ASSESSING THE INFLUENCE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EMPLOYMENT ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study assessed the contribution of entrepreneurial self-employment to the human development index in Nigeria. The specific objective was to examine the influence of entrepreneurial self-employment to Nigerian human capital development. An ex-post facto research design was adopted in the study. Secondary data were collected from the National Bureau of Statistics for a period of 16 years, spanning the period from 2007 to 2022. Data were analysed using descriptive tools and inferential analysis. The hypothesis was validated using estimates from robust least square regression at a 5% significance level. The finding revealed that entrepreneurial self-employment significantly enhances the Nigerian human development index. In conclusion, entrepreneurial self-employment has a transformative potential to drive socioeconomic progress and improve human well-being. The study therefore recommended that by recognising and supporting the role of entrepreneurship in development strategies, Nigeria can unlock new pathways for sustainable and inclusive growth, ultimately leading to a more prosperous and equitable society.
Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Self-Employment, Human Development Index, Entrepreneurial Development, Nigeria*

Introduction

In today's era of globalisation, where entrepreneurs actively participate in cross-border trade, the importance of fostering entrepreneurship and boosting productivity to enhance human development by alleviating poverty and generating employment is widely recognised (Meshack, Nworie & Orji, 2022; Segun, 2021; Bužavaitė, Ščeulovs & Korsakienė, 2019). Moreover, the cultivation of entrepreneurial skills has been pinpointed in the Nigeria Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction as a crucial element in addressing the objectives outlined in various Nigerian visions (Adenuga, Kowo & Sabitu, 2019). Fostering entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in stimulating economic growth through the generation of employment opportunities. As a result, it not only fosters employment but also generates income, ultimately leading to poverty reduction (Onyejiaku, Ngong & Onwumere, 2023) and an increase in the human development index. As entrepreneurs establish and expand businesses, they contribute to increased productivity and GDP, thus boosting a nation's overall wealth and standard of living. Entrepreneurial self-employment

significantly contributes to the Human Development Index (HDI) by enhancing income levels, promoting education, and improving overall living standards. Through self-employment, individuals create jobs not only for themselves but also for others, which can lead to increased household incomes and economic stability. This economic empowerment enables greater access to education and health services, key components of the HDI. Additionally, entrepreneurial activities often drive innovation and local development, fostering an environment where communities can thrive, thereby positively impacting life expectancy, education, and income—core indicators of the HDI.

Additionally, Ogunlusi, David, Atunbi, and Ajani (2018) and Asogwa and Dim (2016) found that entrepreneurship generates job opportunities, reducing unemployment rates and poverty levels, which are key components of the Human Development Index (HDI). By encouraging innovation and technological advancement, entrepreneurs drive progress in various sectors, leading to improvements in education, healthcare, and infrastructure, all of which positively impact human development indicators such as literacy rates, life expectancy, and access to basic services. Additionally, entrepreneurship empowers individuals to pursue economic independence and self-reliance (Akanbi, 2024), thereby promoting social inclusion and gender equality, ultimately contributing to a higher HDI score for nations that prioritize entrepreneurial development.

Entrepreneurship emerges as a central force driving sustainable economic development and poverty alleviation globally, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. It is defined as the art of creatively pursuing new ventures with financial and business acumen to turn innovations into tangible economic assets (Dialoke, Onyi & Edeh, 2017). Thus, entrepreneurial development involves individuals and facilitators initiating processes to create something innovative and valuable, requiring commitment, risk-taking, and anticipation of rewards. This endeavor aims to achieve independence and mitigate poverty by empowering individuals to identify and seize business opportunities while optimising scarce resources (Adeleke & Ojewale, 2024). Poverty is characterized by a lack of sufficient income to afford essential health services, food, housing, clothing, and education needed for a decent standard of living. Entrepreneurship, through its developmental aspects, serves as a proactive approach to address these economic disparities and pave the way toward poverty alleviation (Zhakupov, Berzhanova, Mukhanova, Baimbetova & Mamutova, 2023).

