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Harnessing The Elusive Demographic Dividend In Nigeria Through Improved Skills, Entrepreneurship Development And Labour Force Participation

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Abstract

The age structure of Nigeria's population shows a rapidly growing youth population of 73 million in 2022. Nigeria's youthful population will increase to 94 million by 2030. The youthful surge can be harnessed for a demographic dividend through increased youth labour force participation in entrepreneurship. There are efforts to train and give youth entrepreneurship skills to function ef-fectively in the labour force. So, what effects do skills and entrepreneurial development have on youth labour force participation in Nigeria? The study surveyed youth aged 15-35 across Nigeria using quantitative and qualitative research approaches. A total of 2,396 questionnaires were com-pleted and retrieved. Also, the study held 12 FGDs comprising 96 participants and 12 key inform-ant interviews. The findings show that acquiring skills/entrepreneurial abilities is necessary to

own a business but insufficient to grow a successful venture and create the employment required to im-pact the youth labour force. Youth with customer service skills tend to build a successful business (OR=1.40; CI=1.04, 1.89). The findings further indicate that technical skills in catering could re-sult in owning a business (OR=1.41; CI=1.08, 1.84), while ICT skills could lead to securing em-ployment (OR=1.38; CI=1.09, 1.76). The paper posits that increased capacity building among youth through skills and entrepreneurship will lead to more labour force participation and ultimate-ly result in a demographic dividend for the country. Policymakers and training institutions should deepen their training programmes on skills and entrepreneurship development programmes.

Keywords: Demographic dividend, entrepreneurship, labour force participation, skill, and youth.

Introduction

The age structure of Nigeria's population shows an estimated youth population of 73 million in 2022 (National Population Commission [NPC], 2020). By 2030, Nigeria's youthful population will increase to 94 million, approximately a 30% increase in 2020 figures (Population Review Bureau [PRB], 2021; United Nations [UN], 2019). The youth bulge has been rightfully described as a worrisome demographic burden in Nigeria if not well cultivated (Lee & Mason, 2006), apparently due to its poor management and observed social outcomes. The increase in this population group would result in a bonus or burden to the country depending on the efforts to build and empower the demographic group. Through entrepreneurship, the vibrant, educated, and skilful youthful population can be transformed into a demographic dividend for economic growth and development (Oladosun et al., 2021).

Bloom and Williamson (1998) deepened the analysis of the relationship between age structure change and economic growth. Their findings showed that age heterogeneity in a population has a more catalytic impact on a population and economic growth than the total population impact (Cuaresma, Lutz, & Sanderson, 2014). This impact could positively affect the economy if the youth age group participates vigorously in the labour force. Increased labour force participation of the youth is one of the ways through which the nation can achieve demographic dividends; hence, this paper focuses on this. Other pathways include the demographic dividend associated

with mortality-fertility dynamics and the demographic dividend associated with education attainment.

Ahmad and Khan (2019) studied 67 developing countries. The study's findings indicate that the economically energetic population and increased labour force participation rate positively contribute to economic growth. The study cautions that the country should have a labour market capable of absorbing new entrants, mainly youth, into the working-age population. This caveat is how far most sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries can go, including Nigeria, because such a labour market is non-existent and, therefore, has remained an elusive route to achieving a demographic dividend. Entrepreneurship rapidly creates a skilled labour market. The paper examines the question, "What effects do skills and entrepreneurial development have on youth labour force participation in Nigeria.

Literature reveals that skills and entrepreneurial development are affected by several factors. The uniqueness of this paper is that it examined predictors of labour force participation such as background factors, exposure to skills/entrepreneurship information, and knowledge about entrepreneurship and relates them to skills acquired.

Method

2.1 Study Design and Sample Selection

The study covered youth across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, including a state in each zone and two Local Government Areas in each state. Quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used in the study, and a cross-sectional survey was used. The quantitative segment involved the administration of questionnaires to male and female youth aged 15-35 years selected nationwide across the six geopolitical zones. The population of youth aged 15-35 in the locations for the study, according to the 2006 Population and Housing Census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is 1,832,605 persons. There were two groups: the study group and the control group. The study group included youth who participated in any skill development and entrepreneurship programmes, while the control group included a random assignment of youth in the eligible population who had not benefited from any skills and entrepreneurship training programmes.

The first sample frame is the list of states, local government areas and enumeration areas in the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The source material is the states and LGA population

estimates published in the 2006 population census. The estimates were used to categorise the LGAs in the selected states into urban or semi-urban and to determine gender proportion for the survey sample frame. A second frame is the list of enumeration areas (EAs) in each state/LGA, and samples were drawn from the list in the ratio of rural to urban enumeration areas, noting population size, density and distribution of or presence of entrepreneurial activities in each area.

The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique to select eligible respondents. The first stage involved the pre-selection of six (6) states and 12 LGAs in the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. A state was selected from each zone, while two LGAs were chosen from each state. The pre-selection criteria included states and LGAs with a high youth population using the 2006 census, with a high business density and GDP as an indicator or proxy for the presence of entrepreneurial activities. A very important consideration for pre-selection was states and LGAs that have considerable ongoing youth entrepreneurship intervention programmes.

The second stage of the sample selection involved a stratified random selection of enumeration areas from the list of Enumeration Area Demarcation (EAD) from the National Population Commission (NPC). Stratification was according to urban and semi-urban, and a random selection was made within each stratum to select study EAs within the selected LGAs. Respondents for the survey were selected and interviewed with the aid of youth leaders in the areas, using landmarks like worship places, business outlets, and centres in selected EAs. Enumerators who previously worked with youth and on similar projects were recruited from the areas. A total of 2,397 was calculated as the study sample; 2,430 questionnaires were administered in the six geopolitical zones, while 2,396 questionnaires were completed and retrieved.

