

Effect of Green Entrepreneurship on Sustainability of Selected Communities in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: A Conceptual Review

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Abstract

The study examined green entrepreneurship and sustainability of selected communities in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to examine the effect of business initiative on sustainability of selected communities in Akwa Ibom State; determine the effect of agro-tourism on sustainability of selected communities in Akwa Ibom State; investigate the effect of carbon economy on sustainability of selected communities in Akwa Ibom State. Desk survey method was employed in this study. The study revealed that inadequate funding, corruption and political influence have affected sustainability of selected communities in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the review, the study recommended that green business initiative such as conversion of green waste to wealth be sustained while review be carried out periodically by involving all critical stakeholders. Agro-tourism be institutionalized by government through its relevance agencies such as ministry of Agriculture, commerce and Industry. Green entrepreneurship practitioners should reinvigorate techniques of carbon economy to meet sustainable consumption.

Keywords: green entrepreneurship, business initiative, agro-tourism, carbon economy, sustainability

1. Introduction

Green Entrepreneurship has become a central issue in government around the world, perceivably, due to the fact that it is a key to achieving sustainable economic development through entrepreneurial efforts. Entrepreneurship can be described as the process of creating something new with value, devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychic and social risks and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary, personal satisfaction, and independence. Entrepreneurship is a process that starts with someone, the entrepreneur, recognizing an opportunity to create a new thing which has value, or carry on with an existing method or technology, but in an innovative way so as to transform something to reality. Exploitation of such an opportunity or business idea to create a new thing by the entrepreneur, will certainly involve a preliminary investigative tool like feasibility analysis, to carefully evaluate industry and market analysis, product or service analysis, and financial feasibility analysis of the business idea, so as to know beforehand, whether the business idea is viable and worth pursuing. If the business idea is not viable, the entrepreneur is at liberty to drop or forget about it. But, if it is viable and promising, the entrepreneur will then build a planning tool called business plan to transform the business idea to reality. Thus, the business plan builds on the foundation already laid by the feasibility study, and helps the entrepreneur on how to acquire the necessary financing to launch and operate his business (Desai, 2023).

Entrepreneurship is a powerful force that drives creativity, innovation, productivity, job creation and economic

growth. It is a process that gives individuals opportunities to exploit their potential, create jobs for themselves and others, so as to take charge of their own destinies. In Nigeria, development of entrepreneurial activities and innovation, have manifested in virtually all aspects of the economy via agriculture and agriculture value chain, electronics, information and communication technology (ICT), handicraft making (weaving, embroidery, pottery, dying, etc.), food vending and restaurants, micro finance, and micro businesses. These entrepreneurial efforts have contributed to the attainment of some of the nation's economic development objectives, such as job creation for the growing rural and urban labor force, income redistribution, utilization of local raw materials and technology, increase in revenue base of government (through taxes, tariffs and duties), as well as production of intermediate goods to strengthen inter and intra industrial linkages (Fasua, 2016).

The development of a country is intricately connected to the number and quality of entrepreneurs in that country. In other words, the higher the number and quality of entrepreneurs in a country, the higher the level of economic development and growth. As a result, countries with a high level of entrepreneurial activities tend to be better off economically. The entrepreneur, therefore, is as important agent of innovation, creativity, and sustainable development of Nigeria. Sustainable economic development in this context, implies that the people of Cross River should manage their resources creatively, innovatively, and prudently such that they will not be exhausted but will remain for future generations (Nsowah, 2024).

Many successive governments in Nigeria have embarked on one entrepreneurship program or the other in Cross River State, but the growth and development of entrepreneurship in the state, remains observably low. This is arguably reflected in increasing militancy and youth restiveness in the state, especially in rural communities. Inadequate funding of entrepreneurship programs, corruption, political influence, lack of consideration of host communities' inputs and interest in identification and implementation of programs, and lack of commitment by development agencies, seem to make it difficult for sustainability to be achieved in entrepreneurship development in the state, and most especially, in Cross River State. This observation has, therefore, generated serious concern among the people of the Cross River, and leaves a question mark as to the efficacy and sustainability of the existing entrepreneurship in the rural communities. It is against this back drop that this study is carried out.

