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**Entrepreneurship as a Viable Career Choice for Nigerian  
Youth**

Beem Hassana Beeka

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
Sheffield Hallam University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2015

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my exceptional eternal parents

Dr E.D.Z Beeka and Hajia E.N.N Beeka

And also to my lovely Twin D.H Beeka

For unconditional love, leadership and timeless protection.

For inspirational, intellectual and entrepreneurial achievements.

For the sacrifices, resolute support, genius, excellence and valour.

To the wisdom and legacy that contributes to the Royal House of Beeka.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*Study what will enable you become an entrepreneur... (Dr E.D.Z. Beeka)*

*Don't let others define you, define yourself, write your own story (E.N.N Beeka)*

*Champions are not made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them, a desire, a dream, a vision. They have the skill, and the will. But the will must be stronger than the skill (Mohammed Ali).*

This is to acknowledge and extend my gratitude to the driven leaders that facilitated the conclusion of this intellectual enterprise. I will forever remain grateful to the Almighty, my parents, grandparents, ancestors, and the universe, including my family and friends who started this journey with me and are still with me.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all my supervisors for the positive guidance, mainly Professor Helen Richardson, Mr Mike Rimmington and Professor Stephen Ball. Much appreciation to the 40 participants within this thesis for their entrepreneurial career narratives enriching this contribution to knowledge, and special mention to the pilot participants and the countless inspirational entrepreneurs encountered over the years, including every entrepreneur we assisted to develop through training, coaching and mentoring, and the encourage youth entrepreneurs (E.Y.E) campaign. To my numerous mentors, MP and Funds for Women Graduates (FfWG) for assisting a female graduate. To every wisdom, strength, known and anonymous person or institution that directly and indirectly empowered this phase, and hence to every hero and (s)hero that facilitated this achievement, I am grateful.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the career experiences of forty entrepreneurs who all started businesses under the age of 35. It contributes to knowledge by generating a conceptual model for the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process.

This inductive study based upon narratives generates affective, behavioural, cognitive and discursive understanding to assert that entrepreneurship is an experience, an employment choice and a viable career option for the young. This research learns what facilitates entrepreneurship can be explained in three main concepts the trigger, precondition and core-processes. The *trigger theory* demonstrates that entrepreneurial alertness is bilateral; the career triggers are intentions, motivation, anchors and employment drivers, while opportunity triggers include the origins and nature of opportunity gaps. The *preconditions theory* shows enterprise is supported by antecedent circumstantial factors of genetics and nurture, including personality characteristics, social networks, and knowledge. The *core process theory* elucidates that career development occurs through identity legitimacy, managing failure, dilemmas, results and psychological satisfaction. Furthermore, opportunity development occurs through making judgmental and heuristic decisions, learning and having an operational strategy whilst responding to milieu changes. These three stages represent the entrepreneurial career and opportunity lifecycle.

This thesis provides an original perspective into functional entrepreneurship, and gives voice to the career advances and sustainable opportunities of Nigerian youth entrepreneurs. The conceptual model explains the lived dimensions of entrepreneurial triggers, preconditions and core processes in practice and provides implications for young entrepreneurs, practice, policy and further research.

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material contained within this thesis is my composition, and materials drawn from other sources have been acknowledged and referenced.

Beem H. Beeka

## PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

During the course of the research various parts of the work were published in peer reviewed academic journals, as well as presented at conferences.

### Journal Publications

- Beeka, B. H. and Rimmington, M. (2011) Entrepreneurship as a viable career option for African youths. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*. 16(1), 145- 164.
- Beeka, B and Rimmington, M. (2011) Tourism entrepreneurship as a career choice for the young in Nigeria. *Tourism Planning and Development*. 8(2) 215-223.

### Conference Papers

- Beeka, B. (2012) *Youth Entrepreneurship: Career Choice, Opportunity Identification and Development*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Sheffield Joint Doctoral Conference, Sheffield, 22 -23 May 2012 (Awarded best conference paper).
- Beeka, B. (2011) *Career Identity and Opportunity Recognition: Narratives from Nigerian Youth Entrepreneurs*. The 34th ISBE Conference Sustainable Futures: Enterprising Landscapes and Communities, Sheffield, 9-10 November 2011.
- Beeka, B. (2011) *Entrepreneurship as a Career Choice: Opportunity Recognition Pattern from an Emerging Economy*, 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Sheffield Joint Doctoral Conference, Sheffield, 19-20 April 2011.
- Beeka, B and Rimmington, M. (2010) *Tourism Entrepreneurship as a Career Choice for African Youths*. NeXt Tourism Entrepreneurship Conference, Ontario, 26-27 April 2010.
- Beeka, B. H. and Rimmington, M. (2010) *Entrepreneurship as a Viable Career Option for African youths*. Entrepreneurship in Africa Conference, Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University, New York. 1-3 April 2010.

### Presentations: Conferences & Workshop

- Presented 2012- Joint Sheffield Doctoral Conference, Sheffield.
- Presented 2011- The Institute for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE).
- Presented 2011- Joint Sheffield Doctoral Conference, Sheffield.
- Presented 2010- Northern Advanced Research Training Initiative (NARTI).
- Presented 2010- Wilfrid Laurier University, NeXt Tourism Entrepreneurship Conference, Canada.
- Presented 2010- Syracuse University Entrepreneurship in Africa Conference, New York. USA.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB: African Development Bank  
ADI: Africa Development Indicators  
ASEAN: Association of South East Asian Nations  
AU: African Union  
B2B: Business-to-Business  
B2C: Business-to-Consumer  
BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation  
BMO: Business Membership Organisations  
BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa  
CAC: Corporate Affairs Commission  
CBN: Central Bank of Nigeria  
CIA: Central Intelligence Agency  
CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency  
CIT: Critical Incident Technique  
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States  
EDF: Education Trust Fund  
EDSP: Enterprise Development Service Providers  
EIA: Energy Information Administration  
ESDP: Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programmes  
ETF: Education Trust Fund  
EU: European Union  
EYE: Encourage Youth Entrepreneurs  
FGN: Federal Government of Nigeria  
FRN: Federal Republic of Nigeria  
FSOE: Federal and State-Owned Enterprises  
GDP: Gross Domestic Product  
GEM: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor  
GSM: Global System for Mobile  
HDI: Human Development Index  
IT: Information Technology  
ICT: Information Communication Technology  
ITF: Industrial Training Fund  
ILO: International Labour Organisation  
IMF: International Monetary Fund  
LEAD: Leaders and Entrepreneurs Advanced Development  
MAN: Manufacturers Association of Nigeria  
MBA: Masters in Business Administration  
MBV: Market Based View  
MINT: Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey  
MSME: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises  
NACCIMA: Nigeria Chamber of Commerce Industries, Mining and Agriculture

NACIN: National Association of Cottage Industries of Nigeria  
NAPEP: National Poverty Eradication Programme  
NASME: National Association of Small and Medium Enterprises  
NASSI: National Association of Small Scale Industrialist  
NECA: Nigeria Employers Consultative Association  
NBS: The National Bureau of Statistics  
NCC: Nigeria Communication Commission  
NCP: National Council on Privatisation  
NDE: National Directorate of Employment  
NESG: Nigerian Economic Summit Group  
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation  
NGN: Nigerian Naira  
NUC: National Universities Commission  
NUD\*IST: Non-numerical Unstructured Data, Indexing Searching and Theorizing  
NYSC: National Youth Service Corps  
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
OPEC: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries  
PPP: Public Private Partnerships  
PSED: Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics  
RBV: Resource Based View  
RMRDC: Raw Materials Research and Development Council  
SAGE: Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship  
SAP: Structural Adjustment Programme  
SBRC: Small Business Research Centre  
SCCT: Social Cognition Career Theory  
SLEPT: Social, Legal, Economic, Political and Technological  
SME: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise  
SMEDAN: Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria  
SMIEIS: Small and Medium Industry Equity Investment Scheme  
TEA: Total Entrepreneurial Activity  
U.K: United Kingdom  
UN: United Nations  
UNECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa  
UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization  
US: United States  
USD: United States Dollar  
USP: Unique Selling Proposition  
WTO: World Trade Organization  
YES: Youth Employment Summit  
YRN: Constraints of Youth Run Enterprises

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the thesis including focus and process. The chapter provides the background, identifies the knowledge gaps and specifies the study rationale. It clarifies the main research question, aims and objectives. The significant theoretical concepts and scope are identified through Nigerian contextual, career and entrepreneurship literature, which provides understanding into the research and conceptual framework. The empirical, theoretical and practical knowledge contributions of the study are highlighted. This is followed by a reflective illustration regarding my interest in the research area, and the chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis structure.

### 1.1. STUDY BACKGROUND

The African development agenda recognises that entrepreneurship and the small business sector addresses unemployment, creates work, alleviates poverty and transforms economies (Inyang and Enuoh, 2009; Rogerson, 2001). Nigeria is Africa's largest economy and most populous nation with an estimated 177 million people (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2014). It is said one in every five African is a Nigerian (Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA], 2011; Eicher, 1967; Nwoye, 1997), and the population is very youthful (British Council Nigeria, 2010; Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2001). This study defines youths as those between the ages of 15-35 years old, and the rationale is because the United Nations (UN) adopts member youth definitions when implementing local programmes (UNESCO, 2013). The Federal Republic of Nigeria officially classifies Nigerian youths as citizens between the ages of 18-35 (FRN, 2001); however the African Union stipulates 15-35 years as the African youth age (African Union [AU], 2005). The FRN (2009) believes one in every three person is within the youth age, and six out of ten persons are below the age of 25. However, these are the most vulnerable (FRN, 2001, 2009) especially given the unemployment rate for those between 15-24 years are high at 41.6% (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2010). Studies proclaim within the African continent Nigerians are probably the most dynamic and innovative possessing the highest number

of educated men and women (Alabi, 2009; Koroma, 2010). However, an alarming trend is increasing high graduate unemployment (Egulu, 2004; Onu, 2013; Salami, 2011).

Therefore, it is considered crucial to support more youths to build entrepreneurial skills, pursue entrepreneurial careers, and assimilate into business sectors, which could contribute to the alleviation of the triad of unemployment, underemployment and poverty. Yet, specific research into the field of youth entrepreneurship in the African context is limited (Chigunta, 2002b; Chigunta *et al.*, 2005; Schoof, 2006). Additionally, Stumpf (1992) asserts the goal to become an entrepreneur is explored by many between the ages of 17-30, but there is paucity of information in the literature that shows the different aspects of the career. Hence, failure to comprehensively study the entrepreneurship career means its uncertainties continue to exist outside normal practice (Dyer, 1994; Rae, 2000). Understandably, entrepreneurship is not the total solution to youth issues or unemployment (Curtain, 2001; World Bank, 2008). However, it is a recognisable and innovative strategy to integrate more youths into today's work environment given changing career patterns (Africa Commission, 2009; Chigunta, 2002a; Chigunta *et al.*, 2005; Egulu, 2004; Mueller and Thomas, 2000; Onu, 2013; Owualah, 1999; Salami, 2011; Sommers, 2007). Additionally, informal entrepreneurship is becoming more widespread (Williams, 2011; World Bank, 2012).

There is little research detailing the entrepreneurship process in Africa (Marsden, 1992; Mead and Leidholm, 1998; Rogerson, 2001), and a paucity of literature regarding the career decisions of young entrepreneurs in Africa. Ogbor asserts entrepreneurship literature is mostly western and masculine challenging practice (Ogbor, 2000), and within this study masculine refers to male rather than female, while western countries include The United State, Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Kurth, 2004). In line with Ogbor's comments, studies that address non-western entrepreneurship elucidate diverse motivations, actions and outcomes (Galloway and Cooney, 2012). Furthermore, a profile of small enterprises in Africa suggests non-scarcity of entrepreneurs (Mead and Leidholm, 1998; Rogerson, 2001), because African/Nigerian entrepreneurs manage to survive (Adegbite *et al.*, 2007; Marsden, 1992; Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2002; Steel, 1994). Likewise, Shariff (2000) explains by worldwide comparison Sub-Saharan African youths have the highest self-employment inclination. Chigunta (2002b) advances most youths are not job seekers unlike popular opinion. Instead, most consider self-employment and youth entrepreneurship a feasible career

path. Interestingly, a joint survey from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and Small and Medium Enterprise Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) discovers Nigerian youths dominate the small business sector within the economy (NBS/ SMEDAN, 2010), which is likely due to the wide youth age classification of 15-35; however, a Gallup poll finds Nigerians within the youth age group very entrepreneurial. The poll shows 67% of Nigerians would like to start a business, one of the highest rates in West Africa, with those over 19 years expressing a 75% interest rate (Rheault and Tortora, 2008). Similarly, modern African entrepreneurs comparable to classical and mainstream economic representations actively identify and exploit business opportunities (Elkan, 1988; Marsden, 1992). Furthermore, innovative entrepreneurs materialise from restrictive environments (Marsden, 1992; Manimala, 1992), because entrepreneurship involves value conception and extraction from the environment (Jack and Anderson, 2002). Thus, external environmental influences are ambivalent and excessive deliberation on obstacles diverts attention from understanding successful entrepreneurial micro-actions. These functional behaviours are the practical lessons important for entrepreneurial training and development (Manimala, 1992).

This study addresses theoretical and empirical insufficiencies in African entrepreneurship literature by developing a conceptual framework from the inductive analysis of narrative interview data and existing theoretical literature. These provide relevant insight into youth entrepreneurship career patterns in Nigeria. The resulting conceptual model for the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process clearly depicts variables relevant to the career from beginning to end; these triggers, preconditions and central processes indicate the complete lifespan.

This research is interpretative using the narrative method to gather, analyse and interpret the entrepreneurship stories of forty (40) Nigerian entrepreneurs who start businesses young within the youth ages of 15-35 years gaining an entrepreneurial identity and shows how they become entrepreneurs; the why, when and how that characterises their career and venture process choices. These provide useful insights into entrepreneurial career motivations, decisions, behaviour and patterns. By directly learning why indigenous youth entrepreneurs become self-employed, why they start businesses, how they navigate constraints and their progression, this research allows the voices of these Nigerian youth entrepreneurs to be heard. This non-Western study enables a general appreciation of diverse minority issues, scope of experiences, motivations, effects and

the impact on practitioners lives (Galloway and Cooney, 2012). This research through an investigation of the entrepreneurial lifecycle communicates and presents entrepreneurship as a viable career choice for Nigerian youths.

Furthermore, through learning from these 40 entrepreneurs their career and opportunity lifecycle, risks, rewards, and critical thinking abilities communicate their world. This can potentially empower more youths to consider entrepreneurship as a feasible career (Taylor, 2008). This study agrees with Smith and Air (2012) that entrepreneurship potentially empowers and transforms lives.

Essentially, learning from entrepreneurial behaviour helps in understanding the entrepreneurial process (Mitchell, 1996; Rae and Carswell, 2000; Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997). Hence, the study aims to further the understanding of the entrepreneurial career experience in Nigeria and to inform future development of entrepreneurial support for young people through pragmatic lessons (Beeka and Rimmington, 2011a; Diomande, 1990; Manimala, 1992). This could raise the potential of young people to pursue entrepreneurial dreams, which could also assist alleviate poverty and some social ills relative to youth unemployment. Additionally, the study intends to encourage the society to action implementable support for an entrepreneurial economy. This is a desirable goal, and alongside the development of an empirical and theoretical contribution, provides a great rationale for this research.

### **1.3 THE RESEARCH AIM, QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **1.3.1. Aim**

This study aims to learn about the world of the Nigerian youth entrepreneur and specifically use the experiences to develop empirical and theoretical understanding regarding entrepreneurship as a viable career option. This is achievable through developing a conceptual model from the affective, behavioural, cognitive and discursive significant narrative accounts regarding how the entrepreneurial career starts, why and how the individual recognises and develops the career and opportunity. These contribute to entrepreneurship theory and practice presenting entrepreneurship as a sustainable career for youths. Similarly, the study aims to encourage entrepreneurship as

a resourceful way to change lives, enrich individual wellbeing, advance society and enable growth.

### **1.3.2. Research Questions**

The main research question is “What facilitates entrepreneurship as a viable career choice for Nigerian youths?” the essence being contextual empirical and theoretical knowledge that provides insight into the career behaviour of Nigerian youth entrepreneurs. This thesis also answers the following sub-questions relative to this main question:

- Why do they become entrepreneurs?
- How do they recognise career and business opportunity?
- What path do they take to start and operate ventures?
- What challenges the entrepreneurial career and opportunity?
- What supports the entrepreneurial career and opportunity?

### **1.3.3. Research Objectives**

The research objectives below support the research questions, defining the holistic investigation and scope of the thesis:

- To understand the youth and Nigerian entrepreneurship environment.
- To review relevant entrepreneurship and career theory literature.
- To design an appropriate methodology to investigate the Nigerian youth entrepreneurs career decisions, actions and experiences.
- To identify what initiates, enables, challenges and supports the entrepreneurial career and opportunity.
- To generate insight and examine influential factors that facilitate the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process.
- To develop a conceptual model to elucidate the triggers, preconditions, and core processes within entrepreneurial opportunities.
- To advance knowledge about entrepreneurship as a feasible career for youths.

