



Influence of Entrepreneurial Activities of Small Scale Enterprises and Economic Development of Rural Communities in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of entrepreneurial activities of small scale enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State. Four research questions were raised for the study and four null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The target population of the study was 331 small scale enterprises in nine (9) selected Local Government Areas in the three (3) Senatorial Districts in Rivers State. The sample size was 169 respondents (88 fashion designers and 81 fish farmers) in the 9 selected Local Government Areas in the 3 Senatorial Districts in Rivers State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size of the study. The instrument for data collection was a self- structured questionnaire titled: "Influence of Entrepreneurial Activities of Small Scale Enterprises on Economic Development in Rural Communities in Rivers State". The face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained by two experts in Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation in the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87. Data collected were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation for research questions, while null hypotheses were tested using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance. Findings from the study revealed that entrepreneurial activities of small scale enterprises influence economic development in rural communities in Rivers State to a high extent. The study therefore, recommended among others that: there should be increased support by the State and Local Government Areas for all entrepreneurial activities in the rural communities in Rivers State, and that capital should be made available to small scale enterprises by the State and Local Government, as well as financial institutions for business expansion.

Keywords: Influence, Entrepreneurial, Small Scale Enterprises, Economic Development.

INTRODUCTION

Job creation is one of the fundamental objectives of every government but sadly, Nigeria has not been able to keep up with this responsibility, hence, it is bedeviled with high unemployment rate, which has become worrisome to government and other stakeholders. Obviously, the government has not been able to create jobs in preparing the Nigerian economy to achieve full employment, economic growth and development (Bogoro, 2015), in spite of the numerous businesses and investment potentials due to the abundant human and natural resources. This is why Nigeria continues to experience its share of social, economic and political disturbances which have stunted her economic development (Onwubiko, 2011).

Economic development is an all-encompassing, multifaceted and multidimensional concept being a measure of welfare and well-being, unlike economic growth. On one hand, economics is a social science that is concerned with human beings and social systems by which they organize their activities to satisfy basic material and non-materials needs. While on the other hand, Todaro and Smith (2011) maintained that, development is a process of improving the quality of all human lives and capabilities by raising people's standard of living, self-esteem, and freedom. In light of the above, researchers hold the view that economic development entails incremental transformation of an economy from stagnation to growth, and from low-income to high income status, where the economy has overcome problems of absolute poverty. In reality, economic development is about reducing poverty, enhancing public provision of education, improving health care and the maintenance of law and order, as well as guarantee civil liberties and opportunity for civic participation.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) provides the Human Development Index (HDI) as one measure of economic development; using real national income per head, adult literacy rate, the average years of schooling, and life expectancy ranking, alongside Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita income as a benchmark for measuring development, under the assumption that higher national income translates directly into a higher level of development. It is true that, if one compares a country's ranking in terms of its HDI with its ranking in terms of its GDP per capita, one may make some useful conclusions about the country's success in translating the benefits of national income into achieving economic development (UNDP, 2016). It is therefore, pertinent to note that, the HDI is a composite that brings together three variables; a long and healthy life, improved education, and a decent standard of living (UNDP, 2016), which can only be achieved through robust entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurial activity connotes enterprising human actions (in form of fashion designing, hair styling, fish farmers, and poultry farming) in pursuit of value creation through creating or expanding economic activity, by identifying and exploring new products, processes or market (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2006).

In the same vein, researchers have identified some fundamental objectives that seemed to drive entrepreneurial policy at the national level, to increase competition, strengthen local production chain, diversify the economy, and create employment and reduce unemployment. In this regard, Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD) (2006) launched an entrepreneurship Indicators Programme (EIP) to build internationally comparable statistics on entrepreneurship and its determinants, whose aim is to create a durable, long-term, programme of policy-relevant entrepreneurship statistics. As such, the activities involve developing standard for engaging countries and international agencies in the collection of data and other information (Ahmad & Seymour, 2008). This may be one of the reasons which prompted Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010) to argue that percentage(s) of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) operating in any economy has increased tremendously in recent times; hence they are regarded as an economy's growth engine. In buttressing this fact, it is evident that large corporations have lost huge percentage of patronage to the benefit of SMEs which have become a major source of employment thereby reducing the high rate of unemployment and economic stagnation, as it enhances socio-economic harmony and improve living standard of the citizenry, among other things, indicating a shift towards enhanced entrepreneurial activities (Awogbenle & Iwuamadi, 2010).

