

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF CITIZENS IN KATSINA-ALA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated Entrepreneurship Skills Development and Socio-Economic Development of residents in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. The purpose of the study was to find out the influence of entrepreneurship skills development on reduction of unemployment and creation of self-reliance among the residents of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. Two research questions were raised and two hypotheses formulated for the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised 224,718 residents in the urban, semi-urban and rural areas of the study area. A sample of 300 residents was drawn through multistage sampling technique for the study. A questionnaire titled 'Entrepreneurship skills development and Social Economic Development Questionnaire, (ESDSEDQ) was used for data collection. A trial test of the instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.843. The questionnaire was administered on 300 respondents while 287 copies were recovered. Collected data were analyzed using Mean Scores to answer the research questions while Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found that entrepreneurship skills development reduced unemployment and increased self-

reliance among residents of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. The study recommended that the state government and public-spirited individuals should empower the residents to develop their entrepreneurship skills so that they can benefit from entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Skills, Socio-economic Development, Citizens, Kastina-Ala LGA.

Background to the Study

The quality of life, scope and scale of the future greatness of a nation is always determined by the quality of investment in the condition of its citizens. As Gaskin (2014) notes, a nation that trivializes the current socio-economic condition of its citizens is merely laying the foundation for its decline and irrelevance in the global community. Gaskin stressed that a nation without highly educated, highly literate, highly skilled, intellectually brilliant and self-confident citizens, is only toying with its future, and undermining its existential capacity for economic stability. Economic and social development hinges upon entrepreneurship skills possessed by the population of any nation irrespective of its landmass of population parameters. According to Adikwu (2017), a vibrant entrepreneurial climate provides new jobs, increases competitiveness, and produces novel goods and services which culminate into uplifting the standard of living of the people as well as improving their social and economic status. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that policymakers of developed economies attempt to increase entrepreneurial activities of the populace in numerous ways. Anyanwu and Yameogo (2015) note that they do this by creating a regulatory environment in order to increase the number of permits and licenses required to start a business, make more capital available to new firms via loans, subsidies or tax incentives, and increase the amount of resources devoted to education in general and business education in particular, in order to create a set of attitudes and skills in the populace that is conducive to entrepreneurship.

The peril of low social and economic development coupled with unemployment in Nigeria in the past and at present has been an issue of great interest to the economic managers, individuals, government at all levels and policy makers. According to Nwankwo (2013), a nation can only grow and develop when its citizens acquire basic knowledge of education in getting relevant entrepreneurship skills. Entrepreneurial advancement or development is one key-factor that helps a nation develop quickly technologically, socially and economically. Adekunle and David (2014) report that a very desiring economy that needs development in all ramifications provides the kind of economic environment that will attract investors both local and international into the economy as well as develop local entrepreneurship potentials. The importance of entrepreneurship skills development to economic growth and job creation is widely accepted and publicized. Social economic development in Nigeria is assumed to be driven almost entirely by small and medium scale businesses that reach the rapid growth stage (Agwu, Onwuegbuzie & Ezeifeka, 2017).

The Nigerian economy is characterized by mirage of problems which has constituted a sleepless night to developmental oriented governance. The most disturbing thing in the country is the menace of unemployment and low social economic development of the citizens (Tobin & Gianiodis, 2018). Nigeria as a country has numerous business and investment