## 1.4. THE RESEARCH SCOPE AND CONTEXT

### 1.4.1. The Nigerian Context

Nigeria is seen as the giant of Sub-Saharan Africa with a population and potential market of 177, 155, 754 million people and measurable resources, which include huge reserves of oil and gas, arable land and minerals (African Development Bank [ADB], 2010; CIA, 2014). With a 2013 GDP of US\$ 502 billion Nigeria is now Africa's largest economy consistently growing at an annual rate of 6-8% driven by agriculture, telecommunications, services, and steady oil prices (CIA, 2014). According to the ADB (2010) Nigeria was the least affected by the world economic crisis in Africa. Nevertheless, despite macroeconomic stability, on the micro-level unemployment difficulties and youth unemployment remains pervasive (ADB, 2010). Given this jobless growth especially in the formal sector, the economy continues to largely depend on agriculture, wholesale and retail (ADB, 2010; Ezekwesili, 2010; World Bank, 2010). However, KPMG ranks Nigeria one of the four major investment and growth areas in the world, asserting the MINTs (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) and ASEAN are preferred destinations for safer and higher return on investments (Aderinokun, 2013).

Furthermore, while most parts of the world have limited youths, Nigeria's population is predominately young (British Council Nigeria, 2010; FRN, 2009). The current population composition includes those 0-14 years are 43.2%, the 15-24 years are 19.3%, 25-54 years are 30.5%, and the 55-64 years 3.9% (CIA, 2014). Many young Nigerians want to become entrepreneurs (Rheault and Tortora, 2008), however entrepreneurial empowerment is needed especially for graduates and urban youths (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011; Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; FRN, 2009; Oviawe, 2010, Salami, 2011). Therefore, Nwoye (1997) asserts the more dynamic private sector could take the lead to encourage youth entrepreneurship in Nigeria. According to the World Bank the private sector needs public policy support being the engine for job creation through providing 90% of jobs within developing countries (World Bank, 2012). Harding contributes that Nigeria's entrepreneurial spirit and energy is "incredibly addictive and powerful. The energy and passion that exists in Nigeria is something very unique. I think . . . if it [Nigeria] can only harness that energy and that passion, I think the opportunities are enormous" (Harding, 2011). Doug Richards initiating a Nigerian youth entrepreneurship project believes Nigeria could potentially become 'Africa's entrepreneurial superpower'. Richards considers the large population 'the single most diverse group of opportunities'

(British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], 2012). Furthermore, despite the controversial statistics that shows females as the most disadvantaged in the society (Africa Commission, 2009; FRN, 2009), Limbs and Fort (2000) finds Nigerian women enterprising and responsible for most of the food in the marketplace, many engaged within retail especially after maturity or marriage. Additionally, statistics shows the small business sector in Nigeria dominated by youths (NBS/SMEDAN, 2010). Thus, the African's ability to venture and function with scarce resources, the financial approaches and operational strategies, provide rare insights regarding the unique entrepreneurial agility needed to commence and maintain a business with negligible resources (Diomande, 1990). Similarly, conversant to the popular views of entrepreneurship, risk and uncertainty are recurrent but hardly prevent entrepreneurial activity. This perspective within this study could contribute to empower the young enhance personal well-being, upward mobility, societal progress and economic growth (Farley, 2000; Taylor, 2008). Therefore, the strength of this research is the conceptual model generated within the Nigerian context. Strong theories are positioned within "social, historical, local, and interactional contexts" (Charmaz, 2006, p.180).

#### **1.4.2. Defining Career and Entrepreneurship**

A career is "the evolving sequence of a person's work experience over time" (Arthur *et al.*, 1989, p. 8), and this study defines the entrepreneurial career as "one in which growth occurs through the creation of new value or new organisational capacity" (Kanter, 1989, p. 516). The participating entrepreneurs have been in business a minimum of two years to over 19 years therefore current ventures qualify as careers. Similar to Dyer (1994) these career experiences cover individual vocational decisions, career choice, socialisation, orientation and progression relative to career triggers, preconditions and core processes.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship presently lacks a generic definition (Cole, 1946; Gartner, 1988; Shane and Venkateraman, 2000), and this study adopts Bygrave and Hofer (1991, p. 14) "an entrepreneur is someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organisation to pursue it". The term 'organisation' is loose within this thesis to address both informal and formal entrepreneurs to advance a comprehensive model showing entrepreneurship in Nigeria. The focus is on youth entrepreneurs who start ventures between the ages of 15-35 years old, hence all study references to "young" refers to this contextual age group (see section 1.1. for age definition rationale).

This research focuses on agency/the individual as the main unit of analysis, because team based entrepreneurship is typically researched separately to individual entrepreneurship (Casson, 2003b; Shaver, 2003). Thus, to answer the research question, aim and objectives, the primary concentration is on individual entrepreneurship rather than business sectors. Low and MacMillan (1988) suggest entrepreneurship studies involve more analysis levels, and this thesis elucidating career and opportunity triggers, preconditions and core processes covers the individual, firm process and society (Low and MacMillan, 1988), this is, the characteristics of the individual, the venture development process, and the encompassing environment (Gartner, 1985). Smallbone and Wyrer (2006) advocate the entrepreneurial character, management strategy and external business environment are influential for company growth.

For further clarification, the research adopts the following stances; entrepreneurs are self-employed, founder or cofounder owners operating informal or formal businesses. According to Katz and Gartner (1988) one element of emergent firms is commencing transactions (sales), which acknowledges entrepreneurs start operations either informal or formal. Formal entrepreneurship activities are recognised by the public service, informal activities being the opposite (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2002). The formal and few informal interests within this study assist to understand entrepreneurial career and opportunity patterns because “entrepreneurship is based on the same principles, whether the entrepreneur is an existing large institution or an individual starting his or her venture singlehanded” (Drucker, 1985, p. 131). Also, the World Development Report 2013 asserts the informal economy is normal especially in developing countries (World Bank, 2012). Therefore, this research could contribute first-hand knowledge given Elkan (1988) finds many African entrepreneurs start informally before developing formal institutions.

Furthermore, Verheul et al. (1999) equate business ownership and self-employment to entrepreneurship, an approach adopted. Likewise, the terms entrepreneurship and self-employment are interchangeable, and all references to starting and operating a business also indicate the entrepreneurial career. Finally, the participants are solely from Nigeria therefore references to Africa unless specified apply as Nigeria.

### 1.4.3. Career and Opportunity Recognition Focus

There is scarce entrepreneurial career theory (Carroll and Mosakowski, 1987; Dyer, 1994; Rae 2000), and different disciplines disagree about integrating multiple perspectives for a career theory (Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Sonnenfeld and Kotter, 1982). Nevertheless, how individuals formally address themselves or social labels signify identity (Gross and Stone, 1964). This thesis investigates the entrepreneurial career from disciplines including, economics, sociology and psychology. Psychology focuses on career as work, the associated personality and conditions for success (e.g. emotions, affect, cognition, behaviour, abilities, skills, limitations), including self-realisation. The sociological focus examines roles and relationships within the social environment. The economic view examines career as a response to market forces and milieu opportunities (Arthur *et al.*, 1989) including expected utility (Douglas and Shepherd, 2002). Therefore, this thesis focuses on the dynamics of the entrepreneurial career an understudied area (Dyer, 1994).

Furthermore, entrepreneurship is a young scholarly field (Cooper, 2003; Neergaard and Ulhoi, 2007). Neergaard and Ulhoi (2007) insist the phenomenon is in transformation but entrepreneurship activity involves the unpredictable actions of entrepreneurs who respond to perceived opportunities. Additionally, Wennekers (2006) asserts entrepreneurship can be divided into two distinct views, the occupational view, when individuals undertake personal risk to own and manage businesses, and the behavioural view, the entrepreneurial behaviours relative to taking advantage of economic opportunity. Wennekers states both views are connected to behavioural entrepreneurship, that is, the perception and exploitation of opportunity. Baron and Ensley (2006) advocate that opportunity recognition studies should identify patterns, which this study aims to use to develop the conceptual model.

Therefore, the ability to recognise opportunity is fundamental to new business creation theory (Shaver and Scott, 1991; Shane, 2003), including enhancing active businesses. Drucker (1985) concludes entrepreneurs always seek out change and respond through opportunity exploitation. Stumpf (1992, p. 26) refers to entrepreneurial behaviour as “opportunity-seeking, value-adding, risk accepting, creativity activity where ideas result in organisational birth, growth, and/or transformation”. Hence, the decision to start a business personally originates from individuals, and only when this decision is taken can actions lead to venture creation (Shane, 2003). Green and Amat (2012) consider

“entrepreneurship a mainstream career” for youths. This thesis accepts this position and plans to show through a conceptual model internal and external influences that enable the entrepreneurship career. An understanding of the career and opportunity triggers, precondition and main processes could improve youth inclination towards entrepreneurship.

Essentially, opportunity exploitation depends on personal ability because venturing depends occurs through decisive and sustainable entrepreneurial behaviour (Shaver and Scott, 1991). Therefore, entrepreneurs build ventures careers and identities through opportunity recognition, which is the identification and development of entrepreneurial opportunity. Accordingly, within this study, the terms ‘opportunity recognition’ and ‘opportunity identification and development’ are used interchangeably; these terms also refer to the entrepreneurial career.

### **1.5. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

The potential empirical, theoretical and practical contributions would be immense given the study originality as one of the first to develop a career and opportunity model.

There is a general gap in functional African entrepreneurship literature. Specifically, limited existing studies address the entrepreneurial career and opportunity from a Nigerian youth perspective, and this research addresses this theoretical and empirical shortcoming to elucidate the Nigerian youth entrepreneurial career experience. Hopefully, positioning this thesis within the Nigerian context reinforces it showing how western career and entrepreneurship concepts apply in Nigeria. Additionally, presenting entrepreneurship as a viable career option for the young could enable awareness for the career to be understood and respected by all levels of society.

Furthermore, there is paucity in entrepreneurial career theory, and this cross-sectional qualitative research uses a multi-disciplinary approach to develop a retrodictive theory. This model presents the conceptual classifications given the entrepreneurs career and opportunity processes depicting the triggers, preconditions, and core process. The generated model of the entrepreneurship career, opportunity identification and development process could become a useful tool for venturing including understanding the career and opportunity lifecycle, which renews theoretical and practical insights for academicians, policy makers, advisors, trainers and enterprise service providers.

## 1.6. PERSONAL REFLEXIVITY

This section elucidates my background and role as researcher within this thesis; it uses the first person pronoun and some past tense to acknowledge, within the context of this research topic, my personal interest, values and experiences (Willig, 2001) including the study rationale (See appendix 1). Holliday supports that personal experience rather than obscure objectivity actually enriches research because “powerful, personal authorship” and narratives confirm the real-life context of research interests (Holliday, 2007, p. 120).

The regular interaction between parents and children influences career choices, idea development and opportunity consideration (Bassot, 2009; Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 1999; Young *et al.*, 1997). The section conveys how I followed my parent’s footsteps professionally, becoming an entrepreneur, operating businesses in certain sectors and becoming an academic. Hence, my interest in entrepreneurship stands traceable to my family background, Father was an Academic Rector and a consultant, and Mother a prime leader who ran a business; their entrepreneurial ventures, nurturing and highly supportive family structure were a great impact. I believe being entrepreneurial and operating diverse portfolios made my parents well versed in many sectors, and we frequently assisted their interesting entrepreneurial pursuits, learning both practically and vicariously.

While at university early business experiences included coordinating petroleum product deliveries to jetties, I started in business informally and subsequently become formal. Basically, we effectively combined enterprise with university education, and while prospecting people would say ‘what is this child doing here?’ or ‘why is this girl here?’ the society discouraged a young female, but my family encouraged a young entrepreneur regardless of gender, hence amongst peers being a businessperson and a student was rare, but in my case, the informal advice of family was a strong pull toward the career (Blenkinsopp *et al.*, 2006).

After my Master’s degree I commenced corporate training, a service extended to other United Kingdom offices including bringing in teams from Asia and Western Europe to learn from me, and gained various commendations including leadership awards. Where did I learn how to build entrepreneurial abilities? It was from my practical entrepreneurial career experiences of starting and building a business from nothing and as a young person. I was simply making people understand in practice what I now know

as the process of entrepreneurship and leadership. Subsequently, through consulting and training I got involved with enterprise development agencies. For the young, it was a boost learning real experiences from someone who started in business young. Many were seeking venture creation knowledge, including recommending friends and family for training. To reach vast people, I put together a simple book based on general business and vicarious knowledge called “A Practical Guide: How to Start and Grow Your Own Business”. I underestimated its significance, but surprisingly and most humbling till date people communicate being inspired to start and grow as entrepreneurs. We subsequently started the “Encourage Youth Entrepreneurs (EYE)” campaign to deliver free coaching and mentoring, and when this got overwhelming recruited other entrepreneurs. An acquaintance said, ‘Why are you doing all this, do you realise you are not making any money from this pursuit?’ One day I was given the book “Banker to The Poor” the story of Grameen Bank by Mohammed Yunus, and asked to collaborate to start a similar microfinance scheme. I realised I had become somewhat a social entrepreneur, and understood why my enthusiasm for developing entrepreneurs was always met with ‘Are you an NGO?’ Eventually, we started a company limited by guarantee and enacted a board to develop people, and in 2009 translated my enterprise book into Hausa (Mu Koyi Sana’ a) the popular indigenous language of the region and we got the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Tukur and the Dantata family; prolific business families of the North whose enterprises spanned generations from the 1800’s to front the campaign, training women and youths.

The training efforts were successful but a drop in the ocean due to scarce entrepreneurial development programs, and total absence of youth career advisory services. I was invited to speak at the African World Business Congress in Tanzania about ‘Empowering African Youth Entrepreneurs’ and various other meetings, consortiums, think tanks and met many Africans. The issues were similar; the failure of African youths to contribute within their economies made them passive victims, affected by poverty, unemployment, and ill equipped to operate within the modern economy. While not everyone could start a business, many were unaware of entrepreneurial options, many had a fussy idea about other professions, for instance being a banker, but entrepreneurship remained a myth. However, I witnessed the benefits of starting young as Trustee for the Entrepreneurship Club of a Secondary School in Jikwoyi, who defeated their counterparts within Nigeria and then Brazil, China, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, South Africa, United States of America and

the Ukraine, to lift the Global Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship (SAGE) World Cup in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, in 2007 with an average age of 12 years, they were the youngest contestants.

Therefore, I believe entrepreneurship teaches employability skills, and agree with Taylor who reviewed a comprehensive longitudinal study by Kourilsky and Walstad (2007) into youth entrepreneurial aspiration involving students, the general public and business owners, and concluded the entrepreneurial spirit concept impacted all aspects of life and enhanced societal achievement “there is an entrepreneur in youth who, given a nurturing and stimulating education, can contribute to economic growth, community development, youth empowerment, individual well-being and social mobility, regardless of whether the individual ever launches an enterprise” (Taylor 2008, p.1). I cannot solve problem of the African youth but any valuable contribution requires understanding the issues, and this in-depth entrepreneurship study enables this process.

Commencing this research, I discovered the scarce African or Nigerian literature concentrates on the difficult business environment. An undeniable issue, however no study directly addressed the career patterns of young entrepreneurs in Nigeria. When I started in business I focused on what needed to be done rather than any existing constraints, and some entrepreneurs within this study reinforced this attitude. Therefore, this thesis acknowledged but departed from Africa’s enterprise problems. Additionally, this journey sought the dynamics regarding what facilitate the career. To avoid influencing the participants, the relevant discursive approach generated data through allowing participants lead their narratives regarding the subject, which enlightened about successes, dilemmas, gender issues, and the duality of structure. Therefore, studies that accentuate African entrepreneurial difficulties downplay the pragmatic actions utilised within the career, see appendix 1 for more details of past research and study contribution. I hope this thesis educates interested readers and the process model becomes a beneficial resource for the entrepreneurial career and venturing.

This study reveals diverse aspects of the entrepreneurial career, increases my understanding of enterprise activities, and provides a theoretical base to understand career entrepreneurship. A principle achieved from this empirical study is that entrepreneurship is a career and an employment choice, for without the personal decision to start and persistent efforts ventures are not created or sustained. This research hopes to contribute to the supply of youth entrepreneurs to enable society

embrace the entrepreneurial spirit. Certainly, this may be a lifelong journey while developing professionally as an entrepreneur, academic, and researcher.

## **1.7. THESIS STRUCTURE**

**Chapter 1:** This chapter encapsulates the main research, provides the study background, defines the literature gaps, elucidates the rationale, and identifies the main theoretical concepts. The chapter depicts the research aim, questions and the related objectives, and highlights the empirical, theoretical and practical contributions of the study. The chapter contains personal reflexivity illustrating my background, interests, and research influences. This overview of the thesis structure summarises the chapters.

**Chapter 2:** This contextual chapter addresses the research objective to understand the situated context of youth and Nigerian entrepreneurship. The chapter provides a descriptive overview of the Nigerian economy reviews the scarce literature regarding the business sector in Nigeria, definitions, features, challenges, and the general environment. The chapter discusses Nigerian youths, contextual issues, unemployment, youth enterprise, the barriers, and importance of entrepreneurship education and culture.

**Chapter 3:** This theoretical chapter addresses the research objective to review literature on entrepreneurship and career theory. The chapter shows the emergence of the intellectual perspectives, defines the entrepreneur and examines career theory, opportunity identification and development literature. This chapter reviews relative literature given the aim to develop a comprehensive entrepreneurial lifecycle model.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter addresses the research objective to design an appropriate methodology to investigate the Nigerian youth entrepreneur's career decisions, actions and experiences. The chapter provides a comprehensive account of the research design, and confirms the subjective ontological and epistemological positioning. It details and justifies the narrative approach used to gather, analyse and interpret empirical data. This chapter addresses validity and ethical issues, methodological reflexivity, and limitations.

