

Self Esteem and Achievement Striving on Entrepreneurial Aspiration among the Nigerian Youths: Implications for Entrepreneurship Education

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Abstract. The resurgence of entrepreneurship in the late twenty century has made it the focus of the global economic community. In fact, the developing nations are tending towards entrepreneurship economy. The potency of entrepreneurship is quite heavy while its resultant effects cannot be ignored. The contribution of this economic driver towards national development is significant and its incremental impact on nations' GDP cannot be undermined. Fostering entrepreneurship is vital in every part of the world. Supporting youth entrepreneurial aspiration in developing countries with education, motivation, mentorship and encouragement is a critical pathway to stimulate the creation of sustainable livelihoods. Thus, identifying and labeling the psycho-social predictors of entrepreneurial aspiration is germane. Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were analysed with multiple regression statistical method at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, this study investigates entrepreneurial aspiration among the Nigerian youths focusing on the relative and composite contributions of self esteem and achievement striving. Adopted and modified and revalidated instruments were administered on the four hundred (400) respondents sampled to participate in the study. The findings revealed that self esteem and achievement striving has both relative and composite contributions towards entrepreneurial aspiration of the respondents. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommend strategies such as mentoring of students by the established entrepreneurs in the industries; review of

entrepreneurship education curriculum among others. These are expected to enhance the sustenance of entrepreneurial aspiration among the youths, using self esteem and achievement striving as predictors.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Aspiration, Self-Esteem, Achievement Striving, Youth.

1. Introduction

Early references to the entrepreneurs in the 14th century spoke about tax contractors, individuals who paid a fixed sum of money to a government for the license to collect taxes in their region. In the 19th century, entrepreneurs were the “captains of industry”, the risk takers, the decision makers, and the individual who aspires to be wealthy and who gathered and managed resources to create new enterprises. Notable early French, British and Austrian economists wrote enthusiastically about entrepreneurs as the “change agents” of progressive economies (Holt, 1992). The concept of entrepreneurship has been around for a very long time, but its resurgent popularity implies a “sudden discovery”, as if we had’ stumbled onto a new direction of national and global economy (Holt, 1992).

It is widely assumed that unemployment (and its social vices), job dissatisfaction and profitability among others are largely responsible for the drive towards entrepreneurship. Brockhaus (1992) opines that a major factor pushing people towards self-employment is job dissatisfaction which he tagged “negative displacement”. Audretsch and Thurik (1998) argue that the

positive effect of unemployment as it shows a replacement ratio and propensity of unemployed persons to become self-employed. The foregoing is known to be push factors. On the contrary, Acemoglu (1995) cited in Wennerkers, Noorderhaven, Hofstede and Thurik (2000) argues that reward structure of entrepreneurship can be pecuniary (monetary profit) and non-pecuniary (respect-self esteem and achievement striving). The non-pecuniary reward structure of entrepreneurship is described as the pull factors which is the focus of the study.

The concept of self-esteem originated from a psychosocial perspective. The concept first arose in psychology and can be traced back to the writing of William James in the late 19th century. James was the first Social Scientist to develop a clear professional definition of the self (Turner, 1998). In his typology of self, James' description of the social self recognized that people's feelings about themselves arise from interaction with others; he recognized that humans have the capacity to view themselves as objects and to develop self-feeling and attitudes towards themselves (Turner, 1998). Self esteem has been described as the judgments that we make about our own worth and the feeling associated with the judgments. It has been ranked as among the most important aspects of self- development since evaluation of our own competencies affect emotional experiences, future behaviour and long term psychological adjustment (Nagar, Sharma & Chopra, 2008). Your self esteem depends on many questions such as: Is your job worthwhile? Do others respect what you do? Do you believe you are successful? How do you see yourself? What do you think of your social status? and so on. Thus, if entrepreneurship is towards self-employment, self-esteem is more ubiquitous to entrepreneurial aspiration.

Holly (1987) espoused that self esteem is influenced by achievement-related attributions, culture, child rearing practices amongst other factors. Adolescence (youth), being the stage of turmoil, is one of the period in life of individuals, when self esteem increases and is highly influenced by the environment. It is really a person's perception of life experiences and

relationships that have a greater impact on one's self esteem (Mecca, Smelser & Vasconcellos, 1989)

Achievement striving is the extent to which individuals take their work seriously, active, and work hard (Bluen, Barling & Burns, 1990). Studies have shown that it is associated with positive organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction (Bluen, Barling & Burns; 1990), escalating commitment to a course of action for individuals who perceive a high responsibility (Schaubroeck & Williams, 1993) and job performance (Helmreich, Spence, & Pred, 1998; Northam, 1994). Wright (1988) opines that achievement striving is traditionally associated with career success. Individuals high in achievement striving is likely to be hard working, involved in their jobs and ambitious (Lee & Gillen, 1989). These are all characteristics that are particularly suited for entrepreneurship; and research reports showed consistently that achievement striving is associated with sales performance (Bluen et al., 1990). This is the core of self-employment (Entrepreneurship) business, both in product or service dimension.

