



EFFECT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the effect of government policy on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship and small business development are the heart of many countries' economy, and countries that give entrepreneurship special attention stand better chances of improved economy and industrialization. World over, it is well known that government policies often affect entrepreneurial activities directly and indirectly. To address entrepreneurship development problems, government has introduced programs

Introduction

Man, no matter how talented and endowed he is, would always need a helping hand. Similarly, entrepreneurs cannot make it alone (Desy, 2018). They need support from both internal and external sources: from family members, institutions, and governments. Otherwise, their dreams may never materialize. And their lofty ideas may never come to fusion unless certain measures are put in place. Government entrepreneurship development programmes have been remarkably resurgent over the past decades in Nigeria that achieved substantial poverty reduction. Nigeria being gifted with large reserves of natural resources is expected to build a thriving and vibrant economy, to reduce poverty level, and provide health, education and infrastructure services to meet with the demands of the teeming population and other African countries and the entire world at large (Onwuka, Ugwu, and Kalu, 2014). Apart from lack of credit facilities, recent study conducted by Eriobunah and Nosakhare (2013) found that entrepreneurship development in Nigeria is also affected by the followings; lack of basic amenities or infrastructural facilities; lack of power supply; inconsistencies in government policies; unfriendly fiscal policies or excess taxes and duties; high cost of production as a result of inadequate infrastructure; insecurity of people and property; competition with foreign products or restricted access to market and absence of sustainable institutional mechanism.



such as; World Bank SMEs 1 and 2 Loan Scheme, National Economic Reconstruction Fund (NERFUND), Peoples and Community Bank, Nigerian Bank of Commerce and Industry (NBCI), Export Processing Zone (EPZ), National Poverty Eradication, Advisory Agencies, few to mention about. Findings reveal that, these policy measures have played insignificant role in entrepreneurship development instead they work only on white papers and used by some corrupt government officials to embezzle national treasury. The study discovered that meeting the requirements for accessing government entrepreneurship programmes was the most serious difficulty encountered by entrepreneurs in benefiting from government programmes; and that government entrepreneurial policies have been ineffective due mainly to lack of continuity by successive governments. The study found that government policies at present do not improve economic growth. The study concluded that achievement of the desired economic growth requires review of credit requirements to less stringent terms, harmonization of government entrepreneurial policies with other fiscal and monetary policies, continuity of government policies by successive government, de-emphasis on political affiliation as condition for accessing government programmes and improved sensitization of the public on various government policies/programmes and entrepreneurial development.

Keywords: Government policies, economic growth, small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurship development.

Based on the above, the government has from time to time introduced several entrepreneurship development and empowerment schemes to sensitize, inform and prepare lots of Nigerians on how to go about fixing these challenges in a bid to increase the gross domestic products (GPD) by reducing the heightened unemployment rates. In an attempt to redress the deepened unemployment situation in Nigeria, especially in Rivers State; this research work intends to ascertain whether adopting and institutionalizing government entrepreneurship programmes would put the small and medium scale enterprises on high speed of success. Governments can create subsidies, taxing the public and giving the money to an industry, or tariffs, adding taxes to foreign products to lift prices and make domestic products more appealing. Higher taxes, fees, and greater regulations can stymie businesses or entire industries (Hall, 2022).

Government Policies in the United Kingdom helped Cadbury in the mid-1850s when the taxes on imported cocoa beans were reduced (Fitzgerald, 2005; Cadbury World, 2014). This reduced the production costs, and the previously expensive chocolate products became affordable for the wider population. Also, to further discourage the use of adulterated foods and beverages at that time, the Parliament heralded Cadbury's unadulterated cocoa essence. This was another breakthrough for Cadbury, and led to the passing of the Adulteration of Foods Acts in 1872 and