**Chapter 5:** This findings chapter addresses the research objective to identify and analyse what initiates enables, and challenges the Nigerian youth entrepreneurial career. It introduces the entrepreneurs illustrating how the research questions relate to each entrepreneur. The chapter extensively analyses the participants, careers and entrepreneurial engagement. It shows factors that influence the entrepreneurial career

elucidating ideas, motivations, backgrounds, supports and skills relevant to opportunity alertness, antecedents and exploitation. The empirical evidences reveal the career and opportunity triggers, precondition and development themes.

**Chapter 6:** This chapter discusses the empirical findings and addresses the research objective to generate insight and examine influential factors that facilitate the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process. The chapter organises the contribution to knowledge by interpreting the trigger process to entrepreneurial careers, intentions, motives, anchors and employment drivers including the origins and nature of opportunity, discusses the circumstantial antecedents within psychology, economics and sociology, and shows the core process of the career and opportunity; three processes that represent the entrepreneurial career and opportunity lifecycle.

**Chapter 7:** This concluding chapter addresses the research objective to advance knowledge about entrepreneurship as a feasible career for youths, and develop a model to elucidate the triggers, preconditions, and core processes within entrepreneurial opportunities. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the study importance, and in light of the empirical evidences generates the conceptual model for the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process showing the contribution to theory, methodology, practice and policy. The chapter ends with study limitations incorporating recommendations for further research, and a closing statement.

## **1.8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION OF THE INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the complete study, focus, design and contents. The chapter begins with the background and study rationale. It addresses key theoretical concepts, scope and context and definitions. The applicable focus on entrepreneurial careers and opportunity recognition provides understanding into the study concept. The chapter presents the research aim, questions, and the relative objectives, and the potential empirical, theoretical and practical contributions are emphasised. This chapter provides personal reflexivity and an overview of the thesis structure. The next chapter reviews Nigerian entrepreneurship and youths, the context underpinning this study.

## **CHAPTER 2: CONTEXTUAL REVIEW**

### **NIGERIA, BUSINESS AND YOUTHS**

#### **2.0. INTRODUCTION**

This second chapter provides a contextual review of the Nigerian environment and youth entrepreneurship. It addresses the research objective to understand the youth and Nigerian entrepreneurship environment. It is worth noting there is a paucity of literature and secondary resources into the Nigerian environment and this chapter creatively presents the limited information, which impacts the participants and Nigerian entrepreneurship. The chapter illustrates the social, legal, economic, political, historical and technical characteristics of the environment. It provides an overview of the Nigerian economy, examines the general business environment including the micro, small and medium enterprise sector. Subsequently, the chapter evaluates youths, unemployment, enterprise barriers and entrepreneurship education.

#### **2.1. THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Nigeria is now Africa's largest economy (CIA, 2014). According to the National Council on Privatisation [NCP] (2000) the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) gained independence on the 1st of October 1960 forecasted as the model for African development given bright prospects, rich oil and mineral deposits, including a thriving agrarian sector. However, years after bad governance, and oil overdependence leads to stagnation, hence emphasising private sector-led growth becomes imperative due to inefficiency within over 1000 Federal and State-Owned Enterprises (SOE). Thereafter, despite mixed reactions, the FGN through economic reforms and on a sustainable development path embark on the complete privatisation and commercialisation of public enterprises (National Council on Privatisation [NCP], 2000; Osemene, 2010; Zayyad, 1990). Entrepreneurship becomes more attractive following the African privatisation programs (Chigunta, 2002b), and creates attempts to improve small and medium enterprises, and also promote youth entrepreneurship (Soludu, 2005).

The efforts are yet to yield the desired effects (Salami, 2011); nevertheless, economic reforms can assist economic diversification, boost entrepreneurship and return Nigeria to her enterprise glorious days (FRN, 2011). The KPMG asserts with dissatisfactory returns from the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) asides from

China. The MINTs (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) and ASEAN have become the favoured destination for safer global capital and investment due to high returns on investment. Hence, there are cumulative inquiries how to do business in these countries, access markets and achieve long-term growth in the MINTs, the attractive sectors being financial, food and energy with the Nigerian capital market of particular interest (Aderinokun, 2013). See Table 1 for brief country profile.

**Table 1: Nigeria: Brief Country Profile**

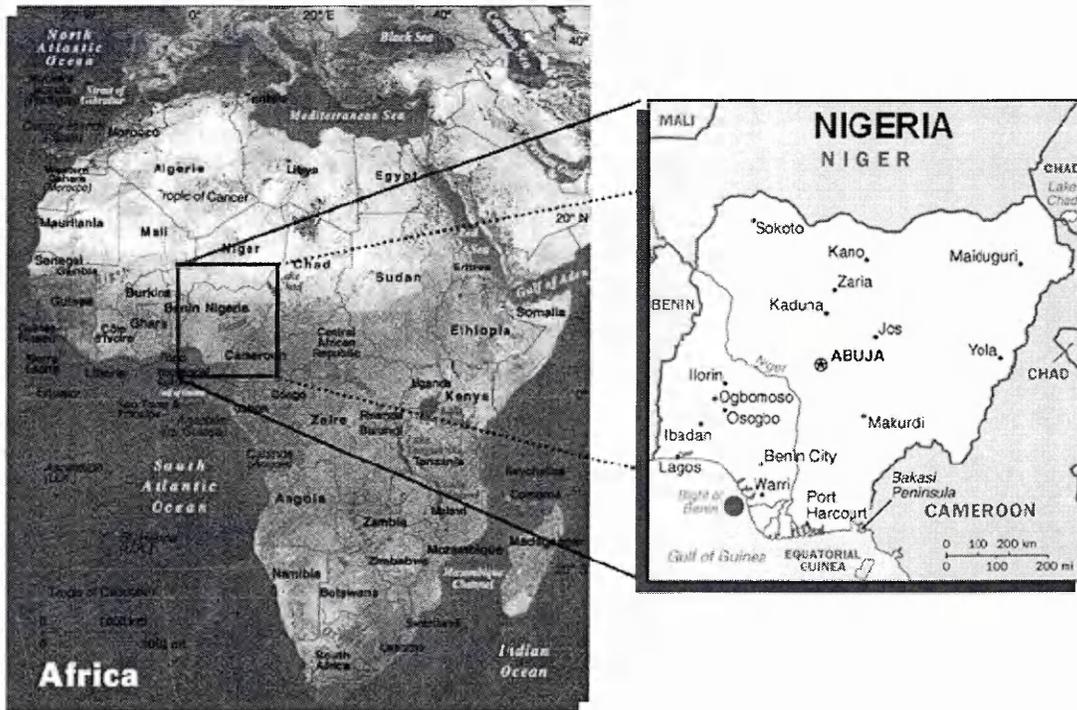
<b>Country Name/Long</b>	Federal Republic of Nigeria
<b>Country Name/Short</b>	Nigeria
<b>Government Type</b>	Federal Republic
<b>Federal Capital</b>	Abuja
<b>Total Area</b>	923,768 sq. km
<b>Population</b>	177, 155, 754 (July 2014 estimate)
<b>Official Language</b>	English
<b>Currency</b>	Naira (NGN)
<b>Exchange rate</b>	1USD=156.8 NGN (2013 estimate)
<b>Labour Force</b>	51.53 million (2011 estimate)
<b>Age Structure</b>	0-14 years: 43.2% (male 39,151,304/female 37,353,737) 15-24 years: 19.3% (male 17,486,117/female 16,732,533) 25-54 years: 30.5% (male 27,697,644/female 26,285,816) 55-64 years: 3.9% (male 3,393,631/female 3,571,301) 65 years and over: 3% (male 2,621,845/female 2,861,826) (2014 est.)
<b>Labour Force Occupation</b>	Agriculture: 70% Industry: 10% Services: 20% (1999 estimate)
<b>Agriculture Products</b>	Cocoa, peanuts, cotton, palm oil, corn, rice, sorghum, millet, cassava (manioc, tapioca), yams, rubber; cattle, sheep, goats, pigs; timber; fish.
<b>Industries</b>	Crude oil, coal, tin, columbite; rubber products, wood; hides and skins, textiles, cement and other construction materials, food products, footwear, chemicals, fertiliser, printing, ceramics, steel.

CIA (2014)

## 2.2. THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located in West Africa (See figure 1: Map of Nigeria), constitutes the seventh largest country in the world holds Africa's largest proven oil reserves, and is currently the world's fourth largest producer of Liquefied Natural Gas (CIA, 2014).

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria



Search and Discovery (2012)

### 2.2.1. Economy and Politics

Nigeria is Africa's largest democracy (ADB, 2010; EIA, 2013; CIA, 2014) and the biggest oil producer in Africa (CIA, 2014). The economy depends on the oil sector for about 80% of budgetary revenues and 95% of foreign exchange earnings (CIA, 2013). This oil concentration neglects sufficient economic diversification, nonetheless FRN (2000) asserts the large market, human and natural resources creates prospects for prosperity given most West African countries use Nigerian produce, in contrast, Nigeria is an importer of high-value foodstuffs (FRN, 2000).

Despite the nation once being the 6<sup>th</sup> largest oil exporter in the world, about 62% live below the poverty line (CIA, 2014). The reasons for this includes over dependence on oil, which makes the economy vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices, and economic mismanagement. However, the democratic administration postulates addressing issues of bad governance and corruption through anti-corruption bills, laws and economic reforms (CIA, 2011, 2013; FRN, 2000; FRN, 2011). Nigeria plays a pivotal peace keeping role in Africa (FRN, 2011), and in 2006 became the first African country to pay off a debt to the Paris Club of Nations (Africa Good News, 2011).

## 2.2.2. Nigeria, Africa and World Economy

Nigeria is Africa's largest economy with a GDP of USD 503bn in 2013 (CIA, 2014). The country is a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), African Development Bank (AfDB), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) accounting for nearly two thirds of the regional aggregate GDP of the 15 countries (FRN, 2011). According to FRN (2011) consistent growth in GDP is driven primarily by growth in the non-oil and gas sectors due to reforms through contributions from agriculture, telecommunications and wholesale and retail trade (FRN, 2011) (See Table 2). The general literature insists the economy remains highly dependent on the oil and gas sector, which in 2009 accounted for 84.5% of export earnings and 69.4% of gross federal revenue, and this makes the economy vulnerable to oil price fluctuations because many economic sectors depend on public spending accruing from oil revenues rather than taxation (FRN, 2011). The overdependence on oil is termed the 'Dutch Disease' (McPherson, 2001) a reference to the Netherlands struggle to diversify their economy after over reliance on oil.

**Table 2: Sector Contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**

Sector	% GDP in 2009
Agriculture	41.84
Wholesale and retail	18.16
Crude oil and natural gas	16.05
Manufacturing	4.19
Finance and insurance	3.71
Telecoms	3.67
Building and construction	1.98
Solid minerals	0.38
Others	7.04

NBS (2010)

The government looks toward the continuous diversification of the economy to stem the overdependence on oil for income, through coordinated economic policies, resource development, continued economic reforms, infrastructural public private partnerships, banking reforms and privatisation (FRN, 2011).

Furthermore, the economy is growing steadily at 6-8% annually (CIA, 2014), after indications of being one of the fastest growing economies in the world according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Africa Good News, 2011). There are prospects that Nigeria and South Africa will contribute to international trade (ADI, 2010), and KPMG

finds Nigeria a preferred destination for global capital and high return on investment in finance, food, energy and the capital market sectors (Aderinokun, 2013).

## 2.3. BUSINESS, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs)

### 2.3.1. SME Definition and Operations

Nigerian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are grouped into three categories, Micro, Small and Medium scale (MSME) given these criteria's; the number of full-time employees or total sales and assets excluding land and buildings (NBS/SMEDAN, 2010; Udechukwu, 2003). See table 3:

**Table 3: Definition of SME's in Nigeria.**

<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>	<b>Assets (Excluding Land and Buildings) in NGN</b>
<b>Micro</b>	Less than 10 workers	Less than 5 million
<b>Small</b>	Between 10– 49 workers	5 to less than 50 million
<b>Medium</b>	Between 50– 199 workers	50 to less than 500million

NBS/SMEDAN (2010)

In Nigeria, the organised manufacturing sector is 95% SMEs, while in Africa and Asia, most jobs, especially in non-urban areas are provided by SMEs who account for the vast majority of industrial units in different continents (Udechukwu, 2003). It is difficult to be exact about the true size of SMEs in Nigeria due to conflicting data (Onugu, 2005), however the World Bank asserts SMEs account for 87% of firms operating in Nigeria, although no data accurately depicts their total number.

However, the Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) estimates SME numbers are about 80% micro, 15% small, and 5% medium, with larger firms located in big cities like Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja but numerous micro and small entrepreneurs operate everywhere, roadsides, around market centres and within villages (Chemonics International, 2005). Hence, Nigerian SMEs encourage indigenous entrepreneurship, and by labour contribution, 97% of these SME's employ less than 100 people (Ariyo, 2005). Nigerian SMEs account for 50% of total employment, and contribute 50% of industrial output. These SMEs dominate the agriculture, building/ construction, transport, utilities, wholesale, and retail trade sectors (Stork, 2006). Table 4 shows the formal regional business registrations with the Corporate Affairs Commission [CAC].

**Table 4: Company Registration by Location**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Lagos	31
Port Harcourt	14
Abuja	12
Ibadan	8
Asaba	8
Others	22

Stork (2006)

### **2.3.2. SME Support Agencies in Nigeria**

Many non-profit organisations including the Fate Foundation, Leaders and Entrepreneurs Advanced Development (LEAD) and Leap Africa offer all kinds of specialist support and training for the young and SMEs in Nigeria. Also, government agencies, business membership organisations and schemes are critical to entrepreneurship development in the country. Some of the agencies listed are briefly described in Appendix 2. However, NBS/SMEDAN (2010) survey finds many MSME's are not aware of these available supports.

- i. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)
- ii. National Directorate of Employment (NDE)
- iii. Business Membership Organisations (BMOs) like NASSI, NASME, MAN, NACIN, NECA, and NACCIMA.
- iv. Industrial Training Fund (ITF)
- v. National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)
- vi. Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC)
- vii. The Small and Medium Industry Equity Investment Scheme (SMIEIS)

### **2.3.3. SME Challenges in Nigeria**

Generally, a limitation with studying MSME's in Nigeria is the paucity of data, nevertheless, as regards challenges Onugu (2005) discovers micro enterprises have better credit ratings than SMEs, and their repayments rates are higher than SME defaults. These challenges in table 5 additional to cultural antagonisms toward youth enterprise (Theil, 2008; World Economic Forum, 2009) discourage rather than promote SME growth (Onugu, 2005; Salami, 2011; Udechukwu, 2003).

**Table 5: SMEs Challenges in Nigeria**

<b>Exogenous/ Outside Factors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inadequate infrastructure- SMEs are forced to provide their own utilities like roads, water, and electricity.</li> <li>▪ Weak access to production inputs especially finance</li> <li>▪ Lack of basic business capacity – knowledge, skills, attitude</li> <li>▪ Lack of trust in indigenous products</li> <li>▪ Multiplicity of taxes and levies</li> <li>▪ Corruption</li> <li>▪ Low access to information, and ability to take advantage of information</li> <li>▪ Limited access to long-term capital</li> <li>▪ Over-dependence on imported raw materials and spare parts</li> <li>▪ Policy instability and reversals</li> <li>▪ Bureaucratic bottlenecks and inefficiency in public sector</li> <li>▪ Lack of administered incentives</li> <li>▪ Multiplicity of regulatory agencies and taxes which means high cost of business</li> </ul>
<b>Endogenous/ Personal Factors</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Aversion to joint ownership or partnership</li> <li>▪ Family ties i.e. family business sometimes means no expansion</li> <li>▪ Financial mismanagement</li> <li>▪ Poor documentation for project finance proposals</li> <li>▪ Lack of quality entrepreneurial staff</li> <li>▪ Low entrepreneurial skill from insufficient educational and technical background</li> <li>▪ Lack of perseverance through tough times.</li> <li>▪ Poor record keeping especially accounting books</li> <li>▪ Non-standard product or service</li> <li>▪ Doing it all, being the Managing Director, Accountant, Admin Manager, Cashier etc</li> <li>▪ Low capacity to invest in Research and Development (R&amp;D)</li> <li>▪ Low capacity to invest in necessary technology</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate management skills</li> </ul>

Onugu (2005); Salami (2011); Udechukwu (2003)

#### **2.3.4. Doing Business in Nigeria**

This section discusses factors that affect Nigeria as a whole and by extension firms operating within Nigeria. Studies (e.g. Adegbite *et al.*, 2007; Mambulu, 2002; Nwoye, 1997; Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2002) declare there exists entrepreneurial talent in Nigeria and a dynamic private sector, which is innovative and results-oriented but lacking is the enabling environment. Ray (2007, p. 4) asserts early conditions from economic and political power distribution, legal structures, tradition, group reputation, colonial heritage, and specific institutional background influences Nigeria. African countries have incompetent and bureaucratic institutions, which hamper enterprise (Schoof *et al.*, 2006), and Nigeria continues to record poor indices on the Ease of Doing Business Report, mostly due to poor infrastructure e.g. light and transport, the difficult business environment and low access to funding (World Bank, 2009).

