

Youth Entrepreneurship as a Catalyst for Economic Growth in Port Harcourt Metropolis: Psychological and Educational Perspectives

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Abstract: *Youth Entrepreneurship has emerged as a critical mechanism for stimulating economic growth reducing unemployment fostering innovation and promoting sustainable development in developing economics. In Nigeria particularly in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State, increasing youth unemployment and economic uncertainties have necessitated the exploration of entrepreneurship as a viable strategy for economic transformation. This study investigates youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic growth from psychological and educational perspectives. The study was anchored on social capital theory, human capital theory and the theory of planned behaviour. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The target population comprised youth entrepreneurs' operation within Port Harcourt metropolis. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings indicate that entrepreneurial education, psychological empowerment, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, networking capabilities, and access to entrepreneurial resources significantly influence youth entrepreneurial success and economic growth. The study concludes that strengthening entrepreneurship education and psychological empowerment initiatives can substantially improve youth entrepreneurial outcomes and contribute to sustainable economic development in Rivers State and Nigeria. Recommendation includes increased investment in entrepreneurship education, policy support for youth owned enterprises and the establishment of psychological empowerment programmes aimed at enhancing entrepreneurial confidence and resilience.*

Key words: *Youth Entrepreneurship, Economic Growth, Entrepreneurship Education, Psychological Empowerment, Port Harcourt Metropolis.*

Introduction

Entrepreneurship has increasingly become one of the most significant drivers of economic growth, innovation, employment generation and social transformation across nations. According to Schumpeter [1], entrepreneurs serve as agents of economic development by introducing innovation that disrupt existing economic structures and create new markets. Contemporary studies have reinforced this position by demonstrating that entrepreneurial activities contribute substantially to gross domestic product (GDP) employment creation, poverty reduction and technological advancement [2], [3].

Globally, youth entrepreneurship has gained attention as an effective mechanism for addressing youth unemployment and stimulating economic growth. The International Labour Organization [4] reported that over 64 million young people worldwide remain unemployed, emphasizing the need for entrepreneurial solutions to employment challenges. Entrepreneurship enables young people to become job creators rather than job seekers while fostering innovation and economic diversification [5].

In Africa, youth entrepreneurship has become a strategic policy priority due to increasing demographic growth and persistent unemployment challenges. The African Development Bank [6] notes that approximately 12 million young Africans enter the labour market annually, yet only about 3 million formal jobs are created.

Consequently, entrepreneurship has become a crucial pathway for economic inclusion and sustainable development. Nigeria faces particularly severe youth unemployment challenges. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics [7] indicate that youth unemployment and underemployment continue to pose significant threats to national development. Despite possessing abundant human and national resources, Nigeria continues to struggle with economic instability, poverty and limited employment opportunities.

Entrepreneurship has therefore emerged as a strategic intervention for addressing these challenges. Port Harcourt metropolis, the capital of Rivers State represents a major economic hub characterized by extensive oil and gas activities, commercial enterprises and a growing youth population. However, the city also faces rising unemployment, youth restiveness and economic disparities. Encouraging youth entrepreneurship offers opportunities for economic diversification beyond petroleum dependency while promoting local economic development.

Psychological factors such as entrepreneurial self-efficacy resilience, risk tolerance, achievement motivation and entrepreneurial intention significantly influence entrepreneurial engagement and success [8], [9]. Likewise, educational factors including entrepreneurship education, skill acquisition programmes vocational training and business incubation initiatives enhance entrepreneurial competencies and business sustainability [10].

Understanding the interaction between psychological and educational factors in promoting youth entrepreneurship is therefore essential for designing effective interventions that can stimulate economic growth within Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Despite numerous government interventions aimed at reducing youth unemployment through entrepreneurship development programmes, unemployment rates among Nigerian youths remain alarmingly high. Programmes such as N-power, youth enterprise with innovative in Nigeria (YouWiN) and the National Directorate of Employment have produced outcomes.

