

THE PRESENT ATTITUDE OF AFRICAN YOUTH TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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ABSTRACT: *It is widely known that entrepreneurship plays a crucial role within the economy. As the African economy needs rapid development and growth, this paper investigates the present attitude of African youth towards new business creation and entrepreneurship. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used, and 204 people participated in the study. The participants were accessed via social media such as Facebook (pages and groups), LinkedIn (groups), Twitter, and WhatsApp. The results reveal that African youth have positive attitudes and that they are entrepreneurially active and ready to take risks, provided that they can be self-dependent. Similarly, the results show that entrepreneurship education is much needed to improve innovative start-ups in Africa.*

KEYWORDS: Entrepreneurship; Attitude; Entrepreneurial Intention; African Youth

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is one of the sources of national wealth (Hindle and Yenchen, 2004). It promotes and stimulates economic development and employment generation (Liñán et al., 2011) via business expansion, technology advancement, and wealth creation (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996). It also serves as a developmental tool for a country (Ismail et al., 2009). Hence, there remains much work to do (Wu, 2009), especially now that it receives more attention than before due to its importance to the national economy (Muhammad et al., 2013). Therefore, it is essential to conduct further studies on entrepreneurship. This paper contributes to the field of entrepreneurship by presenting the current attitude of African youth. The African continent has experienced poverty for several years, and there is a need for poverty alleviation if the continent is to be saved. Entrepreneurship is one of the options for encouraging growth and development in the continent. Thus, it is important to have a good understanding of the attitude of African youth towards entrepreneurship.

The World Bank (March, 2000) confirmed that Africa had a high potential to be successful in 21st century. The institution stated that Africans need to decide to make their continent grow and develop by investing in knowledge, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship. It was also mentioned by the organization that if Africa could invest in those areas, the poverty level could be reduced by half. Additionally, one of the Editor's notes from Forbes.com stated that Africa is a large continent with enormous resources but surprisingly, it continues to be poor. Dr Mo Ibrahim, the writer of the note, asked "Why are we poor?", and in his answer, he argued that it is because of the attitude of Africans. He also argued that it is the responsibility of every African to build his/her nation. He urged them to wake up from their slumber and he slammed the African governance systems. He also stressed that unemployment, with increases in the number of youth these days, possesses a threat to the continent, and he concluded that it is the right time for Africa to encourage entrepreneurship and uplift its

businesses (Forbes.com, July 15th, 2013). His opinion was preceded by the remarks of President Obama of United States who said:

“... And I’m making this trip to Africa because I believe this is a region on the move. Even as this continent faces great challenges -- and they are great, and we can’t paper over them or pretend that those challenges don’t exist -- even as too many Africans still endure tremendous hardship and great injustice, there is, as the song says -- a “new Africa” -- more prosperous, more confident, taking its place on the world stage... We’ll focus on civic leadership and public administration and business and entrepreneurship, the skills you need to serve your communities and start and grow businesses and run effective ministries” (White House Press, June, 29th, 2013)

Furthermore, Simons (2012) stated that entrepreneurship is the possible solution to economic mayhem in Africa. He explained that it would assist the continent to suppress the unemployment rate, improve capital formation, speed-up know-how capability, and probably improve the governance system. The writer hoped that, with such progress, poverty in the continent would be reduced. However, he noted that how entrepreneurship could be attained in Africa still remains a big question to be answered. In addition, Kalan (2013) commented on a report made by the Omidyar Network and Monitor Group, saying that entrepreneurship would be the best option for the development of Africa. He explained further that entrepreneurship was seen as a survival tool for Africans; hence, this perception needed to change to “entrepreneurship with passion”. He added that the celebration of success and the growth of entrepreneurship should be priorities for Africans. He added further that:

“Omidyar believes that entrepreneurship can address this ‘stubborn income gap in Africa’, if, and only if, entrepreneurship evolves beyond its current state of ‘necessity-based informality’ into one that is ‘vibrant and robust enough to promote sustained economic growth and generate long-term, viable livelihoods across the continent.’”

From the above statements, it can be agreed that Africa needs entrepreneurship, and it can also be agreed that entrepreneurship cannot be achieved easily; it involves a lot of effort. If the future of every nation depends on its youth, it is necessary to know the present attitude of African youth towards entrepreneurship, because the present African youth determines the future of the continent. Therefore, investigating the attitude of African youth (including their intentions) would shed more light on the future, and the outcome of the study would show whether Africa is moving forwards or backwards. In order to access the situation, this paper presents answers to these questions: (a) What do African youth think about Entrepreneurship?; (b) Do they really have an interest in becoming an entrepreneur, and why or why not?; and (c) Which business areas they prefer and why? The answers to these questions not only provide a direction, but they also reveal how the continent can be accessed and how its entrepreneurial development problems can be solved.