potentials due to the abundant, vibrant and dynamic human and natural resources it possesses. These human and natural resources notwithstanding, Nigeria is still one of the poorest countries in the world and has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in sub-Sahara Africa, despite its alleged strong economic growth. Therefore, a considerable agreement exists regarding the need to promote entrepreneurship skills development as a strategy for economic transformation. Anekwe, Ndubusi–Okolo and Nwanah (2020) note that the level of economic development experienced by societies has significantly depended on the level of entrepreneurship development skills existing in it. A country might remain backward not because of lack of natural resources or dearth of investment capital [as it is often believed] but because of lack of adequate entrepreneurial abilities or its inability to tap the latent entrepreneurial talents existing in that society.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria recognized the immense role of the development of entrepreneurial skills at the basic school level when it noted that basic education should provide science and technological skills for economic development (FRN, 2004). Therefore, the quality of instructional delivery should be oriented toward inculcating the right type of value and attitude in the students. In addition, Akingbade and Aberuagba (2019) report that the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical, and social abilities/competencies are necessary for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. There has been emergent acknowledgement that a sustainable economic transformation in Nigeria can be facilitated within the framework of entrepreneurial-driven activities. Indeed, the small businesses created by innovative entrepreneurs have proved to be the most significant contributors to the national wealth (Barba-Sanchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018). The prosperity and progress of a nation depends on the quality of its people. If the people are enterprising, ambitious and courageous enough to bear the risk, the society will develop quickly. Such people are identified as entrepreneurs and their character reflects entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship skills development refers to the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institution-building programmes. Bayo (2020) opines that, entrepreneurship skills development aims to enlarge the base of entrepreneurs in order to hasten the pace at which new ventures are created. This accelerates employment generations and economic development. Entrepreneurial skills development focuses on the individual who wishes to start or expand a business. Moreover, entrepreneurship skills development in Nigeria concentrates more on growth potential and innovation (Dollarhide, 2020). Essentially this means the acquisition of skills that will enable an entrepreneur to function appropriately and adequately in terms of turning the perceived challenges into opportunities has the potentials of enhancing the individual's socio-economic development in all ramifications.

Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State happen to be an agrarian area in the state predominantly populated with subsistence farmers whose annual incomes are hardly sufficient to cater for their daily life burdens (Akingbade, 2021). The implication of this scenario is that, citizens in the afore-mentioned area are expected to engage in entrepreneurship skills development and consequently key into numerous benefits of entrepreneurship which are nationally and globally acknowledged. The relevance of entrepreneurship to economic development has been highlighted by many researchers and it is now well-recognized that education and training opportunities play a key role in cultivating

future entrepreneurs and in developing the abilities of existing entrepreneurs to grow their business to greater levels of success through the reduction in the reduce unemployment rate among citizens (Emezi & Emele, 2021). The reduction in unemployment rate which leads to high social economic development of citizens may be lacking in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State due to poor or inefficient entrepreneurship skills development.

Entrepreneurship skills development has the potential to expand and transform the productive potential of the national economy by inducing higher productivity and an expansion of new niches and industries. Olorunfunmi and Kayii (2019) observe that, this can be achieved through rapid job creation as entrepreneurs can learn from both theirs' and others' successes and failures, which enables them to improve their skills and adapt their attitudes towards job creation and wealth generation. It is a known fact that developing countries, especially, pursue economic "prosperity". This is particularly evident as governments of developing, non-industrialized nations of the world have repeatedly declared their intentions to propel their national economies to the status of being "developed" and "industrialized" with the expectation to reap economic "fortune". According to Sahil (2015), to achieve this, there is dire demand to inculcate into the citizens of any nation entrepreneurship skills development which are veritable tools for the pursuit of economic prosperity that breed social and economic development at holistic levels—individual, household, national and even globally.

Based on the scenario depicted in the background above, the researchers set out to investigate the influence of entrepreneurship skills development on the social and economic development of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, observation by the researchers has shows that government, economy managers, stakeholders, parents and the general public have expressed considerable anxiety over low social-economic development of the society occasioned by sky-rocketing unemployment of willing and capable individuals in the country with special attention to Benue State, that is endowed with sufficient mineral and human resources. In spite of the fact that there are numerous government's initiatives like Npower, Pcitizenial, Youths Empowerment Scheme (PYES) and YouWin among others to enhance entrepreneurship skills development for rapid social and economic development of the populace, citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State seem to be alienated from these juicy developmental programmes. Unemployment (which leads to waste of human and material resources) as an impediment to social progress, security of life and property, peace and stability, economic growth and development seems to be taking central stage in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. Though some blame it on poor government policies while others stressed that many citizens (graduates and non-graduates alike) are not employable because they have insignificant business development awareness and relevant entrepreneurial skills to establish small-scale business that will enable them earn a living.