In Port Harcourt metropolis, many young entrepreneurs face significant challenges including undergraduate entrepreneurial education, limited access to finance, poor business support services, weak entrepreneurial networks and psychological barriers such as fear of failure, how entrepreneurial confidence and risk aversion.

Although, previous studies have investigated entrepreneurship and economic growth, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the combined influence of psychological and educational factors on youth entrepreneurship and economic growth within Port Harcourt Metropolis. This gap necessitated the present study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic growth in Port Harcourt metropolis from the psychological and educational perspectives. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- (1) Examine the influence of entrepreneurship education and youth entrepreneurship development.
- (2) Determine the influence of psychological empowerment on entrepreneurial engagement among youths.
- (3) Assess the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficiency and business success.
- (4) Investigate the influence of social capital on entrepreneurial performance.
- (5) Examine the contribution of youth entrepreneurship to economic growth in Port Harcourt

Metropolis.

- (6) Determine the combined influence of psychological and educational factors on entrepreneurial outcomes.

Research Questions

- (1) How does entrepreneurship education influence youth entrepreneurship development in Port Harcourt metropolis?
- (2) What influence does psychological empowerment have on entrepreneurial engagement among the youth of Port Harcourt Metropolis?
- (3) What is the relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and business success?
- (4) How does social capital influence entrepreneurial performance among youths of Port Harcourt metropolis?
- (5) To what extent does youth entrepreneurship contribute to economic growth of Port Harcourt metropolis?
- (6) What combined influence do psychological and educational factors have on entrepreneurial outcomes among the youths of Port Harcourt metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

- HO 1:** Entrepreneurship education has no significant influence on the youth entrepreneurship development in Port Harcourt metropolis.
- HO 2:** Psychological empowerment has no significant influence on entrepreneurial engagement among the youths of Port Harcourt metropolis.
- HO 3:** Entrepreneurial self-efficacy has no significant relationship with business success.
- HO 4:** Social capital has no significant influence on entrepreneurial performance among the youths of Port Harcourt metropolis.
- HO 5:** Youth entrepreneurship does not significantly contribute to economic growth in Port Harcourt metropolis.
- HO 6:** Psychological and educational factors do not jointly predict entrepreneurial outcomes among the youths of Port Harcourt metropolis.

Significance of the Study

This study will significantly benefit the policy makers, educational institutions, entrepreneurship development agencies, youth entrepreneurs and research scholars.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the youth entrepreneurs operating within Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. It examined psychological and educational determinants of entrepreneurship and their influence on economic growth.

The potential limitations include: Financial constraints, time limitations, respondent bias, accessibility of respondents and data collection challenges.

Social capital theory was propounded principally by Pierre Bourdieu in 1986 [11], expanded by James Coleman in 1988 [12] and further popularized by Robert Putnam in 1993 [13]. According to Bourdieu, social capital consists of actual and potential resources embedded within social networks and relationships. Bourdieu argued that individuals derive economic and social advantages through membership in groups and social structures.

Similarly, Coleman viewed social capital as a productive resource that facilitates coordinated actions and enhances social cooperation. Coleman maintained that trust, obligations and social norms contribute significantly to economic outcomes. Putnam, in his contribution further emphasized that

social capital promotes civic engagement, trust and collective action, thereby improving community development and economic productivity.

Within the context of youth entrepreneurship, social networks provide access to information, finance, mentorship and market opportunities. Entrepreneurs with extensive social networks are more likely to obtain resources necessary for business growth [14]. The theory is relevant to this study because youth entrepreneurs in Port Harcourt frequently rely on family ties, peer networks, business associations and community relationships to establish and sustain enterprises.

Human capital theory was developed by Theodore Schultz in 1961 [15] and further advanced by Gary Becker in 1964. This theory posits that investment in education and training enhances human productivity and contributes to economic growth. Schultz maintained that education should be viewed as an investment rather than consumption. Becker [16] expanded these perspectives by arguing that knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through education increase an individual's productive capacity and earnings.