The variables for this study are broadly classified as independent, intervening and dependent variables. The independent variables comprise the background factors and exposure to skills development information, while the intervening variables are knowledge and skills acquired. Background factors include age, sex, region, residence, education, employment status, income level, personal motivation, entrepreneurial family background, entrepreneurial hub/ecosystem availability, unforeseen situations, and personal motivation. Exposure to skills development information has two categories: 'heard' and 'participated' in skills development programmes.

Entrepreneurship knowledge includes knowledge about available resources, how to develop a business, organise a business, and run a business venture. Skills/entrepreneurship abilities include soft and technical skills. Youth-owned startup ventures measure labour force participation (LFP) for this study.

2.2 Research Instrument

The survey instrument for the quantitative study was a questionnaire. This study designed a part of this, while some parts were adapted from standardised instruments used in previous research conducted by the National Centre for Technology Management [NACETEM] (2022), Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [GEM] (2021), Olofinyehun and Egbetokun (2021), Staniewski and Awruk (2019), FATE Foundation (2021) and MindTool (2022). The survey questionnaire was pre-tested (n = 20) with target participants to ensure its validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used in this study to measure reliability, which was set at 0.75. IBM SPSS 25 was used for the analysis of the data.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis Technique

The qualitative segment featured key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGD). The KIIs were with representatives of organisations, funders and training centres/institutions (teachers, managers, coordinators of training centres) that provide entrepreneurship education and skills development training and who are knowledgeable about the subject. Twelve key informant interviews were conducted. The study held 12 FGDs comprising youth aged 15-35 across Nigeria. The FGDs were held according to sex and whether they participated in training or not. The FGDs had 8 participants in each session. The interviews featured discussions with participants using semi-structured interview guides developed for the study, noting the study's objectives and information from the literature. Quantitative data was collected by completing 2,396 questionnaires to respondents.

Analyses were conducted on three levels: univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistical to test for the effects of skills and entrepreneurial development on youth labour force participation in Nigeria at specified significance levels. Qualitative data was analysed using the content analysis method.

Results

3.1 Bivariate results using descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the bivariate association between background factors, exposure to skills/entrepreneurship information, knowledge about entrepreneurship, and four youth labour force participation components: own a business venture, business success, desire for a startup in the future, and secured employment.

Results showed that age is significantly associated with labour force participation by the youth. Owning a business venture increased as youth age increased, ranging from 19.7 percent for those aged 20 or less to 54.2 percent for persons 33-35 (p-value=0.000). The region of residence of the youth was significant, with a percentage distribution of 43.3 percent for youth in the northern part of Nigeria and 30.7 percent for those in the South (p-value=0.000). Education and owning a business venture by the youth was significant, with the highest (41.9 percent) occurring among youth without educational qualifications. Owning a business venture was highest (52.2 percent) among self-employed youth at the time of the survey. From the results, employment status is significantly associated with youth owning a business venture. Youth who earned N80,000.00 and above reported having the highest income (48.5 percent) (p-value=0.000). Also, owning a business venture was significantly associated with entrepreneurial family background, entrepreneurial hub/ecosystem and experienced unforeseen situations, that is, 41.7 percent, 47.1 percent and 70.0 percent, respectively (p-value=0.000). There was a significant association between owning a business venture and personal motivation variables of 'study my environment' (43.9 percent) and 'set goals and achieve them' (45.5 percent) (p-value=0.000).

Results in Table 1 show that age is significantly associated with youth business success. Business success in terms of profitability increased from 20.9 percent for youth aged 20 or less to 56.7 percent for youth 33-35 years old (p-value=0.000). Region of residence of the youth was significant, with a percentage distribution of 44.1 percent for youth in northern Nigeria and 32.3 percent for the South (p-value=0.000). Also, education and business success had a significant association, with the highest (41.4 percent) occurring among youth with educational qualifications of OND or higher. Business success was reported highest (53.1 percent) among youth who are self-employed. So, the result showed that employment is significantly associated with youth business success (p-value=0.000). Income level of youth is significantly associated with business success. Youths earning N50,000.00 – N79,999.99 reported having the highest (48.8 percent)

business success. Results showed that business success was significantly associated with entrepreneurial family background, entrepreneurial hub/ecosystem and youth who have experienced unforeseen situations in business with 44.1 percent, 49.4 percent and 75.7 percent, respectively (p-value=0.000). There is a significant association between business success and personal motivation variables of putting in 'maximum effort and work harder if I suffer a setback' (48.4 percent) and 'sustain my belief '(47.0 percent) (p-value=0.000).

Table 1 shows that age is significantly associated with the desire to have a startup in the future. Interestingly, the desire to have a startup in the future declined with age. The decline was from 73.0 percent for youth aged 20 or less to 41.3 percent for youth 33-35 years old (p-value=0.000). Region of residence of the youth was significant, with a percentage distribution of 44.3 percent for youth in the northern part of Nigeria and 69.8 percent for those in the South (p-value=0.000). Education and desire to have a startup in the future were significant, with the highest (60.3 percent) occurring among youth with secondary/primary/other equivalent qualifications. The desire to have a startup in the future was reported highest (75.3 percent) among youth who are unemployed (p-value=0.000). Youth who earned less than N30,000.00 was said to have the highest (64.1 percent) desire to have a startup in the future, but as income increased, the desire declined to 52.9 percent for youth who earned N80,000.00 and above. Youth with entrepreneurial family backgrounds reside in an area with an entrepreneurial hub/ecosystem, and those who have experienced unforeseen situations in business reported 'desiring future startups' with the frequencies 54.8 percent, 53.4 percent and 33.0 percent, respectively (p-value=0.000). The desire for a startup in the future was significantly associated with the personal motivation variable of 'thinking positively about making sure my needs are met' (44.6 percent) (p-value=0.000).