Various researches have tried to unknot the variables responsible for entrepreneurial aspiration; but most of these searched into the level of awareness of entrepreneurship as learning experience, while the study subjects were students and lecturers within the school system (Gurol & Atsan, 2006; Kiadese, 2006; Zaidatol, 2009). Also, other researches have looked into the cultural factors affecting entrepreneurial attitude and self-employment across national frontiers but there are questions of relative homogeneity and representativeness of the sample (Lorraine & Thurik, 2003; Tan, 2002).

Young people make up a large share of the Nigerian population. The review of global and regional trends highlights that youths are largely unemployed or mostly employed in informal sector. Fostering youth entrepreneurial aspiration is a useful way to promote self employment and engender a sustainable development in developing nations. Thus, the need to support the youths with access to

infrastructure, take-off grants, and other economic input, might not be enough for taking a step towards entrepreneurship. Other psychosocial variables may serve as accompanying influences on entrepreneurial aspiration.

Hence, this study investigates whether self-esteem and achievement striving would determine entrepreneurial aspiration of youths in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The following null hypotheses were specifically tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H₀₁: Self-esteem will not significantly determine entrepreneurial aspiration of youths
 H₀₂: Achievement striving will not significantly determine entrepreneurial aspiration youths
 H₀₃: Self-esteem and achievement striving will not significantly determine entrepreneurial Aspiration of youths.

2. Method

2.1 Design

This study adopts the descriptive research design. The population comprises all the Nigerian youths living and working in Lagos State, both at the formal and informal sectors of the economy. This study used proportional stratified sampling technique. Twenty (20) Local Government Areas in Lagos State were stratified into formal and informal sectors. Two Hundred (200) respondents are randomly selected from each sector; meaning Twenty (20) respondents were selected from each Local Government Area. In all, four hundred (400) respondents were sampled to participate in the study.

3. Results

The results are as presented in Tables 1-3

Hypothesis 1: Self-esteem will not significantly determine entrepreneurial aspiration of youths

2.2 Instrumentation

The instrument was developed based on the modification of previous instruments developed by several authors such as Rosenberg (1965) - Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), **Goldberg, Johnson, Eber, Hogan, Ashton, Cloninger, and Gough (2006)** - Achievement Striving Scale (ASS) and Kiadese, (2006) - Entrepreneurial Aspiration Scale (EAS). The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Achievement Striving Scale were administered on a segment of the sample using test-retest method and correlation co-efficients of 0.76 and 0.78 were derived respectively. The entrepreneurial aspiration scale was validated by experts in the field of entrepreneurship education and was subjected to a test-retest method of reliability with a resultant correlation coefficient of 0.87. The measurement of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was based on the 6 points Likert scale with 1 demonstrating “strongly disagree” to 6 demonstrating “strongly agree”. Achievement Striving Scale and Entrepreneurial Aspiration Scales were based on the 4 point Likert scales with 1 demonstrating “strong disagree” to 4 demonstrating “strongly agree”.

2.3 Procedure

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researchers with the aid of a working team of trained research assistants. All questionnaires were collected immediately. It took one month to administer the scales. Data resulting from the administration of the instruments were analyzed using Multiple Regression Analysis at .05 significant level.

Table 1: Multiple Regression of the influence of Self-Esteem on Entrepreneurial Aspiration of Youths

Model	Analysis of Variance							
R	.177		Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Remark
R Square	.031	Regression	164.101	1	164.101	12.807	.000	Significant
Adjusted R Square	.029	Residual	5099.899	398	12.814			
Std Error of the Estimate	3.57964	Total	5264.000	399				

Table 1 shows that self-esteem in determining entrepreneurial aspiration yielded a multiple regression coefficient (R) of .177 with F-ratio (12.807) significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that 3.1% of the variation in entrepreneurial aspiration was accounted for by self esteem. Hence, self-esteem determines entrepreneurial aspiration of the youths. Thus, hypothesis one is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Achievement striving will not significantly determine entrepreneurial aspiration of youths

Table 2: Multiple Regression of the influence of Achievement striving on Entrepreneurial Aspiration of youths