Realizing the importance of developing entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria, the Federal Government being this in mind, introduces policies and programmes to establish institutional arrangements as well as agencies such as, National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN), Subsidy Reinvestment Programme (SURE-P), Youth Enterprise With Innovation in Nigeria (YOUWIN), Better Life Programme, Peoples' Bank, National Agency for Poverty Eradication (NAPEP), the National open apprenticeship scheme, the graduate job creation loan Guarantee Scheme, Agricultural sector Employment programme, Social Investment Programme (N-Power), and the most recent Trader Moni, to curb unemployment and encourage effective entrepreneurial development to boost entrepreneurial activities (Idam, 2014; Osemeke, 2012).. It is worthy of note that, all of these entrepreneurial programmes have not successfully achieved the intended plan for them.

Hence, private individuals in Nigeria are forced to practically engage in entrepreneurial activities to earn a living. Narrowing this scenario down to rural communities in the three senatorial districts in Rivers State, namely; Rivers-West, Rivers-East, and Rivers South-East, private individuals now engage in small scale businesses such as hair stylist, fashion design, fish farming, and sale of livestock feeds and poultry farmers.

Notwithstanding, several research works have been conducted on entrepreneurial activities and economic development respectively, such as those of Awogbenle and Iwuamadi (2010), Ishola and Akintoye (2008), Osemeke (2012), Wiklund and Shepherd (2003), but there seem to be no clear evidence of research on entrepreneurial activities and economic development, especially in rural communities in Rivers State. Given this perceived gap in literature, the point of departure for this study is to conduct an empirical study on entrepreneurial activities and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State. Hence, this study was geared toward ascertaining the influence of entrepreneurial activities of small scale enterprises on economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sexton and Bowman (1985) noted that entrepreneurs renew the economic activities by introducing new ideas, new processes, new products and services for the development of an economy as high correlation is noticed between the need for achievement motivation and successful economic activities in his study of motivational orientation. Wiklund and Shepherd (2003) viewed progress in economics due to high degree of their need for achievement motivation as a result of their child rearing practices. Sexton and Bowman (1985) explained that entrepreneurs practice ideologies relating to factors generating need for achievement motivation because these gives them high sense of psychological satisfaction. Li (2002) tries to relate motivation directly with entrepreneurship assuming that it is the immediate cause of the entrepreneurship. In the same vein, Wiklund and Shepherd (2003) stated that the disadvantaged minority group is mostly the source of entrepreneurship. Wiklund and Shepherd (2003) argued that the forces of disruption against the stability of traditional society were powerful to have creative personalities. This historical view implies that entrepreneurs are not equally distributed in the population, and the minorities, on the basis of religion, ethnic, migration or displaced elites have provided most of the entrepreneurial talent but not all the minority groups are the sources of entrepreneurship.