Personal observations by the researchers again have revealed that, most citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State are not self-reliant and still depend on

government's handouts in terms of salaries and other forms of subsidies on agricultural inputs. The researchers presume that depending entirely on the government to meet a people's social economic demands may not be sufficient in fostering the social and economic development of such a people. Again, the researchers presume that the low rate of self-employment opportunities among the citizens of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State may be premised on the lack of entrepreneurship skills development among the populace.

Once more, a visit to most parts of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State reveals that, there are very little job creation opportunities for the citizens of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. This could be emanating from the lack of entrepreneurship skills development which could have bred job creation opportunities for the citizens leading to social and economic development. The researchers speculate that other factors such as high unemployment rate, low self-reliance, low self-employment and poor job creation are presumed to have exerted a negative toll on the social and economic development of the citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State of Nigeria. Therefore, the problem of this study is: What is the influence of entrepreneurship skills development on the social economic development of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State?

Purpose of the study: This study investigated Entrepreneurship Development Skills and Social Economic Development of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. Specifically, the research sought to examine:

1. the ways in which entrepreneurship skills development could reduce unemployment rate among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State;
2. the influence of entrepreneurship skills development on self-reliance among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State;

Research Questions: This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. In what ways does entrepreneurship skills development reduce unemployment rate among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State?
2. How does entrepreneurship skills development influence self-reliance of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State?

Research Hypotheses: The following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

1. Entrepreneurship skills development does not significantly reduce unemployment rate among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.
2. Entrepreneurship skills development has no significant influence on self-reliance of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. A descriptive survey research design deals with data collection from a large population by drawing a representative sample of such population for the purpose of describing, interpreting, evaluating and analyzing the existing perceptions, conditions or variables and prevailing situations through the formulation and testing of relevant hypotheses for drawing inferences. This research design was appropriate

for this study because it enabled the researchers to get opinions or perceptions of a sample of respondents drawn from a larger population that could not be completely studied. The design also enabled the researcher to draw inference from the responses of the sampled respondents that was generalized on the entire population.

The population for the study comprised all the 224, 718 citizens in the urban, semi-urban and rural areas of the study area. Those areas are Katsina-Ala town, Abaji-Kpav, Tor Donga, Gbor, Amaafu, Joo Mbatyough, Ayua, Gbishe, Ikowe, Gawa, Abako and Harga. The sample size for this study is 300 respondents which was 0.13% of the population which is 224,718 respondents from all the twelve (12) geographic regions of the study area. Multistage sampling technique was used to select respondents from the twelve settlements in the area of study. In the first stage, the researcher selected all the twelve settlements as they were not too many for all of them to be studied (this is called a census). In the second stage, after deciding the number of respondents to be sampled from settlement, the researcher adopted simple random sampling to draw sample size. The researcher got the names of the entrepreneurs in the settlements which were then written on pieces of paper that were folded uniformly, dropped in a basket and picked one at a time with replacement

Instrumentation

One instrument was used for data collection. It was a structured questionnaire titled "Entrepreneurship Skills Development and Social Economic Development Questionnaire, (ESDSEDQ). The questionnaire consisted of Parts 'I' and 'II'. Part 'I' was a letter of introduction. Part 'II' of the questionnaire consisted of two (2) clusters named Section A and B. Section A contained items concerned with the influence of entrepreneurship skills development on reducing unemployment rate. It had five items related to the theme of the cluster. Section B elicited information on the influence of entrepreneurship skills development on self-reliance among the citizens. Both had five (5) items each. The response format was Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The instrument was administered on the respondents by the researchers. A total number of 300 copies of the questionnaire were taken to the field and administered to the respondents and 287 copies were recovered for data analysis. A four point modified rating scale was used to establish the disparity in the respondents' opinions. Thus, Strongly Agree (SA) =4; Agree (A) =3; Disagree (D) =2; Strongly Disagree (SD) =1 were used by respondents to respond to each item in each cluster. . The descriptive statistics of Mean Score was used to answer the research questions. A cut-off point of 2.50 was used for decision making. The Boundary for Decision Making with respect to positive items was 1.00-1.49= SD; 1.50-2.49= D; 2.50-3.49= A; 3.50-4.00= SA while the reverse was the case for negative items. Chi Square statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 17 software was used for analysis of the data collected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: In what ways does entrepreneurship skills development reduce unemployment rate among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State?