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on ecological modernization theory, propounded by Hajer (1995) and Moi (1995). Ecological modernization theory reviews the rationality for the practices and consciousness of environmental entrepreneurs. These proponents argued that economic growth and firms' profitability can be concurrently pursued with promotion of environmental sustainability. Thus, there is no need to trade off economic growth or profit motives of firms as a result of environmental sustainability. This implies that the capitalist move for business innovativeness can vigorously be pursued towards environmental sustainability. To this end, entrepreneurs are seen as change agents who are key players in such business transformation process pursuing economic growth amidst environmental sustainability. Entrepreneurial activities are fundamental steps towards promotion of environmental protection. Since this model facilitates entrepreneurial drive amidst environmental sustainability. Hajer (2015) revealed that eco-entrepreneurs do not only identify and pursue business opportunities towards economic benefits at the immediate but also seeks to identify and pursue activities that promotes environmental protection.

3. Literature Review

Green entrepreneurship is seen as the activities that deliberately address social, environmental or ecological needs with the instrumentality of agricultural techniques. Green entrepreneurship is a systematic process through which entrepreneurs get assistance from the critical stakeholders to enable them vigorously pursue their entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurship creates the avenue to poses the ability to find and act upon business opportunities to transform entrepreneurial innovation or technological know-how into new products or services. Green entrepreneurship is seen as the application of entrepreneurship techniques into green areas or practicing agricultural activities in the most environmentally sustainable manner. Green entrepreneurship therefore means that entrepreneurs identify and practice agricultural activities with the view to providing solutions to climate change, global warming as well as environment solution. Green entrepreneurs therefore serve as variable tools towards enhancing the socio-economic conditions of nations. This is due to the fact that green business practices create opportunities to cater for the dynamics of market, thus resulting to product design, process design, concept development and innovative marketing practices.

Green entrepreneurship has evolved for more than two centuries. The concept evokes varying meanings and interpretations, depending on the perspective of the user. The term entrepreneur is derived from the French verb *entreprendre*, which means to undertake, to attempt, to try in hand, to contract for, to adventure or to try (Iwok & Akpanuko, 2024). Oyinlola (2023) described entrepreneurship as the attempt to create value though recognition of business opportunity, the management of risk taking appropriate to the opportunity, and management skills to

mobilize human, financial and material resources necessary to bring project to fruition. In the early 16th century, the Frenchmen who organized and led military expeditions were referred to as entrepreneurs. Around 1700AD, the term was used for architects and contractors of public works (Desai, 2023). But in all these, an entrepreneur is seen as a person who has the initiative, skill for innovation, and who looks for high achievements (Parker, 2016).

Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (2018) believe entrepreneurship is a process that helps to create something new that has value, considering the risks and reward. It is a process that starts with someone, the entrepreneur, who recognizes an opportunity to do something that is new and original (Ahmed & Hoffman, 2017). In all, entrepreneurship became a phenomenon of interest to economist as early as 1755, when Richard Cantillon, the Irish-French classical economist, first introduced it into economic lexicon (Parker, 2016). Cantillon described an entrepreneur as a rational decision maker who takes risk to provide management for the firm. Subsequently, Adam Smith in his 1776 publication, *An inquiry into the Nature and causes of the wealth of Nations*, described an entrepreneur as an individual who understood the formation of an organization for commercial purposes. The concept was given further interpretation during the Industrial Revolution when another French Economist, Jean Baptiste Say, in 1816 separated profits of an entrepreneur from the profits of capital and posited that an entrepreneur was a planner (Desai, 2023; Nsowah, 2024).

Sustainable development is perceived as the economic development model which gives focus to environmental protection while taking account of the validity of economic reality as against the predatory exploitation of the global resources. Therefore, sustainable development requires the systematic development of the productive structure of the nation's economy as well as the creation of basic infrastructure for the pursuance of environmental sustainability. Development is synonymous with growth. In the context of society, it is the sustained elevation of an entire society and social system toward a better or more humane life (Todaro & Smith, 2016). However, Ikwuako (2021) stated that when the term development is used, four separate but interrelated processes are always borne in mind:

- 1) A developing society that is changing from simple and traditional techniques towards the application of scientific knowledge due to technology.
- 2) A developing society evolves from subsistence farming towards commercial production of agricultural goods.
- 3) A developing society undergoes a transition from the use of human and animal power to industrialization; and
- 4) A developing society moving from the farm and village towards urban concentrations.

