

# Event Entrepreneurship and Employment Creation: Implications for National Development

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## Abstract

*The study was aimed at assessing the impact of event entrepreneurship on employment creation in the South-South region of Nigeria, in the quest for national development. 327 copies of questionnaire were used to generate data from respondents. The hypotheses raised was tested using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient, the results revealed that event entrepreneurship has a positive impact on employment creation. The study therefore asserts that events reduce unemployment and menace in the society, creating employment for most youths and women. Its contribution to national development is laudable to the private and public sectors. The study further recommended that there be collaboration between the government and private sectors to revive dead event/festivals and destinations as to yield value to the society and enhance infrastructure.*

**Keywords:** Event Entrepreneurship, Employment Creation, National Development

## Introduction

For decades now, Nigeria has been faced with severe economic impingements that have called for transformation in all of the sectors. The oil and gas production however, contributes over 40 percent of West Africa's Gross Domestic Product (Alasoofi, 2009) while the impact of other mineral resources is partially progressive. Pathetically for the giant of Africa, the economy remains epileptic with crisis on the allocation of the revenue from the 'national cake', threats of insurgencies, militancy, corruption, theft, unemployment, poverty, political crisis, bad leadership and other vices are muddles on the stability of the economy. As a significant move on the economy, the 'Vision 2020' was launched by the government to be able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa (Alasoofi, 2009; Euromonitor, 2010). Alasoofi (2009) further affirms that this project would move the economy into the league of top economies of the world by the year (2020). In consensus with this development, it becomes very pertinent to take advantage of huge opportunities offered by events market (Alasoofi, 2009).

Events involving travels, tourism, festivals and hospitality have become major sources of economic diversification (Amalu and Ajake, 2012) for many economies. This has not excluded its impact on host destinations (Eja, Oyi, Yaro and Inyang, 2011), and great growth potentials for the government (Basse, Vivian, Glory and Emmanuel, 2011; Eja et al 2011; Amadu and Ajake, 2012). This move is anticipated to catapult the economy to first rank of emerging market. Kotler (2010), postulates that it is a mechanism for social change, which engages the poor and unemployed in the locality (Mbanefo, 2013) and involves direct flow of services (Prakash and Ricky, 2010).

Conferences, destinations, exhibitions, artistic performances, festivals etc are ascribed to be promotion and marketing embedded in event entrepreneurship, consumers are offered the possibilities of first hand engagement with brand and its personalities (Prakash et al, 2010; Nnenanya, Ogbuji & Onuoha, 2016). It is subscribed to be a headway for sustainable development of destination zones (Fascinating Nigeria, 2013). It is on this premise, that the three levels of government of Nigeria made

some pronouncements to expend huge resources and fund events as a means to create employment for national development. This study therefore seeks to ascertain the claim with emphasis on job creation in Nigeria.

In Nigeria today, the rate of unemployment is relatively high, as more graduates flock around without jobs still desperate to make a living. Poverty and crimes abound pathetically in the society as a result of unemployment taking the serenity of the society. Bribery and corruption acclaimed to be on the pursuit to be pegged of which majority of individuals give the present government a minimal success. Gaining financial access from government and financial institutions for business ventures is reportedly a challenge.

Many economies of the world enthusiastically embrace event entrepreneurship as a means of economic diversification as investigated by several authors because it is purposed to be a major contributor to national economy (Fascinating Nigeria, 2013) but with heavy funding that absorbs tax payers money. More so, various political leaders have attested to its goodwill, yet, there lies abandoned important destination areas and festivals in certain parts of the country, especially in the Niger Delta. Moreover, many scholars have postulated the impact of events to economic growth but unfortunately, no empirical indications to link events entrepreneurship and employment creation for national development. This study seeks to fill this lacuna.

The study aimed to investigate the impact of events entrepreneurship on employment creation. Also to provide more understanding on the importance of events entrepreneurship on national development. The following research questions helped in achieve the aim thus,

- i. What is the impact of events entrepreneurship on employment creation?
- ii. What is the impact of event product on employment creations?
- iii. How does promotion impact on employment creation?

- iv. How does place impact on employment creation?

The following hypotheses were developed for the study.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** Is there any significant relationship between Product and employment creation.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** Is there any significant relationship between place and employment creation.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** Is there any significant relationship between promotion and employment creation

### **Literature review**

Event entrepreneurship aligns with Alert theory of entrepreneurship propounded by Kirzner in 1997. He indicated that the key to a successful business is understanding the market (Ranjan, 2013). It becomes a prime source for innovation and competitive advantage (Ayeni and Ebohon, 2012). Kirzner (1973), also indicated that the distribution of information in the society, influences the discovery of business opportunities which emanates to employment opportunities (Amalu et al, 2011; Sule, 2013). Events entrepreneurship gives opportunities for new ventures by taking advantage of innovations, knowledge and business information (Nigeria 360, 2012).

