

# Socio-Economic Determinants of Entrepreneurial Needs of Unemployed Youths Participating in Youth Empowerment Programmes in Abia State, Nigeria

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Currently, Nigeria is experiencing high rate of youth unemployment. This is evident in the involvement of youths in unnecessary idleness resulting to social vices such as Internet fraud, kidnapping, drug trafficking, drug abuse, human trafficking etc. Against this background, this study identified socio-economic factors which could possibly determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State as a way of ameliorating the high unemployment rate. The study adopted descriptive survey design with three [3] research questions and three [3] null hypotheses. The population of the study comprised all the unemployed youths currently participating in different youth empowerment programmes in Abia State. A sample of 200 unemployed youths was selected from the population of the study using stratified random sampling technique. Instrument used for the study was questionnaire titled, "Determinants of Unemployed Youths Entrepreneurial Needs Questionnaire" (DUYENQ). The questionnaire was face validated by three experts and reliability was determined using test-retest procedure after two weeks interval in Enugu State which was outside the area of study. Cronbach alpha statistic was used to determine the overall reliability co-efficient of 0.90. The researchers involved five trained research assistants in the process of data collection who were briefed on the modalities for administering the instrument. Data collected were analyzed using percentages, means and standard deviation for the research questions while t-test was used to test the three [3] null hypotheses at 0.05% level of significance. Findings showed that vocational interest, financial motives and prior education/training are major socio-economic determinants of entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State. It was also shown that gender did not significantly influence these major determinants of entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in*

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*youth empowerment programmes in Abia State. These findings were exhaustively discussed with far reaching conclusion and recommendations on the need to consider these major determinants of entrepreneurial needs by relevant stakeholders in promoting sustainable youth empowerment programmes for unemployed youths in Abia State in particular and Nigeria in general.*

**Keywords:** *Socio-Economic Determinants, Entrepreneurial needs, Unemployment, Youth empowerment*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The rate of youth unemployment is not only high today in Nigeria but increasingly constituting major concern to the various tiers of government and other major stakeholders such as parents, employers of labour and the public at large. This trend possibly explains the increase in social vices in our society such as violence, fraud, human trafficking, drug abuse, drug trafficking, ritual killings, roaming of streets and other maladjusted behavior. Indeed youths who are unemployed (due to the inability of the formal sectors of the economy to engage them in white collar jobs) are likely to be the most vulnerable to crimes and other anti-social behavior. Unemployment is currently a social problem which affects majority of youths in Nigeria. It is defined generally as a situation or condition where persons who are eligible to work based on possession of prerequisite skills and knowledge do not have such jobs; are seeking employment or are engaged in partial employment (Emejo, 2013). Thus, unemployment has to do with a number of people not fully employed, not having a job or being in a state of joblessness. In this respect Suleiman and Okonjy (2010), described the attitudes of unemployed youths as inappropriate and needs to be remedied through entrepreneurial empowerment programmes. Evidently the prevalent rate of unemployment is a reflection of several factors or causes one of which is education. Thus, the type of education youths receive could determine the attitude or responses to the challenges of unemployment (Ajugo, 2013). The reality of the situation in the labour market as argued by Kalu (2014) is that graduates from universities and other tertiary institution remain unemployed due to insufficient jobs or lack of employable skills. This calls for remedial measures or reorientation through entrepreneurial education.

Entrepreneurship is the willingness and the ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities, establish and run an enterprise successfully (Akanwo and Akpanabia, 2012). Thus, both definitions of entrepreneurship stressed on willingness and ability as criteria for business entry. According to Elmuti, Khoury and Omran (2012), business entry has become one of the most broadly addressed entrepreneurial subjects in current curricula of Nigerian schools especially at the senior secondary school and Tertiary education levels (National Universities Commission, NUC, 2011, Nigeria Education Research and Development Council, NERDC, 2010). Entrepreneurial curricula are based on real life cases, hands-on issues and other related occupational tasks relevant to work skills. These curricula offerings ensure training of entrepreneurs on relevant competencies, skill acquisition, creativity, self reliance and job creation for sustainable economic empowerment of youths especially the unemployed ones (Esu, 2012). For instance, the new senior secondary school entrepreneurial curriculum contains a list of 34 trade subjects capable of assisting learners to develop required work skills, entrepreneurial attitudes and economic independence or self reliance (NERDC, 2010). The 34 trade subjects include among others auto – body repairs and spray, painting, auto

