

TECHNOPRENEURSHIP AND UNEMPLOYMENT AMONGST NIGERIAN YOUTHS IN A PANDEMIC ERA

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which Technopreneurship stands out as a panacea for unemployment amongst Nigerian youths in a post covid era. Three (3) research hypotheses guided the study. Correlational survey design was adopted. The population of the study consisted of 1692 graduates of three departments (OTM, BAM & MKT) from Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic in the past three years (2017-2019). A total of 750 of these students were selected as the sample for the study. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and an overall coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. Data collected were all imputed into SPSS version 21, Pearson's product moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. All hypotheses were rejected and alternative hypotheses stated as P-values were less than 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that App development and Online advertising/marketing have significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria. It was recommended that our youths should be encouraged to take up Technopreneurship as the remedy for the high level of unemployment in Nigeria.

Keywords: Technopreneurship, App development and Online advertising/marketing, unemployed.

Introduction

Unemployment has been one of the strongest concerns of the Nigerian state. It is a 'cancerworm' that has plagued the Nigerian nation terribly, resulting in several vices. Over the years there has been constant rise in the level of unemployment. The rate of joblessness in Nigeria has more than quadrupled over the last five years as the economy went through two recessions, casting a shadow on the efforts to implement policies to drive growth and create jobs by President Muhammadu Buhari's administration (Olurounbi, 2021). The covid-9 pandemic heightened the already terrible situation. With the massive loss of jobs, increase in cost of goods and services, lots of lockdowns, restrictions of movements which brought about the closure of virtually every sector of the economy, (schools, markets, business organizations, government offices, etc.) so many organizations downsized because they lost lots of businesses and customers. This of course increased the number of jobless Nigerians.

As at the end of the 1st quarter of 2021, unemployment in Nigeria, Africa's largest economy surged to the second highest on a global list of countries monitored by Bloomberg. Olurounbi (2021). The rate of joblessness in Nigeria rose to 33.3% in March 2021 as against 27% in the second quarter of 2020, the last period for which the National Bureau of Statistics released labor force statistics. Nigeria, the oil producer surpassed

almost all the African countries, on a list of 82 countries whose unemployment rates are tracked by Bloomberg, with Namibia still leading with 33.4%. With the fast rate at which unemployment is growing in Nigeria however, if nothing is done, Nigeria will top the list in less than no time. Less than half of Nigeria's labour force is fully employed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). As 2021, the unemployment rate in Nigeria is estimated to reach 32.5 percent. This figure is projected to further increase in 2022, because the unemployment rate has risen constantly for years (www.statista.com).

The lack of job that characterizes the Nigerian nation had put so much pressure on young people. Majority of the working population of Nigeria fall within the age limits classified as youths. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2004) publicly positioned the age range of childhoods between 16–30 years. There are people who see themselves as youths even at 40. Mohamed (2019) noted that “in Nigeria it may not be out of place to see people (especially men) of even 40-45 years of age claiming to be youths. The concept of youth is therefore a relative one. In this research youths are considered to be people (male or female) between the ages of eighteen (18) and thirty five (35) years. According to population projections by the United Nations for 2020, about 43 percent of the Nigerian population comprised children 0-14 years, 19 percent aged 15-24 years and about 62 percent are below 25 years of age. According to the projection, less than 5 percent are up to 60 years and above. This makes Nigeria a youthful population with a median age of about 18 years, which is lower than African and world estimates of 20 and 29 years respectively. A lot of these youths in Nigeria that have reached the working age are unemployed. Nigerian youths graduate from school and have no jobs. They are stagnated, with dreams and aspirations and having no means of achieving them. Some of them are forced to source for every crooked means of livelihood – terrorizing the environment through cultic and terrorist activities, armed robbery, banditry, kidnapping etc. making the environment insecure and unconducive for businesses to thrive. This is why something

must be done fast to salvage the Nigerian youth. Nigerian youths should rise up to the occasion, they can leverage on the provisions of technology to find expression for the skills and knowledge they have inside.