There is no commonly accepted definition of the concept of event entrepreneurship, however, both event entrepreneurship and employment creation will be progressively discussed. Event entrepreneurship falls back on event marketing pioneers, Bill Veeck, Jay Lury and George Preston (Leonard, 2002; EventEducation.com, 2011), who brought in innovations to the marketing of events by engaging the consumers, making marketing activities exciting, educating and entertaining. Consumers of event products are availed the opportunity of a firsthand experience and interaction with service providers. Information dissemination, vitality of sponsorship, engagement of entrepreneurs and audience is considered as a pertinent factor (Ercan, 2013). Event entrepreneurship may be challenging due to its heterogeneous nature, therefore requires entrepreneurial skillfulness and consumer experience to be able to deliver value and

satisfaction to target audience (Wood and Masterman, 2014). To this effect, Wood and Masterman in their work, 'Event Marketing: Measuring an experience?' gave a guide for effectiveness of an event that would result to newness, surprise and match with the audience's prior experience. This they ascribed as the 7'I's of event attributes being involvement, interaction, immersion, intensity, individuality, innovation and integrity.

**Table 1: Examples of Event Entrepreneurship**

Incentive/reward events	Product launches	Open days
Conferences	Product sampling	Publicity events
'Created' events	Road shows	Press conferences
Compensation s/contests	Exhibitions	Corporate entertainment
Charity fundraisers	Trade shows	Product visitor attractions

**Adopted from Wood and Masterman (2014), Event Marketing: Measuring an experience?**

Dimensions have been proposed by several researchers for event marketing, amongst them is Wohfeil et al, (2006), they developed Dregner's (2003) three dimensional aspect of event marketing, being event marketing involvement, event-object involvement and event-content content. They came up with a fourth dimension which is social event interaction. However, this study adopted three dimensions from Alexandru (2013) 4Ps dimensions of sports marketing, they are product, place and promotion. The dimensions would aid the study towards achieving reasonable level of innovation and knowledge of event entrepreneurship.

Product in this context refers to all events being marketed for the essence of entrepreneurship (Alexandru, 2013; Business Fundas, 2013). The core product of event as well as the event venue (Joseph, 2013; Ranjan, 2013) that would attract audience and stimulate business ventures to yield employment (Raj and Deepika, 2010; Raymond, William, Dean and

Inna, 2008). Place is the point of origin for distributing the event product. Event accessibility is very pertinent to the entrepreneur (Lynn, 2005 and Alaxandru, 2013), as this could either pose an impediment or opportunity (Nnenanya, Ogbuji and Onuoha, 2016). Event promotion envisages the various medium of events communication to target audience (Nnenanya, Ogbuji and Onuoha, 2016). Intimate information about event product benefits consumers and individuals (Alexandru, 2013), for entrepreneurial/employment involvement and generation of sales.

### **Event Entrepreneurship and Employment Opportunities**

Event entrepreneurship promotes new products aimed at developing customer awareness and loyalty (Lynn, 2005). Marketing event messages are made consistently, precise and concise to attract and influence event investors. Analysis and evaluation of event marketing effort is pertinent for the participants to take decisions on competitive pressure, customer motivation, timing and purchase action. Essentially, the event entrepreneurship is to trigger employment creation hence its contribution to economic development (Imikan and Ekpo, 2012; Sule, 2013 and Nigeria 360, 2013). The alarming rate of unemployment in the economy has constantly threatened the welfare of the nation (Nigeria 360, 2012).Jyostana, (2007) and Sule, (2013) affirms that this is as a result of low level of event entrepreneurship. They further postulate that, employment opportunities arise if entrepreneurs successfully establish their ventures by taking advantage of innovations, knowledge and information on events entrepreneurship, thereby, fostering the development of different sectors of the economy, harnessing the entrepreneurial talent of the society to achieve modern industrial culture (essentials, 1999 and Kayode, 2012).

### **Methodology**

The study covered the six south-south states of Nigeria of which sample size was derived from the entire population as sourced from the

National Population Commission Document/South-South Economic Summit (2012). The sample size was determined using Yamane’s (1968) sample size determination formula. Hence, the study made use of 384 copies of the questionnaire issued to respondents from the region as drawn from the sample size. Also, secondary data such as related literature to the study was used. Cronbach’s Alpha was adopted to determine reliability while the spearman’s correlation was used to analyse the data.