However, capacities are being built including Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to ease constraints (ADB, 2010; CIA, 2013, 2014). See table 5 for the SME challenges contributing to mortality. Nevertheless, studies argue opportunities still exist, and firms manage to withstand the unfavourable business environment (Diomande, 1990; Elkan, 1988; Marsden, 1992; Udechukwu, 2003).

### **Internal Factors**

The internal factors affecting doing business in Nigeria include inconsistent government policies, which change at short notice shifting priority from one sector into another, tight credit to address inflation and entrepreneurs discovering their indigenous products cannot compete with imported goods (Austin, 1990). The Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) and NOI Polls in the last quarter of 2010 conducts forty-one face to face, telephone and self-administered interviews involving business owners in banking, insurance, transport, oil and gas, agriculture, manufacturing, consulting, private equity, telecoms, aviation, real estate and retail sectors. The finding explains in comparison to previous years there are slight improvements within the business environment, but the pessimistic issues, such as, access to credit, infrastructural deficit, exchange rates, corruption, and policy inconsistency largely remain the same. Hence, business in Nigeria is challenging but strategic investment, and far-sighted business decision-making generates desired rewards (NOI/NESG, 2011). Additionally, Beeka and Rimmington (2011a, b) assert to successfully operate within the Nigerian context requires confidence and resourcefulness when facing with obstacles, this agility facilitates taking advantage of opportunities because the opportunity recognition process is best functional through, self-efficacy, social networks, prior knowledge, a tolerance for high-risk, learning, and importantly imbibing the cognitive heuristic ability of making decisions 'on ones feet' to adapt to changes within the environment (Beeka and Rimmington, 2011a, b).

### **External Factors**

The African continent consists of over 54 countries that remain major exporters of raw materials and net importers of consumer industrial goods (Stock, 2004). These countries have little control as prices for exports and imports into Africa are determined in London, New York and other major centres of the world economy, and this lack of control over commodities prices makes mid to long term development planning

uncertain and challenging (Stock, 2004), this is one explanation why the Nigerian economy appears unplanned. Ray (2007) explains 'past expectations, aspirations and actual history' in the developing world involving the colonial history of surplus production and extraction contributes to decaying institutions. Hence, historical legacies contribute to development difficulties (Ray, 2007; Stock, 2004).

Similarly, the failure and decline of many SMEs in Nigeria can be attributed to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) an imposed World Bank policy advocating neo-classical theory of perfect competition without considering the facts; a developing country like Nigeria is unprepared to handle the aftershocks of competing on equal terms with countries possessing more developed trade channels and institutions. This dismantling of trade barriers created chaos with SMEs struggling to survive due to the increase in competition from both internal and international goods (Udechukwu, 2003). Austin (1990) argues external elements contributes to a constrained macro situation and business environment, for instance, loans and economic aids by multilateral institutions demand non-negotiable terms of trade and policy changes (e.g. Currency devaluation, fiscal austerity), which cause disruptions in already fragile business environments. These political interferences negatively affect firm operations, and continuous dependence on foreign aid means a political economy perpetually in shambles (Austin, 1990).

Nevertheless, development aid creates business opportunities for contractors through projects (Austin, 1990). Aid is one feature many associate with Africa rather than business a reason why the President of Tanzania within the Africa Commission (2009) document affirms that Africa's young need assistance to become entrepreneurs rather than aid, and youth entrepreneurial development could improve Africa's competitiveness. Kosack (2003) for instance favours aid and asserts in combination with democracy financial aid improves the quality of life. However, others disagree with its ability to influence economic growth, for example, Okon (2012) in a long-term study 1960-2010 of development aid to Nigeria finds aid contributes immensely to worsening human development. Okon asserts for aid to be beneficial, government policy needs to monitor effective utilisation and donors need to provide more information on future disbursements to curb uncertainty, and enable better fiscal planning. Others contend aid does nothing for Africa because rather than governments concentrating on developing entrepreneurs and raising revenue through effective

taxation, they relegate this function of enabling entrepreneurship in exchange for courting donor aid (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2012; Moyo, 2009). But, foreign aid including loans are 'easy money' and bribe money (Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, 2012). Aid creates political vulnerability and likely facilitated the African wars and coups of the 1990's (Moyo, 2009), and these conflicts cause economic regression (Ray, 2007). Yet, African governments remain less concerned with creating an enabling environment for business (Moyo, 2009).

### **Formal and Informal Entrepreneurship**

More than thirty years ago the International Labour Organisation [ILO] (2002) uses the term 'informal' sector to describe the activities of those operating outside the formal economy, whose activities are not recognised, recorded, protected or regulated by the public service. The informal enterprise colossal increase is causing a quandary; they can no longer be ignored because majority of employment in developing and transiting economies emanates from this sector. In Africa, they account for 80% of non-agricultural employment, over 60% urban employment and over 90% of new jobs over the past decade, though this work may not be considered valuable such as those in the formal sector (ILO, 2002).

While the informal sector gains prominence, much discussion persists about legalising the informal sector (Dessing, 1990; Elkan, 1988; ILO, 2002; Soludu, 2005; Trager, 1987. According to Rheaut Tortora (2008) 69% of people in Nigeria planned to start a business informally, and perceived difficulty in the regulatory environment and access to finance were the attractions. Hence, talented entrepreneurs unable to overcome institutional barriers operate in the informal sector, due to bureaucracy and inability to provide basic needs for poor masses (De Soto, 1987, Thomas and Mueller, 2000). Elkan asserts most informal entrepreneurs are less educated, or from social or religious minorities and even though the sector remains criticised, informal entrepreneurs importantly serve low income consumers, and their activities serve as a springboard, since many large businesses in Africa start within the informal sector (Elkan, 1988). Many small enterprises are informal and assisting them become formal is an important goal for the government and all Enterprise Development Service Providers (EDSPs) (Soludu, 2005).

Acs (2006) equates informal entrepreneurship to necessity entrepreneurship arguing that opportunity entrepreneurship leads to economic growth, while necessity entrepreneurship (including informal self-employment type) shows that bureaucracy hampers business creation to hypothetically cause slow economic growth. However, the informal sector is an important source for many, the Economist expresses it is approaching 60% in Chad, 22% in Ghana and between 20-30% in Nigeria (Chigunta, 2002b). Hence, given many youths operate within the informal sector, the debate of youth entrepreneurship ranges around ‘are the self-employed who operate in the informal sector, entrepreneurs or disguised workers exploited by the formal sector?’ (Cross, 1997) surely such enterprise skills are functional in life circumstances including coping with poverty, which is good for both the formal and informal economy (Schnurr and Grant, 1999). Also, Shane (2003) asserts numerous opportunities exist for trader groups coming together to recombine resources; these do not always end up new legal entities. Therefore, Williams (2011) maintains the informal economy is multifarious and should no longer be ignored and considered illegal, under undeclared wages and “sweatshop-like” conditions, and governments should reconceptualise informal activities. Williams advocates formal activities should not replace informal activities, and once the right structures for informal self-employment are recognised with targeted policy, then informal enterprise can become an alternative to formal employment (Williams, 2011).

According to the World Development Report 2013 over half of workers in developing economies are self-employed, or engage in small-scale farming. Therefore, the informal sector is normal and transformational with capacity to make cities work, create internationalisation, preserve environments, build trust and civic duties, reduce poverty and create jobs that achieve economic and social development. The report advocates that governments needs to realise 90% of jobs in developing countries are created by the private sector that need an enabling environment, macroeconomic stability, investment in human capital, rule of law, security, and removal of obstacles that hinder the private sectors ability to create jobs (World Bank, 2012). Hence, consistent with this thesis Ucbasaran et al. (2010) advocates entrepreneurship studies research different structures.

## Understanding the Business Environment

All over the world interest is growing away from a managed economy, towards an entrepreneurial economy and entrepreneurship is increasingly linked to creativity, employment generation and economic growth (Belgrave and Cowling, 2002; Criscuolo *et al.*, 2007; Drucker, 1985; Harper, 2003; Kirchoff and Greene, 1995; Schoof, 2006; Schumpeter, 1947; Stevenson and Lundstrom, 2002; Thurik *et al.*, 2008; Van Stel *et al.*, 2007). The intensity of entrepreneurial activity varies from country to country, relative to demographic, cultural and institutional environmental factors, and these shape economic development in countries (Bosma and Harding, 2007). Similarly, entrepreneurs play a significant role in the commercial and industrial development of less developed nations (Collins *et al.*, 1964). In underdeveloped nations new businesses restore deteriorating public enterprises, empower the excluded/poor and create jobs. Thus in all economies, increased entrepreneurial activity results in economic growth (Thomas and Mueller, 2000).

The entrepreneur is central to the economy as entrepreneurial activity boosts economic development (Kelly *et al.*, 2012; Harper, 2003; Schumpeter, 1947), and entrepreneurs do not operate in a vacuum rather they interact with the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) aspects of society (see Table 6) which affect business operations, risk perception and enterprise returns within countries. These include, wealth, economic stability, availability of capital and taxation in the economic environment (Shane, 2003). The political environment elements include political freedom, property rights, power centralisation, also, the policy environment affects business set-up, determines business taxes, employment and security laws, credit market regulations, the national pension system, wage-setting institutions and the size of the public sector (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000). In the socio-cultural environment as well as the tangible characteristics, there exists the intangible aspect of culture (Aderemi *et al.*, 2009; Delmar and Davidsson, 2000). Social and cultural factors influence values and norms (beliefs and attitudes), which impact entrepreneurial legitimacy (Shane, 2003; Smith and Air, 2012). This environment includes family, friends, customers, business cartels and government support structures (Aderemi *et al.*, 2009). Hence, studies find, regardless of country of origin or cultural background, entrepreneurs are more similar to each other than to non-entrepreneurs (Thomas and Mueller, 2000), especially their way

of thinking (Mitchell *et al.*, 2002a, b, 2007). Gillespie (2010) depicts in table 6 more PESTEL factors:

**Table 6: PESTEL Factors**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Features</b>
Political	e.g. Political unions, currency, international trade, taxation policy
Economic	e.g. Interest rates, exchange rates, national income, inflation, unemployment, stock market
Social	e.g. Population composition, work attitude, income distribution
Technological	e.g. Innovation, new product development, obsolete technology
Environmental	e.g. Global warming, environmental issues
Legal	e.g. Competition law, health & safety, employment law

Gillespie (2010)

Therefore, Austin (1990) emphasises countries have distinct challenges which entrepreneurs must be conversant with when managing their companies. This includes government controls, production issues, financial limitations and market disruptions such as industrial infrastructure, technology, quality attitudes, training attitudes, foreign exchanges restrictions, import and export restrictions and complicated bureaucratic procedures for obtaining licences. These disrupt business plans, sales projections and operational schedules. Hence, to succeed in a developing country one must have superior understanding of the accepting ways of transacting business, through adequate analysis and ulterior comprehension of the external environment. The four environmental factors in table 7 interrelate to shape business strategy and operations (Austin, 1990).

**Table 7: Environmental Factors**

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Political</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Natural resources</li> <li>▪ Labour</li> <li>▪ Capital</li> <li>▪ Infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stability</li> <li>▪ Ideology</li> <li>▪ Institutions</li> <li>▪ Geographical links</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Demographic</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social structure and dynamics</li> <li>▪ Human nature perspective</li> <li>▪ Time and space orientation</li> <li>▪ Religion</li> <li>▪ Gender roles</li> <li>▪ Language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Population growth</li> <li>▪ Age</li> <li>▪ Structure</li> <li>▪ Urbanisation</li> <li>▪ Migration</li> <li>▪ Health status</li> </ul>

Austin (1990, p. 32)

Furthermore, harsh business environments create rent-seeking behaviour, unproductive (Baumol, 1990) and illegal practices (Smith, 2011; Smith and McElwee, 2013).

McElwee and Smith (2012) in a study of farmers express 'selective and well-managed diversification' is the act of avoiding detection whilst engaging in illegal practices. Hence, entrepreneurial 'proclivity' ensues while engaging jointly in legal and illegal activities (Smith and McElwee, 2013). Fadahunsi and Rosa (2002) provide empirical evidences through a Nigerian case study that productive entrepreneurship is preferred when supported, but weak property rights and rule of law creates instances of bribery, moral compromise, and taking advantage of legal grey areas to facilitate trade. Additionally, individuals commit economic crimes to prevent economic and social status decline (Engdahl, 2008). Down (2010) suggests illegality is worldwide and a socially constructed behaviour largely ignored by scholars. This is because, analytically, illegal and normal enterprise follow similar creative destruction paths; both identify opportunity, take risks, create organisations, and pursue profit (Rehn and Taalas, 2004). However, to encourage enterprise, that which adds rather than exploits and destroys should be promoted (Baumol, 1990; Down, 2010), and this best practice focus is the reason research concentrates on positives. Furthermore, to build an entrepreneurial culture, good regulations are required (Baumol, 1990), and society needs to understand entrepreneurship is about social and economic value, rather than selfish materialism (Casson, 2010).

### **2.3.5. Nigerian Entrepreneurial Intentions**

The Gallup survey to those over 15 years in a face-to-face interview to gauge the entrepreneurial intentions of Nigerians finds high entrepreneurial intentions amongst the young, 70% for those over 19 years, including with the employed, the educated, and desires to operate informally possibly due to business environment constraints. Additionally, 73% indicate difficulties accessing finance and obtaining loans, and 59% are unhappy with bureaucratic government requirements and tough requisite filling processes (Rheault and Tortora, 2008).

Furthermore, studies indicate knowing a self-employed person in Nigeria is a major push towards self-employment (Owualah, 1999), and the Gallup poll discovers a small majority of 53% know someone else besides a relative in business. About partnerships, a slight majority of men at 57% would consider in comparison to 49% women due to trust issues with non-relatives (Rheault and Tortora, 2008). Also, there is potentially more opportunity than necessity entrepreneurs. Generally, Nigerians have a reasonably

strong drive for entrepreneurship, and the non-responses may indicate lack of information about the business environment (Rheault and Tortora, 2008).

## **2.4. NIGERIAN YOUTHS**

According to UNESCO the term ‘youth’ is a flexible expression rather than an age group, which signifies the transition phase from childhood dependence to adult independence, often the age between leaving compulsory education and gaining first employment, and this age has been on the increase given the rise in youth unemployment. The United Nations defines youths as those between the ages of 15 and 24, but accepts member definitions when implementing local programmes (UNESCO, 2013). This study adopts the age of 15-35 similar to the African Youth Charter (African Union, 2005; FRN, 2009).

The current population composition shows youths up to 24 years constitute over 52.5% of the populace (see table 1) (CIA, 2014). The British Council Nigeria (2010) forecast for most of the twenty first century Nigeria would be a youthful country with 40% below the age of 15. By comparison the West contends with an increasingly aging population and China experiences declining individuals of working age. By 2030, Nigerian youths not oil could become great assets yielding dividend or a demographic disaster (British Council Nigeria, 2010).

### **2.4.1. Youth Voice**

The broad definition of Nigerian youths reflects the dramatic circumstances of transition between childhood and adulthood for many Nigerian individuals. This categorisation up to the 30’s reflects dependency, a consequence of the 80’s stagnation (Beeka, 1993; Chigunta, 2002a, b). Also, it is considered normal for persons between 15 and 30 years to still be in secondary and tertiary education. Unfortunately, many young people in the country only start generating wealth relatively late in life, and contribute only about 30 years to the society, seven years short in comparison to China (British Council Nigeria, 2010). Hence, to fulfil their potentials Nigerian youths require social, economic and political support, which is currently lacking despite youths showing promise, being energetic, vibrant, ambitious, creative, and enthusiastic, they remain the most vulnerable group within the economy facing various uncertainties (FRN, 2009). FRN (2009)

asserts Nigerian youths would like be recognised as partners and request that their voices be heard and issues addressed (FRN, 2009).

#### **2.4.2. Economic Growth vs. Youths**

According to the African Development Bank [ADB] (2010) Nigeria is the largest consumer market on the African continent but the economy grows at the same time as poverty (Brock, 2012). However, with Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) high at USD11bn in 2009, the 2009-2010 world financial crises did not negatively impact the macroeconomic environment like other African nations. Unfortunately, the strong growth performances did not translate into increased job opportunities, with youths especially affected by the 'jobless growth' (ADB, 2010; Brock, 2012; World Bank, 2010). The Human Development Index (HDI) pegs Nigeria poorly, a disparity for an emerging economic force (British Council Nigeria, 2010). The employment difficulties are traceable to issues regarding physical infrastructure, finance rarity, poor investment climate, low labour skill, and addressing these can induce private sector led growth in the non-oil sectors, only then will any growth indices be meaningful for the average Nigerian (ADB, 2010).

#### **2.5. YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**

The unemployed are the proportion of the labour force who are available to work, but do not work for at least 39 hours in the week preceding the survey period (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2010). There are two categories of the unemployed in Nigeria; the first groups are older people retrenched, redundant or bankrupt, while the second groups are the young with no employment experience (NBS, 2010). Studies (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; Salami, 2011) find youth unemployment in Nigeria is higher in the urban areas than in rural ones, because strong macroeconomic indices are not reaching the microenvironment creating little investments, economic activity and low growth, hence rural to urban migration is increasing amongst the youths simultaneous to rising graduate turnout, and the small labour market is unable to cope and absorb the teeming young job-seekers, there are too many people chasing few jobs. Table 8 shows a sharp unemployment rate surge from 14.9% in March 2008 to 19.2% for urban and 19.8% for the rural areas.