Model	Analysis of Variance							
R	.133		Sum of Square	df	Mean square	F	Sig	Remark
R Square	.018	Regression	93.735	1	93.735	7.216	.008	Significant
Adjusted R Square	.015	Residual	5170.265	398	12.991			
Std Error of the Estimate	3.60425	Total	5264.000	399				

Table 2 reveals that achievement striving in determining entrepreneurial aspiration yielded a multiple regression co-efficient (R) of .133 with F-ratio (7.216) significant at 0.05 level. This indicates that 1.8% of the variation in entrepreneurial aspiration was accounted for by achievement striving. Hence, achievement striving determines entrepreneurial aspiration of the youths. Thus, the hypothesis two is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Self-esteem and achievement striving will not significantly determine entrepreneurial aspiration of youths

Table 3: Multiple Regression of the Determination of Self-Esteem and Achievement Striving on Entrepreneurial Aspiration

Model	Analysis of Variance							
R	.212		Sum of Square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig	Remark
R Square	.045	Regression	237.058	1	118.529	9.361	.000	Significant
Adjusted R Square	.040	Residual	5026.942	397	12.662			
Std Error of the Estimate	3.55842	Total	5264.000	399				

Table 3 shows that self-esteem and achievement striving in determining Entrepreneurial aspiration yielded a multiple regression co-efficient (R) of .212 with F-ratio (9.361) significant at 0.05 level. This

indicates that 4.0% of the variation in entrepreneurial aspiration was accounted for by composite contribution of self esteem and achievement striving. Hence, self esteem and achievement striving can determine entrepreneurial aspiration of the youths. Thus, the hypothesis three is rejected.

4. Discussion of Findings

The empirical evidence in Table 1 revealed that self esteem has significant effect on entrepreneurial aspiration of the Nigerian youths. This agrees with the assertion of Greenberg (1992) cited in Flynn (2003) that self-esteem is an individual characteristics that all humans possess and continually striving to improve upon. The implication is that it is a universal human need that cut across cultural and demographic landscapes. Although, it may vary in intensity (i.e, low or high), but a significant level of self esteem will definitely leads to entrepreneurial aspiration. Flynn (2003) reports that majority of researchers believe that self-esteem lies on a linear vector: individuals who espoused high self-esteem are considered to be functioning smoothly in society and vice versa. Self-esteem is a product of social environment within which the youths function. Holly (1987) opined that, adolescence (youth), being the stage of turmoil, is one of the period in life of individuals, when self-esteem increases and is highly influenced by the environment. Little wonder that Flynn (2003) asserts that it is the perceived and experienced reality that affects the individual self-esteem. If we are to understand people's reaction, we must understand the contexts in which they live, for it is the perceived and experienced worlds that shape their feelings towards themselves and towards life. Generally, Nigerian youths are quite adventuresome, gregarious and daring; but the productive channeling of these towards entrepreneurship should be encouraged.

The discovery from the analysis of hypothesis two, in which achievement striving accounted for 1.8 percent of the variation in entrepreneurial aspiration of the Nigerian youths is quite significant. In corroboration with this, Barling, Rellway and Cheung (1996) opined that individuals high in achievement striving is likely to be hardworking, involved in their jobs and ambitious. Bluen, Barling and Bums (1990) asserts that achievement striving is associated

consistently with positive organizational outcomes such as escalating commitment to a course of action for individuals who perceived a high responsibility. Hence, the prevalence of youth unemployment has opened the consciousness of the respondents to strive to assume responsibility towards self employment and aspiration (ambition) to own their businesses. Also, Lee and Gillen (1989) find that achievement striving amongst others is a characteristic that is suited for sales success and performance which is the focal part of entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, Jamal (1985), reported that achievement striving is inversely associated with qualitative performance in a sample of white-collar workers. Few studies have investigated achievement striving and sales performance but surprisingly revealed characteristics that are peculiar to entrepreneurs which include energetic, hardworking, competitive, high value for money, status and high standard of living (Lee & Gillen, 1989, Matteson, Ivancevich & Smith, 1984). With the depth of poverty as a result of graduate unemployment in Nigeria, the Nigerian government introduced the idea entrepreneurship education as a compulsory component of higher education curriculum that a student must pass before graduation (CAEL Report, 2015). Also, the public enlightenment campaign on entrepreneurship by various non-governmental agencies seems to have accounted for the realization of the snares of the white-collar jobs that clogs self fulfillment, wealth creation and national development. Little wonder, some Nigerian youths are taking the bull-by-the-horn by engaging in small scale enterprise at least for survival; but many are yet to tread the direction. They are still conservative and stereotyped.