However, Sexton and Bowman (1985) argued that the marginal situation is not the guarantee for the growth of entrepreneurship. Sexton and Bowman (1985) suggested that entrepreneurial behavior is a function of the surrounding social structure and it is influenced by manipulatable economic and social incentives. Therefore, his model is based upon experimental psychology but identifies sociological variables as the determinants of entrepreneurial growth. Early research into entrepreneurship often focused on the psychological characteristics of entrepreneurs (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). Trait approaches were often employed, and long lists of entrepreneurial traits were identified. Studies have held that the potential entrepreneur can be identified through the examination of key attitudes and intentions as empirical studies show that intention is the single best predictor of human behavior (Thaddeus, 2012; Chen, 2005). Also, findings from different studies have shown that entrepreneurial potentials are not found with all individuals (Thaddeus, 2012). Li (2002) introduced the notion of entrepreneurial potential in a bid to enhance fulfillment of the psychological state of entrepreneurs. Thaddeus (2002) noted that potential entrepreneurs' surface and take the initiative when an attractive opportunity presents itself. For an opportunity to be seized, someone must first recognize it as a personally viable opportunity. When potential entrepreneurs and opportunities coincide, entrepreneurial behavior may take place, and a new firm can be founded. Thus, the joint occurrence of two events is critical for the emergence of entrepreneurship and as a result creation of a new firm. The first is the presence of an opportunity suited for a new firm and the second is a person who is able and willing to take advantage of an entrepreneurial opportunity. Hence, before there can be entrepreneurship, there must be an individual who is competent for entrepreneurship, whether in a community seeking to develop or in a large organization seeking to innovate (Thaddeus, 2012).

Measures of entrepreneurial potential often relate to various personality profiles and demographic characteristics with minimal predictive validity (Chen, 2005). It is surprisingly difficult to distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs. It is even more difficult to differentiate the potential entrepreneur, if we rely on personality or demographic data. Although it has been claimed that personality factors have the least predictability, yet there are a good number of studies to prove that personality factors or characteristics or otherwise known as competency, could well be used to predict entrepreneurship in a given group. The influence of an entrepreneur is addressed by the competency approach from a process or behavioral perspective (Li, 2002). Entrepreneurial competencies are considered a higher-level characteristic encompassing personality traits, skills and knowledge, and therefore can be seen as the total ability of the entrepreneur to perform a job role successfully. Chen (2005) revealed competencies are seen as behavioral and observable but only partly intra-psychic characteristics of an entrepreneur. Consequently, competencies are changeable and learnable, allowing intervention in terms of the selection, training and development of entrepreneurship. The relevance of the theory to this study is that it emphasizes achievement motivation which is the most prominent determinant of entrepreneurial development. If a society has a poor score on achievement motivation, a low level of entrepreneurship development is expected. In the same vein, Dan' Azumi (2010) noted that entrepreneurship is a process of identifying, developing and bringing a vision of life.

Dakare, Osifia and Ogbjafor (2011) posit that entrepreneurship involves individual ability to turn ideas into action, which includes creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. Olokundu (2017) asserted that the French economist Richard Cantillon and Jean Baptise were the first to have used the term "entrepreneur" as a technical concept. Cantillon in his definition referred to the entrepreneur as the agent who organizes factors of production with the aim of creating a new product, while Jean- Baptise incorporated the concept of leadership, in defining an entrepreneur as one who organizes individuals, in order to create a useful product. It was Joseph Schumpeter who clearly associated entrepreneurs with the concept of innovation and economic development, defining an entrepreneur as the one responsible for organizing all factors of production to create quality products, while maximizing the employment of resources to achieve high productivity (Shaw, 2011). Entrepreneurship is the phenomenon associated with entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurial activity is the enterprising human action in pursuit of the generation of value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets (OECD, 2001).

The above definition makes clear that actions that identify and exploit new products, processes or markets can be considered as entrepreneurial activities. Specific actions that are mentioned by Ahmed and Seymour (2008) are the entry of new markets, the creation of new products or services, and the innovation required for different business activities. He also describes some more activities that entrepreneurs engage in, like innovation, organization creation, risk taking, and the startup of new ventures. These activities are important in order to create value and constitute growth. Creating value also includes the creation of jobs. In this, Ahmed and Seymour (2008) distinguishes between 'subsistence entrepreneurs', 'social entrepreneurs' and (normal) 'entrepreneurs'. People creating little personal and little value for others are called the 'self employed' or 'subsistence entrepreneurs'. People who are creating value primarily for other people are referred to as 'social entrepreneurs' and people creating both value for themselves and for others are labelled as (normal) 'entrepreneurs' (Ahmed & Seymour, 2008). Entrepreneurship development in agrarian sector is regarded as one of the major requirements and developing entrepreneurial potential among the farm graduates has been attracting the interest of policy makers, educationalists and development agencies in recent years. Indeed, entrepreneurial education is a tool for eradicating graduate unemployment and there is evidence that promoting entrepreneurship can solve the problem of unemployment. Yet, unemployment thrives among young agriculture and allied graduates. Entrepreneurship enhances the individual and collective capacity of rural youth to implement sustainable rural enterprises.