**Table 8: National Unemployment Rates (2000 - 2009)**

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Rate%	13.1	13.6	12.6	14.8	13.4	11.9	12.3	12.7	14.9	19.7

NBS (2010)

By educational levels table 9 shows those most affected by unemployment in Nigeria are the young and older groups, with unemployment highest amongst secondary school leavers at 23.8%. By gender comparisons, female rates are higher (NBS, 2010).

**Table 9: Unemployment Rates by Educational Group, Age group and Sex**

Unemployment by Educational Group, Age group and Sex (March 2009)			
Items	Urban	Rural	Composite
All Groups	19.2	19.8	19.7
<b>Educational Group</b>			
Never Attended	20.6	20.0	20.1
Below Primary	18.4	22.9	22.3
Primary	15.1	14.7	14.8
Secondary	21.4	25.3	23.8
Post-secondary	13.9	26.4	21.3
<b>Age Group</b>			
15-24	49.9	39.6	41.6
25-44	16.3	17.3	17.0
45-59	10.0	12.1	11.5
60-64	18.2	16.2	16.7
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	17.2	16.9	17.0
Female	21.7	23.9	23.3

NBS (2010)

According to FRN (2009) Nigerian youths are the largest affected by unemployment, within this group females are the most affected with less access to opportunities, those in rural areas are hampered by less access to services and facilities. Similarly, those in the agriculture sector lack financial resources to expand operations. The exact youth unemployment rate in Nigeria is hard to decipher but it is projected about 50 million Nigerian youths are unemployed and under-employed (FRN, 2009). A distressing trend is the unemployment rate among urban youths (Salami, 2011) and Nigerian graduates (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011; Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; Egulu, 2004; FRN, 2009; Oviawe, 2010, Salami, 2011). Hence, unemployment and poverty becomes the twin faces of the economy especially in the North, causing under-development and social ills, and the best escape is for all 36 states and 774 local governments to develop their

business fabric and give entrepreneurship its rightful place as the major transformer for their economies (Soludu, 2005).

Kanyenze et al. (2000) identifies that the supply-side causes of the high unemployment rate are population growth, demand for jobs greater than supply, rural-urban migration, inadequate curriculum and public perception. The demand side include demographics and deep-rooted economic crisis. However, Feather (1985) asserts individual reasons for youth unemployment can also be deep and largely dependent on the individual's cognitive-affective system, attitudes and values. This study agrees with the demand, supply and especially individual reasons since cognition triggers opportunity alertness and personal effort sustains entrepreneurship.

### **2.5.1. Graduate Unemployment**

In the Nigerian context, graduate unemployment refers to a situation where a qualified person is able and willing to work after graduating from a tertiary institution and completing the mandatory one-year National youth Service Corps (NYSC) remains unemployed from failure to find a job (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011).

Nigeria's educational system is arranged into nine years of compulsory and free basic education (six years of primary and three years of junior secondary), three years of senior secondary, and four years of tertiary education (Vere, 2007). In 2005, 93 Universities, 56 Colleges of Education and 58 Polytechnics produced about 617, 097 graduates, and according to National Bureau of Statistics/Federal Ministry of Productivity by 2007 this figure increased to 754, 100 (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011).

However, increasing unemployment amongst university graduates is problematic because "education which does not tend to develop the individual is not education at all" (Beeka, 1981, p. 19), the poor quality fails to equip young people with the skills needed to function within modern jobs and society. Brijlal (2011) suggests universities develop bureaucrats rather than calculated risk-takers. The Nigerian educational curriculum seems to be producing graduates who believe they are designed for government jobs at the, federal, state and local government levels. Hence, many limit their job search to government institutions (Salami, 2011). Generally, the mismatch is attributed to poor curriculum that creates appalling and unemployable graduates (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011; Oviawe, 2010; Salami, 2011). Akinyemi et al. (2011) asserts there is a problem of high graduate turnout concurrent to lack of corresponding

opportunities in 2009 graduate unemployment increases from 40.3% from 23.6% in. Akinyemi et al. summarises influential factors include insufficient technical knowledge, inadequate proficiency in English and critical thinking skills required by increasingly technologically savvy organisations. In 2004 the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Education Trust Fund (ETF) national survey 20 organisations to determine the labour market needs, and discover 44% of organisations assess Nigerian science graduates as average in competence, 56% average in innovation, 50% average in rational judgment, 63% average in leadership skills and 44% average in creativity. Regarding skills such as literacy, oral communication, information technology, entrepreneurship, analytical, problem solving and decision-making, 60% deem graduates poor. Generally, this statistics reflects a poor assessment of Nigeria's university graduates and implies they are unemployable (Oviawe, 2010; Salami, 2011). Hence, a reason for high graduate unemployment is because the focus of learning within institutions contrasts with the creation of entrepreneurial youths (Gibbs, 1987), see table 10 for an illustration of the relationship between education and entrepreneurship.

**Table 10: The Focus of Learning**

<b>Educational focus on:</b>	<b>Entrepreneurial focus on:</b>
The past	The future
Critical analysis	Creativity
Knowledge	Insight
Passive understanding	Active understanding
Absolute detachment	Emotional involvement
Manipulation of symbols	Manipulation of events
Written communication and neutrality	Personal communication and influence
Concept	Problem or opportunity

Gibb (1987, p. 17)

Green and Amat (2012) assert entrepreneurship is a legitimate way to earn a living, and higher institutions students require educating that it is a valid career option. Furthermore, a tripartite of tertiary institutions, government and the labour market can address graduate unemployment; the tertiary institutions need these partners to plan curriculum to build modern and entrepreneurial skills within the young (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011; Oviawe, 2010). Indeed, for Nigerian youths to become more entrepreneurial they need targeted training, and entrepreneurship education could pass on the knowledge, skills and attitudes to function effectively as profitable entrepreneurs so the young too could contribute to nation building (FRN, 2009).

## **2.6. FACTORS INFLUENCING NIGERIAN YOUTHS**

This section highlights other wider structural, cultural, and political features that directly or indirectly impact Nigerian youths.

### **2.6.1. Gender Issues and Trade**

Nigeria is a masculine society (Austin, 1990). The population of women in the nation is about 60 million which is about half of the population (FRN, 2009). FRN explains women are the most unemployed due to limited access to resources and education in comparison to men. Culture and traditions largely confine the symbol of womanhood and female roles to the family, which includes, getting married and raising children. Women are expected to be subordinate, while men and boys are seen as family heads, prime decision-makers and bestowed more authority and opportunities within the family and society (FRN, 2009). This gender inequality inhibits ability to obtain decent education and employability skills; likewise in the labour market young Africans are hindered by un-progressive 'cultural attitudes towards them' (UNECA, 2006).

Woldie and Adersua (2004) assert worldwide women are only beginning to be taken seriously from relegation and gender inequality, yet in some environments prejudicially their involvement in business is interpreted as neglecting the family, which is bad for 'honour' and 'respect'. This appears a contradiction because, Nigerian females prominently support the families economic wellbeing, but continue to be ignored by the patriarchal society hampering ability to contribute more favourably to the business environment; hence men and society need to take women more seriously or many would continue to operate within the informal economy. Women need better access to good education, training, development and employment (Woldie and Adersua, 2004). The FRN (2000) states most of West Africa imports Nigerian produce, creating in 2009 an agricultural contribution to the GDP of 41.84% (NBS, 2010). Ananyisi-Achibong (1988), and Limb and Fort (2000) confirm about two thirds of Nigerian women are enterprising traders and one third operate small farms. Similarly, the NBS/ SMEDAN (2010) survey corroborates that more Nigerian women operate in the informal and micro sectors. Hence, when authors (e.g. Africa Commission, 2009; FRN, 2009; NBS, 2010) indicate more women constitute the unemployed, it appears operating within the informal sector equates to unemployment.

### **2.6.2. Ethnicity and Diversity in Business**

Nigeria is a country of different backgrounds living very diverse cultures, and some liken Nigeria to a country of many nations (Oni, 2008). The country consists of 36 states with a Federal Capital Territory-Abuja and some 774 local government areas (FRN, 2009; ADB, 2010; CIA, 2014), comprising a population of 250 ethnic groups the largest and most influential ethnic groups being the Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, and Tiv 2.5%, with a religious composition of 50% Muslim, 40% Christians, and 10% indigenous beliefs (CIA, 2014). Stock declares the many indigenous languages and ethnicities are a basis for concern, that the divide and rule tactics inherited from colonial oppression causes these problems. Thus, building national identity and a sense of purpose remains challenging amidst complex ethnic, linguistics, cultural, and religious multiplicity, and these tensions including regional and ethnic division of power and wealth contributes to shoddy planning, bad development agenda's and the exclusion of groups (Stock, 2004).

The major difference within the Nigerian culture is between the north and south (Oni, 2008). Nigerian businesses operate with communitarian ethics and are mostly family owned and patriarchal. The North contains more Hausa's and practising Muslim's with high religious customs (Austin, 1990). Hausa the largest group dominate government policy, the Yoruba's mostly from the West the civil service and the more entrepreneurial Ibos of the East start-ups and businesses (Ananyisi-Achibong, 1988). Thus, Limb and Fort (2000) concludes the society is a mixture between the family male oriented environments of the Hausa's, and the pragmatic and industrious Yoruba and Ibos who have adapt more western values. Also, most Nigerians speak more than one language asides English to trade effectively.

### **2.6.3. Poverty, Intolerance and Insecurity**

Nigeria is a wealthy nation yet few Nigerians are well off, in some regions up to 70% live on less than one United States dollar (USD) a day. As poverty worsens, it is no longer news that the alienation coincidentally creates intolerance and resistance. For instance, the Niger Delta and hub of the oil industry is one of the most impoverished areas of Nigeria, badly battered not just by poverty but environmental nightmares; petroleum spillages, pollution, and so on which destroys farming, fishing and other livelihoods (Stock, 2004). Hence, in the past the Niger Delta militants resorted to

kidnapping oil workers in exchange for ransom (Salami, 2011). Currently, the major insecurity issue is religious intolerance from insurgents but the FGN is tackling them (African Examiner, 2013). Nevertheless, ‘Boko Haram’ a terror sect creates mayhem with many young people afraid to attend schools. The conflict between this sect and the government contributes to senseless loss of lives and property, which threatens and devastates specific cities in Northern Nigeria (Mark, 2013).

#### **2.6.4. Inconsistent Education Policies**

Salami (2011) finds the quality of education in Nigeria deficient (FRN, 2009) due to inconsistent education policy changes since 1960, gross underfunding and low educational sector budgetary allocation; only 1.3% of the GDP is assigned to education and the reason for this low investment is unclear. It appears the policy makers consider immediate return on investment (ROI) and are more attentive to real sectors like oil and telecommunications. For instance, (e.g., Salami, 2010) when oil and gas workers proceed on strike their issues are resolved within three days, much faster than when the lecturers strike for months on end, and regardless of the social and political repercussions only the interests of those in authority are considered. Thus, bad leadership, corruption and mismanagement contribute to the gross under-funding of education (Salami, 2011).

#### **2.6.5. Declining Low Vocational and Technical Education**

The society widely believes being educated to tertiary level implies getting to the top of the ladder (Salami, 2011). Low value is attached to vocational and technical education, and although technical colleges have increased since 1991 student enrolment since 1997 are on the decline. However, technical and vocational education is vital to the country’s economic development (Dike, 2006, 2009a, b; Salami, 2011). Thus, vocational programs need to be market driven to include business management skills (Kanyenze *et al.*, 2000; Salami, 2011).

Furthermore, Salami (2011) declares artisans and technicians are considered at the lower end of the economic ladder, and “never-do-wells”, dropouts, rejects or failures that should perpetually remain at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. The general public looks down at manual labour and accordingly, there is shortage of proficient bricklayers, carpenters, printers, auto mechanics, laboratory and pharmacy technicians,

vocational nurses, and so on, and in years the nation could have severe deficiency of artisans (Salami, 2011). Generally, the Nigerian value system of consideration for others, hard work and accountability are gradually being replaced with the desire to live on the fast lane. The age-old apprenticeship systems are disappearing. Formerly, a master auto mechanic would guide about three to five apprentices, but now youths sign up to learn and quit before the required time, not learning the trade skills, and some gravitate toward the motorcycle transport business “Okada” to start making immediate money. Thus, apprenticeship, vocational and technical education is on the decline (Salami, 2011).

#### **2.6.6. Rural-Urban Migration**

The young from rural areas readily migrate to urban areas seeking a better life (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; FRN, 2009; Salami, 2011). The reasons being inability to get integrated into the economic environment, low quality of education and lack of economic assets such as land, including issues that rural communities are yet to embrace mechanised farming depending on ‘rain-fed agriculture’ which causes seasonal unemployment, pushing many young people to migrate to cities and urban areas in search of ‘educational, economic and cultural’ opportunities (UNECA, 2006). The disadvantages of such migration are youths may encounter exploitation, growing incidence of youth poverty, and different forms of social ills like prostitution, crime, drugs and armed-conflict, which causes problems for them and society in general (UNECA, 2006).

### **2.7. IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

It is important to understand why Nigerian youths start entrepreneurial careers, businesses or develop enterprise skills. However, there is scarcity of empirical and systematic literature accurately providing this information (Chigunta, 2002b; Green and Amat, 2012). Understanding their motivation can contribute to innovative avenues to encourage youth entrepreneurship. Chigunta (2002b) finds the level of youth entrepreneurship and self-employment higher in Sub-Saharan Africa than other developed countries, but in comparison to the adults noticeably lower. Africa Commission (2009) declares more men engage in entrepreneurial activity compared to women, and older youths run more enterprises than younger youths. These studies need greater investigation to check applicability to Nigeria but the NBS/ SMEDAN (2010)

Nigerian survey indicates those within the youth age dominate the small business sector in Nigeria. Although, we have to remember that Nigerian youths like most African definitions are those between 15-35 years.

A Zambian study (e.g., Chigunta, 2001) shows 92.3% of youth businesses are due to necessity to escape socio-economic problems, out of these 46.2% cite unemployment, 30.8% supplementing household income, 15.4% poverty and 7.7% the need to accumulate wealth as the major venturing reason. Similarly, in Malawi (e.g., Kambewa, *et al.*, 2001) youth entrepreneurs cite unemployment and poverty (Chigunta, 2002b). The survey by NBS/ SMEDAN (2010) confirms there are more Nigerian women operating within the informal and micro sectors, and the Gallup poll shows mostly opportunity enterprise intentions among Nigerian youths (Rheault and Tortora, 2008). Therefore, Chigunta argues while easy to dismiss the entrepreneurial aspirations of African entrepreneurs as arising from lack of alternatives, the reality is various factors contribute, such as, changes within the political and social environment, and lower wages in the formal economy. Also, self-employment is increasingly seen as an employment option (Chigunta, 2002b). Basically, enterprise facilitates self-development enabling self-esteem and independence (Anderson and Galloway, 2012). Additionally, within the same age group, young self-employed individuals boast higher “life satisfaction” (OECD, 2001). See table 10 for youth enterprise importance:

**Table 11: Importance of Promoting Youth Enterprise**

- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Creating employment opportunities for both the self-employed youth and other young people.</li><li>▪ Bringing back the alienated and marginalised youth into the economic mainstream.</li><li>▪ Helping address some of the socio-psychological problems and delinquency that arise from joblessness.</li><li>▪ Promoting innovation and resilience in youth.</li><li>▪ Promoting the revitalisation of the local community.</li><li>▪ Young entrepreneurs may be particularly responsive to new economic opportunities and trends.</li><li>▪ Youth run enterprises give young people, especially marginalised youth, a sense of meaning and belonging.</li><li>▪ Enterprise helps young women and men develop new skills and experiences that can be applied to many other challenges in life.</li></ul> |
|---|

Chigunta (2002b, p. v)

### 2.7.1. Constraints to Youth Entrepreneurship

There is acute shortage of access to finance for young people and micro-finance institutions appear unhelpful. An assessment of 902 organisations in 96 countries under the Microcredit Summit's Council of Practitioners shows only 21 organisations with 'youth' in their titles (Curtain, 2001). The financial institutions often refer to lack of sufficient collateral, experience and other prejudices to avoid considering youth enterprises (Chigunta, 2002b; Curtain, 2001; FRN, 2009; Udechukwu, 2003; Yunus, 2003). Hence, worldwide data suggests in comparison to adult enterprises the young face challenges relative to their age, life and work experiences, and table 11 shows the constraints beyond finance:

**Table 12: Constraints of Youth Run Enterprises (YREs)**

- More youth face problems of access to resources such as capital;
- More young people start their enterprises with lower levels of initial capital;
- More enterprises owned by young people have a lower market value or inventory;
- More youth entrepreneurs are engaged in a narrower range of activities;
- More young people tend to operate from homes or streets (lack of access to space);
- More young people do not bring experience and contacts to the business, and;
- More enterprises owned by youth tend to rely on simple tools or have no equipment at all.