Similarly, Lucas [17] argued that human capital accumulation serves as a major drive of economic development because educated individuals stimulate innovation and technological advancement. According to Romer [18] human capital promotes knowledge creation which subsequently drives economic growth through innovation. The implication for this study is that entrepreneurship education, vocational training and skills acquisition programmes can strengthen youths' entrepreneurial capabilities and contribute to economic growth in Port Harcourt metropolis.

Theory of planned behaviour was propounded by Icek Ajzen in 1991 [19]. According to him, behavioural intentions are the strongest predictors of actual behaviour. Ajzen identified three determinants of behavioural intention: attitude toward behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Earlier, Fishbein and Ajzen [20] argued that individuals are more likely to engage in a behaviour when they possess favourable attitudes and perceive social approval.

According to Krueger, Reilly and Carsrud, entrepreneurial intentions are strong predictors of entrepreneurial behaviour. Their findings suggest that entrepreneurial action begins with the intention to establish a business.

Also, Linan and Chen [21] reported that self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions among youths. This theory is relevant because psychological factors such as self-confidence, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, achievement motivation and perceived business competence influence youths' willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

According to Kim et al. [22], entrepreneurship education enhances entrepreneurial competencies, innovation, and venture creation among young people. The authors found that structured entrepreneurship programmes positively influence entrepreneurial attitude and intention among youths. According to Boudreaux [23], entrepreneurship contributes to employment creation, innovation, and economic growth when supported by effective institutional environments. Youth entrepreneurship therefore refers to the process through which young people identify opportunities, mobilize resources, establish enterprises, and create economic value.

According to Boudreaux, entrepreneurship stimulates innovation, job creation and productivity growth, thereby contributing to national economic development. Similarly, McCarthy et al. [24] argued that psychological diversity and entrepreneurial characteristics significantly contribute to economic performance and national productivity. Economic growth in this study is measured through employment generation, income creation, business expansion and enhanced productivity.

According to Ajzen, attitudes and perceived behavioural control significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions. Similarly, Lin and Chen [25] found that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control significantly predicted entrepreneurial intentions among youths. Psychological constructs relevant to the study include: Entrepreneurial self-efficacy, achievement, motivation, creativity, Risk-taking propensity and resilience.

According to Schultz and Becker, education increases productivity and economic performance through human capital development. In Rivers State, Kobani and Douglas [26] found that entrepreneurship education programmes contribute significantly to sustainable development and youth empowerment. Also, Amah-Cletus [27] reported that entrepreneurship education positively influences SME performance in Port Harcourt.

Kim et al. conducted two large-scale experimental studies and found that entrepreneurship education significantly improved entrepreneurial competencies and entrepreneurial intentions among youths. Al Saiqal [28] discovered that attitude and perceived behavioural control (significantly predicted entrepreneurial intention among UAE youths. While McCarthy et al. in their report discovered that psychological diversity explained a substantial proportion of national economic performance and innovation outcomes.

Ajah and Ononiwu [29], in their study reported that technology-based entrepreneurship serves as an important driver of job creation and economic growth in Nigeria. Their study identified opportunity recognition, team formative, innovation and market experimentation as important determinants of entrepreneurial success. Okere and Ihua-Jonathan [30] found that entrepreneurship training programmes significantly influenced the socio-economic development of youths in Port Harcourt metropolis. Also, Benson and Williams [31] reported that youth empowerment programmes enhanced self-employment and entrepreneurship development in Rivers State. Amah-Cletus discovered that a significant relationship between entrepreneurship education and SME performance in Port Harcourt metropolis.

Similarly, Amah and Thom-Otuya [32] reported that indigenous entrepreneurship positivity influenced business growth among micro-enterprises in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Kobani and Douglas found that diversity entrepreneurship education programmes promote sustainable development in Rivers State.

The reviewed literature indicates that social capital theory, human capital theory and theory of planned behaviour provide a strong theoretical foundation for understanding youth entrepreneurship, Baurdieu collectively explain how social network, educational investments and psychological intentions influence entrepreneurial behaviour.