Meanwhile, it is important to state that investigating “attitude” is a common research to deduce entrepreneurial interest and intention among the youth according to Ashokan and Suresh (2012), Autio et al. (2001), and Duijin (2004) amongst others. Likewise, it is essential to mention that youth entrepreneurship is a current research area in African entrepreneurship according to the United Nations (2012) which is also supported by the United Nations report (Swaziland, 2013). The United Nations report (Swaziland, 2013) revealed the importance of youth entrepreneurship and the perspectives of young entrepreneurs in Swaziland, and it was recommended that Swaziland and the rest of the African nations should encourage policies

and programs that facilitate youth entrepreneurship as soon as possible. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the paper is structured as follows: literature review, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is one of the most used theories in examining intentions in relation to actual behavior. It was propounded by Ajzen (1991). In the world of business, more specifically entrepreneurship studies, TPB has been used to investigate the attitude and interest of students towards entrepreneurship (e.g. Autio, et al., 2001; Christian, 2000; Christine, 2004; Duijin, 2004; Engel et al., 2010; Gerald 2006; Ismail et al., 2009; Klyver and Schøtt, 2011; Lie, 2004; Liñán and Chen, 2009; Muhammad et al., 2013; Thompson, 2009). The theory focuses on intention and its actual behavior, and it also presents important factors responsible for changing of both. The factors are behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. Behavioral belief leads to an attitude; normative belief leads to subjective norm (which form social belief); and control belief leads to perceived behavioral control. These factors can individually or collectively affect intention and actual behavior. The main difference of this theory, in comparison to others motivational theories, is that it considers motivation for certain action and its perception on the associated problems or benefits of the action.

According to Duijn (2004), after testing TPB, there is a relationship between the intention and actual behavior. A student that has the intention to embark on entrepreneurship may be actually being an entrepreneur if his or her personality supports it. He notes that the role of personality seems to be bigger than the role of entrepreneurship education because there are certain personalities that education can hardly orientate. Therefore, he recommends that people with the right attitude are supposed to be selected for entrepreneurship education and the right teachers are expected to be used; for instance, teachers with entrepreneurial experience may be highly useful. Likewise, he suggests that the using of games or competitions for entrepreneurial activities during entrepreneurship education is very important. In the same view, Muhammad et al. (2013) confirms that behavioral control and attitude are the main determinants of business students to have an interest in starting businesses. These authors argue that entrepreneurship education plays an important role, though such knowledge is not the sole factor responsible for entrepreneurship careers by business students.

In supporting the above studies, Engle et al. (2010) carried out another study which comprised 12 countries. The result of their test showed that TPB has the ability to predict Entrepreneurial Intention (EI), and the aforementioned elements of the model were present though there were some differences from one country to another. It was also confirmed that the social norm was predominantly present in all countries.

In addition to TPB, another model was developed by Lüthje and Franke (2004), which is an expansion of TPB. The model focuses on intention but it is more specific on “entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial activity”, and it includes university education. The model presents three factors – internal/personality, external/environment and others – those responsible for “attitude towards self-employment” to “entrepreneurial intention (EI)” and finally to “entrepreneurial activity”. An internal factor consists of willingness to take risks,

need for independence, locus of control, and other entrepreneurial personalities. Similarly, external factors comprise of market, financing, society, and university (for inspiration, training, networking, and others related benefits). Other factors are the general factors that affect mostly internal factors and the “attitude” of individuals. For instance, the image of entrepreneurs in society (role models) and the availability of funds (government support programs or family background) may have impacts on the attitude of people towards entrepreneurship. The model was tested as well and its results were similar to those of TPB.

Apart from TPB, Entrepreneurial Event model (SEE) is another EI framework which was developed by Shapero and Sokol (1982). The model assumes that certain events in one’s life may lead to entrepreneurial adventures. Such events can be positive, such as the winning of a lottery, or negative, like the loss of a job or a neutral like graduation. The event causes displacement, and it also triggers a person to have an interest in entrepreneurship and develop a new business. However, job related events play important roles on EI. Nonetheless, EI depends on these factors – propensity to act, perceived desirability, and perceived feasibility. A propensity to act refers to individual ability to utilize an opportunity and a perceived desirability refers to the expected outcome of the act. The viability of the act in relation to the desired outcome is referred to perceived feasibility. Perceived desirability and feasibility are determined by the culture and the social environment of the person.

Wang et al. (2011) tested the SEE model. Their studies were conducted in the United States of America and China. The result of their studies showed that propensity to act does not impact EI but it has some effects on the perceived desirability and feasibility. Their finding revealed further that work experience and family background play significant roles on EI in the both countries. Furthermore, Lucas and Cooper (Unpublished) used both TPB and SEE models to examine the EI of laid-off employee in Ireland. The outcome of their study revealed that self-efficacy and outcome expectancy were independent, and these elements played important roles on the intention of the employees. Similarly, their result showed that self-efficacy contributed significantly to a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and thus, it served as a motivational factor. Therefore, TPB and SEE are relevant models to investigate attitude and EI.

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) is another common model which was developed by Armitage and Conner (1999 and 2001). PBC focuses on the predictive psychological factors; it separates the psychological factor of “self-efficacy” as an internal control from the “outcome expectancy” as an external control. Likewise, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is a theory which explains how the individual selects and pursues a certain career based on their belief. It was developed by Lent et al. (1994,) and Brown and Lent (2006). The model was adopted from Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory. It also explains the relationship between self-efficacy and the desired career – expected outcome. Liñán and Chen (2009), Lucas and Cooper (Unpublished), and Thompson (2009) agreed that these models are useful for EI.