1875 (Fitzgerald, 2005). As a result, Cadbury received a remarkable amount of free publicity, sales increased dramatically, and Cadbury broke the French producers' monopoly in the British market. Entrepreneurship Development in Nigeria – The entrepreneur plays a vital role in the process of economic growth and development. Iwu Eze (1986) in Olorunshola, (2013) in a paper presented in on entrepreneurship development in Nigeria said that an entrepreneur is a contractor, an organizer of an enterprise for the public, a resourceful person with a dream. Entrepreneurs are bold men and women who have initiative and the ability to lead, manage and take the consequences. They are men of action, risk takers, missionary, creative and highly respected of their ability to effectively and efficiently concubine the functions of management to achieve the goals. He also noted that during the colonial period, only few of Nigerians could boast of personal or family capital to start off any meaningful business and hence the next place of call for business and financial was bank. Since the mid-1980s there has been an increased commitment of government to entrepreneurship development especially after the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) in 1986. Added to this are the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) and, the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Association of Nigeria (SMEDAN) (Ogundele and Abiola, 2006). The Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria programme is a collaboration of the Federal Ministries of Finance, Communication Technology and Youth Development to organize an annual Business Plan Competition (BPC) for aspiring young entrepreneurs in Nigeria (Tende, 2014). Tende (2014) noted that the Nigerian government, at various levels, has adopted policies aimed at enhancing the performance of some sectors in other to reduce unemployment. As a result, different administrations; often in collaboration with the private sector, have embarked on youth employment programmes, leading to the establishment of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN), The Poverty Alleviation Programme, the Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P), and the Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN), Better Life Programme, Peoples' Bank, National Agency for Poverty Eradication, (NAPEP), the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme, The Graduate Job Creation Loan Guarantee Scheme, and Agricultural Sector Employment Program. Despite these policies and programmes, youth unemployment/empowerment remains a major challenge to the developmental process of the Nigeria economy (Idam, 2014; Tende, 2014). As a means of arousing entrepreneurial interest in students of higher institutions, the Federal government of Nigeria introduced entrepreneurship studies into the Nigerian educational system as a compulsory course in the early 2000's (Adeoye, 2015).

The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development was established with the goal of making graduates self-employed, create employment opportunities for others and create wealth particularly in Sciences, Engineering and Technology (Thaddeus, 2012). In addition, the National Directorate of Employment and National Open Apprenticeship Scheme were established to promote vocational



skill development in youth. To complement government efforts at promoting entrepreneurship growth through training and education, some financial institutions have embarked on training and sensitization for SMEs. Example of this is the FirstBank SME forum where business development initiatives are discussed.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor has found that a significant relationship exists between entrepreneurial development and economic growth. Naude (2013) argued that countries that recorded considerable reduction in poverty over the past thirty years have done so with increased level of entrepreneurial activities. Naude (2013) further noted that the contribution of entrepreneurship to economic growth and employment is not limited to underdeveloped countries alone but also developing and developed ones. Obamuyi's (2017) study found, using multivariate linear modelling, that very young entrepreneurs have less financing expectations and higher growth expectations than young adult and concluded that providing more financing opportunities to very young entrepreneurs can induce bigger expansion and growth of jobs. Accessing the effect of government entrepreneurial policies and initiatives on economic growth in Nigeria, authors have found that government policies have not substantially affected economic growth. Tende, (2014) studied selected EDP-NDE beneficiaries and found that government credit policies and programs do not have substantial influence on entrepreneurial activities. Kpelai's (2013) study revealed a weak positive link between government policies and entrepreneurial activities of women in Benue State noting that government policies have not helped in reducing the operational challenges they face. Chukwuemeka (2011) found that the slow pace of entrepreneurial development in Nigeria is caused by poorly formulated and implemented government fiscal policies.

Nkechi, Ikechukwu and Okechukwu (2012) noted that these documents whereby policy measures may be implemented and progress observed may include: A review of the Youwin to encourage entrepreneurship as a poverty reduction strategy to favor the youths. National Directorate of Employment was established in November 22, 1986 and its objective is to promptly and effectively fight unemployment by designing and implementing innovative programmes, which are directed towards the provision of training opportunities through the guidance and management support services to graduate farmers and small-scale entrepreneur. Entrepreneurial activities therefore increase the productive ability of the national economy (economic growth) and attainment of individual entrepreneur's personal wealth and self-realization goals through enhancement of greater productivity and enlargement of industries and markets. The developments at the macro level, through feedback apparatus, induce better performance at the individual level (Tomola, and Adegboyega, 2018).