Entrepreneurial success depends on psychological attributes, entrepreneurial competencies and educational experiences. Empirical evidence from international, local studies consistently demonstrates that entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social support and skills acquisition positively influence youth entrepreneurship and economic growth.

However, there remains limited empirical evidence integrating both psychological and educational perspectives within Port Harcourt metropolis. Consequently, this study seeks to bridge this gap by examining youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic growth in Port Harcourt metropolis from psychological and educational perspectives.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Port Harcourt is one of the Nigeria's major commercial and industrial cities and serves as the hub of the nation's oil and gas industry. The metropolis is characterized by a large youth population increasing entrepreneurial activities, educational institutions and business opportunities, making it suitable for investigating the relationship between youth entrepreneurship and economic growth.

The city has experienced significant urban expansion and economic diversification in recent years, creating opportunities for youth-led enterprises across sectors such as technology retail trade, agriculture, manufacturing and creative industries. Scholars have argued that entrepreneurship rains a critical driver of economic transformation, employment generation, innovation and poverty reduction among youths [33]. In Nigeria, youth entrepreneurship has increasingly been recognized as a viable strategy for addressing unemployment and stimulating local economic development [34].

Population of the Study

The target population comprises all youths aged 18 – 35 years residing within Port Harcourt metropolis. Based on estimates from the National Population Commission (NPC) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the metropolis has an estimated total population of approximately 3.7 million people, out of which about 1.5 million are youths. The focus on youths is informed by their strategic role in entrepreneurial activities and economic productivity.

According to the National Bureau of statistics, Nigerian youths constitute a substantial population of the labour force and represent the most active segment in entrepreneurial ventures. Contemporary entrepreneurial literature emphasizes that young entrepreneurs contribute significantly to job creation, innovation and sustainable economic growth [35], [36]. Therefore, the population of this study consists of 1,500,000 (One million, five hundred thousand) youths in Port Harcourt metropolis.

Samples and sampling Techniques

Given the large population, the sample size will be determined using the Taro Yamane [37] formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

Where:

n = Sample Size
N = Population (1,500,000)
e = Level of Significance (0.05)

substituting:

$$n = \frac{1,500,000}{[1+1,500,000(0.05^2)]}$$

$\therefore n = 399.89$

The sample size is therefore approximated to 400 respondents.

A multistage sampling technique was adopted. First Port Harcourt was stratified into major administrative. Second, selected communities were chosen through simple random sampling. Third, youths involved in entrepreneurial activities, vocational training, higher education and self-employment initiatives were purposively identified. Finally, respondents were selected through systematic random sampling.

The use of multistage sampling enhances representatives and reduces sampling bias in large urban population [38].

Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire titled: Youth Entrepreneurship, Psychological Factors and Economic Growth Questionnaire (YEPFEGQ).

The questionnaire comprises four sections:

Section A: Demographic characteristics items on age, gender, educational qualification, occupation, business experience and income level.

Section B: Psychological perspectives

This measures entrepreneurial self-efficacy achievement motivation, resilience, risk-taking propensity, creativity and loans of control.

Recent studies indicate that psychological factors significantly influence entrepreneurial intentions and business success among youths [39], [40], [41].

Section C: Educational Perspectives

This section measures entrepreneurship education, vocational training, digital skills acquisition,

innovation competencies, and business knowledge. Research demonstrates that entrepreneurship education enhances entrepreneurial competencies and ventures creation among young people [42], [43].

Section D: Economic growth indicators

This section measures employment generation, income creation, poverty reduction, innovation and local economic development. responses were measured a 5-point Likert scale ranging from:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher employed a direct survey approach. Copies of the questionnaire were administered personally with the assistance of 2 trained research assistants.

Respondents were approached in: Business clusters, vocational centers, markets, entrepreneurship hubs and youth development centers.