In addition, the Economic-psychological model is one of the prominent models for EI. It was developed by Davidsson (1995). It presents the determinants of EI. The model focuses on the personal background which consists of gender, vicarious experience, education, radical change experience, and age. These personal background factors lead to “attitude” which can either be general or domain attitudes. The general attitudes include change, compete, money, achievement, and autonomy, while domain attitudes include payoff, societal, contribution, and know-how. These attitudes form “conviction”. Conviction is a situation when an

individual feels that a career is suitable for him/her as an alternative. Hence, it leads to intention but it is subjected to current employment status. Conviction is similar to “perceived self-efficacy”. In summary, Davidsson (1995) says:

“The proposed model receives support in terms of reasonably high explanatory power with respect to the central variables. Further, some direct or indirect influence on entrepreneurial intentions is ascribed to all variable groups that were included in the model. The strongest and most direct influence is ascribed to the conviction variable, while the weakest and most indirect influence emerges for education and experience with radical change. The effects of current employment status turned out to be relatively weak, but it could be demonstrated that this factor is likely to be a more important factor for the actual start-up decision.” (p. 22)

Furthermore, Thompson (2009) states that there are about 25 studies and many models for EI. He explains that those studies employed different models and various variables with different items. Among the studies are Audet (2004), Davidsson (1995), Kenney et al. (2003), and Lee et al (2004). In order to combine the models and their variables, he developed a new model/scale which he termed as Individual Entrepreneurial Intent Scale (IEIS). His model aims to investigate individual EI at an international level. He conducted eight studies to develop IEIS. In a nutshell, he identified 10 items which he believed to be the most important scales for IE studies. These items are:

- (a) Intend to set up a company in the future
- (b) Plan your future carefully*
- (c) Read business newspapers*
- (d) Never search for business start-up opportunities (R)
- (e) Read financial planning books*
- (f) Save money to start a business
- (g) Do not read books on how to set up a firm (R)
- (h) Plan your finances carefully*
- (i) Have no plans to launch your own business (R)
- (j) Spend time learning about starting a firm

However, he provides some explanations regarding these items: *Items appeared as a single block in the order given. Those marked with an asterisk are distracter items that act as red herrings and are not to be included in scale analyses. Items marked (R) are reverse coded in scale analyses. Interval measure runs 1 = very untrue, 2 = untrue, 3 = slightly untrue, 4 = slightly true, 5 = true, 6 = very true* (Thompson, 2009; p. 680).

Based on the above-discussed models, it can be agreed that EI is not a new research area in the entrepreneurship field. However, recent studies would give more insight on the topic. Hence, there is a need for a validated research instrument. Fortunately, Liñán and Chen (2009) developed the Entrepreneurial Intention Questionnaire (EIQ) from most of the aforementioned models like TPB, PBC, and SEE. They tested it on 519 people from diverse nations – Spain and Taiwan. The aim of their test was to confirm their hypotheses which include the following:

- (a) Personal attitude (PA) positively influences entrepreneurial intention
- (b) Perceived behavioral control positively influences entrepreneurial intention
- (c) Subjective norm positively influences entrepreneurial intention

- (d) Subjective norm positively influences personal attitude
- (e) Subjective norm positively influences perceived behavioral control
- (f) Subjective norm exerts a stronger effect on PA and PBC in the less individualistic country (Taiwan)
- (g) The relative effect of PA and PBC on EI differs by country (p. 599)

The result of their study positively confirmed their hypotheses and it indicated that the properties of the EIQ supported the above-mentioned models. Similarly, the result revealed that cultural value had some impacts on how people perceive entrepreneurship in their society. After a year, Liñán et al (2011) re-used their EIQ in collaboration with a statistical method (factor-regression) in a new study. They measured knowledge background, entrepreneurial knowledge, personal attitude, social norms, self-efficacy, and intention. They found out that personal attitude and perceived behavioral control were the most important elements for EI.

Another study, conducted by Van Gelderen et al (2008) tested TPB, PBC, and subject norms on the business students. Their findings showed that most of variables from the models were relevant to EI, but the most relevant factors were entrepreneurial alertness and the importance attached to financial security. In a similar study, conducted by Basu and Virick (2008), the finding showed that the above-mentioned models, especially TPB, were relevant to assessing EI among the students. The finding revealed further that prior exposure to entrepreneurship education affects attitude towards entrepreneurship, and it also improves entrepreneurial self-efficacy positively. The result was also revealed that prior entrepreneurial exposure has a positive relationship with attitude, norms, and PBC. Furthermore, the authors explained that prior entrepreneurial exposure can be direct or indirect, and it can be gained via family business or other related means.

In addition to above studies, Fatoki (2014) investigated how entrepreneurship education and work experience influence EI. He sampled South African business students, and found out that students with previous work experience had higher level of EI and that entrepreneurship education had a positive impact on EI.

However, Klyver and Schøtt (2011) argued that an important factor that is not yet included in the EI models is social network. They conducted a study to test the hypothesis that social network affects EI. They used Danish adult data which were collected by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) in 2001. The result of their study showed that social network had a positive impact on the EI. It was also revealed that people who had extended business networks would possibly have the intention to own their business in the future. Their result revealed that a business network would enable people to discover an opportunity, and that people who were surrounded by entrepreneurs would be an entrepreneur in the future. Another interesting part of their result was how competence and skills contributed immensely to the EI, and these resources can come from the social network. Thus, the authors argued that social network facilitates opportunity discovery, as well as increases self-efficacy and desired value/outcomes. However, they noted that size, diversity, and the age of network did not affect entrepreneurial intention.

Similarly, Ismail et al. (2009) studied how these factors - extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism, perceived barriers, and perceived and close support

affect EI. After their data analysis, they found out that extraversion, openness, and close support had correlation with EI but not all the factors.