Moreover, entrepreneurial development transcends mere skill acquisition; it entails acquiring skills and ideas with the intent of not only creating job opportunities for oneself but also for others. It revolves around fostering creativity and innovation to establish new ventures (Abul, Hussain & Rosni, 2014). Ultimately, the pursuit of

entrepreneurial development is viewed as a significant and transformative undertaking, with profound implications for alleviating poverty and enhancing economic vitality. Regrettably, while the importance of entrepreneurial development in enhancing human development by reducing unemployment and poverty is widely acknowledged, entrepreneurs encounter numerous daunting challenges globally, impeding the productive contribution of entrepreneurship to economic growth and development (Ezeanyeji, Imoagwu & Ejefobihi, 2019). Issues such as limited access to finance, inadequate financial services, insufficient governmental attention and policies, and an unfavorable business environment are pervasive obstacles faced by entrepreneurs in both underdeveloped and developing nations. Despite the significant transformative impact that entrepreneurial productivity has had on the Nigerian economy (Anekwe & Ndubuisi-Okolo, 2018), it remains underutilised and constrained from realising its full potential. Challenges, particularly those concerning finance, governmental support, and the business environment, hinder the comprehensive development of entrepreneurial productivity in Nigeria.

As a result, the nation faces escalating poverty rates on both regional and national scales (Ogidi & Okonkwo, 2021), alongside increased unemployment, exacerbated income inequality, weakened human capital quality, a sizable population dependent on welfare, and substantial emigration. Hence, the urgent need to actively pursue poverty reduction through entrepreneurial development becomes paramount for fostering economic growth, facilitating structural transformation, and achieving comprehensive economic development through efficient poverty alleviation.

Previous studies by scholars such as Steven, Ahlstrom, Jiang, and John (2020); Aamir, Habib, Khan, and Ullah (2020); Adenuga, Kowo, and Sabitu (2019); Eneji, Dom, and Odey (2019); Ezeanyeji, Imoagwu, and Ejefobihi (2019), among others, have delved into the impact of entrepreneurial development on the Nigerian economy. While many of these studies have been conducted within Nigeria, shedding light on local business dynamics, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the specific influence of entrepreneurial self-employment on the Nigerian human development index. Thus, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between entrepreneurial self-employment and the Nigerian human development index.

Review of Related Literature

Entrepreneurial Self-Employment

Entrepreneurial self-employment encompasses the pursuit of independent business ventures by individuals, identifying opportunities, mobilizing resources, and assuming risks to establish and manage businesses (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017). This form of employment ranges from small-scale enterprises and startups to freelancing and gig economy work. Entrepreneurial activities

contribute significantly to economic growth by fostering innovation, creating jobs, and stimulating productivity. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), often spearheaded by entrepreneurial self-employed individuals, play a crucial role in driving economic development, particularly in emerging economies. Entrepreneurial ventures generate employment opportunities, thereby reducing unemployment rates and promoting inclusive growth (Meshack, Nworie & Orji, 2022). Through self-employment, individuals create jobs not only for themselves but also for others, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and socioeconomic stability. Through entrepreneurial development, an entrepreneur initiates the creation of something novel with value. It emerges from the integration of entrepreneurial skills, education, and innovation, resulting in the production of goods and services (Meshack, Nworie & Orji, 2022). This involves establishing new ventures such as micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises; fostering innovation by introducing new products, and services, or entering new markets within existing firms. This endeavor demands dedication of time and effort, alongside assuming financial, psychological, and social risks, to secure both monetary rewards and personal fulfillment and independence (Aamir, Habib, Khan & Ullah, 2020). It encompasses identifying fresh business prospects and marshaling economic resources to establish a new venture or rejuvenate an existing one, amid the backdrop of risks and uncertainties, all to generate profits under private ownership. Entrepreneurial development, facilitated through entrepreneurial education, skill acquisition, and creativity, over time yields lasting value and steady cash flows for individuals or groups (Okoh, Agbadua, Ojeogwu, Ale & Ojeogwu, 2024; Steven, Ahlstrom, Jiang & John, 2020).

Again, entrepreneurial development entails enhancing an individual's capacity to identify investment prospects, establish, and successfully manage an enterprise (Meshack, Nworie & Orji, 2022). It involves fostering innovative and ingenious business ventures, showcasing the effective utilisation of human intellect through creative endeavors in resource allocation for goods and services production (Ezeanyeji, Imoagwu & Ejefobihi, 2019). This concept encompasses recognising business opportunities, mobilising resources, and continually exploiting these opportunities (Segun, 2021). Hence, enhanced productivity in entrepreneurship fosters the growth and sustainability of innovative ventures, nurturing them for long-term success.