The analysis on this research question is presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of the Influence of entrepreneurship skills development on reduction of unemployment rate among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State

Item No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	σ	Decision
1	I have used my business to be gainfully employed	300	150	147	1	98	3.34	.86	Agree
2	I have been able to employ people in my business that is being adequately paid.	300	155	88	46	11	3.52	.72	Agree
3	The apprentices learning under me are handsomely empowered after completion to start off their businesses.	300	117	102	41	40	2.55	.63	Agree
4	The branches of my business that I have opened in other parts of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State have been able to employ more people.	300	12	25	13	27	3.69	.82	Agree
5	I have diversified my business and employed more people in those new businesses.	300	212	42	6	4	2.79	.83	Agree
Cluster							2.84	0.78	Agree

Source: Researcher's Field Survey Results (2022).

Table 1 shows the Mean Score and Standard Deviation of respondents' opinions on the influence of entrepreneurship skills development on reduction of unemployment in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. This result reveals that all item 1 Mean score of 3.34. The respondents did not reject the item indicating that entrepreneurship skills development has reduced unemployment. Item 2 has Mean Score of 3.52. This implies that the respondents did not disagree with the insinuation that they have used their entrepreneurship skills development to employ others. Item 3 has Mean Score 2.55. This also implies that respondents agreed with the opinion that apprentices are adequately empowered to become self-employed after completion of apprenticeship. Item 4 has Mean Score of 3.09. This implies that respondents agreed with the opinion that the other branches of their business are a medium for employment opportunities for others. Item 5 has Mean Score of 2.79. This implies also that respondents agreed with the opinion that diversification of their business is another of source of employment for others. The cluster Mean Score 2.84 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50 which implies that entrepreneurship skills development has

influence on social economic of the citizens of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

Hypothesis 1: Entrepreneurship skills development does not significantly reduce unemployment rate among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

The collected and analyzed data relating to the hypothesis stated above is presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis on the Influence of Entrepreneurship Skills Development on Reduction of Unemployment in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Decision	Nature of Influence
Chi-square	69.037	165.254	135.635	177.142	2.983	Ho rejected	Positive i
df	4	4	4	4	4		
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.318	

(P-value=0.00; P=0.00<0.05; Ho rejected; Positive Influence).

Table 2 shows the calculated Chi-square (χ^2) value between 2.983 and 177.142 and a critical value between .000 and .318. Since the calculated value is greater than the Chi-square critical value at 0.005 level of significance, the null is rejected. This result reveals that the null hypothesis which states that entrepreneurship skills development does not significantly reduce unemployment rate among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State was rejected. This implies that there is significant positive influence of entrepreneurship skills development on social economic development of the citizens.

Research Question 2: How do entrepreneurship skills development influence self-reliance of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State?

Data answering the above research question are presented on Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation on the Influence of entrepreneurship skills development on self-reliance of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State

Item No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	σ	Decision	
6	I no longer depend on the government for salaries.	300	199		22	16	8	3.94	.92	Agree
7	I use the income from my business to take care of my financial needs	300	112	94	11	32	3.86	.91	Agree	
8	The income from my business is used to be reinvested into the business.	300	121	144	23	11	3.62	.73	Agree	

9	I no longer run to money lenders to borrow money for my upkeep as well as family needs.	300	242	32	9	4	2.72	.91	Agree
10	I am no longer usually broke since the income from my business is guaranteed.	300	135	228	28	8	2.58	1.0	Agree
Cluster							3.24	0.82	Agree

Source: Researcher's Field Survey Results (2022).