Chigunta (2002b, p. vi)

### 2.7.2. Developing Youth Entrepreneurship Careers

There is a wide call to develop more youth entrepreneurs (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011; Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; FRN, 2009; Oviawe, 2010, Salami, 2011). Additionally, Hajia Turai Yar'Adua a First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria advocates entrepreneurial and skill acquisition as the approach to empower women and youths to create wealth and alleviate poverty (Ebonugwo, 2009). According to the 2009 National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action, the following are lacking in Nigeria and if provided would empower the young (FRN, 2009), these include school based career guidance services, youth centres and career guidance centres, enterprise training that communicates that self-employment is a viable career path and not a last resort, youth financing, vocational apprenticeships, ICT and science to motivate the young, and provision of equal access to education and resources especially for women.

### **2.7.3. Entrepreneurship Education and Training**

*For the ordinary person to attempt overnight to create a new venture is tantamount to the person who cannot read music sitting down to compose a symphony. It is like a man who has never held a brush and palette in his hands essaying a portrait in the style of Rembrandt. The creation of a new business, like any form of creativity, is depended upon the mastery of the fundamentals (Collins et al., 1964, p. 36).*

The Entrepreneurial Skills Development Programmes (ESDP) in Gambia, Nigeria, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Uganda and Kenya advance questions regarding their effectiveness (Nafukho 1998; Chigunta *et al.*, 2005). Green and Amat (2012) advise young people need education and counselling that entrepreneurship is an authentic career and wage earner. Therefore, education can contribute to creating an entrepreneurial culture (Jack and Anderson, 1999). Education increases attention on graduate entrepreneurial development and high growth firms (Galloway and Brown, 2002). However, the argument regarding ability to teach entrepreneurship persists, additionally educationist and policy-makers perceive that employment signifies working for others and earning a wage an attitude beginning to change, because enterprise education is an importance dynamic that can contribute to youths living a more responsible and productive life (Chigunta, 2002b), entrepreneurship education can assist students gain knowledge to start businesses or work within large firms (Young, 1990, 1997).

### **2.8. IMPLICATION & CONCLUSION OF THIS CONTEXTUAL REVIEW**

This contextual review chapter positions the thesis within the Nigerian environment illuminating youth career issues, the business environment. It shows the paucity of Nigerian youth entrepreneurship studies, and the limited focus surrounding substandard education and graduate level unemployment. Similarly, the economy earns considerably for macro stability without creating an enabling environment for enterprise. However, through strong entrepreneurial intentions the private sector perseveres within the harsh environment. Hence, despite the seemingly unplanned economy, Nigeria is the largest economy and consumer market on the African continent with massive opportunities, and both formal and informal MSMEs dominate mainstream business. This review provides the background to understand and interpret the thesis findings, and the absence of literature into the Nigerian youth career choices and opportunity patterns confirms the contextual contribution of this thesis. The next chapter examines entrepreneurship and career theory.

### **ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CAREER THEORY**

#### **3.0. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter constitutes the theoretical orientation and addresses the research objective to review mainstream entrepreneurship and career theory. The chapter starts with contributions to entrepreneurship perspectives and the intellectual principles of Schumpeter (creativity) and Kirzner (alertness) toward trait and behavioural approaches. It examines career, opportunity identification and development theory, and identifies the paucity of an entrepreneurial career theory. This chapter evaluates relative literature given the aim to develop a comprehensive model of the entrepreneurial process and lifecycle. The chapter concludes by considering the implications of this literature review.

#### **3.1. ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTELLECTUAL TRADITION**

The scholarly field of entrepreneurship originates from economic theory (Gedeon, 2010; Herbert and Link, 2010). The word “entrepreneur” derives from the French verb “entrepredre” meaning to undertake (Jennings, 1994). The term originates from economic literature (Gedeon, 2010; Knight, 1964; Stauss, 1944), and the earliest historical conception is traceable to Bernard de Belidor (Hoselitz, 1951/1960), in his 1729 book 'La Science Des Ingénieurs' the entrepreneur is a contractor who bears costs risk and uncertainty to sell at a fixed price. From the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Cantillon a well-known entrepreneurship theorist extends relative views (Wennekers, 2006), asserting the entrepreneur buys at a given price and sells at an uncertain price (Jennings, 1994; Webster, 1977; Wennekers, 2006). Three 'intellectual traditions' (table 13) emerge from Cantillon's functional entrepreneurship theory with contradictory focus (Wennekers, 2006, p. 25); however, Shane (2003) asserts these traditions in modern day research are harmonious.

**Table 13: Entrepreneurship Intellectual Traditions**

<b>Tradition</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>The German tradition of Von Thunen and Schumpeter (Schumpeter, 1911/1934)</b>	The German school and Schumpeterian economists advance that the entrepreneur creates instability and creative destruction in essence destabilizing and changing competition rules in industries.
<b>The Chicago tradition of Knight and Schultz (Knight, 1921; Schultz, 1975)</b>	The entrepreneur creates equilibrium in the market place.
<b>The (neo-) Austrian tradition of Ludwig von Mises and Kirzner (Kirzner, 1979, 1997)</b>	The entrepreneur perceives profitable opportunities due to external stimulus, and gathers resources to satisfy personal wants or improve inefficiency or efficiency in the market place.

Wennekers (2006, p. 25)

The German and Schumpeterian school of thought economists concentrate on the entrepreneur as a creator of instability and creative destruction, changing the 'rules of competition' for the industry (Schumpeter, 1934). While the Austrian school focus on ability to perceive profitable opportunities due to external stimulus (Wennekers, 2006).

Venkataraman (1997) argues entrepreneurship studies based on the principles of Schumpeter are stronger given regardless of market conditions innovative individual action creates wealth, while Kirzner only elucidates market gap recognition. Shane however supports that both views are compatible given both involve fresh ideas, resource recombination and uncertainty, although Schumpeter focuses on grand creative destruction, while Kirzner emphasises milder innovation in exploiting market inefficiencies (Shane, 2003).

Entrepreneurship economic theory, definitions, history and advancement literature contains different perspectives (Gedeon, 2010), which are beyond the scope of this study. Hence, this research focuses on the influences of Schumpeter and Kirzner, including ensuing traits and behavioural scholarly views.

## **3.2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE ENTREPRENEUR**

### **3.2.1. Entrepreneurship Definitions**

Entrepreneurship is a process where an individual sees opportunity (possibilities) and has the ability to cope with issues, resistance and intricacies inherent when operating outside established practice (Schumpeter, 1947). Stauss (1944) reveals the entrepreneur is the 'captain of industry' after originating from economic literature as a 'character of

economic history'. However, with advancement in public and private firms, the modern perspective is that 'the firm is the entrepreneur' specifying two vital responsibilities, bearing risk and assuming management, and this formal definition makes the entrepreneur a 'character of economic theory' (Stauss, 1944, p. 112). However, the literature from early scholars to date confirms the field has no generic definition (Cole, 1946; Gartner, 1988; 1989; 1990; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Hence, fundamental purpose and definition for this study is discussed within the introduction (1.4.2 Defining Career and Entrepreneurship).

The Collins English Dictionary defines the entrepreneur as "the owner of a business who attempts to make money by risk and initiative" (Collins, 2011, p. 328). Shane (2003) and Casson (2010) support a legal entity is unnecessary for new venture existence, which supports informal enterprise and self-employment. Similarly, self-employment refers to working for oneself rather than being paid wages (Shane, 2003). Furthermore, Gartner (1989) asserts entrepreneurship is the process of new organisations coming into existence, through starting new ventures or individuals assuming risk, to start innovative and fast growing ventures. Low and Macmillan (1988, p. 141) support it involves 'creation of new enterprise'. Others argue entrepreneurship transcends simply creating an enterprise or the individual innovatively leaping toward risky ventures (Kaplan and Warren, 2007; Kuratko, 2009). It now involves idea origination and execution, sufficient research, time, determination and communicating with teams and external 'stakeholders like the banks, investors, and corporate partners respectively' (Kuratko, 2009).

Youth entrepreneurship is defined as the "practical application of enterprising qualities, such as initiative, innovation, creativity, and risk-taking into the work environment (either in self-employment or employment in small start-up firms), using the appropriate skills necessary for success in that environment and culture" (Chigunta, 2002b, p. v). Nevertheless, the defining characteristic of the entrepreneur is simply the doing of new things, or the doing of things that are already being done in a new way (innovation), this is someone who develops new products or services adding societal value (Schumpeter 1947, p. 151). Bartlett (1988, p. 4) asserts entrepreneurs are highly motivated and effectively achieve business objectives. Thus, the word entrepreneur signifies a configuration of psychological traits, attributes, attitudes, and values of an individual motivated to initiate a business venture (Thomas and Mueller 2000, p. 291).

### 3.2.2. Types and Classification of Entrepreneurs

Smith (1967) using a historical approach interviews 110 mature firms, the two to seven hour interviews of 150 entrepreneurs in six Michigan cities gathers personal and firm histories, actions, observing appearance and company layouts. The conclusion identifies (see table 14) two types of entrepreneurs, the craftsman and the opportunity entrepreneur, with level of education the major difference. However, De Vries (1977) opines a consideration of personal history and non-work environments could produce a more in-depth look beyond demographics.

**Table 14: Types of Entrepreneurs**

The Craftsman- Entrepreneur	The Opportunistic-Entrepreneur
Narrow focus toward the present and past	Far sighted and future oriented
Has special technical education	Advanced in education
Has lower confidence levels	High social awareness and highly confident
Is rigid with low flexibility	High level of flexibility, adapting to change
Implication 1: Less effective in making innovative decisions	Implication 1: More effective in making innovative decisions
Implication 2: Lower sales growth	Implication 2: Higher sales growth

Smith (1967)

Furthermore, Webster (1977) identifies five classes of entrepreneurs (see table 15):

**Table 15: Classification of Entrepreneurs**

Classification	Description
The Cantillon Entrepreneur	When Cantillon introduced the “entrepreneur” in the eighteenth century he meant a person assuming risk, being accountable for and managing a business enterprise. In the factors of production the person was one of the four, land, labour, capital and the entrepreneur. This person took advantage of opportunity to make entrepreneurial profit.
The Industry-Maker	This is an entrepreneur who management literature considers to be an industry-maker, nation builder, and a pioneer, huge risk-taker. They invest personal funds to start a business venture, manage the organisation and become industry leaders.
The Administrative Entrepreneur	These were the most addressed in academic journals, including Business Week, Fortune, and The Wall Street Journal. This is an individual who singularly or jointly (with colleagues) creates a venture or reorganises one and becomes the manager of the organisation. Unlike the industry-maker their influence is concentrated in an individual firm.
The Small Business Owner/Operator	This category depicts the largest amount of entrepreneurs, who most often start their ventures not seeking the ‘quick and dirty “big financial payoff” like flamboyant entrepreneurs. The typical small business owner’s operations are limited in scope, regarding sales, geographical outreach, and potential profits. Even though these are difficult to classify, a few examples include, those in retail, wholesale merchants, corner store grocer, independent druggist, the local gasoline station, and the marginal boutique (p. 55).
The Independent Entrepreneur	The Independent Entrepreneur is typically one who alone starts a venture, operates it but is less concerned with the long-term management of any one venture. In comparison with the other types, this is an entrepreneur who is less prone to risk, preferring to be a risk creator or avoider rather than a risk-taker. Their only risk is time lost when a deal goes bad and generates no pay-off, because even when the venture fails they manage to make money from the venture through selling its shares. Therefore, the real risk-takers in this business are the outside-shareholders, subordinate principles, and unsecured creditors. However, a highly profitable independent entrepreneur may become an administrative entrepreneur.

Webster (1977)

### 3.3. TRAITS AND BEHAVIOURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship is a young scholarly field (Neergaard and Ulhøi, 2007). According to Thornton (1999) three fundamental principles psychology (McClelland, 1961), economics (Schumpeter, 1934), and sociology (Weber, 1904) largely shape entrepreneurship knowledge. Consequently, in researching the entrepreneur various studies have taken distinct paths; Knight (1921) examines profit factors, Schumpeter (1934) emphasises the central role of innovation in economic development, while Kirzner (1973,1979) describes alertness to opportunity. Wennekers (2006) asserts entrepreneurship consists of two distinctive views the occupational view regarding risks associated with business ownership, and the behavioural view, the behaviours associated with taking advantage of opportunity. Therefore, in general, trait schools highlight personal qualities, while behavioural schools concentrates on the holistic influences on the entrepreneurship process. These involve all functions, activities, and actions linked with the perception and pursuit of business opportunities (Bygrave and Hofer, 1991; Kuratko, 2009; Shane, 2003).

McClelland a major contributor to the traits schools in 1961 explains entrepreneurial behaviour through personal characteristics and cultural values (Gedeon, 2010). According to Kuratko (2009) and De Vries (1977) in the 'The Achieving Society' McClelland finds entrepreneurs score high on Need for Achievement (n Ach) the need to perform excellently in competitive situations, although this focus shifts toward Need for Power (n Power) since power motivation is necessary for efficiency. McClelland (1961) summarises that: (a) Entrepreneurs have high Need for Achievement (n Ach); (b) Desire to take responsibility for their actions; (c) Decisions are taken given moderate risk; there is interest in tangible knowledge resulting from personal decisions; (d) Entrepreneurs dislike monotonous routine work. Additionally, Collins et al. (1964) in the 'The Enterprising Man' use some of McClelland's analysis to find entrepreneurs have resolution issues, are patriarchal, and their need for autonomy arises from discomfort with authoritative figures, they are anxious and can be self-destructive. Kets de Vries (1977) alleges many entrepreneurs are social deviants due to early encounter with death, desertion and neglect, and these create lonely, impulsive individuals who reject authority to control a hostile world through owning businesses. However, Kets De Vries advances that entrepreneurial traits are contentious, and the traits school, which

attempts to describe how entrepreneurs are different from others, is criticised given character similarities to non-entrepreneurs (Brockhaus, 1980).

Therefore, profiling the entrepreneur remains difficult (Low and Macmillan, 1988), after both schools initially dispute regarding entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs. Carland et al. consider entrepreneurs practice ‘strategic management’; establish and manage ‘innovative’, ‘profitable’ and ‘growing’ businesses. Therefore, not all new ventures are entrepreneurial given small business owners/ventures do not adhere to these four criteria's and are an extension of individual personalities (Carland *et al.*, 1984). Smith (1967) rejects this use of innovation to define entrepreneurs and their firms, and Gartner (1988) similarly argues Carland et al. flaws are the excessive concentration on the entrepreneur, which directs focus toward traits and personal characteristics, when ‘how new firms come into existence?’ should be the spotlight for understanding the complete entrepreneurial process, because entrepreneurship simply involves creating new organisations, a criteria non-entrepreneurs lack. Therefore, the behavioural approach is more productive in understanding ‘the dancer’ and ‘the dance’, including the inherent complexities and intricacies influencing the entrepreneurial process “entrepreneurship is a role that entrepreneurs undertake to create organisations” (Gartner, 1988, p. 64). Carland et al. (1988) re-conclude that to understand entrepreneurial concepts both trait and behavioural approaches are essential.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship goes beyond the study of economic small businesses; all enterprises go through the start-up process no matter the size; micro, small, medium or large, and the entrepreneurial career and process involves decisions made on different levels given many contextual influences (Wright and Marlow, 2012). Therefore, the literature shows entrepreneurial studies today are more consistent in advocating the behavioural approach, this is, studying the process of entrepreneurship (Gartner, 1985; Shane *et al.*, 2003; Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990).

### **3.4. CAREER THEORY**

The definition of a career connects central circumstances both internal and external to the individual (Arthur et al., 1989; Goffman, 1961). The Chicago school asserts careers are created when many people follow a path, and humans identify with socially recognised careers (Goffman, 1961). Therefore, a career is “the evolving sequence of a person’s work experience over time” (Arthur *et al.*, 1989, p. 8). It is “any social strand

of a person's course through life" (Goffman, 1961, p. 127). Likewise, assuming "everybody who works has a career, then the theory is the body of all generalisable attempts to explain career phenomena" (Arthur *et al.*, 1989, p. 9). Career studies should address individual and organisational change (Van Maanen, 1977), including societal change (Kanter, 1989) and occupational variables such as job and income, additional to the psychological factors like job satisfaction and associated stress (Sonnenfeld and Kotter, 1982). Hence, subjective career success is evaluated internally based on important personal goals (Van Maanen, 1977). While objective career success explains the external and publicly shared social perspective, these tangibles include profession, family situation, task elements and progress, income, and job status (Van Maanen, 1977, p. 9).

Therefore, career theory is best studied from different disciplinary perspectives (Arthur *et al.*, 1989), (See table 16) and this thesis given the scarcity of an entrepreneurial career theory starts with psychological, sociological and economic concepts.

