

NURTURING YOUTHS ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: *This paper Nurturing Youths Entrepreneurial Mindset and National Development: A Critical Analysis interrogates and explores the role of youths in national development. The problem that spurs this investigation is evidenced in high level of unemployment among Nigerian youths. Many Nigerian graduates are roaming the streets looking for paid jobs while host of other youths engage in various criminal activities and odd jobs as a means of livelihood. These includes: kidnapping, internet fraud, robbery, prostitution, etc. The paper observed that Nigerian youths pay little or no attention to entrepreneurship, thereby leaving them without employment. The paper identified the development of entrepreneur culture, science of self-realization, discover the needs of your environment, confront the obstacle etc as some of the factors that will enable youths to direct their mindset toward entrepreneurship. It identified the benefits of youth entrepreneur to include both personal and public benefit. The paper therefore recommends that Nigerian youths should shun all social vices such as kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution, internet fraud/ cyber crime etc. Nigerian youths should be nurtured, mentored and guided towards possessing adequate entrepreneurial mindset. The government should as a matter of important provide the enabling environment for business start-ups so that the youths will be economically engage, thereby developing themselves and the society in which they live.*

KEY WORDS: entrepreneur, national development, youth

INTRODUCTION

Centrality of the youth in the nation's development equation has manifested itself in the concern and consciousness about youth mobilization among major political gladiators in Nigeria. Thus, our leaders recognized that the youth constitute a reservoir of dynamic human capital-energy, capacities, potentialities, know-how and infinite abilities which need to be properly nurtured for national development. One of the fundamental challenges facing governments globally and at all levels of governance is how to effectively direct the youths mindset, nurture them, harness their dynamism and potentialities, and meaningfully integrate them into the national development architecture.

Youth's natural disposition for innovation and change make young people well suited for entrepreneurship, provided the community can give them the right support to overcome their challenges and improve their chances of success. A city's economic development benefits from youth entrepreneurship in terms of employment creation, product and service innovation, market competition, community revitalization, and income generation (Riahi 2010).

According to the World Economic Forum one in five people aged 15-34 is unemployed, not engaged in formal education or training. Data from the World Bank confirm that the total youth unemployment rate, labor force ages 15-24, in 2018 was 13.23percent. The youth globally are recognized as a formidable and critical segment of the population of every society whose strength and dynamism are essential in the process of development engineering (Njoku & Isigwe 2019).

Second National Youth Policy Document of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2009 stated that Youth are one of the greatest assets that any nation can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a country's development. Young women and men are, in particular, recognized as a vital resource whose future prospects are inextricably tied to that of their country. They are the valued possession of any nation or region. Without them there can be no future. They are the center of reconstruction and development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. The extent of their vitality, responsible conduct, and roles in society is positively correlated with the development of their country.

Changing society raises new demands as human way of life requires the ability to adapt to environmental changes taking place and actively participating in terms of sustainability (Dzemyda & Raudeliūnienė 2014).

Entrepreneurship is seen today as a cultural and economic phenomenon. Entrepreneurship through the creation of new businesses that produce new products and services, and thereby ensure public needs creates new jobs and contributes to the overall economic stimulus and development of community life quality.

Thus, particular attention is given in recent years, to youth entrepreneurship, based on idea that young people have a lot of potential to create, develop and manage their own businesses, thereby contributing to solving variety of social problems such as youth unemployment and unemployment in general, the involvement of anti-social activities etc. From the economic position of the enterprise it is regarded as the organization to achieve results. In psychological sciences entrepreneurship is regarded as individual personal characteristics, traits, abilities in achieving organization's success. From the management science positions entrepreneurship is understood as an element of strategic management and seeks to identify the links between the organization's entrepreneurship skills and intentions (Dzemyda & Raudeliūnienė 2014).

It is therefore essential that nations that aspire to greatness and prosperity must seek ways to positively nurture and tap the great potential of its youths. However, Nigerian governments and leaders have not adopted appropriate and adequate strategies for youth engagement for national

development. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to examine the nexus and or relationship between nurturing the mindsets of Nigerian youth and national development. Specifically, it sought to identify possible strategies for repositioning the mindsets of youths towards national development.

Conceptual clarification

In this section we shall attempt a decomposition of the major concepts embedded in the topic of this article to enable us to appreciate the relationship and or nexus between the variables under discuss. We shall specifically conceptualize the terms youth, entrepreneur and national development.