Results in Table 1 showed that age is significantly associated with the youth's LFP of 'securing employment'. The least (16.2 percent) outcome of youth who reported securing employment was those aged 20 or less. The frequency distribution for 27-29, 30-32, and 33-35 were somewhat flat at 34.9 percent, 35.1 percent, and 32.1 percent, respectively. From the results, employment was significantly associated with youth 'securing employment', which was highest (39.8 percent) among those employed in the public sector (p-value=0.000). Youth who earned N50,000.00 – N79,999.99 reported having the highest (38.8 percent) employment.

Further, results showed that securing employment was significantly associated with entrepreneurial family background (29.9 percent) as well as entrepreneurial hub/ecosystem (39.3 percent) and experienced unforeseen situations (43.9 percent) (p-value=0.000). Also, securing employment had a significant association with personal motivation variables of 'set goals and achieved them (36.8 percent), 'think positively about making sure my needs are met (32.6 percent)' and 'move in a new direction (39.4 percent (p-value=0.000).

Similarly, results in Table 1 show that youth labour force participation is significantly associated with personal motivational factors, exposure to skills development information variables, knowledge about entrepreneurship development indicators, measurements of soft skills/entrepreneurship abilities acquired, and technical skills/entrepreneurship abilities.

Table I: Bivariate association between background factors exposure to skills/entrepreneurship information, knowledge about entrepreneurship and skills acquired and labour force participation and labour force participation

	Own a business venture		**Business successful (profitability)**		**Desire startup in the future**		**Secured Employment**	
Variables	**Yes (%)**	**P-Value**	**Yes (%)**	**P-Value**	**Yes (%)**	**P-Value**	**Yes (%)**	**P-Value**
Age								
20 or less	19.7		20.9		73.0		16.2	
21-23	24.6		26.1		69.0		17.6	
24-26	36.5		38.3		57.7		25.5	
27-29	50.4		48.8		43.5		34.9	
30-32	54.2		55.8		42.0		35.1	
33-35	54.2	.000	56.7	.000	41.3	.000	32.1	.000
Sex								
Male	37.0		38.6		55.9		25.7	
Female	37.0	.985	37.7	.647	58.5	.192	24.9	.670
Region								

Northern Nigeria	43.3		44.1		44.3		25.6	
Southern Nigeria	30.7	.000	32.3	.000	69.8	.000	25.1	.795
Residence								
Semi-Urban	36.5		39.4		58.7		26.8	
Urban	37.4	.662	37.1	.246	55.8	.158	24.1	.126
Education								
None	41.9		32.3		35.5		6.5	
Secondary/ Primary/ Other equivalents	33.1		35.0		60.3		24.4	
OND or higher	40.8	.000	41.4	.005	54.4	.001	26.8	.021
Employment								
Unemployed	16.4		16.1		75.3		10.4	
Self-Employed	52.2		53.1		44.7		28.5	
Employed (Priv Sector)	32.5		34.8		63.0		31.6	
Employed (Pub Sector)	36.2	.000	39.8	.000	50.0	.000	39.8	.000
Income								
Less than N30,000.00	24.7		24.5		64.1		14.2	
N30,000.00 to N49,999.99	41.1		43.2		53.1		25.0	
N50,000.00 to N79,999.99	44.4		48.8		53.7		38.8	
N80,000.00 and above	48.5	.000	46.8	.000	52.9	.000	34.7	.000
Entrepreneurial family background								
No	24.2		22.0		63.4		12.9	
Yes	41.7	.000	44.1	.000	54.8	.000	29.9	.000
Entrepreneurial hub/ecosystem								
No	33.0		33.7		58.6		19.8	
Yes	47.1	.000	49.4	.000	53.4	.019	39.3	.000

Unforeseen situations (e.g. COVID-19)								
No	23.6		23.0		66.9		17.8	
Yes	70.0	.000	75.7	.000	33.0	.000	43.9	.000
Personal Motivation								
Keep myself in check								
Never	28.3		27.7		61.2		15.4	
Sometimes	46.9		52.7		50.1		38.5	
Always	46.0	.000	47.0	.000	54.6	.000	34.2	.000
Set goals and achieve them								
Never	28.1		27.5		61.9		15.0	
Sometimes	47.0		48.9		48.2		34.2	
Always	45.5	.000	49.1	.000	54.6	.000	36.8	.000
Create a vivid vision of my future success								
Never	28.2		27.5		61.7		15.4	
Sometimes	51.4		54.2		47.1		36.1	
Always	43.7	.000	47.0	.000	54.9	.000	35.8	.000
Study my environment often								
Never	28.4		27.7		61.5		14.8	
Sometimes	48.6		53.0		49.5		31.3	
Always	43.9	.000	46.2	.000	54.8	.000	39.7	.000
Maximum effort and work harder if I suffer a setback								
Never	27.9		27.1		62.0		14.7	