Entrepreneurial programmes are avenues through which people are prepared to become entrepreneurs. Nigeria possesses the ability to develop its fish supply for the teeming population and make up for its enormous fish shortage of 400,000 metric tons (Food and Agricultural Organisation of United Nations, 2006). Aquaculture development to a large extent hinges on superb quality, cheap and enough fish-feed and fingerlings delivered to consumers every year. Production of fish feed in Nigeria has risen from 3 million in 2000 to about 30 million in 2005, and 55 million in 2007 (Federal Department of Fisheries, 2008). Despite the increase, fish farmers are faced with the problem of inadequate supply and expensive cost per unit in fish feed and their enterprises. Both result in inexpensive input cost and a resulting high fish cost in the market as a proteinous food. The job of meeting the increasing demand for fish feed is by locally producing such fish feed in the country. Local fish-feed ventures are viewed as an open method due to the simplicity of non-scarcity of home resources and free farmers' access. To achieve this, strategies such as input subsidies, price policies, liberalization by governments and individuals, and production credit, have been adopted (Foraminifera Market Research, 2016) to increase the production and performance of these firms. Since the history of design, numerous developments have experienced a fruitful advancement process and were broadly advertised in gratitude for great usefulness and the capacity to make esteem. Innovation is certainly essential for the future improvement of style industry as competitive businesses. After some time, the entrepreneurs' job in the economy and their commitment to financial change, just as their innovativeness, advancement, enterprising and administrative perspectives changed. Style and clothing structure pioneering instruction should be arranged in connection to the training of the endeavor, for the venture and through the organization.

Design and clothing design is a specific division which requires the hopeful business people to be acquainted with the design enterprise and design pioneering attributes, for example, Ability to build up a style that is particular, steady and new ability to deal with the procedure of correspondence on which design depends ability to oversee key and showcasing issues. Entrepreneurial education for the enterprise incorporates granting learning and abilities required to begin and develop the endeavor. It incorporates business instruction through a program of activity discovery that manages certifiable issues and embraces huge numbers of the enterprise training standards (Kirby, 2002). Fish is staple nourishment for some Nigerians. Fish utilization represents over 40% of the protein sources devoured in the nation. The utilization of fish has appeared upward development pattern with a yearly utilization of about 3.2 million metric tons, of which 2.1 million metric tons are imported every year. Nonetheless, since the start of the Millennium Nigeria has seen the aquaculture subsector experience development and advancement. Nigeria presently positions among Africa's biggest makers of fish, just second to Egypt, whose aquaculture items have Nigeria as its fundamental African market goal. The Nigerian government is anxious to decrease the country's import charges, and has guided fish merchants to actualize in reverse joining into business aquaculture. This has expanded speculation into aquaculture since 2016. The most refined fishes are catfish and tilapia, however the nation has nature to help the cultivating of other tropical species in both new and marine water situations. At present, a couple of Dutch private area SMEs and multinationals are exceptionally dynamic in the aquaculture esteem chain (fish seeds and seed generation innovation, fish creation and RAS innovation and fish sustains) (worldfishcenter.org & fao.org, 2019).