Youth

The opinion of scholars and organizations on the concept of youth varies. We shall consider a few perspectives here;

- Hamlyn's Encyclopedia word dictionary: Youth means the condition of being "young".
- Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary of current English: Youth refers to young men and women. This means that whoever is young, fresh and vibrant both in looks and at heart, full of hope, promise, enthusiastic ideas is a youth even at 70 years.
- The Nigeria National Youth Policy (2009) defines youth as persons between 18 –35years.

The African youth charter recognizes youth as people between 18-35.

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, formerly the President of Nigeria from 1999 until 2007, believes that identifying and addressing issues that would enhance the lives of the youth would improve overall national development. He stated that, "Youth constitute Nigeria's only hope for a real future". The Nigerian government characterizes youth as ambitious, enthusiastic, energetic and promising. A National Youth Development Policy was created and designed to advocate for youth and youth development. The policy views youth welfare as vital to the Nigerian nation and its socioeconomic development. This policy is seen as a youth participation project, versus a project identifying problems and needs (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_in_Nigeria).

However, the central thread that appears to hold the views about the concept "youth" can be expressed as follows: It is synonymous that associated with dynamism, enthusiasm, youthfulness, creativity, hope, innovativeness, promise, vigour, positive thinking, explorative sociability, self-esteem, spirit of camaraderie, progressive mindset, etc

Entrepreneurship

Dzemyda & Raudeliūnienė (2014) noted that entrepreneurship is seen as a system consisting of the inner personal provisions, skills and orientation, a constant desire to learn and improve skills and identify, take advantage of the favorable conditions and opportunities for business ideas. It is the ability to turn ideas into reality, and to create added value.

Kuratko (2009) cited in Suraju (2016) describes entrepreneurship as a kind of behaviour that includes initiative taking, the organizing of social economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations to practical account and the acceptance of risk of failure. As such entrepreneurship

revolves around the individual who searches for changes, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity. He takes risk and not afraid of failure.

Nafukho (1998) noted that an entrepreneur is a human bulldozer, who can convert a stumbling block into a stepping stone. He is a creative and aggressive innovator who channels all his energy towards promoting the necessary relationships required for the new business to come into existence.

Thus, to be enterprising is to keep your eyes open and your mind active towards exploiting any available opportunity. Therefore, the main idea about entrepreneurship is risk bearing, it has to do with introducing new firms that did not previously exist; it involves the idea of starting new firms, particularly new ventures. In addition, it is the creation of new wealth through adoption of new idea or concepts. What entrepreneurs have in common is commitment to innovation. And for innovation to occur the entrepreneur must have not only talent, ingenuity and knowledge, in addition he must be hardworking, purposeful and focused.

Entrepreneurial development has to do with the ability to identify business opportunities, the ability to be able to harness the necessary resources to use opportunities identified, the ability and willingness to initiate and sustain appropriate actions towards the actualization of business objectives (Osemeka 2012).

Nwangwu (2006) noted that entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual or a firm or an organization to identify an environmental change and exploit such an opportunity to produce goods and services for public consumption

Entrepreneurial development can be conceived as programmes of activities to enhance the knowledge, skill, behaviour and attitudes of individual and groups to assume the role of entrepreneurs (Osemeka, 2012).

Entrepreneurship Development refers to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes. It aims to enlarge the base of entrepreneurs in order to hasten the pace at which new ventures are created. This leads to employment generations and economic development of the society. Entrepreneurial development 'focuses on the individual who wishes to start or expand an existing business. Therefore, entrepreneurship development concentrates more on growth potential and innovation. Thus, the acquisition of skills that will enable an entrepreneur to function appropriately and adequately in terms of:

- Attaining present result based on previous decisions and planning for the future, based on present circumstance.
- Maintaining and developing the organized capability which makes achievement possible, and
- Coordinating the specialist functions that should enable a firm to perform the technical task in marketing, personnel, research and development, manufacturing, finance and control, especially in the face of changing technology and dynamic industry trend (Osemeka 2012).

National Development

It includes full-growth and expansion of our industries, agriculture, and education, social, religious and cultural institutions. Thus, national development implies development of a nation as a whole. It can be best defined as the all-round and balanced development of different aspects and facets of the nation viz. political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and material etc.

Therefore, it is the ability of a country to improve its economic, political, cultural and social welfare of the people. It has to do with expansion and growth that promote the overall wellbeing of the people in a defined territory or locality.