Sometimes	51.1		51.8		48.2		36.6	
Always	43.9	.000	48.4	.000	54.1	.000	36.3	.000
Think positively about making sure my needs are met								
Never	28.1		27.7		61.9		14.8	
Sometimes	51.5		57.0		44.5		42.7	
Always	43.2	.000	44.6	.000	56.3	.000	32.6	.000
Use rewards to keep myself focused								
Never	29.4		29.0		61.2		16.7	
Sometimes	47.6		52.0		49.0		36.3	
Always	43.5	.000	45.0	.000	55.8	.000	33.8	.000
Sustain my belief								
Never	27.9		27.9		62.0		14.6	
Sometimes	51.8		53.7		43.7		36.6	
Always	44.5	.000	47.0	.000	55.1	.000	36.5	.000
Move in a new direction								
Never	28.9		29.2		61.3		15.7	
Sometimes	45.4		48.3		52.6		33.3	
Always	47.1	.000	48.7	.000	52.0	.000	39.4	.000
Do the minimum amount of work								
Never	29.8		30.4		60.6		16.6	
Sometimes	50.0		52.8		46.8		33.3	
Always	43.2	.000	44.3	.000	57.0	.000	38.1	.000

Exposure to skills development information and labour force participation

Participated in skills training/entrep devt prog								
No	25.9		24.6		63.9		13.2	
Yes	50.2	0.000	54.4	0.000	49.0	0.000	39.9	0.000
Heard of skills training /entrepreneurship devt prog								
No	24.0		21.0		63.0		10.4	
Yes	43.5	0.000	46.8	0.000	54.2	0.000	32.9	0.000
Knowledge about entrepreneurship development								
Resource available								
No	30.1		28.3		56.9		15.7	
Yes	41.3	.000	44.4	.000	57.3	.822	31.4	.000
Develop a business								
No	20.3		19.0		65.6		10.9	
Yes	47.3	.000	50.0	.000	51.9	.000	34.3	.000
Organise a business								
No	21.4		19.7		63.5		12.0	
Yes	46.7	.000	49.7	.000	53.1	.000	33.7	.000
Run a business venture								
No	21.9		20.1		64.1		12.8	
Yes	46.9	.000	50.0	.000	52.6	.000	33.5	.000
Soft skills/entrepreneurial abilities acquired								
Problem-solving								
No	28.1		27.2		61.9		15.4	
Yes	46.2	.000	49.5	.000	52.2	.000	35.6	.000
Communication								
No	27.7		26.8		60.5		13.2	
Yes	44.9	.000	48.0	.000	54.2	.002	35.8	.000
Customer services								

No	26.0		24.8		61.6		11.8	
Yes	47.2	.000	50.6	.000	52.9	.000	38.0	.000
Leadership								
No	30.7		31.2		59.3		18.1	
Yes	46.2	.000	48.4	.000	53.9	.008	36.1	.000
Technical skills/entrepreneurship abilities								
Catering								
No	34.4		34.8		58.4		22.6	
Yes	45.7	.000	49.4	.000	52.8	.021	34.5	.000
ICT, technical works)								
No	34.2		33.6		57.4		18.6	
Yes	41.9	.000	46.3	.000	56.6	.706	37.4	.000
Fashion, Trading								
No	32.5		33.4		59.1		19.7	
Yes	46.2	.000	48.0	.000	53.1	.006	36.9	.000
Shoemaking								
No	35.7		36.9		57.9		23.0	
Yes	44.8	.001	45.4	.003	52.2	.048	39.5	.000
Total								**2396**

3.2 Multivariate results from applying binary logistic regression

Table 2 shows the binary logistic regression of the effect of background factors, exposure to skills/entrepreneurship information factors, knowledge about entrepreneurship development, and skills/entrepreneurship abilities on labour force participation. In model 1, results showed that the odds of owning a business venture are significantly higher for youth aged 27-29 than their counterparts in the reference category (OR=2.16; CI=1.49, 3.13). Also, youth aged 30-32 and 33-35 had significantly higher odds of owning a business venture compared to their counterpart in the reference categories (OR=2.25; CI=1.54, 3.31), (OR=2.27; CI=1.53, 3.36), respectively. Qualitative Results showed that age and sex are important factors in owning a business, especially in the northern part of Nigeria as opined thus; *"Age and gender can stop you from doing business. For example, hairdressing is for men while scavenging (urban mining of scrap metals) work is for men and young boys."* (***Male 33-35, Kano***).

Training centre representatives stated that the first thing to deal with in terms of expanding the chances of owning a business by both sexes is to ensure equal opportunity for participation in the programmes. In their own words, they noted that they: *"intentionally provide information to girls so that they will be aware of the programmes, thereby reducing the tendencies for male dominance as programme beneficiaries."* (***Female, Trainer, Lagos***).

Results suggest that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly lower for youth in the southern part of Nigeria compared to those in the reference category (OR=0.51; CI=0.40, 0.64). Also, the results showed that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly higher for youth who are self-employed compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=2.95; CI=2.16, 4.04). Likewise, the results showed that the odds of owning a business venture are significantly higher for youth who earn N80,000.00 and above income per month compared to their counterpart in the reference category (OR=1.69; CI=1.18, 2.40). In the same vein, the results showed that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly higher for youth with entrepreneurial family backgrounds compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.35; CI=1.03, 1.75).

Qualitative results showed that family background could, on the contrary, become a hindrance to youth owning a business. *"Some children are opposed to their family business or choice of skill. My friend came to work with us in cordwainer and leather works because the mother wanted her to continue in the line of their family business; she, instead, opted for something else"* (***Female, 20, Lagos***).