**Analysis and Discussions**

**Table 2. Reliability Analysis**

Variable	Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Product	8	0.944
Place	8	0.77
Promotin	8	0.719
Employment creation	5	0.745

Source: SPSS (Version 20.0) Output

Table 2 above shows the results of reliability analysis using Cronbach’s Alpha. The information in the table above, indicates that the Cronbach’s Alpha on all variables were greater than 0.7. This confirms reliability.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Variables**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Product	327	3.92	1.2050
Place	327	4.00	1.1426
Promotion	327	4.02	1.1736
Employment creation	327	4.064	1.1750

Source: Data Output 2016.

Data (table 3) indicates a high rate of response on the variables with regards to the mean scores and the standard deviation. This also implies that respondents’ agree that event entrepreneurship enhances employment creation.

**Table 4: Hypotheses Testing**

			Product	Place	Promotion	Employment creation
Spearman’s rho	Product	Correlation coefficient	1			
		sig. (2 tailed)				
		N	.598**			.598**
	Place	Correlation coefficient	.	1		
		Sig. (2 tailed)				
		N		.637**		.637**
	Promotion	Correlation coefficient			1	
		Sig. (2 tailed)				
		N			.862**	.862**
	Employment creation	Correlation coefficient				1
		Sig. (2 tailed)				
		N				1

\*\*\* correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The table above shows that the coefficient  $\rho$  for product, place, promotion at 2-tailed test are 0.598,0.637 and 0.862 respectively. The p value (0.000) is less than the alpha (0.01), we accept the alternative hypothesis that product, place and promotion has significant and positive impact on employment creation in the south-south region of Nigeria.

**Discussion of Findings**

The study investigated the relationship between event entrepreneurship and employment opportunity for national development in Nigeria, concentrating on the South-South Zone. A total of 327 participants made successful contribution for data generation and

analysis out of 384 participants. The result proved a strong relationship between event entrepreneurial and employment creation. The result further revealed that 62% of employment creation in Nigeria can be linked to event entrepreneurship. This is in line with Lynn (2005). They amongst others, affirms that jobs are generated from events entrepreneurship such as hotels, restaurants, eateries, cyber cafes, superstores, shuttles etc. Also, Anyadike et al., (2012) and Fascinating Nigeria (2013) affirms that events reduce unemployment and menace in the society and it creates employment for most youths and women. In the event sector which comprises of ticket sellers, tour wholesalers, security personnel, marketers, online attendants etc (Lynn, 2005), individuals are gainfully employed.

The finding also revealed that product, place and promotion have positive effect on employment creation however promotion has a stronger positive effect. This is in line with Wohfeil and Whelan (2006), Nnenanya et al. (2016), Alexandru (2013) and Ukessay (2013), that event promotion gives entrepreneurs opportunity to showcase and highlight their products. The authors also assert that promotion of events is satisfying to the passing on of information, implying that the quest for employment inspires people to be conscious of information through the media. These indications are in agreement with Lynn (2005), Kotler (2010), Eja et al. (2011), Ayeni et. al (2012), Kayode (2012), Sule (2013) and Alexandru (2013). They established that event entrepreneurship has a positive relationship with economic growth, employment creation and empowerment of the disadvantaged segment of the population.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study asserts that event entrepreneurship through its dimensions is an innovative source that instigates new and better ways of business services and products. It is an informative tool for opportunity awareness, influencing the society to discover employment opportunities for national development. Event as a product can be a success if well marketed,

yields satisfactory sales growth, enhances market share and infact an economic catalyst with high profit.

Involving marketing activities into event planning would mean positive impact on the development of the locality by helping to gainfully engage the host community in diverse commercial activities. This essentially is an implication that the development of a nation is dependent on the involvement of the populace, that is, to unanimously build the economy by engaging in investment yielding economic activities such as event entrepreneurship.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the summary and conclusions of the study; the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Government should give due attention as a national revenue sector because it is revealed to have positive significant effect on job opportunities.
2. A Public-Private Partnership should be adopted in funding and developing tourist destinations to yield value to the society and enhance infrastructure.
3. Further efforts should be geared towards improving Information Technology and power infrastructure that can enhance interaction between event managers, entrepreneurs and customers and further boost the event/tourism sub sector.
4. That there be continuity of event projects and activities from any succeeding government to enhance the flow of revenue for national development.
5. Nigerian policymakers must sincerely design and implement appropriate public policies in order to manage public expenditure properly.
6. Infrastructural bottlenecks are an impingement on event entrepreneurship, if addressed will encourage both foreign and local investors.
7. Further study should be carried out to measure the past performance of event entrepreneurship in Nigeria as to evaluate the sector to determine future action and improvement.

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