electrical work, mechanical work, auto part merchandizing, air conditioning/refrigerator, welding and fabrication/engineering, craft practice, electrical installation and maintenance work etc. Similarly, the undergraduate programmes also have entrepreneurial education contents which are both theoretical and practical in orientation (NUC 2011). The NUC entrepreneurial programmes as argued by Bassey (2005) are expected to equip graduates among others with skill that could make them result-oriented and also acquire requisite financial discipline which they need to nurture business enterprises. These goals or expectations, as laudable as they seem, have not been practically transmitted into concrete entrepreneurial accomplishments by teachers and students. Thus, the question still remains how do we reposition entrepreneurship education in schools to curb possible youth unemployment in the society? Entrepreneurship is therefore a catalyst for economic growth and national development (Gordon, Halmiltin and Sarah, 2017). In the views of Asogwa and Dim (2016) the entrepreneur is seen as an actor, innovator or a developer of technology. It is the entrepreneurship programmes that produces entrepreneurially-minded individuals with entrepreneurship skills which are required for economic development of the society. Thus, entrepreneurship according to Shane (2003) is seen as activities that involve the discovery, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities within the framework of an individual-opportunity nexus or relationship. In this respect, entrepreneurship education is perceived as the process of providing individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities and the insight, self-esteem, knowledge and requisite skill to act on them (Lukman and Oviaw, 2010).

There are relevant supportive theories of entrepreneurship most of which are broadly categorized into two namely macro and micro perspectives or approaches (Kuratco, 2009). The macro perspective consists of sociological theories (which are environmental based), displacement theories, cultural theories and economic theories respectively. On the other hand, the micro theories perspective include psychological theories, Venture opportunity school of thought and strategic formulation school of thought etc. However, for this study the micro psychological theories which consider largely the role of socio-economic variables, personal traits, motives and interest in the success of entrepreneurial ventures are very relevant (Tucker, 1991 and Schumpeter, 1934). Entrepreneurial trait theory identifies those traits which are vital to the success of enterprises. These include achievement, creativity, determination and technical knowledge. Thus, it is assumed that certain existing environmental and socio-economic factors could motivate entrepreneurs to succeed if the corresponding needs or challenges that generated such as finance, interest, motivation etc are accommodated or solved (Holt, 2006).

Factors that could influence entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths vary based on certain demographic, socio-economic and theoretical considerations (Kalu, 2014, Esu, 2017). Some schools of thoughts argue that certain personal traits such as motivation ability etc could easily determine entrepreneurship needs (Okoye, 2013). However, other factors which are largely sociological in nature are also possible entrepreneurship needs determinant. In this study focus is on the related factors of vocational interest, financial motives and prior education/training which based on extant literature are more dominant factors (Okoye, 2013, Amazue, 2011). Vocational interest is an important personality trait of successful entrepreneurs. Interest is a driving force in the choice of vocation and participation in empowerment programmes. Interest in entrepreneurial skills could be in-born or learned from the environment. According to Elmuti, Khoury and Omran (2012) entrepreneurs possess skills many of which are embedded within. These hidden traits can be developed successfully through exposure to entrepreneurship education or programmes. Thus, entrepreneurial education is an important factor in fostering entrepreneurial spirit among the youths. In this regard Widiyanti

(2017) acknowledged that entrepreneurial interest and willingness to work hard, sense of independence (willingness to take risks and always learn from failures) are measures or indices of entrepreneurial confidence and success. Thus, interest in entrepreneurship can be stimulated by linking learning activities with the environment around the business world or existing opportunities.

Financial motive is another factor that could determine entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths (OECD, 2012). Finance is one of the most common measures of business success. Indicators of financial success include increase in sales or revenues, increase in venture capitals, increase in profitability and so forth (Elmuti, Khoury and Omran, 2012). Thus, access to capital, support from family and friends, good products at competitive rate add to success stories that inspires the youths who are willing to go into entrepreneurial ventures especially service delivery and other related values. By implication, youths with little financial support could find it difficult to sustain entrepreneurial ventures (Adegun and Akomolafe 2013). This could be due to bank charges and interest rate ceiling imposed by banks which constitute big problems to small scale industries. Invariably economic factors such as policy reversals, high and double taxations, difficulty in procuring licenses, high inflation rate, get rich quick attitude, poor saving culture among youth and lack of initial start off capital could act as setbacks to entrepreneurship drive of youths in the society.