Entrepreneurial efforts which are the catalysts and bedrock for economic growth in every nation have become very challenging and difficult. For easy takeoff and start-ups, most businesses would need funds. They need capital and space (a room, office or land). Labor is also needed in most cases. The environment we find ourselves is very harsh and does not support such efforts. If Nigeria as a nation would overcome the high level of poverty, unemployment and insecurity that characterize her, entrepreneurship which is the bedrock for economic growth in every nation must be practiced differently. Entrepreneurial efforts must harness the provisions of technology, which have taken the center stage in the world today. An entrepreneur is a person who identifies a gap or opportunity in any market, industry or process, converts it into a service or product, conducts market research, estimates possible profits and earnings and creates a successful business. He is always on the lookout for opportunities. He is always ready to take opportunities as they come, and convert them to real profitable ventures in the form of products and services offered in return for pay. Technology is pragmatic application and use of scientific knowledge for all human benefit.

There is no gain saying that technology has invaded virtually every facet of our lives and every field of endeavor. We live and work in knowledge based society, where virtually every meaningful human activity depends reasonably on information and communication technology. (Otamiri and Ogwe, 2020). This is what has given rise to the need to harness the provisions of technology to do business differently. The combination of the provisions of technology and entrepreneurial skills is referred to as technopreneurship. Technopreneurship is a blend of two words which are “technology” and “entrepreneurship”. The term “Technopreneurship” is the amalgamation of the century's two most powerful words -

‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘technology’. (Riddhi, 2020). It is a combination of technological advancements and entrepreneurial skills. This is a new breed in the field of entrepreneurship (Balachandran, 2018) which has the capacity to alleviate or reduce to the barest minimum the poverty, unemployment, crime, and social insecurity that characterized the Nigerian nation today. Providing ICT solutions to the ever increasing number of end users is a modern day lucrative activity capable of empowering youths economically. Many of our youths are yet to embrace this reality (Uchidah, 2015; Izibheya, 2015). Some of the possible technopreneurial skills youths can turn into business opportunities, identified in this study include: App development and on-line advertising and marketing.

There is a grave need for more of our youths to get productively busy online, create jobs for themselves, make the skills they have acquired over the years through education and training marketable through technological means, then we would be on our way to eradicating poverty, unemployment, youth restiveness and insecurity, or at least reducing these to the barest minimum, as a nation. This study is therefore carried out to find out the relationship between Technopreneurship and the level of unemployment among Nigerian youths. Can the involvement of our youths in technopreneurial activities reduce or possibly alleviated the level of unemployment among Nigerian youths today? These are some of the questions this paper intends to x-ray.

Statement of the Problem

Unemployment has been one of the strongest ‘cankerworm’ that has plagued the Nigerian nation. This is caused by several factors like lack of foresight of political leaders, bribery and corruption, deplorable state of the educational system, lack of practical skills by graduates, amongst others are, over dependence on oil etc. There seem to be no solution to this problem as no frantic effort is made toward job creation. This study has however noted that with the current trend of technological innovation that has hit the world. Nigeria may be able to reduce this problem of unemployment, by adopting, inculcating and

implementing technopreneurial skills. Some of which are App development and online advertising and marketing which have the capacity to put food on their table and in turn reduce the insecurity and crime rates in the Nigerian State. This study will be filling a major gap in literature as App development and online advertising have not been seen used as dimensions of Technopreneurship as it relates to unemployment in Nigeria. This is to the best of the researcher’s knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to x-ray the extent to which Technopreneurship can solve the problem of unemployment amongst Nigerian youths. Specifically the objective of this study is to determine the impact of:

1. App development on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria.
2. Online advertising/marketing on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

1. App development has no significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria.
2. Online advertising/marketing has no significant effect on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The Roger’s diffusion of innovation theory is used as a framework for this study. This is because it is the most appropriate for investigating the adoption of the technology in several disciplines and in any social system and has been used as a framework for most disciplines (Dooley 1999, Stuart 2000, medlin 2001, parisot, 1995). Rogers defined diffusion “as the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among members of a certain social system.” As expressed in Roger’s definition, innovation, communication channels, time and social systems are the four key components of the diffusion of innovation theory.

An innovation - is a practice or project that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption. (Roger, 2003). According to Rogers, an innovation may create uncertainty.