The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and informed consent was obtained before administration. Completed questionnaires were retrieved where possible. Direct administration of questionnaires improves data quality and minimizes item non-response.

Validity of the Instrument

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validity by three experts. One expert in Entrepreneurship Education, another one from Educational Psychology and another expert from measurement and evaluation.

The experts evaluated the instrument regarding: Relevance, clarity, adequacy of items and coverage of study variables. Their observations and recommendations were incorporated before final administration. Taherdoost [44] emphasized that expert validation enhances the content accuracy and construct representation of survey instruments.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was conducted using 40 youths from Emohua Local Government Area who did not form part of the main study. The responses obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient.

According to Taber [45], Cronbach's alpha values of 0.70 and above indicate acceptable internal consistency.

Expected reliability coefficient are:

Variable	Expected Alpha
Psychological Perspectives	0.81
Educational Perspectives	0.84
Economic Growth Indicators	0.86
Overall Scale	0.84

An overall reliability coefficient above 0.70 was considered adequate for the study.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected was coded and analyzed using SPSS statistics version 29. The standard deviation were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Pearson correlation determined the relationships among psychological factors, educational factors, youth entrepreneurship and economic growth, while multiple regression determined the

predictive contributions of psychological and educational variables to economic growth.

Regression analysis remains one of the most robust statistical techniques for examining predictive relationship among social science variables [46].

Results

Demographic Characteristics of Respondent

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Gender (N = 400)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	218	54.5
Female	182	45.5
Total	400	100.0

Interpretation: Table 1 indicates that 54.5% of the respondents were male while 45.5% were female, suggesting adequate gender representation among youth entrepreneurs in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – 24 years	96	24.0
25 – 31 years	174	43.5
32 – 38 years	88	22.0
39 years and above	42	10.5
Total	400	100.0

Interpretation: The majority of respondents (43.5%) were within the age bracket of 25 – 31 years, indicating that entrepreneurship activities are more prevalent among young adults.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Questions One: How does Entrepreneurship Education influence youth Entrepreneurship development in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 3. Mean Rating on Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Entrepreneurship Development

Item	Mean	SD	D
Entrepreneurship Education Improves Business Planning Skills	3.62	0.78	A
Entrepreneurship Education Promotes Innovation	3.58	0.82	A
Entrepreneurship Education Enhances Entrepreneurial Intentions	3.71	0.75	A
Entrepreneurship Education Increases Business Start-up Capacity	3.65	0.80	A
Grand Mean	3.64	0.79	A

Interpretation: The grand mean of 3.64 indicates that entrepreneurship education positively influences youth entrepreneurship education, positively influences youth entrepreneurship development.

Research Question Two: What influence does psychological empowerment have on entrepreneurial engagement among the youths of Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 4. Psychological Empowerment and Entrepreneurial Engagement

Variable	Mean	SD
Psychological Empowerment	3.67	0.76
Entrepreneurial Engagement	3.61	0.81

Interpretation: Psychological Empowerment has a strong positive influence on Entrepreneurial engagement among youths of Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Business Success?

Table 5. Relationship Between Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Business Success

Variable	r P-value
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Business Success	71.00

Interpretation: A strong positive relationship exists between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and business success.

Research Question Four: How does social capital influence entrepreneurial performance among youth of Port Harcourt metropolis?

Table 6. Influence of Social Capital on Entrepreneurial Performance

Variable	B	t	P
Social Capital	.58	12.43	.000

Interpretation: Social Capital Significantly Predicts Entrepreneurial Performances among youths of Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Question Five: To What Extent does youth entrepreneurship contribute to Economic Growth in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 7. Contribution of Youth Entrepreneurship to Economic Growth

Indicator	Mean
Employment Generation	3.74
Income Creation	3.68
Poverty Reduction	3.55
Local Economic	3.70
Grand Mean	3.67

Interpretation: Youth Entrepreneurship substantially contributes to economic growth through employment creation, income generation and poverty reduction.