Similarly, results showed that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly higher for youth who have experienced unforeseen situations like the COVID-19 pandemic compared to their pairs in the reference category (OR=5.51; CI=4.36, 6.97). Furthermore, the results showed that the odds of owning a business venture are significantly higher for youth who move in a new direction compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.77; CI=1.02, 3.07). On the contrary, results showed that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly lower for youth who know of the resources available in their environment for entrepreneurship compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.68; CI=0.52, 0.88). On the other hand, results showed that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly higher for youth who know how to develop a business compared to their counterparts in the

reference category (OR=1.55; CI=1.08, 2.23). Also, results showed that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly higher for youth with skill/entrepreneurship abilities compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.52; CI=1.08, 2.14). On technical skills, the results showed that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly higher for youth who have technical skills in catering compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.41; CI=1.08, 1.84).

Model 2 in Table 2 results showed that the odds of building a successful business are significantly higher for youth aged 27-29 years old compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.73; CI=1.17, 2.54). Also, youth aged 30-32 and 33-35 had significantly higher odds of successful business compared to their counterpart in the reference categories (OR=2.22; CI=1.48, 3.33), (OR=2.23; CI=1.47, 3.37), respectively.

Results in the table showed that the odds of a successful business were significantly lower for youth in southern Nigeria compared to those in the reference category (OR=0.50; CI=0.39, 0.63). Also, the results showed that the odds of a successful business were significantly higher for self-employed youth compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=3.09; CI=2.23, 4.30). Further, the results on income shows that the odds of a successful business is significantly higher for youth who earn N30,000.00 – N49,999.99 income per month compared to their counterpart in the reference category (OR=1.48; CI=1.10, 2.00). Likewise, the results showed that the odds of a successful business is significantly higher for youth earning N80,000.00 and above in monthly income compared to their counterpart in the reference category (OR=1.47; CI=1.02, 2.14). In the same vein, the results show that the odds of owning a business venture were significantly higher for youth with entrepreneurial family backgrounds compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.60; CI=1.21, 2.11). Also, the results show that the odds of a successful business were significantly lower for youth residing in areas where there are entrepreneurial hubs/ecosystems compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.73; CI=0.55, 0.97).

In Table 2, results showed that the odds of a successful business were significantly higher for youth who have experienced unforeseen situations like the COVID-19 pandemic compared to their pairs in the reference category (OR=7.85; CI=6.11, 10.08). Further, the results showed that the odds of a successful business is significantly higher for youth

who keep themselves in check sometimes compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=2.08; CI=1.07, 4.03). Conversely, the results showed that the odds of a successful business were significantly lower for youth who think positively about ensuring they are met compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.40; CI=0.17, 0.93). In the same pattern, results showed that the odds of a successful business were significantly lower for youth who always do the minimum amount of work necessary compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.54; CI=0.32, 0.90). Further, results showed that the odds of building a successful business venture were significantly higher for youth who know how to organise a business compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.71; CI=1.14, 2.57). On soft skills, the results showed that the odds of building a successful business were significantly higher for youth who have customer service soft skills compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.40; CI=1.04, 1.89). On technical skills, the results showed that the odds of a successful business were significantly higher for youth who have catering skills compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.67; CI=1.27, 2.20).

Model 3 of Table 2 results show that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly lower for youth aged 24-26 years compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.65; CI=0.47, 0.90). Along this line, the results show that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly lower for 27-29, 30-32 and 33-35 years compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.46; CI=0.33, 0.65), (OR=0.45; CI=0.32, 0.65), and (OR=0.44; CI=0.31, 0.64), respectively. Also, the result showed that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly higher for youth in the southern part of the country compared to the youth in the reference category (OR=2.97; CI=2.41, 3.66). Notably, the results showed that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly higher for youth with secondary/primary/other equivalents compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=2.41; CI=1.03, 5.63). The results showed that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly lower for youth who are self-employed compared to those in the reference category (OR=0.37; CI=0.28, 0.49), in the same way, the result was lower with youth who are employed in the public sector compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.54; 0.37, 0.79). Further, the research results show that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly higher for youth who reside in areas where entrepreneurship

hubs/ecosystems are situated compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.32; CI=1.03, 1.70). On the contrary, the odds are lower for youth who have experienced unforeseen situations in their businesses and have participated in skills/entrepreneurship programmes compared to their counterparts in the reference categories (OR=0.34; CI=0.27, 0.42) and (OR=0.70; CI=0.53, 0.94), respectively.

Results of interviews with representatives of skills/entrepreneurship development institutions showed that they use email lists and community outreaches to increase youth exposure to hearing about skills/entrepreneurship training and the desire for a future startup. One of the representatives opined thus;

> *". . . for example, to increase the desire for business among people with disabilities, we consider that they won't hear about our programmes using our usual medium of communicating the programmes, so we engage in community outreach using experts like NGOs working in that area to bring the information to them." (**Male, Trainer, Abuja**)*

Furthermore, the results in Table 2 showed that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly higher for youth who know of the resources available in their environment for entrepreneurship compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.63; CI=1.29, 2.07). Contrarily, results showed that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly lower for youth who know how to develop a business compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.66; CI=0.48, 0.91). Also, results showed that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly lower for youth with problem-solving skills compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.66; CI=0.48, 0.91). On technical skills, the results showed that the odds of desiring a startup in the future were significantly lower for youth who have catering skills compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.76; CI=0.59, 0.97).

Results in model 4 of Table 2 showed that the odds of securing employment were significantly higher for youth aged 27-29 years compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.66; CI=1.13, 2.45). Also, the results show that the odds of securing employment were significantly lower for urban youth than those in the reference category (OR=0.78; CI=0.62, 0.98). Further, the results show that the odds of securing employment were significantly higher for youth with

secondary/primary/other equivalent educational levels compared to the youth in the reference category (OR=6.93; CI=1.40, 34.38). Similarly, the results showed that the odds of securing employment were significantly higher for youth who are employed in the private and public sectors compared to those in the reference categories (OR=2.06; CI=1.39, 3.06) and (OR=2.39; CI=1.52, 3.78), respectively. Likewise, the results on income showed that the odds of securing employment are significantly higher for youth who earn N50,000.00-N79,999.99 income per month compared to their counterpart in the reference category (OR=2.22; CI=1.58, 3.13).