There are varying opportunities for individuals and the national development as a whole such as, Nigerians as of now have a high inclination for reasonable fish protein, Fast developing populace anticipated to reach more than 250 million out of 2030, Growing economy with a normal GDP development rate of over 2 percent and per capita GDP of#2388 anticipated to approach #3000 in 2023, aquaculture will improve the circumstance of youth business and movement, Strong requirement for reasonable innovation, information and data sources that could improve the supportability of the aquaculture business, Good number of aquaculture ventures are requesting productivity improvement arrangements in the part of seeds, encourages, veterinary information sources, coordinations and production offices, Government of Nigeria is centered around utilizing agribusiness to expand economy where aquaculture is additionally viewed as a noteworthy angle for youth contribution .Fish farming potentially provides high economic returns and social benefits. . This means it can greatly benefit the poor

through meeting their needs, including food security, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, and community development. According to the National Informatics Centre(2007) fish farming as a form of aquaculture is gaining increasing importance for employment creation and income generation, particularly in the socio – economically weaker communities of fisherman, which represents the poorest sections of the society in many developing countries. Central Bank of Nigeria ,2015 ,stated that fisheries including aquaculture , contributed 0.5 percent to the gross domestic product(GDP) of Nigeria.

The business can possibly differentiate the Nigerian economy and become one of its principle drivers, if Government and different partners would contribute and open up the chances to the pool of abilities accessible in Nigeria. Nigeria has a huge populace base, 62 percent of which are 24 years and beneath this is a gigantic repository of potential gifts, work and customer showcase.

- a. About 40 percent of her populace is urban tenants, containing a rich privileged and an expanding working class whose spending influence is okay.
- b. Nigerians know and love style from their movements, get-togethers and the media a decent inspiration for purchasing up brands.
- c. Nollywood is a solid media outlet and offers a potential market for the Nigerian design industry. With the correct ventures it could add to the revitalisation of the article of clothing and material enterprises as well.

There are developing open doors in the yearly style weeks sorted out both in Nigeria and globally (Nigerian fashion industry, 2019). Kabeer and Mahmud (2004) argue that the fashion industry has made a significant contribution not only to economic growth and export earnings in the country, but also to poverty reduction. The activities in the plan challenged/tasked the ingenuity and inventive skill of the individuals. This early period witnessed an economic development ideology of industrialization as the ultimate source of economic growth, and industrialization itself as the support institutions and other incentives created by the government notwithstanding, policy instability and reversals in addition to high turnover and frequent changes in government have impacted negatively on the success of the primary institutions responsible for policy formulation, monitoring and implementation resulting in distortions in the macro-economic structure, low productivity and dismal success of small and medium scale enterprises (Nwachukwu, 2012).

Entrepreneurial activities take place within a framework of forces that constitute the system environment, which are either external or internal. A critical issue in the entrepreneurial activities and growth is a firms' ability to adapt its strategies to a rapidly changing system environment to which the entrepreneurs' role is critical to the success or failure of such firm (Amadasun, 2003) For the entrepreneur to be successful, he must be able to identify and find a useful niche within the large environment where it takes its risk, make strategic business plan and take/implement decisions. The various institutions and forces which determine the success or failure of the entrepreneur is its habitat also referred to as ecosystem or critical factors affecting the entrepreneurship which is equally dependent on the stability of the environment within which he operates; stability of environment exists in various degrees. For government entrepreneur development programmes to survive in these varying degrees depend on strategic management of the environment (Banabo & Ndiomu, 2011). Generally, the internal forces that the business ecosystem entrepreneur must face and take strategic action to adapt in Nigeria are controllable, while the external forces are generally uncontrollable. Banabo and Ndiomu (2011) noted that various schemes that have contributed to the growth of Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in Nigeria. The industries credit scheme (ICS) was introduced in 1971 as a revolving grant by the federal and state governments in Nigeria to assist in meeting the credit needs of small and medium scale enterprises on a relatively more liberal condition than in private leading institutions which is part of what gave rise to the introduction of National Directorate of Employment (NDE). Tende (2014) revealed that the Nigerian government(s), particularly since the structural adjustment programme (SAP) of mid 1980s, have put in place policies and programmes aimed at entrepreneurship development, as a means of employment generation, poverty alleviation and rapid economic development, which brought about Youwin (Youth Enterprise with

Innovation in Nigeria).The Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria programme is a collaboration of the Federal Ministries of Finance, Communication Technology and Youth Development to organize an annual Business Plan Competition (BPC) for aspiring young entrepreneurs in Nigeria (Tende, 2014).