Conceptualising Human Development Index

The Human Development Index is a metric formulated and maintained by the United Nations since 1990 to gauge the social and economic progress of different nations (Neumayer, 2001). It encompasses four essential dimensions: the average duration of schooling, anticipated years of education, life expectancy at birth, and gross national income (GNI) per capita. The primary objective behind the creation of HDI is to underscore the importance of considering people and their capabilities as the

ultimate measures of a country's development, rather than solely focusing on economic advancement (Yin, Lepinteur, Clark & D'ambrosio, 2023).
In 2014, Nigeria's HDI stood at a modest 0.548, categorizing the country within the bracket of low human development (UNDP, 2024). Over the span of 19 years, despite witnessing a commendable 22% increase in HDI, Nigeria's overall HDI level has remained relatively unchanged by 2023. This persistence indicates enduring challenges in the realm of human development within the nation. One significant aspect highlighted in the report is Nigeria's substantial loss in HDI attributed to inequality, estimated at 32.7%. Gender disparities continue to prevail, evidenced by a notable gap between male and female HDI values. Additionally, Nigeria's performance in terms of gender equality, as measured by the Gender Inequality Index (GII), is notably poor. Furthermore, Nigeria struggles with multidimensional poverty. As of 2021, approximately 33% of the Nigerian population was identified as multidimensionally poor according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). This multifaceted perspective on poverty underscores the complexity of the socio-economic challenges faced by the country (UNDP, 2024).

Critics of the HDI argue that it fails to encompass a comprehensive assessment of quality of life and adds little value beyond simpler economic indicators. However, its inception aimed to shift the focus onto individuals and their opportunities for fulfilling lives and work, rather than solely on economic prosperity (Jin & Jakovljevic, 2023). Advocates for the HDI aim to foster constructive discourse around public policy. This index serves as a concise gauge of fundamental accomplishments in human development (Pandey, 2023). The HDI for a nation is derived from averaging indexes of various life dimensions under scrutiny: education, longevity, and living standards. These components are standardized to a scale of 0 to 1, and subsequently, the geometric mean of the trio is computed.

Role of Entrepreneurial Self-Employment in Achieving Human Development
Entrepreneurial self-employment refers to individuals creating and managing their businesses or ventures, taking on the risks and responsibilities associated with entrepreneurship (Henley, 2007). This includes activities such as starting a small business, freelancing, or operating as an independent contractor. Entrepreneurial self-employment stands as a cornerstone of economic dynamism and individual empowerment within societies worldwide (Chienwattanasook & Jermsittiparsert, 2019). It embodies the spirit of innovation, risk-taking, and autonomy, fostering economic growth and societal progress.

Engaging in entrepreneurial self-employment cultivates essential skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, and resilience. It offers opportunities for lifelong learning and personal development, empowering individuals to adapt to changing market conditions and pursue opportunities for growth and advancement.

Entrepreneurial self-employment intersects with various dimensions of human development since entrepreneurial ventures contribute to individuals' economic well-being by providing income-generation opportunities, wealth accumulation, and financial security (Meshack, Nworie & Orji, 2022).

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

The Schumpeter Effect Theory, developed by economist Joseph Schumpeter in 1942, focuses on the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in economic growth (Aubry, Bonnet & Renou-Maissant, 2015). Schumpeter argued that economic progress is driven by the creative destruction of existing structures through the introduction of new technologies, products, and business models by entrepreneurs (Tkachuk, 2023). This theory emphasizes the dynamic and disruptive nature of innovation, suggesting that the continuous process of creative destruction is essential for sustained economic growth (Lipieta & Lipieta, 2022).

The Schumpeter Effect Theory is the belief that true economic advancement is not a gradual or linear process but rather a dynamic and disruptive one. Schumpeter emphasizes that the constant cycle of creative destruction, fueled by entrepreneurial activities, is imperative for maintaining sustained economic growth (Tkachuk, 2023). In this context, innovation becomes a driving force, reshaping industries, challenging conventional norms, and propelling economies forward through the constant pursuit of new ideas and advancements.