Furthermore, the results show that the odds of securing employment are significantly higher for youth who earn N80,000.00 and above income per month compared to their counterpart in the reference category (OR=1.53; CI=1.05, 2.23). In the same vein, the results show that the odds of securing employment were significantly higher for youth with entrepreneurial family backgrounds compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.49; CI=1.11, 2.00). Also, the odds of securing employment are higher for youth who have experienced unforeseen situations in their businesses compared to their counterparts in the reference categories (OR=2.17; CI=1.71, 2.74). The outcome of the study also showed that the odds of securing employment are higher for youth who have ever heard of skills/entrepreneurship development programmes compared to their counterparts in the reference categories (OR=1.48; CI=1.04, 2.12). Furthermore, the results showed that the odds of securing employment are significantly higher for youth who sustain their beliefs sometimes and always compared to their counterparts in the reference categories (OR=2.29; CI=1.08, 4.84) and (OR=2.18; CI=1.04, 4.55), respectively. Also, the results showed that the odds of securing employment are significantly lower for youth who do the minimum amount of work necessary sometimes compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=0.60; CI=0.37, 0.97).

The results in Table 2 showed that the odds of securing employment were significantly higher for youth who know how to develop a business compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.57; CI=1.05, 2.35). Similarly, results showed that the odds of securing employment were significantly higher for youth with customer service soft skills compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.93; CI=1.43, 2.61). Similarly, results showed that the odds of securing employment were significantly higher for youth with ICT/technical works skills than their counterparts in

the reference category (OR=1.38; CI=1.09, 1.77). *Results of the FGD showed a mixed but valuable response of skills and labour force participation interaction in securing employment: "I attended a boot camp; a software company organised it. We were given three months of training on everything from software to web design. After three months, I was issued a certificate, and they also gave jobs to interested persons. I didn't get a job from them, but what I learnt got me a job."* (***Male, 24-26, Abuja*****).** Lastly, the analysis of the field data showed that the odds of securing employment were significantly higher for youth with fashion/trading skills compared to their counterparts in the reference category (OR=1.34; CI=1.05, 1.72).

Table 2: Binary Logistics Regression analysis showing the effects of background factors, exposure to skills development information, knowledge about entrepreneurship development, skills/entrepreneurship abilities by labour force participation

Variables	Own startup venture		Startup venture successful		Desire startup venture		Secured employment	
	Model 1:		Model 2:		Model 3:		Model 4:	
	OR (95% CI)	Sig.	OR (95% CI)	Sig.	OR (95% CI)	Sig.	OR (95% CI)	Sig.
Age								
20 or less	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
21-23	1.01(0.71, 1.45)	.948	0.95(0.65, 1.37)	.770	0.99(0.73, 1.35)	.958	0.84(0.57, 1.23)	.377
24-26	1.5(1.05, 2.15)	.028	1.41(0.97, 2.06)	.074	0.65(0.47, 0.9)	.009	1.18(0.8, 1.75)	.395
27-29	2.16(1.49, 3.13)	.000	1.73(1.17, 2.54)	.006	0.46(0.33, 0.65)	.000	1.66(1.13, 2.45)	.011
30-32	2.25(1.54, 3.31)	.000	2.22(1.48, 3.32)	.000	0.45(0.32, 0.65)	.000	1.36(0.91, 2.05)	.138
33-35	2.27(1.53, 3.36)	.000	2.23(1.47, 3.37)	.000	0.44(0.31, 0.64)	.000	1.3(0.86, 1.97)	.219
Sex								
Male	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Female	1.08(0.86, 1.35)	.508	0.99(0.78, 1.25)	.902	1.04(0.85, 1.28)	.683	0.79(0.62, 1)	.054
Region								
Northern Nigeria	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Southern Nigeria	0.51(0.4, 0.64)	.000	0.5(0.39, 0.63)	.000	2.97(2.41, 3.66)	.000	0.82(0.64, 1.05)	.111
Residence								
Semi-Urban	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Urban	1.02(0.82, 1.27)	.857	0.86(0.68, 1.09)	.208	0.97(0.8, 1.19)	.784	0.78(0.62, 0.98)	.036
Education								
None	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Secondary/ Primary/ Other equivalents	0.61(0.25, 1.46)	.268	1.09(0.42, 2.81)	.865	2.41(1.03, 5.63)	.043	6.93(1.4, 34.38)	.018
OND or higher	0.67(0.28, 1.61)	.370	1.03(0.4, 2.67)	.956	2.23(0.95, 5.22)	.066	4.16(0.84, 20.62)	.081
Employment								
Unemployed	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Self-Employed	2.95(2.16, 4.04)	.000	3.09(2.23, 4.3)	.000	0.37(0.28, 0.49)	.000	1.38(0.97, 1.97)	.071
Employed (Priv Sector)	1.12(0.78, 1.62)	.546	1.32(0.89, 1.94)	.166	0.86(0.62, 1.2)	.377	2.06(1.39, 3.06)	.000