The programme provides a one-time Equity Grant of N1million - NIO million to 1,200 selected aspiring entrepreneurs to start/expand their business concepts and mitigate start up risks; and to further generate some 80,000 -110,000 new jobs for unemployed Nigerian youths over a three-year period (Akande and Okuwa, 2009). The government's focus on this program despite a tight budget is part of the pro-people efforts of this budget to support our youth (Bygrave & Minniti, 2000). Tende (2014) noted that an arm of the Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria programme (Youwin) is the Growing Girls and Women Initiative in Nigeria (G-WIN) which was launched in 2013 to integrate our women and girls into key sectors of the economy through budgetary initiatives has yielded positive results and generated interest across the board. Ahiauzu (2016) argued that in 2015, the government continued to expand this program. In addition to the original five ministries, the Ministry of Environment has also has now signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to join G-WIN which was made effective in 2015 and discussions are ongoing with other Ministries and the private sector for partnership. Working with the private sector, the government continued to improve market outreach, produce storage, and strengthen agricultural insurance. As part of its policy objectives to promote a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response to youth issues and concerns in the country; and to promote the harmonization of other policies, programmes, strategies and youth-related research; the Ministry of Youth helped implement active policies for using remittances as vehicles to steer youth employment.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major challenges facing Rivers State and its rural communities is poverty. It has been so endemic as a result of the high rate of unemployment that has become the major characteristics of the state. Unemployment is a major problem especially among the youths who are all waiting for white collar and government jobs which appear not available. The goal of addressing poverty might remain elusive unless much emphasis is laid down on the development of entrepreneurial skills (Akpomi, 2009). Most Nigerian tertiary institutions academic curricula were designed for full employment in government and private organizations. The expansion of the education sector annually, churns out new entrants into the labour market beyond the absorptive capacity of the economy, thus creating the problem of unemployment occasioned by the dearth of entrepreneurial spirit among Nigerians which is yet to be fully addressed by the government. To accelerate economic development in rural areas, it is necessary to increase the supply of entrepreneurial activities such as fish farming and fashion designing in the rural communities in Rivers State. These entrepreneurial activities would help in bridging the gap in the challenges of unemployment and therefore reduce poverty in the rural communities in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived influence of Entrepreneurial Activities of small scale Enterprises on Economic Development in Rural Communities in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the extent fashion design enterprises have influenced economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.
2. Determine the extent fish farming enterprises have influenced economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent have fashion design enterprises influenced economic development in rural communities in Rivers State?.
2. To what extent has fish farming enterprises influenced economic development in rural communities in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between fashion design enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between fish farming enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.

METHODS

This study adopted the correlational research design. This type of design seeks to establish the relationships that exist between two or more variables (Ahukannah & Ugoji, 2017). The intent is to establish the relationships between influence of entrepreneurial activities of small scale enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State. Also, the correlational research design was considered suitable for this study since data was collected through questionnaires to gather information from selected small scale enterprises for economic development. The study was carried out in rural communities in the twenty-three Local Government Area of Rivers State, which is stratified into the three Senatorial Districts in Rivers State. However, the target population comprises of 331 registered small scale enterprises in the 9 Local Government Areas in Rivers State, especially the operators of fashion and designing and fish farming enterprises in 9 Local Government Areas of the 3 Senatorial Districts in Rivers State, while the ones that were not registered were not used. The sample size for the study was 169 respondents who are registered operators of small scale enterprises in the 9 Local Government Areas in Rivers State, made up of 88 fashion designers and 81 fish farmers in 9 Local Government Areas selected from the 3 Senatorial Districts in Rivers State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size of the study. Table 1 below shows the sample distribution.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