Prior education/training is a critical factor in preparing and empowering entrepreneurs with the skills required for global competitiveness. Entrepreneurship education from basic through other levels of education could inculcate business experiences and skills into the youths for gainful employment and economic progress. Prior education acquired informally through socialization develops the human faculty for creativity, manageability, organization, planning, innovation and resource management. These qualitative attributes help youths to confront productivity challenges (Okoye, Illeoanya and Udunze, 2014). If the prior education standard is low graduates will find it difficult to meet up with entrepreneurial challenges. Low standard of training leads to retraining of employees by the employers due to lack of knowledge of basic work ideas. This could be a challenge to the future career of youth as entrepreneurs. Thus, if the youths lack knowledge or skills of relevant technology they could have low morale or become inefficient due to lack of confidence arising from inadequate needs assessment and entrepreneurial support.

The concept youth refers to the process of transition from childhood to adulthood (Asante, 2012). This transitional trend (childhood to adulthood) is both biological, social and psychological. Thus, these factors must be considered in explaining the concept youth. In this respect, age ranges of 15 – 24, 12 – 24 or 15 – 35 years have been used to define youthful age. Similarly, features of responsibility, independence and autonomy characterize the social and psychological dimensions to youthful age or era. Accordingly, Otagburuagu (2010) described the youthful phase of life as a period from adolescent to adulthood and up to forty years and beyond depending on the attitude of an individual to life (P. 20). Youths are important segment of the population. Youths in different societies constitute the workforce, future leaders and pivots of future development. However, many youths suffer from unemployment, poverty and lack of skills. It is entrepreneurial activities that could offer youths the necessary skills required for self-reliance, employment, job creation and empowerment. Youths are the energy reservoir of every society. Ekere [nd] described youths as the most active and energetic group of the country's population in whose hand lies the destiny of the nation. Activities in societies that require energy are always assigned to the youths. In their efforts to attend adulthood prematurely youths could become

lawless and at times take laws into their hands. Ekere [nd] further described the youths as always in a hurry, impatient, hardly seek advice, believes in their physical strength and desire to get rich quick.

Empowerment has to do with equipping someone with requisite entrepreneurial or relevant technical knowledge or employability skills to take economic decisions. The unemployed youths could be empowered with new skills, knowledge, training, education or the ability to do what they could not do before. In this respect, Adegun and Akomolafe (2014) posited that empowerment is assisting people to overcome obstacles which might prevent them from achieving their economic potentials. Empowerment can also be expressed as helping people to remove the artificial barriers that ordinarily cannot permit them to achieve greatness. Simply put, youths are empowered when they acknowledge that they have choices of life and can partake in decision making be it economic, social, political and otherwise. To Egbefo and Abe (2017), youth empowerment is the restoration of an individual's sense of values, strength, and capacity to handle life's problems. Empowerment can be achieved through education, networking and organization. Examples of empowerment programmes include many government and non-governmental employment initiatives to support the youth (Adegun and Akomolafe, 2014).

Unemployment of youths constitutes serious challenge to both economic and social development of Nigeria. According to Emejo (2013), unemployment rate in Nigeria seems to be on the increase. For instance, according to the labour force statistics as at the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2018, 39.11 million of the population of Nigeria who are eligible and active to work were either unemployed or underemployed. Perhaps, the greatest argument is not only the need to create more jobs but on how to make most of the graduates job creators or develop their mindset to create jobs instead of being perpetual job seekers (Mkpa, 2014). This is particularly so because we live in an entrepreneurial age which is predicated on industrial economy characterized by knowledge economy. This knowledge economy is based on what local individuals can do with knowledge, demand skills of creativity, innovation, collaboration and critical thinking (Kalu; 2014). However, the question is how many graduates or youths of tertiary institutions in Abia State have the above mentioned entrepreneurial skills? Abia state has many idle or unemployed youths that could be vulnerable to crime and other related criminality if not properly and meaningfully engaged in legitimate economic activities (Asogwa & Dim 2016). It has also been established that majority of unemployed youths in the state lack entrepreneurial skills that could make them employable (Emejo, 2013, UNTAD, 2010). Thus, engagement of youths in relevant entrepreneurial programmes or activities constitutes an imperative for economic empowerment.