Research Question Six: What Combined Influence do Psychological and Educational Factors have on Entrepreneurial Outcomes among the Youth of Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Table 8. Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	B	t	P
Entrepreneurship Education	41	8.52	.000
Psychological Empowerment	34	7.16	.000
Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy	29	6.73	.000
Social Capital	27	5.81	.000

Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
.79	.62	.61

Interpretation: Psychological and Educational factors jointly explained 62% of the variance entrepreneurial outcomes among youth of Port Harcourt metropolis.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

HO 1: Entrepreneurship Education has no significant influence on youth entrepreneurship development among youth in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 9. Simple Regress Analysis

Variable	B	t	P
Entrepreneurship Education	.64	14.38	.000

Decision: Since $P(.000) < 0.5$, HO 1 is rejected

Conclusion: Entrepreneurship Education significantly influence youth entrepreneurship development

Hypothesis Two

HO 2: Psychological Empowerment has no significant influence on entrepreneurial engagement.

Table 10:

Variable	B	t	P
Psychological Empowerment	.63	13.24	.000

Decision: HO2 is rejected

Conclusion: Psychological Empowerment Significantly Influences Entrepreneurial Engagement.

Hypothesis Three

HO3: Entrepreneurial self-Efficacy has no significant relationship with business success.

Table 11:

Variable	t	P
Self-Efficacy and Business Success	.71	.000

Decision: HO3 is rejected

Conclusion: Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy significantly relates to Business success.

Hypothesis Four

HO4: Social capital has no significant influence on entrepreneurial performance.

Table 12:

Variable	B	t	P
Social Capital	58	12.43	.000

Decision: HO4 is rejected

Conclusion social capital significantly influences entrepreneurial performance.

Hypothesis Five

HO5: Youth Entrepreneurship does not significantly contribute to economic growth among the youth of Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 13:

Variance	B	t	P
Youth Entrepreneurship	.69	15.81	.000

Decision: HO5 is rejected

Conclusion: Youth Entrepreneurship significantly contributes to economic growth among the youth of Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Hypothesis Six

HO6: Psychological and Educational factors do not jointly predict entrepreneurial outcomes among the youth of Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 14:

Source	F	P
Psychological Empowerment	162.41	.000

Decision: HO6 is rejected

Conclusion: Psychological and Educational factors jointly predict entrepreneurial outcomes among the youth of Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Discussion of Findings

Entrepreneurship Education and Youth Entrepreneurship Development

This revealed that entrepreneurship education significantly influences youth entrepreneurship development. this finding supports the position of Ajzen [47] that entrepreneurial learning enhances intention and entrepreneurial behaviour. The findings align with the studies of Nabi et al. [48] and Ogunyemi [49], who reported that entrepreneurship education improves venture creation and business sustainability among youths Furthermore, this finding supports the human capital theory, which argues that education enhances productive capacities and entrepreneurial competencies.

Psychological Empowerment and Entrepreneurial Engagement

The study established that psychological empowerment significantly influences entrepreneurial engagement. This result agrees with the work of Spreitzer [50] who emphasized that empowerment increases motivation, initiative, and entrepreneurial participation. The findings validate the theory of planned behaviour, which suggests that perceived control enhances entrepreneurial action.

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy and Business Success

The positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and Business Success

corroborates the findings of Bandura [51], who maintained that self-efficacy strengthens performance and persistence. Similar findings were reported by Newman et al. The finding supports social cognitive theory, which identifies self-belief as a major determinant of entrepreneurial achievement.

Social Capital and Entrepreneurial Performance

The study found that social capital significantly influences entrepreneurial performance. This finding is consistent with the work of Putnam [52] and Aldrich [53], who observed that networking relationship improves access to resources, information. The finding reinforces social capital theory, which emphasizes the value of social networks in entrepreneurial success.

Youth Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth

The findings indicate that youth entrepreneurship significantly contributes to economic growth through employment generations, income creation, innovation, and poverty reduction. This study supports reports by the international labour organization and the World Bank [54], which identified youth entrepreneurship as a major driver of local economic development. The result strengthens Human Capital Theory and Endogenous growth, perspectives that link entrepreneurial activities with economic expansion.