S/N	Local Government Area	Entrepreneurial activities		Sample
		Fashion Designers	Fish Farmers	
1	AKUKU-TORU	8	11	19
2	ASARI-TORU	7	6	13
3	DEGEMA	10	4	14
4	PORT HARCOURT	18	15	33
5	OBIO/AKPOR	10	17	27
6	IKWERRE	7	3	10
7	OYIGBO	12	8	20
8	ELEME	11	9	20
9	TAI	5	8	13
	TOTAL	88	81	169

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire tagged: “Influence of Entrepreneurial Activities of Small Scale Enterprises and Economic Development in Rural Communities Questionnaire (IEASSEAEEDRCQ)”. The instrument was structured in a 4 points rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE = 4 marks); High Extent (HE = 3 marks); Low Extent (LE = 2 marks) and Very Low Extent (VLE = 1 mark). The respondents were asked to choose the option that suits their opinions. The face and content validity of the instrument was ascertained by two experts in Business Education and Measurement and Evaluation in the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest method was used. Thus, copies of the instrument were administered to a sample of 20 small scale business owners in Okuru community in Port Harcourt

Metropolis who were not part of the population of the study. After an interval of 10 days, copies of the instrument were re-administered to the same sample of 20 small scale business owners in Okuru community in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Their responses were collated, and calculated using the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) in which the reliability coefficient value of 0.87 was obtained thereby guaranteeing the reliability of the instrument. In collecting the data for analyses, the instrument was administered face to face to the respondents by the researcher in the 9 Local Government Areas in the 3 senatorial districts in Rivers State, with the aid of two trained research assistants per Local Government Area. The instructions about the filling of the questionnaire were carefully explained to the respondents. Administration and retrieval of the questionnaire was done within three weeks interval, and all the 331 copies distributed were properly filled and retrieved in good condition, hence the retrieval rate of the was 100%.

Research questions were analyzed using the Mean and standard deviation with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21, while the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance with Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) considering the information below.

Responses	Rating	Boundary Limits
Very high extent	4	3.50-4.00
High extent	3	2.50-3.49
Low extent	2	1.50-2.49
Very low extent	1	0.50-1.49

The decision rule was based on the mean score of 2.50 and above which was the benchmark for acceptance, while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was rejected when less than the table value and rejected when greater than the table value.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent have fashion design enterprises influenced economic development in rural communities in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Analysis of Fashion Design Enterprises Contribution to Economic Development in Rural Communities in Rivers State

S/N	Fashion Design	$\sum fx$	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Business creates room for innovation.	583	1.76	.682	Low Extent
2	In carrying out my business, my family's standard of living has improved.	566	1.71	.456	Low Extent
3	I have what it takes to effectively manage my time in doing my business to reduce poverty	576	1.74	.513	Low Extent
4	Business serves as the key to self-reliance.	609	1.84	.675	Low Extent
5	Like other businesses, my line of business has its own risk, but I succeed anyway by being more creative.	606	1.83	.376	Low Extent
Grand Mean			1.78		

Sources: Field Survey, 2019.

The result in Table 1: reveals that all the items had mean below the cut – off point of 2.50. This revealed that fashion design enterprises influence economic development to a low extent in rural communities in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *To what extent has fish farming enterprises influenced economic development in rural communities in Rivers State?*

Table 3: Analysis of Fish Farming Enterprises Contribution to Economic Development in Rural Communities in Rivers State

S/N	Fish Farming	$\sum fx$	Mean	SD	Decision
6	This business will lead to food security and rapid economic development in rural communities .	583	1.76	.682	Low Extent
7	This business reduces crime rate amongst the youths in the communities.	566	1.71	.456	Low Extent
8	The need to earn a living is what prompted me into starting this business.	576	1.74	.513	Low Extent
9	My business promotes the development of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) .	609	1.84	.675	Low Extent
10	I have enough information to make my business succeed and alleviate poverty.	702	2.12	.773	Low Extent
Grand Mean			1.83		

Sources: Field Survey, 2019

The result in Table 2: reveals that all the items had mean below the cut – off point of 2.50. This revealed that fish farming enterprises influence economic development to a low extent in rural communities in Rivers State.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between fashion design enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.