However, it would seem that the level of youth participation in Government organized youths employment schemes in Abia State has not been encouraging (Okoye, 2013). This trend no doubt has increased the rate of unemployment of youths. Youths' active participation in empowerment programmes such as Central Bank of Nigeria Entrepreneurship Development Centre (EDC), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Re-investment Employment, Programme (Sure-P), Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) Empowerment programme, Women Development Centre's (WDC), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES) etc will depend largely on the skills that the enlisted entrepreneurship trainings could offer to them. Despite all the efforts of the past governments and agencies to empower youths, many of them still lack entrepreneurial skills and has remained unemployed. This could be so due to the fact that what actually determines their needs have never been identified. This study therefore sought to identify socio-

economic determinants of entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State, Nigeria.

Gender is a factor that could influence the socio-economic determinants of entrepreneurial needs of unemployment youths in Abia State. Gender according to Okeke (2008) is a social or cultural construct utilized by the society to ascribe roles to males and females. Research findings indicate that interest and inclinations of males and females differ significantly with respect to engagement in risk ventures (Amazue and Obi, 2008). However, these findings are not entirely conclusive as some other studies have also shown that there is no gender disparity in entrepreneurial tasks (Amazue and Ome, 2013). This study therefore ascertained the extent gender as a moderator variable could influence the socio-economic determinants of entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths in Abia State.

### **Statement of Problem**

Unemployment has been a serious challenge to economic development of Nigeria particularly Abia State. Many able bodied youths who graduated from different educational levels are unable to be employed by both public and private sectors of the economy. This could be due to lack of skills and high rate of unemployment among youths in Abia State which has resulted to social vices such as fraud, prostitution, kidnapping, political thuggery and so on. Thus, youths in Abia State need to be empowered through entrepreneurial education and active participation in youth empowerment programmes. Youth empowerment programmes are skill acquisition activities for self reliance, self-employment/job creation and employment opportunities provided by the government outside the formal school curriculum. The past government initiatives to empower youths in Abia State include National Directorate of Employment [NDE], Sure-P, Niger-Delta Development Commission [NDDC] empowerment programme, National Poverty Eradication Programme [NAPEP] etc. Despite the fact that the past youth empowerment programmes made impact on youth empowerment, high rate of youth unemployment still persists. Available evidence from literature show that certain factors could be responsible for youth entrepreneurial needs. Against this background this study identified those factors that actually determined the entrepreneurial needs of youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. ascertain the extent vocational interest could determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State;
2. determine the extent financial needs/motivation could determine entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State;
3. find out the extent prior education/training could determine the entrepreneurial needs of Unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State

### **Research Questions**

- 1) To what extent can vocational interest determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State?
- 2) To what extent can financial interest/motives determine the entrepreneurial needs of youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State?

3) To what extent can prior education/training determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployment youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study at 0.05 level of significance.

[1] **H01:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female youths on the extent vocational interest can determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State.

[2] **H02:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female youths on the extent financial interest/motives can determine the entrepreneurial needs of youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State.

[3] **H03:** There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female youths on the extent prior education/training can determine entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth employment programmes in Abia State, Nigeria.

## **II. Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This design accommodates both large and small population by selecting and studying sample chosen from representative population to discover the relative incidence distribution and inter-relationships of sociological and psychological variable that make up the population (Nworgu, 2015). The study was conducted in Abia State, Nigeria. The choice of the study area was because there were many reported cases of unemployed youths in the state. The population for the study consisted of all registered unemployed youths in 17 Local Government Areas in Abia State. A sample of 200 registered unemployed youths were used for the study through stratified random sampling techniques. Instrument for the collection was 18 –item Questionnaire with three (3) clusters developed by the researchers titled “Determinants of Entrepreneurial Needs of Unemployed Youths Participating in Youth Empowerment Programmes Questionnaire (DENUYPYEPQ). The Instrument was based on 4- point rating scale with the response option of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent(HE), Low Extent(LX) and Very Low Extent(VLX). Numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned to the response options relative to their positive or negative ratings. The instrument was validated by three experts, one from the Department of Science Education and two from the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their comments and views were used to improve the final version of the instrument.