**Table 16: Social Science Career Concept Viewpoints (Arthur *et al.*, 1989, p. 10)**

Psychology	<p>Career as a Vocation: A viewpoint accepting the traditional psychological turn on stability of personality in adulthood; associated theory is intended to help guide individuals and organisations fill job openings in a mutually satisfactory way (e.g., Holland, 1985).</p> <p>Career as a Vehicle for Self-realisation: A humanistic viewpoint focusing on the opportunities a career can provide for further individuals growth and how that growth can in turn benefit organisations and society (e.g., Shepard, 1984).</p> <p>Career as a component of the individual's life structure: from this viewpoint eras and transitions throughout the career are predictable and are to be accommodated in the work arrangements made (e.g., Levinson, 1984).</p>
Social psychology	<p>Career as an individually mediated response to outside role messages: A viewpoint that studies particular occupational circumstances, such as those of priests (e.g., Schneider and Hall, 1972) or scientist and engineers (e.g., Bailyn, 1980), for their psychological effects.</p>
Sociology	<p>Career as unfolding of social roles: this view overlaps with social psychology but places greater emphasis on individual's reciprocal contribution to the social order (e.g., Hughes, 1958; Van Maanen and Barley, 1984).</p> <p>Career as social mobility: seeing a person's title as an indicator of social position (Bleu and Duncan, 1967; Featherman and Hauser, 1978; Warner and Abegglen, 1955).</p>
Anthropology	<p>Career as status passages: a view overlapping with social functional sociology about how rites and ceremonies serve to maintain a society and culture over time (Glaser and Strauss, 1971).</p>
Economics	<p>Career as a response to market forces: a viewpoint emphasizing the near-term distribution of employment opportunities and long-term accumulation of human capital (e.g., Becker, 1975; Doeringer and Piore, 1971).</p>
Political science	<p>Career as the enactment of self-interest: this views individual needs such as power wealth, prestige or autonomy as prominent objects of self-interested behaviour in the context of institutional political realities (e.g., Kaufman, 1960).</p>
History	<p>Career as a correlate of historical outcomes: looking at the reciprocal influence of prominent people and period of events on each other (e.g., Schesinger, 1965).</p>
Geography	<p>Career as a response to geographical circumstances: focusing on variables such as availability of raw materials, a natural harbour, or a population ready for work or trade as they affect the way working lives unfold (e.g., Van Maanen, 1982).</p>

### 3.4.1. Overview of Career Theory

Frank Parson (1909) is the earliest contributor to the field of career development (and counselling). Parsons and Shaw set up the 'The Vocation Bureau' in the early 1900's to address the problem of young school-leavers making better career choices. Parson's tripartite model of 'The Wise Choice of a Vocation' is the first model of career decision-making (Hartung and Blustein, 2002; Zytowski, 2001), and emphasises traits and factors important to career choice (Kazuyuki and Kuo-lin, 2006). The Wise Choice of a Vocation contains three broad principles: (a) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes; (b) a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (c) true understanding of the relations of these two groups of facts (Parsons, 1909, p. 5). Parson asserts that access to social and economic opportunities also determines career decisions (Hartung and Blustein, 2002).

Krumboltz challenges Parson's 1909 theory for suggesting rationality in professional choices, and ignoring the career impact of chance or unplanned events "we have bought Parsons' (1909) model hook, line, and sinker. Serendipity is not serendipitous. Serendipity is ubiquitous" (Krumboltz, 1998, p. 391). Krumboltz asserts career decisions are not always rational, and occupational decisions include indecisive, open-minded and unplanned events due to unpredictable futures.

Furthermore, the social learning theory proposes social environment circumstances and events influence career choices (Bandura, 1977; Krumboltz, 1979). Savickas and Lent (1994) and Stitt-Gohdes (1997) review four frequently cited career development theories as follows: The Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma Theory (1951) advocates a young persons development path influences vocational choice. John Holland Career Typology (1959) concentrates on development through heredity, life history and environmental demands, Holland postulates people seek out the best environment (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising or Conventional) that accommodates their personality preferred roles, attitude and values, skills and abilities. Lent, Brown and Hackett Social Cognitive Career Theory (1987) originating from Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory encompasses aspects of culture, gender, genetics, the social context and unexpected life events. The main focus of SCCT is the

relationship between self-efficacy, expected outcome, individual goals and career choice. SCCT concludes that beliefs and careers are chosen through personal development, characteristics similar to Bandura, that is, personal performance accomplishments; vicarious learning; social persuasion & physiological states and reactions. The SCCT is considered more dynamic than the other career theories because it considers the intrinsic role of the individual, beliefs, and the influences of social and economic contexts. Super's Theory of Vocational Choice (1954) expresses the self-concept defines career choices, where individual roles are redefined given time and experiences through adapting to certain changes and occupations, and by 35 years most individuals have stable careers.

Schein's (1996) expansion of the self-concept creates 'career anchors' indicating the 'internal career' and subjective sense develops through occupational and life experiences. Schein's longitudinal study finds many have a strong self-concept (career anchor) that keeps the 'internal career' intact when facing or experiencing traumatic changes in the external career. Schein (1978, 1990) advocates career anchors are reasonable parameters to understand future career decisions and elucidate career motivation. Similar to Parson (1909), Schein's self-concept consists of (a) self-perceived talents and abilities (b) basic values, and, most important, (c) the evolved sense of motives and needs as they pertain to career (Schein, 1996, p. 80). Schein (1978, 1990, 1996) career anchor concept classifies eight categories (see table 17):

**Table 17: Career Anchors**

<b>Career Anchor</b>	<b>Characteristics of basic values, motives and needs</b>
Autonomy/Independence	Freedom from organisational constraints for professional competence.
Security or Stability	Job security, benefit packages and long-term stable organisational employment.
Technical or Functional Competence	Advancing technical or functional knowledge, skill and expertise.
General Managerial Competence	Applying management skill; interpersonal, political, analytical and financial
Entrepreneurial Creativity	Building own projects or creating things opposed to managing.
Service or Dedication to a Cause	Aligning work with personal skills and values associated with helping society or improving the world.
Pure Challenge	Testing personal ability through tenaciously trying to win in competitive and extremely tough situations, solving challenging problems.
Lifestyle	Integrating work, family and personal concerns coherently.

Schein (1978, 1990, 1996); Feldman and Bolino (2000)

Schein is later criticised by some within the psychological community (Steele and Francis-Smythe, 2007). However, according to Steele and Francis-Smythe (2007) their empirical research supports Schein's (1978) career anchors. Similarly, Arnold (2004) indicates career anchors provide a broader view of personal values and the most relevant information about career desires opposed to other career models, such as, Holland's vocational personalities that are more attentive to talent.

### **3.4.2. Entrepreneurship Career Theory**

According to Kanter the nature of opportunity, incentives, and expected rewards determines career paths, and defines the entrepreneurial career as "one in which growth occurs through the creation of new value or new organisational capacity" (Kanter, 1989, p. 516). In comparison to other paths, entrepreneurs operate within riskier situations because gains and losses are tied to performance (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Kanter, 1989). Schein (1996) states more people with entrepreneurial creativity anchors are drawn to business as the world become more dynamic, complex and turbulent. Therefore, Schein's career anchors explain why individuals choose entrepreneurial careers (Bolino and Feldman, 2000). Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) assert early studies about career theory indicates education and training policies are disturbed about the career decisions of young people. Yet, literature sources unsuccessfully and empirically

identify and recognise vocational choice as a central aspect of lifestyle selection (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997; Sonnenfeld and Kotter, 1982), similar to the theoretical neglect of entrepreneurial careers (Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Dyer, 1994; Rae, 2000). Additionally, Stumpf (1992) affirms the goal to become an entrepreneur is explored by many between the ages of 17-30, a paucity of information shows the different aspects of the career. Hence, failure to comprehensively study the entrepreneurship career means its uncertainties continue to exist outside normal practice (Dyer, 1994; Rae, 2000). Furthermore, Carroll and Mosakowski (1987) assert entrepreneurial practice is not new yet research gap exists in trying to answer questions of who becomes self-employed including associative differences, but three questions account for why such studies are important (a) entrepreneurship is not rare but experienced by numerous (b) it involves small and family firm operations which evolve and impact the population of organisations, also relevant to organisational theory; and (c) self-employment is importantly connected to the study of entrepreneurship and social classes.

### **Entrepreneurship as a Career**

A search of the literature topic "entrepreneurship as a career" shows empirical studies into the subject matter largely concentrates on university students (e.g. Green and Amat, 2012; Moy *et al.*, 2003; Pihie and Akmaliah, 2009), graduate motivation (e.g. Segal *et al.*, 2005), exploratory mid-career entrepreneurial learning in post-graduate students to understand mid-career entrepreneurs between the ages of 35 and 55 (e.g. Rae, 2005), includes entrepreneurs and none-entrepreneurs (e.g. Douglas and Shepherd, 2002). Douglas and Shepherd (2002) assert past studies into "why people choose to act as entrepreneurs" predominantly focuses on psychology and sociology. The economics career perspective by Douglas and Shepherd (2000) is the concept of utility maximisation that individuals choose entrepreneurship as the best employment option when their total expected (income, independence, risk, effort, and others) utility is greater than the alternative. Douglas and Shepherd (2002) empirically argue, attitude to risk (tolerance) and independence (decision-making autonomy) consistently explain the internal reasons for the career "why" rather than "when" which indicates external environmental influences. Similarly, Douglas and Shepherd support the choice is not influenced by higher income attainment, hence entrepreneurial attitude (attitude to independence and risk) can be promoted to encourage curricula, which develops more graduates to understand and consider entrepreneurship as an employment path, for firms

to increase productivity, for investors to identify management teams, and to enhance economic competitiveness (Douglas and Shepherd, 2002). Douglas and Shepherd (2002) expect to provide economic understanding into entrepreneurial intentions away from the taint of retrospection toward a decision-making (expected utility) method called conjoint analysis which asks and collects information from those who may or may not be entrepreneurs to make judgments regarding expected utility.

Furthermore, career choices occur inside a context amidst social, political, economic, cultural, geographical and historical peculiarities. Therefore, to understand career decisions, requires understanding individual stories to gain from identity evolutions in the cultural milieu (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997). Morrison asserts individuals are personally motivated and their unique characteristics, which include education, family, historical background, and inter-generational role models interact with the environment. Thus, while at the macro level certain cultures have collective values, behaviours, attitudes and characteristics, at the micro level individuals possess personal cultural orientations, and can digress to develop their own personal (self) identity (Morrison, 2000).

### **Entrepreneurship Career Model**

Rae (2005, p. 563) suggests a model of career development would associate 'career theory to entrepreneurial experience and events' and Dyer (1994, p. 8) illustrates the most holistic entrepreneurial career theory with four sub-theories below to capture the broad framework for an entrepreneurship career theory:

- (a) A Theory of career choice: Why individuals choose this particular occupation, clearly expressing the individual, social (family, community support and role models) and economic factors (opportunities, alternatives and resources).
- (b) A Theory of career socialisation: The social experiences preparing individuals for an entrepreneurial career or the role (early childhood, work, education and prior start-up experiences).
- (c) A Theory of career orientation: The different 'roles' depending on the 'identity' adopted by the entrepreneur.
- (d) A Theory of career progression: How the career progresses and roles as it affects the business, family or any personal characteristics, including dilemmas and conflicts encountered over time. Dyer (1994, p. 11) classifies three conflicts areas; personal,

family, and business, and three main stages, early, mid and late career phases; the personal (stress identity, loneliness, retirement); family (family financial stress, balancing time for work and family, hiring family members, estate planning); and business (resources, governance, business strategy, maintaining control, hiring professional, succession planning).

### **Career Socialisation and Genetics**

Entrepreneurial genetics literature and Nicolaou et al. (2008) assert studies provide insight into biological transfer, psychological traits, and environmental influences. Schumpeter (1947) attests entrepreneurial functions are not transferrable by inheritance, except potentially biologically. Casson et al. (2006) contends inheriting entrepreneurial ability is unproven since sons in family firms show less initiative to fathers. However, Nicolaou et al. (2008) argues for heredity, that research into why people engage in entrepreneurial activity often advocates learned individual differences and situational factors but fails to investigate the important factor of genetics. Nicolaou et al. (2008) provide empirical evidences that genetic factors are important psychological compositions. Lindquist et al. (2012) reasons parental influence is one of the strongest influences of entrepreneurial behaviour, since parental entrepreneurship heightens the probability of young entrepreneurship by about 60%. However, the influence of adoptive parents is equally significant, because role models affect nature (those born) and nurture (those bred) (Lindquist *et al.*, 2012). Hence, Gibb (1987) supports entrepreneurs are not only born and can be made. Nevertheless, Wennekers (2006) asserts management skills can be developed through education, but inborn aptitude remains a valuable asset.

### **Entrepreneurship Motives**

Motives are combinations of goals, self-efficacy, and vision (Baum *et al.*, 2001). Generally, motivations are both extrinsic and intrinsic; money, status, recognition, and social acceptance are extrinsic rewards (Ellerman, 2009). While achievement, knowledge, skill, autonomy, self-respect, and solutions to problems are examples of intrinsic rewards (McGregor, 1966). About seventy years ago Schumpeter expresses the following regarding entrepreneurial motives:

*First of all, there is the dream and the will to found a private kingdom, usually, though not necessarily, also a dynasty. ... Then there is the will to conquer, the impulse to fight, to prove oneself superior to others, to succeed for the sake, not of the fruits of success, but of success itself. From this aspect economic action becomes akin to sport-... The financial result is a secondary consideration, or, at all events, mainly valued as an index of success and as a symptom of victory, the displaying of which very often is more important as a motive of large expenditure than the wish for the consumers' goods themselves. ... Finally, there is the joy of creating, of getting things done, or simply of exercising one's energy and ingenuity.... Our type seeks out difficulties, changes in order to change, delights in ventures (Schumpeter, 1934, p. 93-94).*

Furthermore, Carter et al. (2003, p. 14) identifies six career motives:

**Table 18: Entrepreneurial Career Motives**

Motives	Characteristics
Innovation	New accomplishment intentions and creativity
Independence	Freedom, control and flexibility of one's' time
Recognition	Status or approval from family, friends and society
Role	Family tradition or emulate example of others.
Financial success	Increase earnings or achieve financial independence.
Self-realisation	Pursuing personal goals

Carter et al. (2003, p. 14)

Carsrud and Brannback (2011, p. 11) argue over the past two decades entrepreneurial motivation studies are beginning to be ignored like traits research since motives appear similar between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs, which is unfortunate because motivation research explicates the intention-action link and answers questions regarding (a) What activates a person? (b) What makes the individual choose a behaviour over another? and (c) Why people respond differently to the same motivational stimuli?

### **Career Choice**

Career choices according to Krueger et al. (2000, p. 415) have proven through theory and empirical evidences 'to be cognitive in nature'. Therefore, career decisions are an evolution of beliefs, attitudes, and intentions, through the cognitive processing of individual knowledge, belief and experiences (Krueger, 1993; Krueger *et al.*, 2000; Lent *et al.*, 1994).

Push or pull factors trigger the entrepreneurial career, and the field of economics establishes entrepreneurship is an employment choice (Arenius and Minniti, 2005). Therefore, unemployment or job opportunities in regions influence career decisions (Banks *et al.*, 1992). The instances are business venturing from lack of career advancement or unemployment, termed necessity push, alternative to deciding to take

advantage of opportunities, termed opportunity pull (Acs, 2006; Arenius and Minniti, 2005; Bosma and Harding, 2007; Caliendo and Kritikos, 2009; Kuratko, 2009; Owualah, 1999; Reynolds and Curtin, 2008; Thurik, *et al.*, 2008; Van Stel *et al.*, 2007).

The occupational choice approach argues when unemployment is high, the cost of business entry reduces substantially making self-employment attractive; this push is termed the refugee effect (Owualah, 1999; Thurik *et al.*, 2008). However, this can be hindered by the fact the unemployed often have little 'human capital and entrepreneurial talent' needed to maintain business ownership. Besides, unemployment also negatively affects personal prosperity diminishing the self-employment choice (Criscuolo *et al.*, 2007; Thurik *et al.*, 2008; Van Stel *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, some unemployed youths lack human capital (education, experience, and job skills), so when unemployment is high they become unprepared and unqualified necessity entrepreneurs. However, the opportunity cost argument is that generally and more likely the unemployed rather than the employed exploit entrepreneurial opportunity (Shane, 2003). Additionally, the general notion is men venture into entrepreneurship for independent work, control and for increased earnings, but an exploratory study provides an alternating view, men of Black African origin, highly educated but disadvantaged in the labour market become necessity entrepreneurs (Nwankwo, 2005). Another displacement case is highly educated females or those in management; job frustrations or the glass ceiling pushes them into self-employment (Buttner and Moore, 1997). Some African studies find young entrepreneurs drawn due to necessity (Chigunta, 2002b; Kinyanjui, 1996). Also, a GEM study finds a marked correlation between the Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) rate and poverty (Walter *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, entrepreneurship can be promoted as a practical pro-poor strategy since small enterprises create new jobs and self-employment (Africa Commission, 2009).

At the macro level, the Schumpeterian outcome designates the positive impact of entrepreneurship on the economy (Criscuolo *et al.*, 2007; Van Stel *et al.*, 2007). Hence, when new ventures create jobs, unemployment reduces and when new entrepreneurs innovate, they produce new products, improve production processes, enhance productivity, increase competition and enable better consumer choices (Bygrave and Cowling, 2002; Criscuolo *et al.*, 2007; Kirchoff and Greene, 1995; Schumpeter, 1947; Reynolds and Curtin, 2008; Van Stel *et al.*, 2007).

Snyder (2004) finds those pushed into enterprise (informal) embrace the entrepreneurial identity, and argues literature focuses on external push pressures such as unemployment, but findings contrast this because many desire to “explore a new work identity” and consider entrepreneurship as a “long-term career plan”. Therefore, the career choice is not an out-of-the-way decision but a lifetime goal, and socio-economic choice rather than the case of the displaced trying to escape bad conditions (Reynolds and Curtin, 2008). Scott and Twomey (1988) advocate when youths choose entrepreneurship their most prominent ‘predisposing factors’ are hobbies, passion, role models, education and prior work experience, ‘situational trigger factors’ the effect of job hunting and advice, with processing ‘business ideas’ another strong pull towards entrepreneurship. Hence, research finds inconclusive arguments both for and against push and pulls factors (Aderemi et al., 2009; Campbell and De Nardi, 2007; Delmar and Davidsson, 2000).