Schumpeter's theory is relevant to this current work because it paints a vivid picture of the entrepreneurial spirit as a catalyst for change and progress within the economic domain. It underscores the significance of risk-taking and inventive endeavors in not only transforming individual businesses but also in shaping the broader trajectory of a nation's economic development. Generally, the Schumpeter Effect Theory remains a cornerstone in understanding the complex relationship between innovation, entrepreneurship, and the continuous evolution of thriving economies. Based on the argument above, we hypothesize that:

H_1: *Entrepreneurial self-employment will significantly enhance the Nigerian human development index.*

Empirical Evidence

Onyejiaku, Ngong, and Onwumere (2023) examined the long-term association between entrepreneurship and Nigerian economic development in the digitised era from 1991-2020. The fully modified, dynamic, and conical co-integration ordinary least squares regression were used. The gross domestic product growth rate measures economic development. Self-employment and new business density measure

entrepreneurship. The results show a long-term association between entrepreneurship and economic development.

Anoke, Ngozi, Uchechukwu and Joyce (2022) examined the effect of entrepreneurial marketing on SME growth in the post-Covid-19 Era in Awka Anambra State Nigeria. The study adopted a qualitative research design with five participants. An in-depth interview was used to elicit relevant information from the respondents. The study revealed that need-oriented marketing and technology-driven marketing are pivotal to the growth and sustainability of SMEs in the post-COVID-19 Era.

Ogidi and Okonkwo (2021) examined the effect of entrepreneurship development on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. Data was obtained from selected business enterprises. 79 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to these enterprises and the data was analysed using Chi-Square. The study found that entrepreneurial development among small-scale businesses alleviates poverty in Jos North LGA, Plateau State.

Ehugbo and Ugboko (2021) investigated the impact of entrepreneurship programmes on job creation in Nigeria. The study was carried out at Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study employed Survey research. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability at .075. The study involves 262 small business owners. The selected business field includes; welders (60), tailors (75), and hair salon owners (127) within the city of Calabar. A structured Questionnaire was used as the major instrument in the collection of data. Multistage Cluster random sampling was used to determine the sample size. Multiple regression was used to test the hypotheses with the help of SPSS version 25. The results from hypotheses one and two reveal that there is a significant and positive relationship between program transparency, program continuity, and job creation while the result from hypothesis three reveals a significant but negative relationship between youth commitment and job creation.

Steven, Ahlstrom, Jiang, and John (2020) determined the effect of business, entrepreneurship, and innovation on poverty reduction. The study was guided by an exploratory research design. The data for the study were secondary data which were sourced from online journals and published articles. The data collected were analysed using a thematic approach. The results of the findings revealed that business, entrepreneurship, and innovation have significantly contributed to poverty alleviation.

Aamir, Habib, Khan, and Ullah (2020) analysed the influence of entrepreneurship education on poverty alleviation mediating by entrepreneurial intention. The survey research design guided the conduct of the study. A total of 200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed among the respondents of which 165 were returned

filled. The sample consisted of university students, employees, managers, owners of small and medium enterprises, and university lecturers. The study used regression and correlation analysis. The results revealed that entrepreneurship education has an insignificant influence on poverty reduction, however, a significant indirect effect was observed.

Umaru & Ibrahim (2019) investigated entrepreneurship as a viable tool for poverty reduction in Nigeria. The paper adopted a quantitative research design. Primary data for the study was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Data were gathered through a survey using a structured questionnaire with a sample of size of 335 entrepreneurs. The respondents were selected using a systematic random sampling method from the sampling frame of 2,600 entrepreneurs. SmartPLS 3.0 (M3) with path modeling and bootstrapping was used to examine the standard error of the estimate and t-values. The findings suggest that only entrepreneurship education and the attraction dimension of entrepreneurship were significantly related to poverty reduction. Intention and Knowledge were not related to poverty reduction in the country.