To test the above hypotheses, a correlation coefficient between fashion design and economic development was computed using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) and the result is present on the table below.

Table 4: Correlation of Fashion Design Enterprise and Economic Development in Rural Communities in Rivers State.

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	A	Df	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Fashion Design	331	1.83	.376	0.05	299	0.519	0.000	Reject Ho
Economic development		1.83	.532					

From Table1, the r-cal of 0.519 as against the r-crit. Value of 0.000, at 0.05 level of significance. It would be seen that fashion design when correlated against economic development revealed that a significant relationship exists between fashion design and economic development.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between fish farming enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.

This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) and the table below is as presented below:

Table 5: Correlation of Fish farming and Economic Development in Rural Communities in Rivers State

Variable	N	\bar{x}	SD	A	Df	r-cal	r-crit	Decision
Fish farming	331	2.12	.778					
Economic development		1.77	.617	0.05	299	0.426	0.000	Reject Ho

The Table 5 reveals that there is a positive significant relationship of the two variables with a coefficient of 0.426 and a 0.000 which is less than 0.05 alpha level. It would be seen that there is a positive significant relationship between fish farming enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Fashion Designing Enterprises and Economic Development

The result revealed that there is a significant relationship between fashion design enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State. The deduction from the analysis revealed that the mean values were low below the criterion mean of 2.50. The analysis also revealed that fashion design enterprises in rural communities in Rivers State were challenged by linkages, inadequate labour training, outdated equipment, poor infrastructure and relatively low inventive capitalists' interest in economic development in rural communities by investors. In agreement with the result, Kabeer and Mahmud (2004), opined that the fashion industry has made a significant contribution not only to economic growth and export earnings in the country, but also to poverty reduction. The majority of the workers come from poorer households and the poorer districts in rural communities, the designers have low levels of education and their families are often landless and in food deficit for some of the year. Kabeer and Mahmud (2004) further suggest that he wages women are able to earn in the garment industry are higher than in the available alternative forms of employment, which enable them to support themselves and one other adult at levels of living above the poverty line. The fact that many workers remit part of their income to the countryside suggests that it is indeed being used to support their families. The result of the hypothesis showed that there is a significant relationship between fashion design enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State. It revealed that the calculated v- value is greater than the critical r-value at 0.05 level of significance and 299 degree of freedom. Nigerian Fashion Industry (2009) opined that the fashion design business if very well created has the potentials of producing numerous gainful organizations and giving an assortment of employments to a large number of Nigerians, particularly the adolescents, thereby decreasing the high youth joblessness rate.

Fish Farming Enterprises and Economic Development

The result revealed that there was a significant relationship between fish farming enterprises and economic development in rural communities in Rivers State. The deduction from the analysis revealed that the mean values were low below the criterion mean of 2.50. The analysis also revealed that the value of fish produced significantly reduced poverty in fish farming households in rural communities in Rivers State. In agreement with the result, Food and Agriculture Organization (2007), opined that fish farming potentially provides high economic returns and social benefits. This means it can greatly benefit the poor through meeting their needs, including food security, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihood, and community development. The result of the hypotheses indicated that the calculated r-value was greater

than the critical r-value at 0.05 level of significance and 299 degree of freedom. The deduction from that is that there is significant relationship between fish farming enterprises and economic development. National Informatics Centre (2007) stated that fish farming can foster poverty alleviation through providing employment opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS

From the data analysis and findings, the study concluded that fashion design enterprises and fish farming enterprises have positive relationship with economic development in rural communities in Rivers State.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Capital should be made available to small scale enterprises by the State and Local Governments for business diversification.
2. Financial institutions should give soft loans to small scale enterprises for business expansion and growth.
3. The Local Government should come up with more programmes to provide training of the interested populace in all aspects of entrepreneurship, since this can foster economic development in the rural communities in rivers state.

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