In 1971, UNO identified the scope of national development to include:

1. National Development seeks to remove poverty.
2. It improves the National Income as well as per-capita income.
3. It develops quality in Education.
4. It brings revolutionary change in the field of Agriculture.
5. It develops Transport and Communication.
6. Development of Medical facilities.
7. On the contrary it controls pollution and environmental hazard.
8. Use of Science and Technology.
9. Preservation and development of nature and environment.
10. Development of the economic condition of the people living in the particular country.
11. Development of the social condition of the people.
12. Introduction of welfare scheme of people for the betterment of their life and standard of living.
13. Development of an impartial and well-organized political system.
14. It encompasses the preservation, enrichment and development of culture.
15. Above all, it promotes the concept of sustainable development.

Source: <https://bluemington.com/national-development-meaning-scope>

The extent to which hunger and poverty have devastated lives and future ambition of youths especially graduates in Nigeria is very alarming. A situation in which the government cannot adequately provide employment opportunities for its citizens. The level of unemployment in Nigeria is very high. The question is what led to this and what is the way out. The cause of the unemployment situation in Nigeria can be attributed to bad governance and corruption among the political class. In the face of these anomalies, one thing is clear that it is increasingly difficult for government in Nigeria to adequately cater for the teeming population of jobless youths in the country. How will the youths survive in this atmosphere of unemployment is the center of our discuss.

How Will the Youths Survive in this Atmosphere of Unemployment?

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, formerly the President of Nigeria from 1999 until 2007, believes that identifying and addressing issues that would enhance the lives of the youth would improve overall national development. He noted that, "Youth constitute Nigeria's only hope for a real future". The Nigerian government characterizes youth as ambitious, enthusiastic, energetic and promising (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youth_in_Nigeria).

According to Anyadike, Emeh & Ukah (2012), the dexterity with which hunger and poverty have devastated lives and future ambition of youths especially graduates in Nigeria, have led to scholars prescribing entrepreneurship development as the permanent cure for extreme hunger and poverty which is necessitated by the rate of unemployment and its effect on both the people and the nation. The core set of ingredients that make up the mindset of an entrepreneur are motivation, determination, passion, untiring work ethic and desire to succeed. Chigunta (2001) argued that entrepreneurship has been receiving increasing recognition as a source of job creation, empowerment for the unemployed and economic dynamism in a rapidly globalizing world.

The concept of entrepreneurship involves creating jobs for oneself which will have a rippling impact on others who would be employed by him since he cannot do the job alone. Erkko (2005) argued that entrepreneurship is the most effective technique for bridging the gap between science and the market place. This is done by creating new ventures and bringing new products and services to the market. Therefore, these entrepreneurial events substantially impact on the economy of an area by building the economic base and providing employments.

To Achieve This, the Following Factors Have Been Identified

1. **Development of entrepreneurship culture:** According to Brownson (2015), Entrepreneurial Culture is a society that depicts the exhibition of entrepreneurial attributes, entrepreneurial values, entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial behavior. **Entrepreneurial Attributes (EA)** Are the attributes that are important at the early stages of the entrepreneurial process and can sustain an individual during those early stages. **Entrepreneurial Values (EV)** Are the driving force for decision making. They have important implications not only for the decision to pursue entrepreneurship but also in the way in which the individual entrepreneur approaches a venture. **Entrepreneurial Mindset (EM)** is a mental attitude which determines how an individual will interpret and respond to situations. **Entrepreneurial Behavior (EB)** is referred to as new venture creation, firm birth or startup. Hence, when youths develop entrepreneurship culture, wealth creation is possible; jobs are created; individuals and collective wellbeing becomes a reality. Schnurr and Newing (1997) cited in Oladele, Akeke and Oladunjoye (2011) justified the need for promoting entrepreneurship culture on the ground that youth in all societies have sterling qualities such as resourcefulness, initiative, drive, imagination, enthusiasm, zest, dash, ambition, energy, boldness, audacity and courage which are all valuable traits for entrepreneurship development.

2. **Science of self-realization:** it is the ability of an individual to understand or realize himself and equally determine the very essence of his person. It is all about knowing what drives you and what you are passionate about. It leads to job that makes you happy, where you will be more productive. Think out something that will create wealth for you.

3. **Discover the needs of your environment:** It has to do with one's ability to identify the needs of his/her local environment. Here one will look at those things that will be beneficial to his/her people. Thus having identified the needs of your immediate environment, an entrepreneur will try to provide those services or products for the people and make money.