From Table 3, it can be seen that self esteem has a composite contribution with achievement striving in determining the entrepreneurial aspiration of the Nigerian youths. The level of significance of these constructs might be the

influence of the environment within which the respondents operate. This is in agreement with Glass (1977) cited in Barling Relloway & Cheng (1996) that achievement striving is a behaviour resulted from individual attempt to control his environment; which is also the platform upon which self esteem derived its potency. Thus, self-esteem and achievement striving are joint predictors of entrepreneurial aspiration of the Nigerian youths who are mostly influenced by their environment. In addition, self esteem and achievement striving have been found as entrepreneurial motivation variables which have predictive relationship towards self employment. This is supported by Lindsay (2005), that entrepreneurial attitude is measured in terms of achievement striving, innovation, personal control, self esteem and opportunity for recognition. Cassar (2007), Van Gelden and Jasen (2006) opined that self esteem is a pull motivating factor towards entrepreneurship. They stressed that mostly pull entrepreneurship motives include; autonomy, income and wealth, recognition, self esteem and status. Achievement striving is seen as a push factor. This is the opinion of Collins, Hanges and Locke (2004) in their investigation of depth-psychological motives of entrepreneurs. They identified need for achievement as one of the basis for their venture.

Self-esteem and achievement striving are in the realm of human personality which plays significant role in human behaviour. Greenberge and Sexton (1985) cited in Akpomi (2009) asserts that the main premise of this personality perspective is the notion that certain individuals have a unique set of inherent, stable and enduring personality characteristics that predispose them to entrepreneurial activity. Of significance, is the perception that these traits are permanent and remain consistent across time and context. Gartner (1985) argues that personality characteristics of the entrepreneurs are view as ancillary to behaviour. He opined that research should concentrate on what entrepreneurs do rather than who they are. Controvertibly, it is the knowledge of what entrepreneurs are that projects what they do. Thus, in as much we recognize the functional

perspective to entrepreneurship; the behavioural dimension is also germane.

Although, a process-based perspective of entrepreneurship is laudable given the fundamental problems associated with the personality perspective, a learning perspective offers a new capacious avenues for studying entrepreneurship can be developed (Akpomi, 2009). As Shaver and Scott (1991) argue that, the deep dissatisfaction with the attempt to identify psychological characteristics of entrepreneurs has resulted in a tendency to concentrate “on almost anything except the individual”. They go as catalysts for entrepreneurial activity and represent the essence of entrepreneurship. Hessels, Golderen and Thurik (2008) opined that one way to explain entrepreneurship aspiration level is by means of motives. Policy goals usually do not correspond with the motives of enterprising individuals. Hardly anybody starts a business in order to achieve innovation, job creation or economic growth at the national level. Instead, people desire personal profits, project their need for autonomy, achievement and self-esteem amongst others; or they are just forced into entrepreneurship because they have no other options (Locke & Baum, 2007).

5. Conclusion

The findings from the study revealed that there were relative and composite contribution of self-esteem and achievement striving on entrepreneurial aspiration of youths in Lagos State. The finding reveled that self-esteem significantly determines entrepreneurial aspiration of the youths. Also, it was showed that achievement striving significantly determines entrepreneurial aspiration of the youths; and the combination of self-esteem and achievement striving significantly determine entrepreneurial aspiration of the youths.

6. Recommendations

Having realized that self-esteem and achievement striving are human need and universal phenomena that cut across demographic boundaries; it is expedient that the

approach to the development of entrepreneurial aspiration should embrace experiential teaching method in the delivery of entrepreneurship courses. Task-oriented and mentoring of the youths and the students alike should be encouraged. Successful entrepreneurs should be saddled with the responsibilities of mentoring the upcoming generation in order to enhance their self-esteem and cultivate I-can-do spirit. The future of our youths must not be left to chance or trial and error.

The curriculum should be reviewed to accommodate entrepreneurship learning experience of mastery and support by involving the youths within the school system to engage in hands-on learning activities, business plan development and running simulated or real small business. This tends to influence their self-esteem and need for achievements which are predictors of entrepreneurial aspiration.

Parents and guardians should be encouraged and motivated to provide their children with large amount of support in order to raise their self-esteem and lessen the likelihood of being preys to the antisocial behaviours such as gangsterism, robbery, prostitution, kidnapping, cyber crimes all of which are associated with low self-esteem towards productive entrepreneurial venture.

Public campaign towards entrepreneurship should be intensified by the governments at all levels. Incentives and public recognition and respect should be accorded to young ones involved in entrepreneurial activities.

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