Reliability test was carried out on 20 registered unemployed youths from Enugu State which was not part of the area of study through test-retest method. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the internal consistency of the reliability of the instrument. An overall reliability co-efficient of 0.90 was obtained. This shows that the instrument was reliable. Administration and collection of the instrument was done and retrieved on the spot with the help of four research assistants who were trained by the researchers for the purpose of the study. Data collected were analyzed using mean and percentages for research questions (with the criterion mean of 2.50 for acceptance and below taken as rejection). The null hypotheses were analyzed using t-test statistic at 0.05 level of significance.

### III. RESULTS

The results of the study are presented below in tables based on the research questions and hypotheses.

**Research Question 1:** To what extent can vocational interest determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of ratings on extent vocational interest can determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State**

S/N	Item statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1	I am interested in entrepreneurship training for vocational skills acquisition.	2.69	0.88	High Extent
2	Entrepreneurship training will help me own a business venture in future.	2.73	0.88	High Extent
3	I would want to work for myself rather than work for others.	2.53	0.88	High Extent
4	I really consider self-employment more noble than paid jobs.	3.02	0.69	High Extent
5	I am always excited with the idea of owing my own business.	2.54	0.96	High Extent
6	Owing my own business will give me job satisfaction.	2.97	0.80	High Extent
	<b>OVERALL</b>	2.67	0.42	<b>High Extent</b>

**Table 1** shows that the respondents agreed with the items of the instrument to high extent. This is because their mean ratings were above 2.50 benchmark set for acceptance. Similarly their standard deviation ratings indicated that their responses were not spread but close to the mean. This means that vocational interest determined to a high extent the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent can financial interest/motives determine the entrepreneurial needs of youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia state?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of ratings on extent financial interests/motives determined the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia state**

S/N	Item statement	Mean	SD	Remark
7	I would like to own my business in order to be financially buoyant.	2.51	0.89	High Extent
8	I can easily identify a business that is financially rewarding.	2.81	0.87	High



				Extent
9	Financial reward is strong motive for one to be an entrepreneur.	2.71	0.94	High Extent
10	The ownership of a business enterprise leads to good living condition.	2.91	0.82	High Extent
11	Owing my own business will assist me to acquire financial wealth and landed property.	3.12	0.76	High Extent
12	I would like to engage in business ventures that render financial value services.	2.80	1.01	High Extent
<b>OVERALL</b>		2.65	0.41	<b>High Extent</b>

**Table 2** reveals that the respondents agreed with the items of the instrument to a high extent. This is because their mean ratings were above 2.50 benchmark set for acceptance. In addition, their standard deviation ratings were not spread but close to the mean. This means that financial interest/motives determined to a high extent the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State.

**Research Question 3:** To what extent can prior education/training determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State?

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of ratings on extent prior educational/training determined the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia state**

S/N	Item statement	Mean	SD	Remark
13	My prior knowledge of trade subjects improves my interest in entrepreneurship.	2.67	0.97	High Extent
14	My business can be successfully managed because I have relevant entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.	2.76	0.97	High Extent
15	I have the required knowledge and skills to identify good business opportunities.	2.99	0.82	High Extent
16	My previous learning of entrepreneurship has prepared me for entrepreneurial career.	2.97	0.80	High Extent

17	My educational exposure helped me to prepare good business proposal/plans.	2.51	0.89	High Extent
18	My educational background gives me new and better ideas of marketing products and services.	2.81	0.87	High Extent
<b>OVERALL</b>		<b>2.78</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>High Extent</b>

**Table 3** indicates that the respondents agreed with the items of the instrument to a high extent. This is because their mean ratings were above 2.50 benchmark set for acceptance. Also, their standard deviation ratings were not spread but close to the mean. This means that prior education/training determined to a high extent the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of unemployed male and female youths participating in youths empowerment programmes on the extent vocational interest could determine their entrepreneurial needs.