Considering the aforementioned models and the outcomes of the various studies, applying some variable of the models seems to be appropriate for understanding the attitude of African youth towards entrepreneurship. However, for the purpose of this paper, the following factors are considered:

- (a) Willingness to be self-employed, and
- (b) Willingness to start or own business in the near future

The variables that were found to be critical by the above studies were applied and used in relation to the research questions of this study and designed to address the goals of the study. The next section explains in more detail the research process and the method adopted in this study.

METHODOLOGY

Previous studies, mentioned above, employed quantitative research method and they used questionnaire as their research instrument. Likewise, the above mentioned studies used the same method to arrive at a similar result. Therefore, this paper used the same research method but in another dimension. Unlike previous studies, this research targeted individuals (not only business students) and it tried to reach them via the social media websites, more specifically, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and WhatsApp. The primary reason for contacting participants through this medium is that most of African youth are now on social media and they are actively present. Additionally, they are associated with many interested pages and groups like their university, hometown, city, country, and political party. In this regard, the research processes are briefly described in below.

Firstly, the research questions were divided into sub-themes in relation to the above-discussed theories and studies. The sub-themes consisted of background information, knowledge about entrepreneurship, willingness to be self-employed, and willingness to own a business in the near future, personal reasons for self-employment, business environmental reasons for self-employment, and reasons for engaging in a certain business or industry. These sub-themes were used to develop questionnaire and interview questions.

Secondly, the targeted countries were listed and the various pages and youth groups were also listed from the Facebook and LinkedIn. The selected countries were Nigeria, Tanzania, Namibia, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Togo, Botswana, Zambia, Egypt, Benin, Rwanda, Angola, Morocco, Tunisia, and Congo (both Democratic Republic of the Congo and Republic of the Congo). Afterwards, the pages and youth groups were searched from these countries. As usual, many pages and groups were found but the following criteria were used to reduce the number:

- (a) Members' profile could be read (to justify the group relevance to the study and the place of residence and age of the group)
- (b) The group could be joined
- (c) Possibility to contact the administration
- (d) Possibility to forward or post the e-questionnaire on the page/group wall;

- (e) Activeness of group members
- (f) Minimum of 30 members

The third step was searching for the relevant groups and pages from each country. This sentence “All groups/page named [country name]” was used on the Facebook and LinkedIn searching box. Many groups and pages came up for some countries, while a few countries had smaller numbers of groups and pages. For instance, when this sentence “All groups named Nigeria” was used, more than 100 groups were found and they were all checked, but only 53 groups met above-mentioned criteria. Altogether, 275 groups and 218 pages were listed for the all countries on Facebook and five groups on LinkedIn. This activity was done between January and April, 2014.

The list of potential groups and pages was purposely monitored for a month to confirm their relevance to the study, and it was noted that many groups were created but their activities were absurd due to the limited control of the owners. Then, 52 Facebooks pages (including groups) were finally identified. Afterwards, one of the researchers joined the groups, liked the pages, and they were all used for the research.

When the questionnaire questions were ready, an online survey was used with one of the leading online survey providers. The link for the survey was posted on the Facebook pages and LinkedIn groups. There was a message that the link could be shared with their friends and relatives via WhatsApp, Twitter, and other social media applications. The survey was online for a month between 29th July and 29th August, 2014.

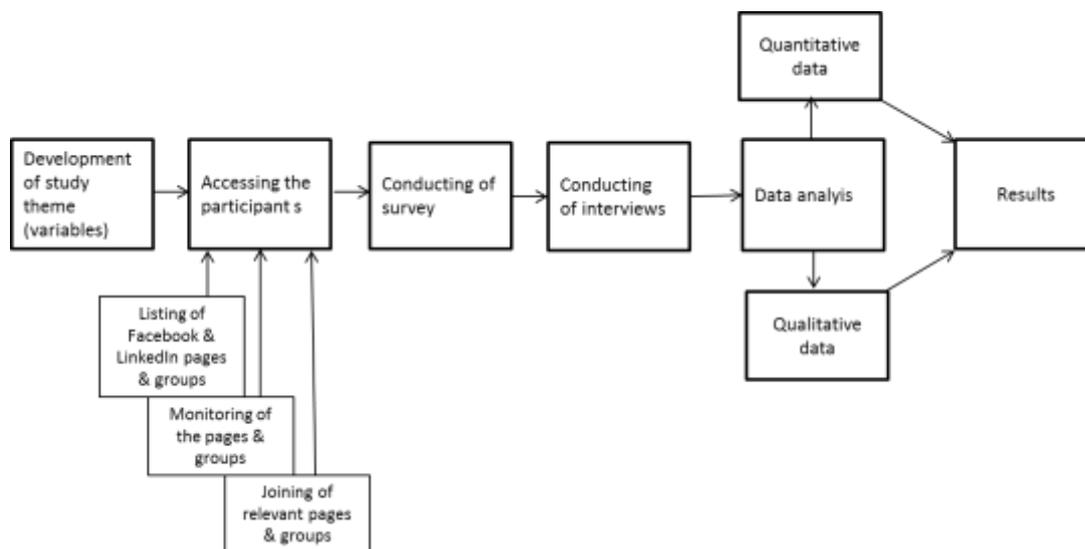
Despite the fact that there were many promotions on the Facebook pages to encourage the members to participate in the survey, only 204 people responded. Almost all respondents were valid for the survey, and only four respondents were not originally from Africa. Therefore, only 200 respondents were analyzed for this study. The online survey software showed that the respondents answered the survey from four continents – Africa, Europe, North America, and Asia. It also showed that the respondents spent 10 minutes on average to complete the survey.