Table 3 shows the Mean Score and Standard Deviation of respondents' opinions on the influence of entrepreneurship skills development on self-reliance among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. The result from the data analysis shows that item 6 has Mean Score of 3.94 and. This implies that the respondents strongly agreed with the opinion that they no longer depend on the government for salaries making them self-reliant. Again, item 7 has Mean Score of 3.86. This implies that respondents agreed with the suggestion that they use the proceeds from their business to cater for personal needs. Furthermore, item 8 has Mean Score of 3.62 indicating that the respondents strongly agreed with the claim that consequent upon their entrepreneurship skills development, they reinvest their income into their business. Item 9 has Mean Score 2.72 indicating that respondents agreed with the opinion that they no longer run to money lenders for their financial difficulties. Item 10 has Mean Score of 2.58. This implies that respondents agreed with the opinion that they are usually not broke owing to a guaranteed income from their businesses. The cluster Mean 3.24 this implies that entrepreneurship skills development has increased self-reliance among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

Hypothesis 2: Entrepreneurship skills development has no significant influence on self-reliance of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

Analysis of generated data in relation to the above hypothesis is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Chi-square Analysis on the Influence of entrepreneurship skills development on self-reliance of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State

	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10	Decision	Nature of Influence
<i>Chi-square</i>	91.017	156.153	111.985	108.234	5.153	<i>Ho rejected</i>	<i>Positive i</i>
<i>df</i>	4	4	4	4	4		
<i>Asymp. Sig</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.646	

(P-value=0.00; P=0.00<0.05; Ho rejected; Positive Influence).

Table 4 shows the calculated Chi-square (χ^2) value between 5.153 and 156.153 and a critical value between .000 and .646. Since the calculated value is greater than the Chi-square critical value at 0.005 level of significance, the null is rejected. This implies that entrepreneurship skills development has a significant positive effect on self-reliance among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this study was that entrepreneurship skills development significantly reduce unemployment rate among citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. This implies that entrepreneurship skills development has the potential of reducing unemployment rate among citizens of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State thereby facilitating their social economic development. This is in consonance with a study by Olorunfunmi and Kayii (2019) who found out that there was a statistically positive relationship between employment rate and social economic development of a nation. This finding can be accepted because the area of study is purely an agrarian zone whose major source of income is the production and marketing of agricultural products. Since the entrepreneurship skills development has the potential of reducing unemployment rate, it can snowball into raising the standard of living as well as improving the social economic development of the region.

The second finding was that entrepreneurship skills development has significant influence on self-reliance of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State. The implication of this finding is that, entrepreneurship skills development positively influenced self-reliance in the area of study. The result of this study agree with a study by Adekunle and David, (2014) who found out that a people with developed skills in entrepreneurship are self reliant and no longer depend on the government or donor agents for survival. This result is possible in the area of study because most citizens in the area depend largely on salaries which are often delayed, arbitrary deducted or not paid at all. With the development of entrepreneurship skills, such people can be self-reliant leading to enhanced social economic development.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it has been established that entrepreneurship skills development has positive influence on social and economic development of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The study therefore concludes that the variables of entrepreneurship skills development (such as development of personal skills, technical skills, management skills, leadership skills, creativity skills, communications skills among others) have significant influence on the social economic development of citizens in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. The researchers are of the view that other factors such as a skyrocketing unemployment rate, over dependence on government's handouts, low self-employment and job creation opportunities have the potentials of affecting the social economic development of a people which justifies the conduct of this research.

Recommendations

From the findings of this research, the researchers therefore recommend that:

1. The government should encourage entrepreneurship skills development among citizens of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State so as to reduce the rate of unemployment rampant in the area.

2. The government and public-spirited organizations should step up efforts in facilitating entrepreneurship skills development among the citizens of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area of Benue State so as to increase their self-reliance.

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