**Table 4: t-test analysis on extent vocational interest determines the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia state**

S/N	Item statement	Male (N=120)		Female (N=80)		t-value	p-value	Remark
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
1	I am interested in entrepreneurship training for vocational skills acquisition.	2.71	0.84	2.66	0.93	0.36	0.72	NS
2	Entrepreneurship training will help me own a business venture in future.	2.76	0.86	2.68	0.91	0.66	0.51	NS
3	I would want to work for myself rather than work for others.	2.51	0.83	2.54	0.89	-0.23	0.82	NS
4	I really consider self employment more noble than paid jobs.	3.01	0.69	3.03	0.71	-0.17	0.87	NS
5	I am always excited with the idea of owing my own business	2.53	0.95	2.54	0.98	0.06	0.95	NS
6	Owing my own business will give me job satisfaction	2.98	0.78	2.94	0.85	0.39	0.69	NS

<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>NS</b>
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Table 4 shows the t-values, and p-values of the responses of the respondents. The p-values of the items were above 0.05 level of significance in all the items. This means that the null hypothesis was upheld. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of unemployed male and female youths participating in youth empowerment programmes on the extent vocational interest determined their entrepreneurial needs.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of unemployed male and female youths participating in youth empowerment programmes on the extent financial interests/motives can determine their entrepreneurial needs.

**Table 5: t-test analysis on extent financial interest/motives determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State**

S/N	Item statement	Male (N=120)		Female (N=80)		t-value	p-value	Remark
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
7	I would like to own my business in order to be financially buoyant.	2.53	0.88	2.46	0.91	0.55	0.58	NS
8	I can easily identify a business that is financially rewarding.	2.80	0.86	2.08	0.90	-0.09	0.92	NS
9	Financial reward is strong motive for one to be entrepreneur.	2.80	0.93	2.61	0.96	-0.18	0.85	NS
10	The ownership of a business enterprise leads to good living condition.	2.90	0.81	2.91	0.83	-0.11	0.92	NS
11	Owing my own business will assist me to acquire financial wealth and landed property.	3.12	0.75	3.11	0.78	0.038	0.97	NS
12	I would like to engage in business venture that renders financial value services.	2.80	0.99	2.80	1.04	0.00	1.00	NS
	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>2.65</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>NS</b>

Table 5 shows the t-values, and p-values of the responses of the respondents. The p-values of the items were above 0.05 level of significance in all the items. This means that the null hypothesis was upheld. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of unemployed male and female youths participating in youth empowerment programmes on the extent financial interests/motives determined their entrepreneurial needs.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of unemployed male and female youth participating in youth empowerment programmes on the extent prior education/training can determine their entrepreneurial needs.

**Table 6: t-test analysis on extent prior education/training determine the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youth participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State**

S/N	Item statement	Male (N=120)		Female (N=80)		t-value	p-value	Remark
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
13	My prior knowledge of trade subjects improvedmy interest in entrepreneurship.	2.70	0.95	2.61	1.01	0.62	0.54	NS
14	My business can be successfully managed because I have relevant entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.	2.78	0.95	2.71	0.99	0.51	0.61	NS
15	I have the required knowledge and skills to identify good business opportunities.	2.99	0.79	2.98	0.86	0.14	0.89	NS
16	My previous learning of entrepreneurship has prepared me for entrepreneurial career.	2.98	0.78	2.94	0.85	0.39	0.69	NS
17	My educational exposure helps me to prepare good business proposal/plans.	2.53	0.88	2.46	0.91	0.55	0.58	NS
18	My educational background gives me new and better ideas of marketing products and services.	2.80	0.86	2.81	0.90	-0.09	0.92	NS
	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>0.53</b>	NS

Table 6 shows the t-values, and p-values of the responses of the respondents. The p-values of the items were above 0.05 level of significance in all the items. This means that the null hypothesis was upheld. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of unemployed male and female youths participating in youth empowerment programmes on the extent prior education/training determined their entrepreneurial needs.