Furthermore, the online software presented the close-ended responses in pictorial charts and open-ended were in tables; hence, the data analysis was easier. The close-ended responses were analyzed using the statistical descriptive method. According to Taylor-Powell (2001), this method facilitates data interpretation and it shows precise information about a phenomenon. The data analysis consists of numerical counts or frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendency (i.e., mean, median, and mode), and measures of variability which includes range, standard deviation, and variance. The open-end data were analyzed through content analysis. Franzosi (2011) stated that content analysis is a systematic characterization of quantitative data in order to make the data valuable or meaningful. The author recommended that the researchers should try to mix qualitative and quantitative data with this method.

When the data were analyzed, we decided to conduct interviews, purposely, to support the quantitative results. Thus, 50 people were contacted but 15 people were able to participate. The interviewees were Africans immigrants in Finland. They resided in Finland for more six years (on average). They were well-educated people and they were currently working or studying. They followed their country news. They were interviewed by telephone and their average interview duration was 25 minutes. Their interview questions had the same theme

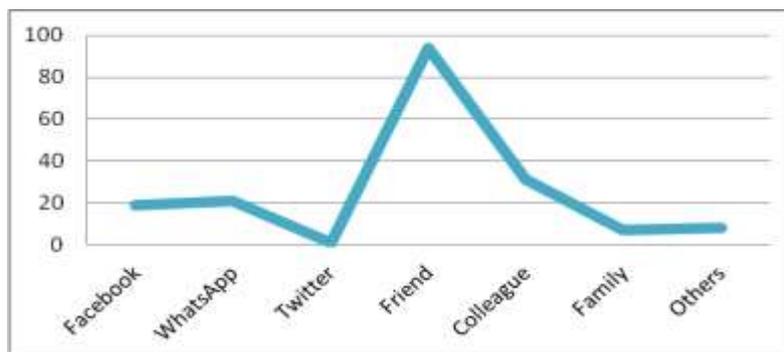
with the questionnaire but the questions were open-ended. Thus, their interviews were semi-structured because they were all asked the same questions though they were allowed to express their opinions. Each interview was summarized individually and they were later combined. The final interview summary was analyzed used the content analysis method of Miles and Huberman (1994). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), content analysis is the summarization of collected data and extraction of main points from the summary. Thus, the interview summary was synthesized by extracting the main points or opinions of the interviewees. Thereafter, results were analyzed and compiled. The findings are presented in the next section and Figure 1 shows the empirical research process of the study:

Figure 1: Research Process



Before presenting the findings of the study, it is interesting to note that the last question of the survey was about the source of information for the survey. The aim of the question was to justify social media as a quantitative research instrument. The responses are shown below:

Figure 2: Social Media as a Quantitative Research Instrument



Other media which they mentioned are LinkedIn, Yahoo, email, and Infostrides. From the figure, it could be observed that Friend topped the media; the possible reason could be that people shared the survey link with their friends and colleagues as was suggested on the Facebook pages. This also led to high number of WhatsApp.

FINDINGS

The background information revealed that the survey respondents are youth and working class people. Thus, they are well-educated and they have access to the internet. Fifty-five percent of the respondents were between 18 and 30 years old, and 44% were 31 years and above. Likewise, the majority of them (75%) were either graduates or still studying at university and polytechnic/college, because their current work status showed that 46% of them are employees, 25% are students and others are employers, apprentice/trainees, and self-employed. Similarly, their years of working experience showed that almost half of them (44%) had more than five years' experience, followed by three to four years' experience (26%). Therefore, it can be stated that the respondents represented the workforce and they were able-people whose opinions need to be considered. Furthermore, the respondents came from Kenya, Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Cameroon, Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Ivory Coast, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Nigeria has the highest respondents followed by Congo and Somalia.

The responses to the questions about knowledge about entrepreneurship showed that 170 respondents had heard about entrepreneurship and 162 of them explained their meaning of entrepreneurship (how they understood it). However, 16 people did not have a good and reasonable meaning for entrepreneurship; they just commented that it was a good choice. Therefore, 146 meanings were regarded as relevant definitions of entrepreneurship. Examples of their meaning are:

“Entrepreneurship is the ability to engage in work activities that makes you your own boss. It also gives the opportunity in employing others. Entrepreneurs are men and women with business ideas, who also have passion to make their ideas a reality.”

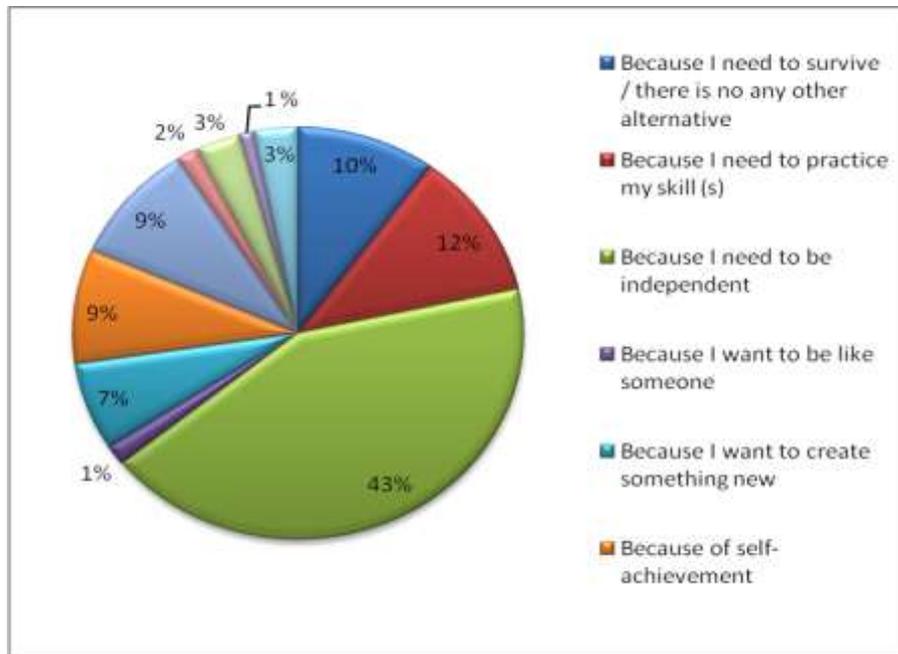
And:

“Entrepreneurship is the willingness to take risks and develop, organize and manage a business venture in a competitive global marketplace that is constantly evolving. Entrepreneurs are pioneers, innovators, leaders and inventors. It takes so much courage to be involved in Entrepreneurial status but it pays off when the principles are properly applied.”

When all their definitions were summarized and synthesized, it was observed that the respondents saw entrepreneurship as owning and running a business, taking risks, doing challenging activities, making money, using business to survive, self-employment, wealth creation, national development, and being independent. In order to confirm Africans' knowledge about entrepreneurship, the respondents were also asked if they had been self-employed before. Their responses revealed that 106 people said yes, and 45 of them were self-employed for one to two years, 30 of them for three to four years and 31 of them for five years and above. Based on their meaning and their years of entrepreneurial experience, it can be stated that the respondents had sufficient knowledge about entrepreneurship.

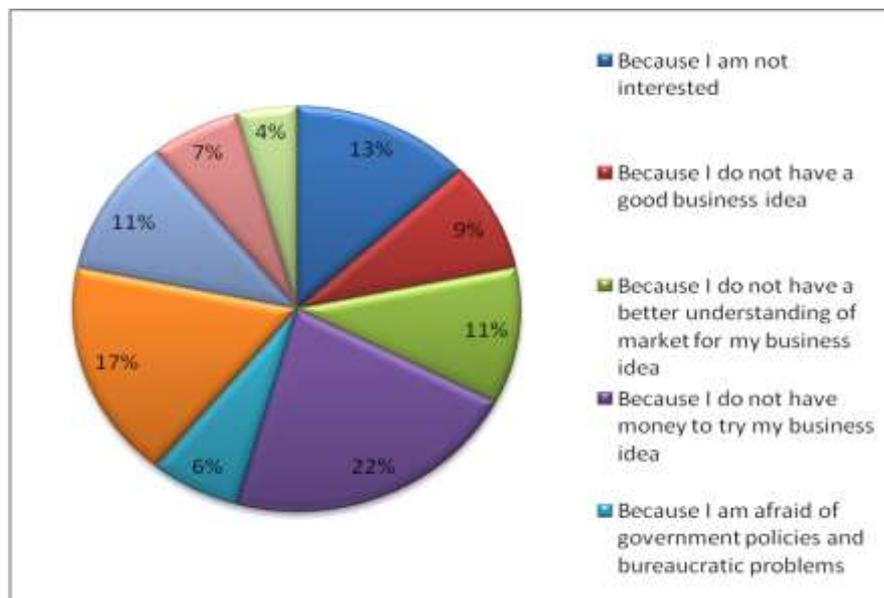
One of the main research questions was asked; would they like to be entrepreneurs in the future? Not surprisingly, 188 people agreed to be self-employed in the future with various personal reasons. Figure 3 shows their reasons:

Figure 3: Personal Reasons for being or to be an entrepreneur



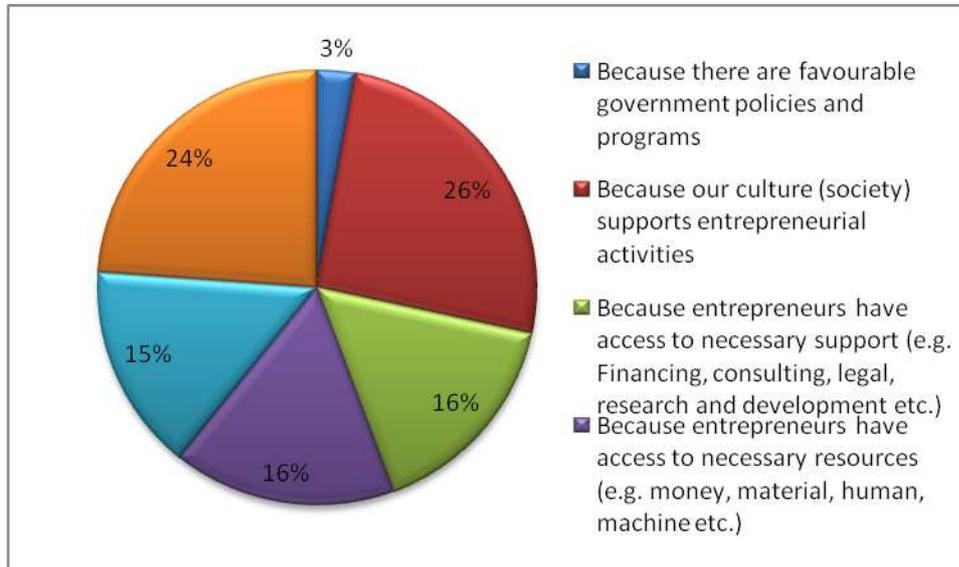
Other specified reasons were summarized to be - making money, improving economy, hobby, and being own boss. Some people also mentioned that their personal reasons for not wanting to be an entrepreneur in the future. Their reasons are presented below:

Figure 4: Personal Reasons for not being or to be an entrepreneur



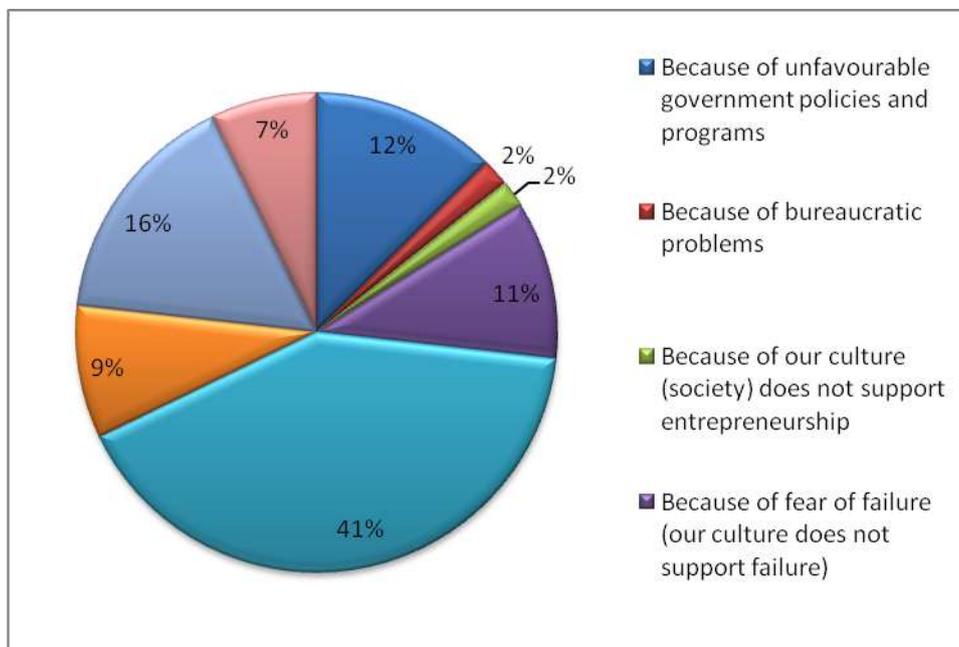
Additionally, the respondents were asked about their business environment reasons for self-employment, 176 people answered the question and their reasons are presented below:

Figure 5: Business environment reasons for self-employment



Although 42 other reasons were mentioned, most of them were quite similar to the personal reasons. Nonetheless, the other reasons were summarized as follows: high unemployment rate, improving the national economy, to impact society, government policies do not favour job-seeking, to be an agent for change, and to escape society problems. The following Figure 6 shows the respondents' business environment reasons for not being an entrepreneur:

Figure 6: Business environment reasons for not being self-employed



From Figure 4, it can be noted that societal support of entrepreneurial activities topped the environment reasons; it also followed by having access to resource and important supports. On the other hand, from Figure 6, people refused to be self-employed because of lack of resources, high costs, and unfavorable government policies. Thus, it can be agreed that African societies culturally support entrepreneurial activities.

In order to understand their entrepreneurial activities and their areas of interest, the respondents were asked to state their industry; 103 people answered the question. Their main industries were building and construction, hotel and hospitality, boutique, Information and Telecommunication, import and export, healthcare and social welfare, services, food and restaurant, business consultation, farming and agriculture, and textiles. An interesting point is that these entrepreneurs are still keen to continue in these industries even if they want to establish new businesses now; they are ready to operate in the industries. They also gave reasons for their choices; 159 people stated their reasons. When their reasons were summarized, it was noted that they planned to continue to operate in these industries because:

- (a) They are passionate
- (b) They are expert
- (c) The business is to start and run the business
- (d) They understand the market
- (e) They try to save environment
- (f) They want to provide for necessity needs
- (g) The business is either a family business or to keep it as an heritage

Therefore, these quantitative results indicate that Africans have positive attitudes toward entrepreneurship, especially those who are educated. Apart from the quantitative results, the qualitative study was also analyzed based on the same aforementioned themes. Hence, the background information of interviewees showed that they were well-educated; most of them had university degree(s). They also have entrepreneurial knowledge and seven of them were entrepreneurs. Their meaning of entrepreneurship seems to be focused on “*creating an innovative business*”. Thus, these interviewees appeared to be highly exposed to an advanced country’s point of view of entrepreneurship. They did not see entrepreneurship as trading or owning and managing a common business. This point of view was well understood because most of them had been living in Finland for more than six years and they had been either studying or working; their point of view was expected to be changed because Finland is a country where innovative entrepreneurship is highly recognized. Their view was quite similar despite that they came from different African countries. They came from Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania, Ivory Coast and Somalia.

With their high level of entrepreneurship knowledge, the interviewees confirmed that they had interest in entrepreneurship, and they planned to engage in different entrepreneurial activities in the near future. They saw entrepreneurship as a means of freedom, self-independence, self-reliance, contribution to society, recognition in a society, and to avoid being unemployed. An interesting part of their views was how they followed their country news and their opinion on entrepreneurial activities in their home country. They read the news almost every day and they monitored the political situations closely. When they were asked about the present situation in their home country, they talked about it for more than five minutes without a pause. In the same vein, they commented enthusiastically on entrepreneurial activities. For instance, the following four sentences are derived from their comments:

- *Generally, African youth like be self-employed because of lack of paid jobs. They seem to be active for any business that can give them a source of income. Also, they*

like business that can give them quick money. However, no strict rules affect business operations in Africa though in the beginning it pays.