“Consequences are the changes that occur in an individual or a social system as a result of the adoption or rejection of an innovation” (Rogers, 2003). People should therefore be informed about the advantages and disadvantages to make them aware of all the consequences.

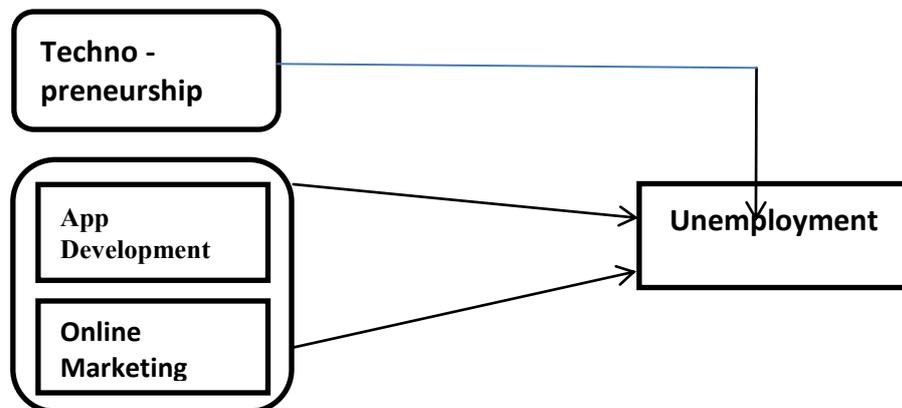
Communication channels - This is the second element of the diffusion of innovation process. Rogers 2003 sees communication as a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. This communication occurs through interpersonal channels who are perceived to be more effective at the persuasive stage of the innovation – decision process. **Time** - The time dimension according to Rogers (2003), is one of the strengths of the innovation – diffusion process, this is because each stage of the process is time bound. **Social systems** - The social system is the last element in the diffusion process. Rogers (2003), defined

it as a set of interrelated units engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal. This process is concerned with motivating individuals to reduce uncertainties about the advantages and disadvantages of innovation. The social systems are influenced by the social structure of the social system.

Rogers noted that the diffusion of innovation process involves five steps which include – knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. These stages according to him follow each other in a time ordered manner.

This theory is related to the study as it is concerned with motivating people to accept an innovation. Technopreneurship is a technological innovation and everyone in the social system ‘Nigeria’ should accept this innovation and take a decision to implement it.

Conceptual Framework



The Researcher’s Desk; 2021

Technopreneurship and Unemployment amongst Nigerian youths

Unemployment has been one of the strongest ‘cankerworm’ that has plagued the Nigerian nation terribly, resulting in several vices. The rate of joblessness in Nigeria has more than quadrupled over the last five years as the economy went through two recessions (Olurounbi, 2021). The covid-9 pandemic has heightened the already terrible situation. The lack of job that characterizes the Nigerian nation had put so much pressure on young people. Majority of the working population of Nigeria fall within the age limits classified as

youths. Nigerian youths should rise up to the occasion, and leverage on the provisions of technology to find expression for the skills and knowledge they have inside.

A technopreneur is a tech-savvy, creative, purpose driven, innovative and dynamic person who thinks out of the box, with the aim of consistently and persistently improving the ways of working of people, organizations, industries, governments and nations as a whole, through the technological means. (Riddhi, 2020; Balachandran, 2018). Technopreneurs begin their businesses with nothing but

brainstorming and developing of ideas. They identify present practices and access new ideas that are technology based in providing their products and services.

The place of Technopreneurship in the growth and development of nations today cannot be overemphasized. Majority of entrepreneurial efforts today are put forth to the society through the vehicle of technology. Technopreneurship has the ability to make young people put their minds to work and come up with unpredictable novel products and services, providing radical solutions to needs in the society that will beneficial be to all. It has an unlimited potential of creating job opportunities, reduces cost, increase customer/client base and patronage. Technopreneurship makes the development, distribution, processing, storage and access to product, services and information easier

Technopreneurship activities are open to every person in any field or career area. Anyone can find a place online to market his/her products and services and get paid for it. The need for technopreneurial skills in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized, especially as it plays a major role in Job creation (Moemenam, et al., 2017) Our young people can actually startup businesses without looking up to the government or any organization for white collar jobs. Most of them have skills; they have services and products they can offer to their world. They can brainstorm and come up with brilliant business ideas, make it a marketable product or service, and easily harness the provisions of technology and reach large numbers of customers and clients within a very short space of time and stay in touch with them. Some of these possible technopreneurial skills they can turn into business opportunities, used as dimensions for Technopreneurship in this study include: App development and on-line advertising and marketing.