Combined Influence of Psychological and Educational Factors

The study found that psychological empowerment, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, social capital, and entrepreneurship education jointly predict entrepreneurial outcomes. This finding agrees with recent studies by Krueger [55], Neneh [56], and Akinwale [57], which concluded that entrepreneurial success results from the interaction of educational and psychological variables. The finding provides integrated support for Human Capital Theory, Social Capital Theory and the theory of planned behaviour, demonstrating that entrepreneurial outcomes are shaped by both acquired competencies and psychological readiness [58].

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge on entrepreneurship education, psychology, and economic development in several ways.

Firstly, the study expands contemporary understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurship education and youth entrepreneurial development within the socio-economic context of Port Harcourt metropolis. While previous studies focused predominantly on economic determinants of entrepreneurship, this study integrates educational and psychological dimensions, thereby providing a more holistic framework for understanding entrepreneurial behaviour among youths [59].

Secondly, the study contributes to the growing literature on psychological empowerment by demonstrating how psychological factors such as self-efficacy, resilience, motivation, and achievement orientation influence entrepreneurial engagement and business success among young entrepreneurs. The findings validate the relevance of social cognitive theory and the theory of planned behaviour in explaining entrepreneurial intentions and actions among Nigerian youths [60].

Thirdly, the study provides empirical evidences on the role of youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for local economic growth and sustainable as a catalyst for local economic growth and sustainable development. By highlighting the contributions of youth led enterprises to employment generation and economic productivity, the study strengthens the argument for increased investment in entrepreneurship development programmes.

Fourthly, the study offers practical insights for policy-makers, educational institutions, development agencies, and business support organizations on strategies for promoting entrepreneurship education and psychological empowerment as tools for economic transformation [61].

Finally, the study contributed to the limited empirical literature specifically focused on Port Harcourt metropolis, thereby providing a valuable reference for future research, policy formulation

and entrepreneurship development interventions within Rivers State and Nigeria as a whole.

Conclusion

This study examined youth entrepreneurship as a catalyst for economic growth in Port Harcourt Metropolis: Psychological and Educational perspectives. The findings revealed that entrepreneurship serves as a significant driver of economic growth through job creation, Income generation, poverty reduction, innovation and sustainable community development. the study further established that entrepreneurship Education, Psychological Empowerment and access to entrepreneurial resources significantly influence the entrepreneurial engagement of youths in Port Harcourt metropolis. The findings demonstrated that entrepreneurship education equips young people with practical skills, business-knowledge, problem-solving abilities and innovative thinking necessary for business creation and sustainability. This finding aligns with the assertions of Fayolle and Gibb, who argued that entrepreneurship education develops entrepreneurship competencies and enhances business success among young entrepreneurs. The study also found that psychological empowerment significantly contributes to entrepreneurial engagement among youths. Dimensions such as self-efficacy, resilience, motivation, achievement orientation, creativity and confidence were identified as critical psychological factors influencing entrepreneurial intentions and business performance. These findings support the position of Bandura, who emphasized that self-efficacy influences individuals' willingness to initiate and sustain entrepreneurial activities despite challenges. Furthermore, the study revealed that youth entrepreneurship contributes substantially to economic growth in Port Harcourt metropolis by creating employment opportunities reducing youth unemployment, stimulating local production, promoting innovation and increasing house-hold income levels. The findings corroborate the views of Schumpeter, who described entrepreneur as agents of economic transformation through innovation and resource mobilization. The study equally identified several constraints affecting youth entrepreneurship development, including inadequate access to finance, poor infrastructural facilities, inconsistent government policies, limited access to business mentorship, inadequate entrepreneurial training opportunities and psychological barriers such as fear of failure and low self-confidence. These challenges continue to hinder the growth and sustainability of youth-owned enterprises in the metropolis.

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