- *Naturally, African has ability to do business but their businesses are not entrepreneurial oriented. They do it for survival reasons. So, their businesses lack growth potentials.*
- *There are three problems facing African entrepreneurship – inability to utilize opportunities, lack of capital to try different business ideas and lack of knowledge. Still, Africans do like to be self-employed because they have to survive and fulfil family obligations.*
- *The attitude of most African youths towards entrepreneurship is quite low...most of them do not believe in entrepreneurship. So many want the so called [white collar jobs].*

When the interviewees were asked on how to improve entrepreneurial activities, they all agreed that the present situation needs to be improved and they emphasized that Africans living abroad need to encourage an entrepreneurial spirit at home. One of them said:

“It’s better to give people tools than to give them foods. Once they know how to use the tool to make food, they don’t bother you again. They will feel ashamed to ask for food from you.”

Based on both quantitative and qualitative results, it can be agreed that Africans have a positive attitude toward entrepreneurship, and they even have plans to engage in certain industries and to offer certain products and services.

DISCUSSION

In relation to the number of participants who showed interest in entrepreneurship, their level of knowledge on entrepreneurship, their personal reasons, and their interested business sectors, it can be agreed that there is a relationship between the behavioral attitude and the intention. According to TPB theory, behavior leads to attitude and attitude leads to intention and actual behavior. Therefore, the variables of TPB seemed to be relevant in investigating EI, because most of the participants had an entrepreneurial personality, seeking freedom and self-achievement. Their personality seemed to motivate them to see entrepreneurship as the right choice for them. Thus, this study supports the previous studies such as those done by Autio et al. (2001), Christian, (2000), Christine (2004), Duijin (2004), Engel et al. (2010), Ismail et al. (2009), and Muhammad et al. (2013).

Additionally, the findings of the study, especially the personal reasons given for being an entrepreneur, revealed that independence, practice of skills, and need to survive were the main reasons why the participants developed an interest in entrepreneurship. Hence, both quantitative and qualitative data did not indicate that an event led to their EI; thus, this study supports the claim of Wang et al. (2011) who found that work experience and family background play important roles in EI. In the same view, this study supports Lucas and Cooper (Unpublished), who state that self-efficacy leads to positive attitudes towards

entrepreneurship because this characteristic was the main reason for the participants to be self-employed.

Still on the self-efficacy, the PBC model sees it as an internal control for entrepreneurship; in this study, it was also observed that internal motivation made the participants engage in their entrepreneurial activities. Similarly, the SCCT model specifies that the beliefs of people would lead them to be entrepreneurs, and that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and career selection. This study agrees with the theory because the participants still want to continue as an entrepreneur, and they have plans to engage in certain industries. Thus, the variables of the models appear to be relevant in investigating EI. Hence, this study supports the existing studies such as Liñán and Chen (2009), Lucas and Cooper (Unpublished), and Thompson (2009).

Davidsson (1995) presented personal background factors that lead people to be self-employed. His factors were highly evident in this study because participants not only mentioned them, but they also explained them. Furthermore, IEIS questions were included in the research questions as well as EIQ; the findings of this study appear to be same as previous studies that used similar questions before. Thus, this study agrees with the previous studies - Fatoki (2014), Klyver and Schøtt (2011), Ismail et al. (2009), Thompson (2009), Liñán and Chen (2009), Van Gelderen et al (2008), and Basu and Virick (2008).

However, the main difference of this study in relation to the above studies is that it shows continuous interest by African youth in entrepreneurship; it reveals that Africans understand and determine to be self-employed. Although the study indicates that Africans have positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship, it is also important to note that their attitudes might be due to unemployment problems facing the continent as well as the increase in the number of well-educated people.

CONCLUSION

So far, this study has presented the current attitude of African youth towards entrepreneurship. It shows that African youth are entrepreneurially active and they know the importance of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it reveals that African youth have an interest in an entrepreneurship career because of their motivation for personal independence. Similarly, it shows that lack of resources could set some African youth back. Therefore, it can be concluded that African youth have the intention to be self-employed.

As scholars and other important people argue that entrepreneurship is an essential tool for Africa development, with this study which shows that African youth intend to be entrepreneurs, it can be agreed that there is hope in Africa. However, the hope of Africa seems to depend on evenly distributed resources because lack of resources can discourage the youth.

Likewise, it was noted during the interviews that African immigrants abroad are keen to have businesses at home but they are worried about the “trust worthiness” of the people at home. Similarly, the interviewees mentioned that entrepreneurship education is much needed to improve innovative start-ups in Africa. Therefore, the hope of African entrepreneurship also depends on the trust worthiness of African youth and their willingness to learn more about entrepreneurship.

In conclusion, African youth are presently entrepreneurially oriented; they are ready to take risks provided that they can be self-dependent. They are well educated and they actively use social media. They have interest in industries where small capital is needed and where they offer their professional services. However, it cannot be completely generalized that all African youth have the same attitudes; thus, further research on individual countries, regions, or tribes will be very useful to buttress the attitude and intention of African youth towards entrepreneurship.

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