4. **Challenge Yourself:** As human being one of the greatest challenges we face is fear. But fear makes you grow, not shrink, Fear is one of the greatest motivators for the human mind. Fear of loss, pain, rejection, harm, and the unknown have prevented us from making many terrible decisions, from childhood to adult life. You have to realize that fear of failure in examination will prompt you to read hard and make you have good grade or result. Therefore, an entrepreneurial mindset requires, first and foremost, an implicit understanding of these systems and their many flaws. The fear that drives others away from confronting its problems is what an entrepreneur uses to drive himself to innovate and work hard to fix the systems, and conquer the fear instead of succumbing to it. As an entrepreneur, you will naturally face new challenges every day. Just because obstacles arise doesn't mean you should be afraid of making mistakes. If you want to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset, you have to embrace challenges.

5. **Confront the Obstacle:** Daily life often makes us confront the many barriers that exist in reality. Yes, Successful entrepreneurs accept that such barriers exist, but instead of stressing about them, they try to find better ways to get past or through them. Each obstacle represents an opportunity – it's a barrier for you and others, and finding a way to overcome that obstacle is an opportunity waiting to happen. Keep searching for ways that accept the situation, but take cognizance of what you can control and seek to make the changes required to overcome and scale the obstacle. You can dig under them, or just blast right through them to get the result.

6. **Meditate on Your Vision on a Daily Basis:** Much of the entrepreneurial mindset involves a steadfast commitment to a very narrow vision. Therefore, the entrepreneurs require putting in place the necessary steps to accomplish that vision. The problem is that the demands of the day can get in your way, creating a space where your vision recedes. This leaves room for frustration and doubt, which can lead to stagnation or worse. That's why it's so important to make an effort to set aside a specific time every single day to focus upon your vision and your goals. This will help you in creating the energy needed to refocus your efforts and propel you to work a little harder the next day in order to achieve your goal.

Supporting Youth Entrepreneurs

Riahi (2010) pointed out that though youth and enterprise share many of the same characteristics, such as resourcefulness, initiative, drive, imagination, and ambition, youths have an increased number of challenges when compared to adult entrepreneurs, in terms of launching and running a new venture. These challenges includes

- less access to capital, whether it be personal savings, investments from family and friends, or access to loans from financial institutes
- less experience and a narrower range of experiences
- lack of access to work space
- less extensive network of contacts
- reliance on simple tools or no equipment at all

These extra challenges faced by youth entrepreneurs should form the basis and design of youth entrepreneurship and talent development programs. The best way to improve success rates of youth entrepreneurs is to provide quality support, skills, and resources to youth entrepreneurs so that they are better prepared and have the enabling to go into entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship Role in National Development

Riahi (2010) identifies some benefits of youth entrepreneurship to include:

- creating employment
- providing local goods and services to the community, thereby revitalizing it
- raising the degree of competition in the market, ultimately creating better goods and services for the consumer
- promoting innovation and resilience through experience-based learning
- promoting a strong social and cultural identity
- continuously creating and growing diverse employment opportunities different than the traditional fields available in a particular city

Shastri, Kumar and Ali (2009) state that youth entrepreneurship is important not only at the level of the individual, but also society, the global level, because through its initiative, skills and ability to create innovative ideas for a young person to contribute not only to their own quality of life improvement but also to the general quality of life. They noted that entrepreneurship among young people and active participation in business is important in that it provides:

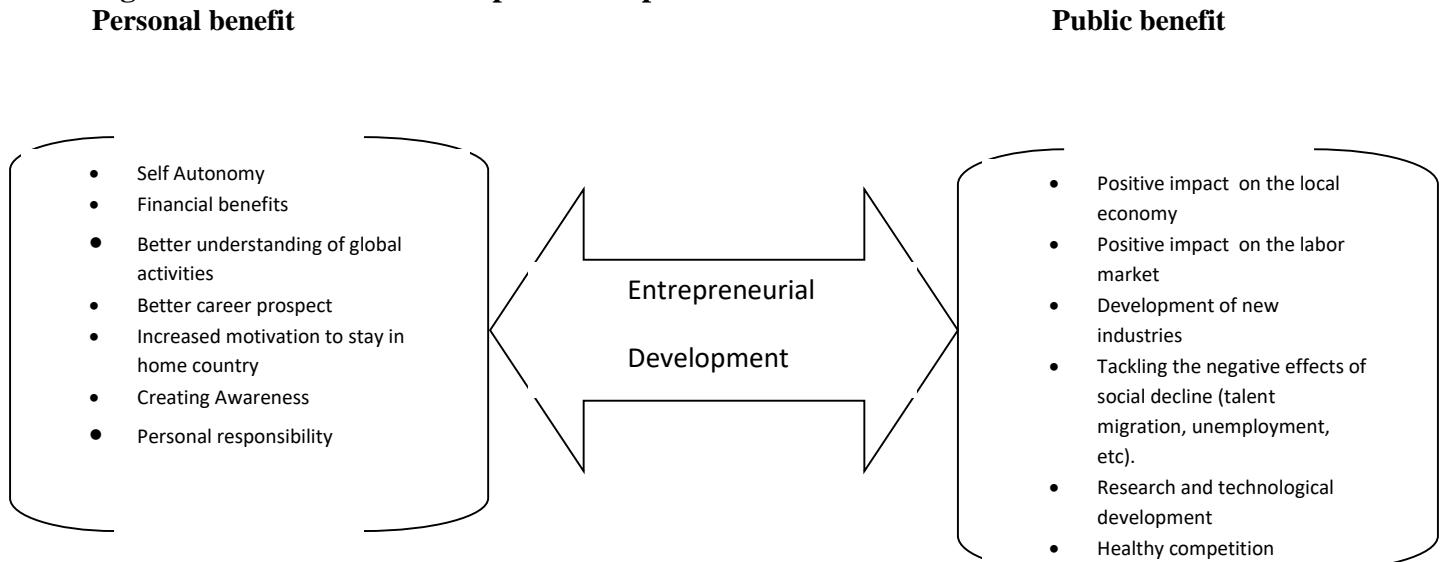
- Financial benefits to the person; independence, creation of jobs;
- Development of new industries, especially in rural areas and less developed regions;
- Promotion of the export of local resources and the recycling of valuable goods, products and services;
- Healthy competition and the development of new markets;
- Research, study and technology development;
- Entrepreneurial characteristics and the proper approach to self-promotion activities, which in turn promotes the development of the various regions and local communities, increase the quality of life;
- The ability to achieve excellent results in their professional career, which increases life satisfaction, and improve the psychosocial health of the public;
- Reduction of the shadow economy; emigration and talent loss.

Entrepreneurial skills are important not only for the development of business, but also in finding work, planning career, making other important decisions in everyday life. Given the challenges of modern life, it is recognized that in order to flexibly respond to the changes, to ensure the development of society and quality of life, it is important to create conditions that will help young people to form and grow as active, responsible, creative personality, active citizens in society (Dzemyda & Raudeliūnienė 2014).

Chigunta (2002) states that youth entrepreneurship has social and economic benefits, which primarily affects the right of young people in terms of business, increased activity of society in economic and social life and greater responsibility for promoting positive changes in society. Young people who had the right conditions and opportunities to realize their business ideas, has the following provisions of the business vision, business discipline, positive attitude with regard to the business sector, the ability to identify and exploit new business opportunities, patience to the results of the perseverance and endurance, the ability to quickly recover from the experience of failure. This ensures that young people grow responsible, active members of society who contribute significantly to the development of the business sector.

From the investigative analysis it is imperative to state that youth entrepreneur has both personal and public benefit. The personal benefits are those gains that accrue to the entrepreneur himself. While public benefits are those gains that are beneficial to all the members of the society.

Fig 1 Benefits of Youth Entrepreneurship



Source: created by authors

CONCLUSION

No nation became great without leaders who have the entrepreneurial mindset. There is a saying that “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”. This implies that Nigerian youths should be nurtured, mentored and guided towards possessing adequate entrepreneurial mindset. It will provide them with the disposition to embrace entrepreneur as the best option in this situation of unemployment. Also the adoption of entrepreneur culture will give them the enabling environment for business start-ups and they will economically be engaged, thereby developing themselves and the society in which they live. Hence, shunning all social vices such as kidnapping, armed robbery, prostitution, internet fraud/cybercrime etc.

Teaching entrepreneurial skills to young people is a solution to the high unemployment rate among youth worldwide. At the same time, it helps to pave the way to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (<https://www.entrepreneurship-campus.org>). Abaho (2013) noted that Entrepreneurial values develop behaviors, skills and attitudes that help people to succeed in all spheres of life. Thus, Olomi (2013) pointed out that entrepreneurial values that pre-dispose people to entrepreneurial behaviour include strong belief in one's ability to make things happen, self-directed action, value of know-who and trust and that rewards come with effort. These values, according to him, act as triggers, incentives and sustainers of entrepreneurial tendencies.

Julius Sevilla, say that: time waits for no body, stops for no one, Excuses will not slow down time, Indecision will not slow down time... Don't waste your time in anger, regrets, worries or hate. Time will not turn around and cry along with you. It is time to let go of the past and stop worrying about the future. Your only time is now. Youths should stand up and face what is facing them, which is unemployment. The sustainable and only way to surmount it is through entrepreneurship.

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