Development as a process by which a country attains reasonable self-sustaining growth, process which facilitates and enhances industrial and technological progress in the interest of the people. Development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Cerin, 2016; Stoddart, 2021). Albeit somewhat vague, this concept of sustainable development while trying to maintain economic advancement and progress, also protects the long-term value of the environment. The whole essence of the principle of sustainable development as implied in this context, requires that as entrepreneurs, managers, planners, administrators, policy makers and decision makers, we need to integrate environment, social, and economic concerns into all aspects of decision making involving exploitation of natural resources, and to creatively and innovatively, produce value added goods, manage same in such a way that they will not be exhausted, but will remain for future generation.

4. Empirical Literature

Fasua (2016) investigated Entrepreneurship and Competency: Strategy for Sustainable Development. Sustainable development is must for every developing economy especially in Nigeria. To achieve sustainable development, nations must develop infrastructure. Entrepreneurship and Competency is therefore a panacea to guarantee first amiable development. The aim of this paper x-ray, theoretically and empirically, how entrepreneurship can be encouraged among Nigerian youths while encouraging entrepreneurship competency among Nigerian Varsities to develop the minds of these youths. The paper adopted an empirical approach where 300 small scale entrepreneurs and 300 students were surveyed using simple random sampling technique. Pearson product moment correlation was used in the study. It was therefore discovered that the majority of youths vices like kidnapping, militancy, unemployment, poverty etc. can greatly be reduced by engaging youths in entrepreneurship ventures. Among other things, it was recommended that government should mobilize competent entrepreneurship personnel to move round schools and communities using both formal and informal approaches to train and retrain youths and adults, literates and illiterates, employed and unemployed.

Nsowah (2024) studied the role of Incubation in Women Entrepreneurship Development in Pakistan. Business incubation is one of the implementation tools of government's strategy for facilitating women entrepreneurship

development in Pakistan. Purpose of this study was to measure the importance and effectiveness of incubation services for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. Study was carried out by using survey method. Tenants from a women specific incubator participated in this survey. Self-administered questionnaire measuring the importance and effectiveness of 34 incubation services was incorporated in this study. Results revealed that tenants perceived all the investigated incubation services very important for the success of their businesses. However, difference in perceived importance and perceived effectiveness, for majority of the incubation services, has been found.

Desai (2023) examined an exploratory study on the work-life balance of women entrepreneurs in south India. Therefore, the major objective of the present study was to develop and validate an appropriate tool to illustrate the work-life balance (WLB) issues faced by women entrepreneurs of South India. We also sought to understand the important factors influencing the WLB of these women entrepreneurs. To achieve this end, data were collected by area sampling (cluster-random) paired with semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. The generated data were subjected to standard statistical procedures, such as factor analysis, regression analysis, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and student's t-test. The five-point psychometric tool developed consisted of 39 statements related to five factors. Each of the statements possessed adequate reliability and validity. This study revealed that role overload, dependent care issues, quality of health, problems in time management and lack of proper social support are the major factors influencing the WLB of women entrepreneurs in India. Furthermore, even though the vast majority of the entrepreneurs examined in this study suffers from WLB issues, there are significant differences in the level of WLB issues faced by the various categories of women entrepreneurs. The present study provides recommendations for human resource professionals, management consultants, academicians and women entrepreneurs themselves to deal with the major WLB issues faced by Indian women entrepreneurs.

Stoddart (2021) assessed the entrepreneurial start-up process: the role of social capital and the social economic condition. This study has three main objectives: predicting the existence of entrepreneurial behavioral intentions in different socio-economic conditions; examining how entrepreneurial behavioural intentions formulate entrepreneurial behaviour; and identifying how social capital influences this relationship. It also aims to reveal the differences between entrepreneurs in a relatively mature free market economy (Taiwan) and a newly emerging free market economy (Mongolia). The analysis shows that socio-economic conditions affect the formation of entrepreneurial intentions. There are different approaches to building social capital in a relatively mature market and its newly emerging counterpart. The tendency of having high trust and social ties was found in Taiwanese entrepreneurs, while monitoring is commonly found among Mongolian entrepreneurs.