Lack of continuity of programmes with change of government is the most cited factor hindering the effectiveness of government policies on entrepreneurship (Tomola, and Adegboyega, 2018). Successive governments do not continue with policies and programmes initiated by their



predecessors and this prevents the policies from having desired effects. Political considerations in selecting the beneficiaries of government programmes are another reason for their ineffectiveness. Most government programmes are politicized leading to selection of wrong beneficiaries to the detriment of the policies' effectiveness and the people who actually need them. There is also the problem of conflicting policies with some policies crowding out the effect of others. For instance, effort to boost local production of rice has been affected by continued importation until recently. Infrastructural deficiencies and poor sensitization follow in that order of factors hindering effectiveness of government policies. For instance, the gains entrepreneurs would have made from subsidized inputs and subsidized interest loans have been off-set by increased operational cost due to unavailability of power, poor roads, poor storage and preservation system. Attitude of beneficiaries towards government programmes (particularly credit facilities which are often seen as share of national cake), poor monitoring of government programmes, corruption on the part of officers in charge of government programmes are other factors mentioned as hindering the effectiveness of government policies (Tomola, and Adegboyega, 2018).

The reasoning of government in designing these programmes and policies is clear: government identifies the catalytic role SMEs and entrepreneurs play in the growth process and hence intends to encourage access to funds and create enabling environment to ensure their growth. Considering these numerous policies and programmes of government at different times and the immense entrepreneurial talents in Nigeria, (the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, (2012) identified Nigeria as one of the most entrepreneurial countries globally with 35% of Nigerians population found to engage in at least one entrepreneurial activity. However, with the recession experienced Nigerian economy from the second quarter of 2016, there is a need to ascertain the effect of the various government policies in the economic growth process in Nigeria. Most of the existing literatures reviewed did not consider the effect of government entrepreneurial policies on economic growth (Mohammed & Obeleagu-Nzelibe, 2014; Afolabi 2013; Oni & Daniya 2012; Osotimehin, Jegede, Akinlabi & Olajide 2012; and Ogujiuba et al. 2004, among others) except for Kpelai (2013) which concentrated on women entrepreneurs in Benue State. Most of the Nigerian entrepreneurs are pushing through and trying to survive despite the poorly implemented policies in the country (Mary, Enyinna, & Ukpai, 2015). At the renowned phase, however, none of the policy factors were significant. This is understandable because at this phase, the entrepreneurs are well grounded and most of their businesses are self-sustaining.

According to research by the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute (Global Entrepreneurship Development Index, 2014), USA is a world leader in supporting its entrepreneurs with respect to business formation, expansion and growth. They also finance new businesses through venture capital. This type of financial capital is provided to early-stage, high potential and risk start-up companies. Countries like Canada and Australia ranked second and third, respectively.



These countries' economies rank very high because they understand the impact of entrepreneurship on the growth of their economy, and make deliberate efforts to promote entrepreneurship.

However, some studies have shown some entrepreneurs go beyond the established phase. Some entrepreneurs remain in business for decades and continue to make significant impact. Some entrepreneurs mentor either a family member or an individual and pass on their businesses to their offspring or other entrepreneurs (Fattoum & Fayolle, 2009; Bird, Welsch, Astrachan, & Pistrui, 2004; Ward, 2004; Morris et al, 1997). Some businesses grow beyond borders. Some entrepreneurs build empires, and leave lasting legacies for generations to come (Arthur & Hisrich, 2011; Zolin, 2012; Africa, 2006). Such entrepreneurs are said to have become renowned. In Nigeria, structures and programmes such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN), N-Power programme, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and the You-win programme were designed to promote entrepreneurial activities by facilitating access to funds and other resources needed for SMEs (Oliyide, 2012; Today.ng, 2018). All these policies and much more are targeted towards promoting entrepreneurship. But the question that comes to mind is "Do all these government policies and programs have equal effects on all entrepreneurship phases?"

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this paper therefore is to examine the effect of Government policy on Entrepreneurial Development in Nigeria.

Research Question

To what extent does government policies affect entrepreneurial development in Nigeria?