Employed (Pub Sector)	1.09(0.71, 1.69)	.694	1.26(0.8, 1.98)	.327	0.54(0.37, 0.79)	.002	2.39(1.52, 3.77)	.000
Income								
Less than N30,000.00	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
N30,000.00 to N49,999.99	1.32(0.99, 1.75)	.060	1.48(1.1, 2)	.011	0.98(0.75, 1.27)	.873	1.31(0.95, 1.8)	.095
N50,000.00 to N79,999.99	1.11(0.8, 1.54)	.526	1.4(1, 1.97)	.053	1.29(0.95, 1.74)	.104	2.22(1.58, 3.13)	.000
N80,000.00 and above	1.69(1.18, 2.4)	.004	1.47(1.02, 2.14)	.042	0.98(0.7, 1.36)	.887	1.53(1.05, 2.23)	.027
Entrepreneurial family background								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.35(1.03, 1.75)	.028	1.6(1.21, 2.11)	.001	0.84(0.67, 1.07)	.151	1.49(1.11, 2)	.008
Entrepreneurial hub/ecosystem								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	0.85(0.65, 1.12)	.246	0.73(0.55, 0.97)	.027	1.32(1.03, 1.7)	.031	1.03(0.8, 1.34)	.802
Unforeseen situations (e.g. COVID-19)								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	5.51(4.36, 6.97)	.000	7.85(6.11, 10.08)	.000	0.34(0.27, 0.42)	.000	2.17(1.71, 2.74)	.000
Participated in skills training/entrep devt prog								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.14(0.83, 1.55)	.425	1.18(0.86, 1.63)	.306	0.7(0.53, 0.94)	.017	1.21(0.88, 1.67)	.252
Heard of skills training /entrepreneurship devt prog								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	0.92(0.67, 1.25)	.587	1.11(0.8, 1.53)	.550	1.32(1, 1.74)	.053	1.48(1.04, 2.12)	.031
Personal Motivation								
Keep myself in check								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	1.54(0.82, 2.89)	.178	2.08(1.07, 4.03)	.030	0.95(0.52, 1.73)	.869	1.04(0.55, 1.96)	.915
Always	1.82(0.96, 3.44)	.068	1.86(0.95, 3.65)	.071	0.9(0.49, 1.65)	.740	0.81(0.43, 1.55)	.528
Set goals and achieve them								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	1.12(0.48, 2.63)	.790	1.08(0.44, 2.64)	.874	0.72(0.31, 1.63)	.427	1.52(0.65, 3.55)	.338
Always	1.03(0.43, 2.46)	.944	1.11(0.45, 2.79)	.818	0.8(0.34, 1.84)	.591	1.48(0.63, 3.52)	.370
Create a vivid vision of my future success								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	1.2(0.59, 2.46)	.619	1.4(0.66, 2.97)	.377	0.79(0.4, 1.57)	.500	0.57(0.28, 1.14)	.110
Always	1.08(0.52, 2.23)	.838	1.48(0.7, 3.16)	.307	0.86(0.43, 1.72)	.669	0.7(0.34, 1.4)	.310
Study my environment often								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	0.66(0.33, 1.34)	.254	0.96(0.46, 2.01)	.909	1.61(0.8, 3.22)	.182	1.14(0.56, 2.32)	.727
Always	0.5(0.24, 1.04)	.065	0.66(0.31, 1.41)	.278	1.89(0.92, 3.86)	.083	1.75(0.84, 3.64)	.138
Maximum effort and work harder if I suffer a setback								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	1.31(0.65, 2.64)	.447	1.69(0.81, 3.52)	.161	0.83(0.42, 1.64)	.594	0.97(0.47, 2)	.932
Always	0.96(0.48, 1.95)	.916	1.69(0.8, 3.54)	.168	0.89(0.45, 1.76)	.735	0.88(0.42, 1.83)	.732

Think positively about making sure my needs are met								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	0.7(0.32, 1.56)	.384	0.66(0.29, 1.51)	.320	1.1(0.51, 2.34)	.814	1.23(0.56, 2.68)	.610
Always	0.54(0.24, 1.21)	.134	0.4(0.17, 0.93)	.034	1.59(0.73, 3.43)	.242	0.88(0.4, 1.94)	.748
Use rewards to keep myself focused								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	0.8(0.45, 1.4)	.425	1.02(0.57, 1.84)	.940	1.02(0.6, 1.71)	.954	0.75(0.43, 1.29)	.294
Always	0.71(0.41, 1.25)	.240	0.75(0.42, 1.35)	.335	1.21(0.72, 2.03)	.483	0.57(0.33, 1)	.049
Sustain my belief								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	1.97(0.94, 4.15)	.072	1.41(0.65, 3.07)	.382	0.55(0.28, 1.11)	.097	2.29(1.08, 4.84)	.030
Always	1.57(0.76, 3.24)	.222	1.15(0.54, 2.45)	.719	0.81(0.41, 1.59)	.539	2.18(1.04, 4.55)	.039
Move in a new direction								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	1.22(0.71, 2.1)	.481	0.89(0.5, 1.58)	.680	0.98(0.58, 1.65)	.936	1.1(0.64, 1.89)	.738
Always	1.77(1.02, 3.07)	.042	1.25(0.7, 2.22)	.453	0.69(0.41, 1.16)	.165	1.38(0.8, 2.38)	.245
Do the minimum amount of work								
Never	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Sometimes	1.06(0.66, 1.72)	.806	0.72(0.43, 1.19)	.199	0.9(0.57, 1.42)	.647	0.6(0.37, 0.97)	.039
Always	0.87(0.54, 1.42)	.581	0.54(0.32, 0.9)	.017	1.19(0.75, 1.88)	.460	0.81(0.5, 1.31)	.387
Acquired skills /entrepreneurship								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	0.68(0.52, 0.89)	.004	0.76(0.58, 1)	.050	1.63(1.29, 2.07)	.000	0.92(0.7, 1.22)	.565
Knowledge about entrepreneurship development								
Resource available								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.56(1.08, 2.23)	.016	1.44(0.99, 2.1)	.056	0.66(0.48, 0.91)	.012	1.57(1.05, 2.35)	.029
Develop a business								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.38(0.94, 2.04)	.104	1.71(1.14, 2.57)	.010	1.1(0.77, 1.57)	.597	1.2(0.77, 1.86)	.425
Organise a business								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.03(0.71, 1.49)	.891	1.08(0.73, 1.6)	.694	1.06(0.76, 1.49)	.718	0.8(0.53, 1.21)	.291
Run a business venture								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.52(1.08, 2.14)	.017	1.29(0.9, 1.85)	.173	1(0.73, 1.35)	.982	1.39(0.92, 2.1)	.116
Soft skills /entrepreneurial abilities acquired								
Problem solving								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.05(0.79, 1.39)	.735	1.19(0.89, 1.6)	.233	0.75(0.57, 0.98)	.033	0.99(0.74, 1.33)	.969
Communication								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.09(0.81, 1.48)	.554	1.11(0.81, 1.51)	.528	0.98(0.74, 1.3)	.877	1.18(0.86, 1.6)	.304

