	0.0%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

The data in Table 14 indicates that 43.6% chose youth entrepreneurs, 39.3% chose adult entrepreneurs, 17.0% chose equal success, while the option no success has 0 respondents.

Table-15. How youth entrepreneurship contributes to the economic growth of the national.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Employment creation	51	54.3%
Mass production of goods	23	24.5%
Rapid industrialization	20	21.3%
No contribution	0	0.0%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 15 shows that 54.3% support employment creation, 24.5% support mass production of goods and services 21.3% support rapid industrialization, no contribution has 0 respondents.

Table-16. Hardening factor to youth managed enterprise.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Lack of market demand	60	63.9.7%
Age stereo-type	4	4.3%
Bad leadership	30	31.9%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

The data in Table 16 states that 63.9% chose lack of market demand, 4.3% chose age stereotype, while 31.9% chose bad leadership.

Table-17. What way(s) government and NGOs could promote youth entrepreneurship in the society.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Financial support	21	22.3%
Conducive environment	43	45.7%
provision of vocational centers	19	20.2%
Encouraging youth empowerment	11	11.70213
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 17 shows that 22.3% suggests financial supports, 45.7% suggest conducive environment, 19 20.2% suggest provision of vocational training centers, while 11,7% suggest encouraging youth empowerment programme. From the above analysis, we discovered the conducive environment has the highest number of respondents, this means that if government and NGOs should work towards providing conducive entrepreneurial environment it would take youth entrepreneurship to a greater height.

Table-18. To what extent have government and NGOs agencies promoted youth entrepreneurship?.

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Greater extent	34	36.2%
High extent	26	26.6%
Low extent	20	21.3%
No idea	15	15.9%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

Table 18 shows that 36.2% support greater extent, 26.6% support high extent, 21.3% support low extent, 15.9% stated they have no idea.

Table-19. How youth entrepreneurship help to reduce youth unemployment?

Options	Frequencies	Percentage
Employment creation	50	53.2 %
Industrialization	44	46.8%
Total	94	100

Source: Field work survey, 2017.

From Table 19 53.2% respondents believe that youth entrepreneurship reduces youth unemployment because it creates employment opportunities, while 46.8% support industrialization

3.2. Summary

At the cause of this study, it was gathered that youth entrepreneurship is the most effective means for the attainment of economic growth and social development in the society. Meanwhile, the contribution of youth entrepreneurs in economic and social development can never be over emphasized. For example, during the field work of this study, it was equally gathered that when the economy of a nation is in distress, it requires only the intervention of the entrepreneurs for stability because of their creative and innovative ability. This study also reveals some of the factors that can promote youth entrepreneurship in the society. Finally, this study captured some factors that hinder youth entrepreneurship and at the same time proffer possible solution to such problems. Above all, the result of this study reveals that, if youth entrepreneurs are provided with all the necessary support and cooperation they may need, the overall development of our country is assured.

4. DISCUSSION

From the responses it is established that youth entrepreneurs in Abakaliki will contribute immensely to the economic and social development of the country through the following ways; through employment creation mass production of goods and services, industrialization and so on. It was equally gathered that most youths take their entrepreneurial venture as a life career and also that there are some entrepreneurial activities that are more suitable for females likewise the males.

However, this study equally found out that the assistance of both the government and NGOs are necessary for promoting youth entrepreneurship in the society. Reason is that, this study was able to capture some of the factors that hinder youth entrepreneurship and saw the assistance of the government and NGOs as the possible solution to such obstacles. For example, from the responses gotten from the respondents, it was discovered that youth entrepreneurship can only work better if the government and NGOs can provide financial support, vocational training centers and conducive entrepreneurial environment for the entrepreneurs.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The youths are generally believed to be the leaders of tomorrow and as well the future hope of a nation. So there is every need that the youths should be supported.

Entrepreneurship on the other hand is a very important tool for economic and social development, so it needs to be encouraged especially among the youths. However in order to promote youth entrepreneurship, enhance economic and social development, the research recommends the following ways:

1. The government should work towards providing conducive entrepreneurial environment by providing electricity, good road network, effective entrepreneurial policies, vocational training centers and so on.
2. The citizens should in as much as possible try to patronize locally made goods because it is through this that the youth entrepreneurs can appreciate their efforts and also access inputs for continuous outputs.
3. Influential authorities such as religious leaders should preach to their followers about the importance of youth entrepreneurship so as to help reduce idleness among the youths because there is a saying that an idle man is the devil's workshop.
4. Institutions such as commercial banks, charity organizations should try to provide the youths with loan at least with little or no interest to begin to fund their enterprises.

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