Eneji, Dom, and Odey (2019) analyzed the causal relationship between entrepreneurship, growth, and poverty reduction in Nigeria. Time series data on the key variables were extracted from reliable secondary data sources covering 37 years. The methods of data analysis are the ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique, the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) test, causality, and Johansen co-integration tests. The study found that there is a causal relationship between entrepreneurship, inclusive growth, and poverty reduction in Nigeria. Entrepreneurship, vocational training, and skills acquisition had an inverse and insignificant relationship with poverty in Nigeria, indicating that the more entrepreneurship practice, the less the rate of poverty or the more success in poverty reduction.

Anekwe and Ndubuisi-Okolo (2018) determined the effect of entrepreneurship on poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to examine the effect of entrepreneurship training and education on poverty alleviation in Nigeria and to determine the challenges that militate against sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The data that were collected were analysed using a thematic approach. The result of the findings revealed that entrepreneurship is a key tool for poverty reduction; stimulating employment and economic growth in developing countries.

Agri, Dalut, and Odey (2017) evaluated the role of entrepreneurship in poverty reduction and sustainable development in Nigeria. The study was guided by a survey descriptive research design. This study used a representative sample survey of private enterprises in North-Central Nigeria to investigate the opportunities, constraints, and overall impact of entrepreneurship on poverty reduction and sustainable development. SMEs in

hairdressing and beauty salons, foods, bottled water, farm fresh products, wholesale and retail trade were investigated. The techniques for method analysis were percentage analysis and chi-square statistics. This research found that small-scale entrepreneurs in Nigeria face many constraints and it underscored the need for fiscal priority to be placed on skills acquisition, rural development, agriculture, animal husbandry, community participation, forestry, community health, irrigation, rural education, and infrastructure.

Methodology

The research employs an *ex-post facto* research design. *Ex-post facto* research involves a study where the researcher works with independent variables that cannot be manipulated during the research process. The term "*ex-post facto*" originates from Latin and translates to "after the fact." This research design is chosen because it is well-suited for establishing causal relationships between the dependent and independent variables, which is the goal of the study.

Secondary data for each variable was sourced from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) for a period of 16 years, spanning the period from 2007 to 2022. This study summarised the collected data using descriptive statistics. While the Human Development Index was measured as a composite measure assessing a country's average achievements in health, education, and income to gauge the overall well-being and development status of its population, the independent variable which is entrepreneurial self-employment was measured using a percentage of self-employed individuals.

To ensure the analysis's robustness that corrects the presence of outliers, Robust Least Square regression was used to examine the stated hypotheses. This advanced technique enables a comprehensive assessment of the direction and magnitude of the impact of explanatory variables on the dependent variables, accounting for extreme values that affect the reliability of regression estimates.

The linear model analysed is stated below:

$HDI_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SEFE_t + \varepsilon_t$----------eqi

Where:

HDI_t is the Human Development Index in year t

$SEFE_t$ is the percentage of self-employed individuals in year t

To validate the hypothesis, the probability value (p-value) of the t-statistic is compared with the significance level (0.05). If the p-value is less than 0.05, the alternate hypothesis is accepted, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the result is considered significant.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Descriptive Analysis

	HDI	SEFE
Mean	0.506188	81.55393
Maximum	0.538000	88.00000
Minimum	0.459000	79.26835
Std. Dev.	0.026516	1.951756
Skewness	-0.273959	2.290259
Kurtosis	1.637359	8.684566
Jarque-Bera	1.438003	35.53029
Probability	0.487238	0.000000
Observations	16	16

Source: Eviews 10 Analytical output (2024) Using aggregated figures from NBS

For the Human Development Index (HDI), the mean value of approximately 0.506 suggests that Nigeria exhibits a moderate level of human development, aggregating achievements in health, education, and income. The maximum and minimum values of 0.538 and 0.459, respectively, illustrate the range of development levels within the country, indicating variations across different regions or periods. The small standard deviation of 0.0265 implies that HDI values are closely clustered around the mean, indicating relatively consistent levels of human development across different contexts. Moving to the percentage of self-employed individuals (SEFE), the mean value of approximately 81.55% indicates a significant portion of the Nigerian workforce engaged in entrepreneurial self-employment. The maximum and minimum values of 88% and 79.27%, respectively, demonstrate variability in the prevalence of self-employment across different regions or periods within Nigeria. The relatively large standard deviation of approximately 1.9518 signifies considerable variability in the prevalence of self-employment, suggesting differing levels of entrepreneurial activity across contexts.

