



SELF EMPLOYMENT AMONG GRADUATES IN NIGERIA

ABSTRACT

This study develops a standpoint to explain self-employment considering the increasing unemployment rate and social vices among graduates. I advance that the conventional financial analysis, demographic and cultural approaches that has been the practice in investigating the concept of self-employment in this context is inadequate in explaining the phenomena of graduates engaging into business activities to meet basic needs. This approach has neglects the mindset, self-starting behaviour and the ability of individuals to learn their business career from successful and experience persons for a living. Particularly, the behaviour perspective is evidently lacking from the understanding and development of self-employment construct, especially when we consider that business activities is a normal practice.

A cross-sectional and mixed method approach was employed to achieve the study objectives, using a sample of graduates across North-Central Nigeria. The quantitative data analysis involved descriptive statistics, zero-order correlations, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling using AMOS version 23 based on 338 usable observations. A bootstrap method using AMOS version 23 was used for mediation tests. For the qualitative approach, the point of saturation was achieved after the ninth self-employed graduates (key-informants) interviewed. The data collected were analyzed using the content analysis technique with the aid of NVivo9 version software. Similarly, voice recorded transcribed in verbatim texts were used to explain the emergent themes and subthemes.

The findings indicated that psychological capital and self-employment, psychological capital and self-starting behaviour, role model and self-starting behaviour and self-employment were found to be significant predictors of self-employment unlike role model and self-employment which found to be non-significantly associated. Similarly, this findings revealed that self-starting behaviour is a partial mediation and direct only mediation (full mediation) respectively.

The empirical study evidence supports the theoretical framework adopted for the investigation. Hence, policymakers need to design and implement programmes that will encourage individuals with a positive mindset to own personal business, and there should be orientation for behavioural change. The managerial implication is that government should build up the self-regulatory programme that will enhance behavioural change towards day to day business operations. The government should consider coming up with a policy to redesign the teaching of entrepreneurship to fit Nigerian context if business operations are to meet basic needs to accommodate business practices by graduates in Nigeria