An app is an application (program) designed to work with a mobile device. It is also called Application Software. It is a computer program that performs a specific, personal, educational and business functions typically to be used by end users. Every program is designed to assist the user with a particular process, which, may

be related to productivity, creativity, communication, etc. (quickbase.com 2021; Indeed Editorial Team, 2021; wikipedia.com 2021).

Through the development of Apps used for different purposes today, thousands of people the world over have created for themselves jobs that are putting food on their tables. They have become millionaires by solving problems for many using technological means. There are different types of Apps developed by different people to work with the computer and mobile devices, some of them include Word Processing Software (MS word, Word Pad, Notepad) Database Software (Oracle, MS Access etc.) Spread sheet Software (Apple Numbers, MS Excel, Pitchtree, etc.), Multi-media Software (Real player, Media player), Presentation Software (MS PowerPoint, Keynotes), Enterprise Software (Customer Relationship Management Systems), Content Access Software (Web browsers, etc.), Engineering Software, Marketing/Advertising Software, etc. Today most business ventures are developing apps to make their work easier; Uber and Bolt are examples of e-businesses that have made booking of cabs easy and stress-free. There are social media Apps (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, LinkedIn, etc.) Apps for meetings and conferences (Zoom, Google meet, Facebook etc.). Other Apps developed for specialized services include: Photo editing Apps, Security Apps, Music Apps, Banking Apps, Games Apps, Online stores, E-Libraries, etc. We can go on and on, these and many more are developed to provide one specialized product and service or the other. A lot of other Software Apps have been developed, all of which cannot be mentioned here.

Millions are making a living out of this, and anybody can learn to develop an App to meet identified special needs and make living out of it. The mindset of the Nigerian youths can be redirected to focus on harnessing the provisions of technology and make a living rather than stay at home idle and frustrated and in a bid to put food on their table, join cultism and occultism, become armed robbers, kidnappers, prostitutes, ritual killers, militants etc.

Another major instrument for job creation today that is technology based is **online advertising**. This is also known as online marketing, Internet advertising, Digital advertising, or web advertising. It is a form of marketing and advertising which uses the internet to deliver promotional marketing messages to consumers. Online advertising includes email marketing, search engine marketing, social media marketing, mobile advertising etc. (en.m.wikipedia.com 2021). Online marketing has become a major source of income to many. Promoting and advertising people's businesses and services online has put money in the hands of many. It has increased turnover rates for many organizations and entrepreneurs as they have unlimited access to prospective customers and clients. Rather than stay jobless, smart thinking Nigerians youths can collaborate with businesses around them and source for customers for such businesses online, and be paid for each client/customer they introduce to the business.

In 2016, internet advertising revenue in the United States surpassed those of cable television and broadcast television and the trend has increased since then, adding value to people lives and increasing revenue. (en.m.wikipedia.org.2021). The benefits of online ads cannot be over emphasized. These benefits range from low cost, better returns, measurability of potential and actual audience response, views etc. There are varieties of ways of presenting and promotional messages through images, videos, audio, links, etc. online and offline ads, online ads can also be interactive, letting users input questions and get responses. It allows for targeted advertising, it has very wide coverage and influences offline sales and patronage. Online ads can be deploys to millions at a click of a button, unlike offline ads. This is a very viable means of promoting economic growth and its potentials should be harnessed in a country like ours. Most of our young people are already doing this, and

making a living, more of such efforts should be encouraged, and we might just bade farewell to unemployment that long plagued us as a nation.