Todaro and Smith (2016) evaluated necessity of entrepreneurship education: a research among entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs in Serbia Entrepreneurship education field is very complex. Studies have shown that the effects of entrepreneurship education are mixed and contradictory and authors' opinions range from unconditional support to doubts into its justification. The study explores the entrepreneurship education perception of the existing entrepreneurs and of those who want to become entrepreneurs, whether it is necessary and adequate in their surroundings. The research has been conducted among 200 examinees on a Serbian municipal environment example. The research implications show the necessity of the entrepreneurship education and justification of its purpose, and the efforts should be directed towards its better quality and results.

Ubom (2023) examined student's entrepreneurial skills: An academia's perspective. The main purpose of this study was to investigate how universities could be manipulated towards polishing entrepreneurial skills of their graduates. Based on Krejcie and Morgan sample size table, a group of 110 academics out of an access population (N=382) of Bu-Ali Sina academic staff were randomly selected. A questionnaire was designed and then validated asking a panel of experts for their comments. Reliability of the instrument calculated to be 0.90 in alpha Cronbach's scale. Results of the enquiry indicated that cooperation of universities with other local organizations (for example, outreach programs), elaborately directed apprenticeship courses, up-to- date educational content (in response to cutting edge technologies) and use of creativity- centered methods of teaching were mentioned to be the most effective enhancing entrepreneurial skills of graduates, according to BASU academic staff. An exploratory factor analysis that followed revealed that a number of activities labeled as orientation and a group of variables named auxiliary proved to be the most and the least influential factors, respectively, towards having university graduates with enhanced entrepreneurial skills.

5. Methodology

Desk survey method was employed in this study. It was used to gather relevant information on entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth. Furthermore, all vital information was obtained from textbooks, libraries, published and unpublished materials etc.

6. Discussion of Findings

The study has established that there is a relationship between entrepreneurship and development, Entrepreneurship has not contributed effectively to sustainable development, because inadequate funding of entrepreneurship programs. It was equally found that the level of creativity and innovation has adversely affected sustainable development due to the fact that creativity and innovation in entrepreneurship drive is low, since most of the young men and women who are supposed to drive this process, have vacated to engage themselves in other choices. While most of the men abandoned entrepreneurship drive to engage themselves in riding commercial motor cycles and politics, the women found solace in 'brief case' politics instead of farming and engaging themselves in other entrepreneurial activities such as hair weaving, crafting, food vending and agricultural value chain vocations.

They claim to make more and quick money in their newly found business. However, this supports the findings of some researchers like Agu (2022), Nwokoye (2023) who emphasized that creativity provides the opportunity to change and improve the quality of life of a people through innovation. Innovation embraces purposeful and organized search for changes, and in the systematic analysis of the opportunities, such changes might offer scope for economic and social innovation. This simply strengthens the fact that innovation is a specific tool of entrepreneurs, and the means by which entrepreneurs exploit changes and create new values that are capable of enhancing sustainable development.

7. Conclusion

This study has been able to establish that entrepreneurship has contributed effectively to sustainable development in selected communities in Akwa Ibom State. But, on the basis of the Schumpeterian economic development theory, it was found that entrepreneurship is a key driver of sustainable economic development of a nation. Economic growth is a function of individuals' activities in a nation, and growth can be accelerated by influencing the behavior and supply of a nation's entrepreneurs. Thus, the higher the number and quality of entrepreneurs in the society, the higher the level of economic growth and development. Economic growth is key to higher standard of living; socio-economic growth can be fueled by influencing the ingenuity of entrepreneurs in the society through entrepreneurship training and development programs, research and development grants and facilities, to help entrepreneurs produce goods that can meet global competitiveness. The result derived from the findings of this study indicates that all the chosen variables of the entrepreneurship have significant effect on sustainable development in selected communities of Akwa Ibom State.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) Green business initiative such as conversion of green waste to wealth be sustained while review be carried out periodically by involving all critical stakeholders.
- 2) Agro-tourism be institutionalized by government through its relevance agencies such as ministry of Agriculture, Commerce and Industry.
- 3) Green entrepreneurship practitioners should reinvigorate techniques of carbon economy to meet sustainable consumption.

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