Customer services								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.16(0.88, 1.54)	.298	1.4(1.04, 1.89)	.025	0.94(0.72, 1.22)	.628	1.93(1.43, 2.61)	.000
Leadership								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	0.99(0.76, 1.29)	.924	0.83(0.62, 1.09)	.176	1.1(0.85, 1.42)	.462	0.93(0.71, 1.22)	.610
Technical skill /entrepreneurship abilities acquired								
Catering								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.41(1.08, 1.84)	.010	1.67(1.27, 2.2)	.000	0.76(0.59, 0.97)	.026	1.23(0.94, 1.61)	.131
ICT, technical works)								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	0.88(0.69, 1.12)	.284	1.1(0.85, 1.42)	.467	1.21(0.96, 1.51)	.107	1.38(1.09, 1.76)	.009
Fashion, Trading								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.15(0.91, 1.47)	.251	1.14(0.89, 1.47)	.296	0.92(0.73, 1.16)	.480	1.34(1.05, 1.72)	.018
Shoemaking								
No	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Yes	1.11(0.82, 1.51)	.484	0.93(0.68, 1.28)	.658	0.9(0.68, 1.2)	.474	1.36(1.01, 1.84)	.045

Note: Level of Significance; p ≤ .1, p ≤ .05, p ≤ .01, p ≤.001.
Model 1: dependent variable: own startup venture: Chi-square = 888.603, -2 Log likelihood = 2268.559[a], Nagelkerke R Square = .423
Model 2: dependent variable: startup venture successful: Chi-square = 1098.611, -2 Log likelihood = 2087.009[a], Nagelkerke R Square = .500
Model 3: dependent variable: desire startup venture: Chi-square = 640.217, -2 Log likelihood = 2632.361[a], Nagelkerke R Square = .315
Model 4: dependent variable: secured Employment: Chi-square = 654.383, -2 Log likelihood = 2057.763[a], Nagelkerke R Square = .353

Discussion

The study showed that age is an important background factor in owning a business. Youth aged 27-35 are more inclined to own and run a business successfully. Results showed that youth in the northern part of Nigeria have more significant tendencies to own businesses, primarily in the agriculture sector. Entrepreneurial family background is an essential factor in owning a business. Results of the FGDs, however, indicate that some youth oppose their family business or choice of skills. Acquiring skills/entrepreneurial abilities (learnt in formal and informal settings) is necessary to own a business but not sufficient to grow a successful venture and create the employment required to impact the youth labour force. Youth with problem-solving skills are more inclined to desire future startups.

Customer service, ICT, and fashion design skills can help the youth secure employment and increase labour force participation. Still, catering is more akin to owning a business and securing employment. Scale-up strategies and interventions are needed to increase entrepreneurship practice among the youth. For example, several businesses are at the rudimentary stages in the fashion industry. The

population-level effect has not been achieved yet. Entrepreneurship development/training centres confirmed that they modify their training modules to address issues like business registration, financial management and record keeping, presentation skills to attract funding, and mentorship, which will support their alumni in accelerating entrepreneurship practice. Observations and comments from respondents at the FGDs revealed that mindset change for youth entrepreneurs is needed urgently. Some youth could not boldly acknowledge that they are involved in business, especially among tailoring and makeup artists who see themselves as getting by rather than professionals serving a massive market with tremendous capacity to contribute to national GDP. Most training centres had no clear modules on building trainees' grit for entrepreneurship practice.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study examined the effects of skills and entrepreneurial development on youth labour force participation in Nigeria. The study developed a question and undertook primary research using both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather data to answer the question. Findings showed that age, region, income, family background, skills and knowledge affect youth labour force participation and the realisation of SDGs 4 and 8 for Nigeria. Improving on them is critical for enhancing youth labour force participation. Therefore, this paper posits that increased capacity building among youth through developing relevant skills and entrepreneurship will lead to more labour force participation. The increased labour force participation will ultimately result in a demographic dividend for the country. Governments should encourage and intentionally support private organisations and youth business groups to set up functional hubs/ecosystems/garages, noting regional advantages as shown in the data about youth owning agriculture businesses in the North. Policymakers and training institutions should deepen their training programmes on soft and technical. Youth-owned businesses should be supported with specialised entrepreneurship development programmes to run successful businesses.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

The Ethical Committee of Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria, has approved this study.

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