Methodology

The study utilized a cross sectional survey design. The population of the study consist of graduates of three departments (OTM, BAM & MKT) from Ken Saro-Wiwa Polytechnic in the past three years (2017-2019). Their total number 436, 960 and 296 respectively, the total population is 1692. 750 of these students were selected as the sample for the study. The researcher was able to locate the students on their online platforms were majority of them are still active participants. The instrument for data collection was a 15-item questionnaire measuring App development on a five (5) item instrument, online advertising on a five (5) item instrument, and unemployment on a five (5) item instrument. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha an SPSS version 21 which yielded an overall coefficient of 0.76. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the variables of the study at a 0.05 level of significance (2-tailed)

Data Presentation and Analysis

Results of the analysis on the relationship between the dimensions of Technopreneurship and the Nigerian economy are presented below.

Decision Rule: The basis for acceptance or rejection of null hypotheses statements is premise on the corresponding probability value (P-value) for each of the test.

Where $P \leq 0.05$, null hypothesis is rejected as it suggests a significant relationship between the variables, where as a $P > 0.05$ suggests insignificant relationship between the variables and as such the null hypothesis is not rejected. Results for the bivariate analysis are presented below

Table 1: App development and unemployment amongst youths in Nigeria

			App development	Unemployment
Pearson's Correlation	App development	Corr. Coefficient	1.00	.776
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.032
		N	750	750
	Unemployment	Corr. Coefficient	.776	1.00
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	
		N	750	750

Source: Survey Data, 2020

H0₁ App development has no significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria.

The result on the table 1 with $r = 0.776$ and $P = 0.032$, shows that $P \leq 0.05$, which reveals that App development has significant impact on the

level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected while the alternate hypothesis, which states that app development has significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeriapted on the basis of the evidences presented.

Table 2 – Online advertising/marketingand unemployment amongst youths in Nigeria

			Online ads	Unemployment
Pearson's Correlation	Online ads	Corr. Coefficient	1.00	.856
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.032
		N	750	750
	Unemployment	Corr. Coefficient	.776	1.00
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.032	
		N	750	750

Source: Survey Data, 2020

H0₂ Online advertising/marketing has no significant effect on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria.

The result on the table 1 with $r = 0.856$ and $P = 0.024$, shows that $P \leq 0.05$, which reveals that Online advertising/marketing has significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected while the alternate, which states that online advertising/marketing has significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria on the basis of the evidences presented.

Discussion of Findings

The study found out firstly that App development has significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria. That is to say that if Nigerian youths begin to develop skills on developing Applications that people can use for different purposes, they

would create jobs for themselves that would put food on their table. The normal capital, land or space and other resources and requirements that characterize the start-up of physical entrepreneurship ventures is taken away or reduced to the barest minimum. This is in agreement with findings of Moemenam, et al., (2017), who noted that the need for technopreneurial skills in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized, especially as it plays a major role in job creation.

The study found out secondly that online advertising/marketing has significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria. That is to say that if Nigerian youths begin to get involved in online advertising and marketing activities, where they connect producers and service producers to their prospective customers and clients, they would create jobs for themselves that would put food on their table, and stop waiting indefinitely for white collar jobs that are difficult to come buy

today. This is in agreement with the findings of Dooley (1999). Who noted that adoption of the technology in several disciplines and in any social systems is the order today, people should therefore embrace this innovation that has come to stay.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study it is concluded that App development has significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria. If Nigerian youths begin to develop skills on developing Applications that people can use for different purposes, they would create jobs for themselves that would put food on their table.

The study also concluded that online advertising/marketing has significant impact on the level of unemployment among youths in Nigeria. If Nigerian youths begin to get involved in online advertising and marketing activities, where they connect producers and service producers to their prospective customers and clients, by simply using the social media platforms at their disposal, they would create jobs for themselves and may not need to wait for the white collar jobs or the government to create employment opportunities for them.

Recommendations

- It was recommended that our youths should be encouraged to get involved in Technopreneurship activities like App development as it can be a very easy remedy for the high level of unemployment in Nigeria.
- It was recommended that our youths should get involved in online advertising/marketing as it fast becoming a very easy and quick remedy for the high level of unemployment the world over.

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