Null Hypothesis

Government policies has no effect on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

Methodology

The cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study as the study deals with the collection of necessary data from respondents at different locations, and also, the respondents were independent of the researcher, and this design is suitable when a study is concerned with the test of relationship between two or more variables (Kothari, 2008). Data was obtained both from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was generated by the researcher and mostly through the questionnaire (which was designed to obtain answers from the respondents on the concepts of Government policies/programmes and entrepreneurship development, while the secondary was the data which have already been gathered, processed, and reviewed by several other scholars; hence an extensive literature review (journal articles, columns in newspapers and



other online materials). The data analysis technique that was used is the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences version 20. The Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient was chosen because the study is concerned with analyzing the relationship between Government policies/programmes and entrepreneurship development. Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient is given as:

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

Where: $\sum d^2$ = sum of the squared differences in the ranking of the subject on the two variables.

N = is number of subjects being ranked.

Results

H01: There is no significant relationship existing between Government policies and Entrepreneurial development

			Government policies	Entrepreneurial development
Spearman's Rank	Government policies	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.541
		Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	Entrepreneurial development	Correlation Coefficient	.541	1.000
		Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
		N	198	198

++ Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Hypothesis shows a significant relationship existing between Government policies and Entrepreneurial development with a coefficient of 0.541 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than alpha of 0.05. We would therefore, reject the null hypothesis.

Discussions

This research work explored the bond between government policies on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria.

The hypothesis explored the bond between government policies on entrepreneurial development in Nigeria. It was found that, significant effects exist between government policies on entrepreneurial development, therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. In a similar study, Iwayemi (2013) submitted that, the government entrepreneurship development programmes help it achieve competitive advantage and value creation, through enhance market share achieve through technological advancement noting that past studies have shown that small and medium scale enterprises success Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria programme starting to



disburse to its 1,500 beneficiaries who are expected to create on average nine jobs each, and government continued in 2015 with the implementation that identified another 1,500 young entrepreneurs to support (Iwayemi, 2013).

Ogundele and Abiola (2006) noted that in the past forty years or so, the government had established various support institutions specially structured to provide succor and to assist small and medium scale enterprises to contend with some of the hurdles along their growth path. Some of these specialized institutions include the Nigerian Industrial Development Bank, the Nigerian Bank for Commerce and Industry, the National Economic Reconstruction Fund, the Nigerian Export-Import Bank, the National Directorate of Employment, Industrial Development Coordinating Centre, Peoples Bank, Community Banks, Construction Bank, Family Economic Advancement Programme, State Ministries of Industry SME schemes, the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Development Bank, Bank of industry and so on. They therefore concluded that, increasing the level of government entrepreneurship development programmes among the participants of the firm will lead a corresponding increase in the sustainability and success of the firm.

Conclusion

The general inference drawn from this study is that policy factors that enhance entrepreneurial activities differ across entrepreneurship phases. The findings confirm that government policies do not have equal effect on all the entrepreneurship phases. Some policies are more favorable in some phases than others. Hence, entrepreneurs, relevant stakeholders and policy makers need to take cognizance of the inherent disparities in the effects of policies implemented on entrepreneurial activities from time to time. This further connotes, therefore, that policy makers seeking to effectively promote entrepreneurship could target specific phases at specific times in order to boost the entrepreneurial activities in such phases.

The study concluded that achievement of desired growth requires that government should encourage stringent credit requirements, harmonize entrepreneurial policies with other fiscal and monetary policies, ensure continuity of policies by successive government, de-emphasize political affiliation as condition for accessing government programmes and improve sensitization of the public on various government entrepreneurial policies and programmes.

Recommendation

Government should partner with financial institution in the country in order to reduce loan default risk as well make available other sources of assistance to entrepreneurs. Every new government comes up with new policy measures without proper implementation. Due to high corruption in government, objectives of entrepreneurship program have not been fully utilized instead top government officials used it as an avenue to loot the nation's treasury in the name of jumbo



elephant projects mostly done on white papers. Study recommends that successive government should implement entrepreneurship programs. In addition, government should build regular training, seminars; research and development centers such as Small and Medium Enterprises Developing Agency to enhanced entrepreneur's knowledge and development to boost maximum productivity. Again, government should borrow a leaf from Giant Asian countries to implement death sentence on corruption to serve as a deterrent for others to learn. Apart from government effort in curbing corruption, individuals should also join hand in the fight against this virus.

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