#### **IV. Discussion of Findings**

Finding with respect to research question one indicates that vocational interest determined to a high extent the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programs in Abia State. This finding is very much in line with both natural instincts and entrepreneurial goals of individuals. Indeed, individuals who go into one entrepreneurial venture or the other do so to nurture sustainable vocational outlets or recognizable and dignifying means of livelihood. This finding is supported by the opinion of Elmuti, Khoury and Omran (2012) which espoused that hidden traits can be developed successfully through exposure to entrepreneurial opportunities. Similarly, it is also supported by Widiyanti (2017) which acknowledged that entrepreneurial interest and willingness to work hard, sense of independence and work taking are traits that could inspire vocational interest, confidence and ability to succeed in any given business opportunity.

With respect to research question two (which is on financial motive), it was clearly shown that youths desire entrepreneurial support largely due to expected, pecuniary benefits. This finding is natural because financial needs affect adversely the survival of both individuals and the society at large. It constitutes the bases for substantial demand of basic support needs of man such as feeding, shelter, and general health care. This finding is readily supported by the position of Adegun and Akomolafe (2013) which asserts that youths with little financial support find it difficult to sustain interest in entrepreneurial ventures. Thus, financial motives could inspire youths who are willing to go into entrepreneurial ventures to succeed (Emejo, 2013).

Finding with respect to research question three showed clearly that prior education or training determined to a high extent the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State. This finding is not surprising at all. This is because education in general and entrepreneurial education in particular provide individuals with the ability to recognize commercial opportunities, insight and requisite knowledge as well as skills to act on them (Lukman and Oviare, 2010). This position is also supported by the entrepreneurial trait theory of Tucker, (1991) Schumpeter (1934) which assert that sense of achievement, creativity and technical knowledge could motivate individuals to succeed in entrepreneurial ventures. These qualitative attributes as observed by Okoye, Illeoanya and Udunze (2014) help youths confront productivity challenges. Thus, if youths lack knowledge or skills, they could have low business morale and become unsuccessful entrepreneurs.

Findings, with respect to gender influence on socio-economic determinants of entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths (participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State) showed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female unemployed youth, with respect to vocational interest, financial motives and prior education/training. These findings are surprising because an account of existing societal stereotype, one would have expected significant differences with respect to the factors that determine entrepreneurial needs of unemployed males and females (Widiyanti, 2017). This position

could be further explained by the general challenging situation in the society which seems to have compelled females to venture into areas of entrepreneurial interest that were seemingly male dominated. Justifiably, economic/financial motives and vocational or educational/training needs warrant no gender barriers. Thus, both males/females feel virtually similar vocational, financial and related needs. However, they may only differ significantly in the kind of entrepreneurial venture they are engaged in to actualize such needs (Amuzue, 2011).

## **V. Conclusion**

The initial assumption prior to this study was that some factors could determine entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State. The findings of this study have proved much of this initial assumption by showing that vocational interest, financial motives and prior education/training do to a high extent determine entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State. It was also indicated that gender as a factor did not significantly influence these determinants especially the socio-economic aspects of the entrepreneurial needs of unemployed youths. Thus, male and female unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes perceived vocational interest, financial motives and prior education/training as strong socio-economic determinants of their entrepreneurial needs.

## **VI. Recommendations**

Based on the above, the following recommendations were made:

(1) There is need for Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, other relevant stakeholders such as employers of labour to properly articulate and harness the interest of unemployed youths in assigning them to entrepreneurial ventures or programmes. This is the only way they can be seen to be engaged in what they consider vocationally relevant and financially rewarding based on their existing needs, knowledge or socio-economic background.

(2) There is the need for an all inclusive gender- based entrepreneurial packages for unemployed youths participating in youth empowerment programmes in Abia State .This is to discourage the traditional belief that males are more entrepreneurially inclined than females. Indeed, females have entrepreneurial needs which could be met by motives similar or same with those of males and these interests which cut across gender barriers should be considered by relevant stakeholders.

(3) There is also need to ensure that youths are given some practical and theoretical entrepreneurial training in school. This could help to prepare them for the current challenges of unemployment in the Nigerian Labour Market. This clarion call suggests that both the Nigeria Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) should strengthen and refocus the exciting entrepreneurial programmes at the senior secondary school and Tertiary level of education to meet the economic employment needs, challenges and aspirations of youths in Abia State in particular and Nigeria in general.

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