Test of Hypothesis

H_1: Entrepreneurial self-employment will significantly enhance the Nigerian human development index.

Table 2: Robust Least Square Regression

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	z-Statistic	Prob.
SEFE	0.018124	0.000699	25.92148	0.0000
C	1.978036	0.057037	34.67958	0.0000
Robust Statistics				
R-squared	0.669054	Adjusted R-squared		0.645415
Scale	0.011679	Deviance		0.000136
Rn-squared statistic	671.9230	Prob (Rn-squared stat.)		0.000000

Source: Eviews 10 Analytical output (2024)

In the robust least square regression model with the Human Development Index (HDI) as the dependent variable, the coefficient for the independent variable, Percentage of Self-Employed Individuals (SEFE), is 0.018124 with a p-value of 0.0000, indicating statistical significance. This suggests that there is a positive association between entrepreneurial self-employment and the Human Development Index in Nigeria; specifically, for every unit increase in the percentage of self-employed individuals, the HDI is expected to increase by approximately 0.0181 units.

Additionally, the intercept coefficient (C) is 1.978036 with a p-value of 0.0000, indicating that even when the percentage of self-employed individuals is zero, the expected value of HDI is approximately 1.978. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.645415 suggests that approximately 64.5% of the variation in HDI can be explained by the independent variable(s) in the model. Furthermore, the F-statistic of 671.9230 with a p-value of 0.000000 indicates that the overall model is statistically significant, suggesting that the independent variable(s) collectively have a significant effect on the dependent variable. Therefore, this regression analysis provides strong evidence of a positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-employment and human development in Nigeria, with higher levels of self-employment associated with higher levels of HDI. In conclusion, the alternate hypothesis was accepted that entrepreneurial self-employment significantly enhances the Nigerian human development index.

Discussion of Findings

The finding that entrepreneurial self-employment significantly enhances the Nigerian Human Development Index (HDI) suggests that entrepreneurial activities play a crucial role in driving socioeconomic development in Nigeria. By engaging in self-employment, individuals contribute not only to their income but also to the overall well-being of society through job creation, innovation, and economic growth. This finding underscores the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem that supports and encourages individuals to start and sustain businesses, thereby fostering economic development and improving human welfare.

Moreover, the positive association between entrepreneurial self-employment and HDI highlights the multifaceted benefits of entrepreneurship beyond economic indicators alone. Entrepreneurial ventures often lead to improvements in access to education and healthcare as entrepreneurs invest in their own and their employees' skill development and well-being. Additionally, entrepreneurship can contribute to social empowerment by providing opportunities for marginalized groups, such as women and youth, to participate in economic activities and have a voice in decision-making processes, thereby promoting inclusivity and reducing inequality. This result aligns with the findings by Agri, Dalut, and Odey (2017); Onyejiaku, Ngong, and Onwumere (2023); Ehugbo and Ugboko (2021); Aamir, Habib, Khan, and Ullah

(2020); and Steven, Ahlstrom, Jiang, and John (2020). The finding of the study underscores the need for targeted policy interventions aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and supporting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria. Such policies could include initiatives to improve access to finance, provide entrepreneurial education and training, streamline regulatory processes, and enhance infrastructure. By creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship, policymakers can leverage the potential of self-employment to drive sustainable development, create employment opportunities, and enhance overall human well-being.

Conclusion

The study concludes that entrepreneurial self-employment significantly boosts the Nigerian Human Development Index with the transformative power of entrepreneurship in advancing socioeconomic advancement and enhancing human welfare. However, while entrepreneurial self-employment can contribute positively to human development, challenges and barriers may exist that hinder its full potential impact. These challenges could include limited access to financing, inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic red tape, and socio-cultural norms that may discourage entrepreneurship, particularly among certain demographic groups. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that involves collaboration between the government, private sector, civil society, and international partners to create holistic solutions that foster entrepreneurship and promote inclusive development.

Recommendation

The study recommends that policy-makers in Nigeria need to unlock new pathways for sustainable and inclusive growth, ultimately leading to a more prosperous and equitable society when they make conducive policies that support and birth entrepreneurship in the country. This is because once targeted policy interventions are made to promote entrepreneurship, it will go a long way toward supporting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria.

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