### **Career Identity and Orientation**

Akerlof and Kranton assert the entrepreneurial career is best conceptualised in sociology and psychology as ‘identity’, the personal image of one’s self. Mead's psychology attests roles, identities and indeed the 'self' are created through a process how individuals formally address themselves or societal labels (Gross and Stone, 1964; Mead, 1934). The normative theory of decision-making drawn from the concept of expected utility (EU) maximisation (Hardman and Connolly, 2009) state individuals are motivated by utility anticipated from pursuing entrepreneurship (Douglas and Shepherd, 2000). Thus, quest for the identity motivates entrepreneurial behaviour (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000). Also, when faced with opportunity, individuals perceive and decide through a rational process that clarifies going ahead against abandoning the opportunity, those who become entrepreneurs their subjective return to entrepreneurship is positive (Minniti and Bygrave, 1999, p. 41). This self-employed decision outweighs being employed a rational process of expected utility (Campbell, 1992; Douglas and Shepherd, 2000, 2002).

At the micro level, for many individuals entrepreneurship is an important identity and significant lifestyle (Reynolds and White, 1997). However, to further address career orientation and identity, many individuals engage in enterprises but do not define themselves as entrepreneurs (Carland *et al.*, 1984), this occupational technicality makes it difficult to study entrepreneurial careers when entrepreneurs prefer to call themselves retailers, engineers, real-estate developers and so on, the area of their background

experience (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984). However, although many do not claim “I am an entrepreneur” and society lacks understanding into what the career entails, people have a mental picture and perception, even if foggy about different careers (entrepreneurship inclusive) and this phenomenon is associated with cognitive categorisation. Studies (e.g., Jelinek and Litterer, 1995; Krueger and Hamilton, 1996) emphasise it is possible for potential entrepreneurs to become attracted to entrepreneurship through mental prototyping (Kruger, 2003). However, Falck et al. (2009) contend the entrepreneurial identity cannot be taught, and education programs fail at teaching entrepreneurship. Psychologists (e.g. Carl Rogers) argue learning is encouraged through autonomy because people are not directly taught. However, others argue it is possible for others to learn from entrepreneurial behaviour (Rae and Carswell, 2000; Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997; Taylor, 2008), and entrepreneurial skills are teachable (Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990), even vicariously (Bandura, 1977). Therefore, motivated individuals can be taught how to identify and develop business opportunities (Fiet and Migliore, 2001; Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990). Saravathy and Venkataraman (2010) declare entrepreneurship can be taught and unleashes human potential.

### **Career Success and Failure**

Stokes et al. argues the view of entrepreneurship as the identification, evaluation and exploitation of opportunity insinuates early stages of venture creation, and while a creative developmental period, the entrepreneurial process covers the “complete life-span of an enterprise and career of the entrepreneur” (Stokes *et al.*, 2010, p. 115). Additionally, Smith and McElwee (2011) discuss the paucity of studies dealing with negative emotions, such as, entrepreneurial shame from failure. Ucbasaran et al. (2012) agree that mystery surrounds the individual long-term when business fails when such information is important for theories of career paths, bricolage, networks, work-life balance, grief, sense-making, experience, psychological, social and financial turmoil.

Ronstadt (1986) asserts entrepreneurs with early experiences survive or have longevity due to being accustomed to business intricacies, and hence consider entrepreneurship a viable career path. Hence, entrepreneurial exit is akin to a revolving door with many entries and exits rather than one-way exits; also, if business closes some individuals start other ventures (Stokes *et al.*, 2010). Hence, Ronstadt (1988) expresses entrepreneurs often downsize the scope and risk of their first venture to start others, given experience, new opportunities, contacts and skills. Therefore, although first few

years are survivalist in nature, by the second year survival rates improve and by the sixth the possibility of a long entrepreneurial career. Hence, Segal et al. (2005) advocates educators, policy-makers and stakeholders need to better communicate the merits of self-employment opposed to employment, and correct the misconception that many businesses fail within the first year, an aspect overemphasised with young people creating low entrepreneurial motivation and expectations. Stokes et al. (2010, p. 127) declare "unfounded" the claims high percentage of firms close within their first year of trading, while survival chances are shaky in the first year and at micro levels, chances increase with age. A study by Kirchoff (1994) finds 28% of businesses survive under original owners, 26% through changes and only 18% fail losing money to creditors, indicating possibilities of high earnings in entrepreneurship. Similarly, the myth nine out of ten firms close in their first year in the US finds 76% of firms remain in operations after their second year (Philip and Kirchoff, 1989), and 66% survive passed two years (Headd, 2003). Stokes et al. (2010) expresses in a UK National Statistic report of 2008, that VAT registered businesses optimistically have an 80% survival rate. Therefore, generally many owners re-enter at 60% after exiting sufficiently encouraged by previous experiences, even for those who experience financial difficulties (e.g. U.K-Stam, Audretsch and Meijaard, 2005; Metzger, 2006; USA-Headd, 2003; Henley, 2004; Japan- Harada, 2005). Hence, business failure should be considered an acceptable part of life (Storey, 2004). Carter et al. (1996) advocate not sticking with a failing business indicates wisdom. Consequently, youths need to realise uncertainly, risk and failure are recurrent parts of life (Farley, 2000) besides positive and negative experiences are the best teachers (Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2006). Sitkin (1992) similar to Minniti and Bygrave (2001) maintain individuals learn and modify entrepreneurial behaviour this being the difference between 'intelligent failure' and 'failure'. Similarly, entrepreneurship is about the theory of success, which is not a matter of luck, but good judgement a specific individual trait (Casson, 2010). Thus, the crucial element potential entrepreneurs need understanding is that at start-up failure could occur and an essential skill is not being afraid but willing to try again, every successful entrepreneur can relate to conquering the fear of failure (Hannadi, 2010). Therefore, in reality accepting responsibility and helplessness temporarily after entrepreneurial failure is necessary for recovery "the flawed entrepreneur need not embrace the tragic storyline- there is life and a future after the fall!" (Smith and McElwee, 2011, p. 105).

### 3.5. OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT THEORY

The consensus for cumulative knowledge in entrepreneurship remains the focus on the pursuit of opportunity and creation of social wealth (Harper, 2003; Shane and Venkataraman, 2003; Venkataraman, 1997; Wright and Marlow, 2012). Hence, situations involving important decisions for entrepreneurs are 'opportunities' (Olson, 1986). The Oxford Dictionary (2010) defines opportunity as “a favourable or advantageous circumstance or combination of circumstances”. An opportunity can be an undefined or under-employed market need (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003). Individuals take advantage of entrepreneurial opportunities to start their ventures, thus functionally opportunity is central to the entrepreneurship process (Shane, 2003).

Schumpeter expresses "...whenever the economy or an industry or some firms in an industry do something else, something that is outside of the range of existing practice we may speak of creative response" (Schumpeter, 1947, p. 150). Schumpeter (1947) declares creative response is synonymous with innovation, which occurs whenever the economy, industry or firm within an industry does new things, not necessarily of high distinction, spectacular or historically different but outside the usual practice. Therefore, entrepreneurship and creative response are “coterminous” and entrepreneurial activity in any capitalist economy is the turning point that leads to economic change, regardless of whether the focus is objective opportunity or conditions. Schumpeter (1947) asserts entrepreneur's initiate change through these new combinations “(a) Making up for market deficiencies (input or output); (b) Connecting different markets; (c) Creation or expansion of firms; and (d) Creation, expansion, or modification of markets” (Schumpeter, 1934, p. 77). Furthermore, Olson (1982) explains opportunities are taken advantage of through series of market-pull and technology-push (see table 19).

**Table 19: Nature of Opportunity**

<b>Opportunity Decision</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Market-need or market-pull	Identifying an existing market need and developing solutions to satisfy the need. This is usually need-driven or market pull, a gap in need of a solution.
Technology-push	Discovering a solution (new product application or technology) then looking for marketplace to apply the product or service, a solution in need of a gap

Olson (1986)

### 3.5.1. The Entrepreneur in Opportunity Recognition

Israel Kirzner believes in the importance of human action in entrepreneurship (Jennings, 1994), and the entrepreneur is central in opportunity studies (Casson, 2003a,b; Shane, 2003). Individuals are the ultimate decision-makers who decide whether or not to pursue opportunity, thus, while environmental proponents may disagree, opportunity exploitation is not a spontaneous activity because opportunity lacks agency (Shane, 2003; Krueger *et al.*, 2000). Hence, the demand for entrepreneurship is created in part through self-employment while the supply of entrepreneurs is dependent on natural abilities as ventures are created through unrelenting entrepreneurial behaviour (Casson, 2003b; Shaver and Scott, 1991). Entrepreneurial intensity (Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2006) explains focus, commitment, and initial effort in opportunity recognition. Likewise, present unpredictable opportunities are considered for future execution as contingency (Casson, 2003a). Casson advocates entrepreneurs are change agents because resources are not handed to them but through individual inquisition they gather and improve on resources catering to demand through a continuous and unpredictable lifecycle.

#### **Entrepreneurial Cognition**

Entrepreneurial cognition perspectives answer three questions (a) Why some people chose to become entrepreneurs over others (b) Why some people discover and exploit opportunity over others (c) Why some entrepreneurs are more successful than others (Baron, 2004). Therefore, the internal process of opportunity recognition creates the basis for cognitive research in entrepreneurship (Baron, 1998; 2004; Kaish and Gilad, 1991; Krueger, 2003; Mitchell *et al.*, 2002a, c; Shaver and Scott, 1991; Simon *et al.*, 2000). Hills (1995) suggest opportunity recognition occurs before venture formation, and throughout the life of the business.

Mitchell *et al.* (2002c, p. 97) defines entrepreneurial cognition as “the knowledge structures that people use to make assessments, judgements, or decisions involving opportunity evaluation, venture creation, and growth”. Therefore, everyone possesses cognitive functions but entrepreneurs share a common thinking process through ‘perception, decision-making, knowledge representation and learning’ (Krueger, 2003, p. 107). Krueger (2003) asserts entrepreneurs share a way of thinking (cognition) by intentionally pursuing opportunity. Thus, Baron (1998, p. 289) expresses entrepreneurs engage in counterfactual thinking “the tendency to imagine what might have been in a

given situation". Baron declares individual cognition develops from life experiences (schemas, prototypes) used to organise and interpret information. These cognitive frameworks make the connection between unrelated trends and events connecting changes in technology, markets, demographics and government policies (Baron, 2004). Down (2010) explains all theories have limitations; however in entrepreneurial cognition unlike personality theory the social (social, historical, and cultural factors) context is important. For instance, who is the entrepreneur or why some and not others discover and exploit opportunities (e.g. Mitchell *et al.*, 2002ab, c) is the question answered through the mental ability to process information, opposed to which conditions social (cultural, economic, personal, historical, etc.) are conducive to entrepreneurship. Thus, cognitive processes explain individual behaviour, identity construction and ways of thinking within the entrepreneurial process (Down, 2010).

### **3.5.2. The Process of Opportunity Recognition**

Ardichvili *et al.* (2003) proclaim the ability to identify and develop opportunity is essential for successful entrepreneurship. Hence, opportunity signifies the prospect for changing, improving and taking advantage of situations (Rae, 2007), however for opportunity recognition to occur a person must become alert (Kirzner, 1973). "Entrepreneurial alertness refers to an attitude of receptiveness to available (but hitherto overlooked) opportunities" (Kirzner, 1997, p. 72). This implies entrepreneurial alertness is the special ability to identify available opportunity (Kaish and Gilad, 1991; Kirzner, 1973, 2008; Nicolaou *et al.*, 2009). Gaglio and Katz (2001) state alertness is the cognitive engine fundamental to perception and the information processing skill, which enables opportunity identification. Beeka (1993) asserts these shape individual decisions; alertness to problems crying for solutions, the changing nature of events associated with positions taken, the response of those most likely affected, like competitors, and environmental interactions since all decisions have consequences within a social context. Nevertheless, Ardichvili *et al.* (2003) attests outstanding ability is not required to recognise opportunity given many discoveries are not ingenious investigations. Furthermore, Dew argues serendipity is valuable for entrepreneurship, and more models need to incorporate this aspect because central to the entrepreneurship process are contingent accident, prior knowledge, active search, systematic exploration, spontaneous recognition, pre-discovery and serendipity (Dew, 2009).

Shapero's model of firm creation (model of entrepreneurial event) believes the decision to start a new business arises from two factors, first the perception that starting a business is achievable, and second a precipitating or displacing (trigger) event (Kruger, 1993). Brockhaus (1987) asserts up to 60% of entrepreneurs desire becoming entrepreneurs before recognising the sort of business to start. Similarly, Bhave (1994) shows two types of opportunity recognition, external and internal stimulation. The external involves the decision to start a business followed by active search, while the internal simulation involves problem identification before the desire to start a venture and hence become an entrepreneur. Therefore, Meeks (2004) argues entrepreneurial decisions are conceptualised problematically in entrepreneurship literature when interpreted as unilateral decisions, when in reality it involves two distinctive choices: first pursuing entrepreneurship as a career (self-employment), and secondly, pursuing a specific market opportunity.

Ardichvili et al. (2003) utilise existing theoretical and empirical studies in opportunity identification and development to propose a theory of the opportunity identification process, and find that personality traits, social networks, and prior knowledge are antecedents of entrepreneurial alertness, and this alertness is necessary for the successful identification triad of opportunity recognition, development, and evaluation.

### **Entrepreneurship Intentions**

New ventures start with intentions (Gartner, 1985; Krueger *et al.*, 2000) and entrepreneurship is a technique of thinking that accentuates opportunities over threats. Therefore, the identification process is evidently intentional which merits interest (Krueger *et al.*, 2000). Conventionally, the bases of intentions are motives (Carsrud and Brannback, 2011), and the reason for engaging in entrepreneurial activity establishes decisions to proceed (Carter *et al.*, 2003). The two intention-based models, Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour stresses intentions depends on perception of personal attractiveness, social norms, and feasibility, while Shapero's model of the entrepreneurial event states entrepreneurial intentions depends on perceptions of personal desirability, feasibility, and propensity to act. These give credence to the deliberations about intentions being the best entrepreneurial behaviour predictors, since

intentions influence attitude and motivate action (Krueger *et al.*, 2000, p. 411; Manolova *et al.*, 2008: 20).

However, caution is recommended when utilising intentions as an entrepreneurial determinant because of 'dreamers' and 'doers' psychologists indicate a weak correlation between intentions and actions (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000). Some studies argue differently, asserting a link between intentions and consequent actions (Dickson *et al.*, 2008). Basically, the decision to become an entrepreneur is planned, contemplated, and in some case involves past persistence (Gartner, 1985). Hence, business is not commenced on impulse but involves an opportunity identification process, before actions turn opportunity into viable commerce. Thus, intention models provide realistic insights into planned entrepreneurial behaviour (Krueger *et al.*, 2000).

Similarly, self-efficacy increases entrepreneurial intentions (Kamau-Maina, 2006; Shane, 2003). Bandura's theory of self-efficacy asserts expectations of success determine coping mechanisms, effort expended and duration despite obstacles; such behaviour derives from "performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological state" (Bandura 1977, p.191). Therefore, self-efficacy significantly explains the decision to become an entrepreneur.

### **Personality Traits and Qualities**

It is difficult to profile entrepreneurs because they are different (Gartner, 1985; Low and MacMillan, 1988), hence personality traits as determinants of entrepreneurship qualities are contentious (Chell *et al.*, 1997; Gartner, 1988; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Similarly, narrative reviews indicate a positive relationship between business creation, business success and personality traits (e.g. Chell *et al.*, 1991; Cooper and Gimeno-Gascon, 1992; Rauch and Frese, 2000), although others disagree (e.g. Brockhaus and Horwitz, 1986; Gartner, 1989; Low and MacMillan, 1988; Rauch and Frese, 2007). Nevertheless, research concedes that personalities 'lead and shape firms' (Chell *et al.*, 1997) and personality traits influence opportunity recognition. Thus, personality traits, skills and interests provide a window into behaviour. These traits include risk bearing, autonomy, freedom, need for achievement, determination, initiative, confidence and the capacity to handle fear or failure (Arenius and Minniti, 2005; Casson, 2010; Delmar, 2000; Kuratko, 2009; Low and Macmillan, 1988; McClelland, 1965; Shane, 2003). Table 20 presents a collective of some personal characteristics:

**Table 20: Personal Characteristics of the Entrepreneur**

<b>The Entrepreneurs Features</b>	<b>The “DNA” of an Entrepreneur</b>
Creative, innovative	Alert to opportunities
Risk taking	Anxiety
Opportunity seeking	Creativity
Intuitive-perceiving	Decisiveness
Seek autonomy	Easily bored
High needs for control	Independent nature
High needs for influence	Inner focus of control
Can embrace change	Innovatory tendency
Creates a culture	Need to achieve
Enterprising careers/Adventurous	Risk taking propensity
Ambitious	Self-confidence
Energetic	Self-motivation
Domineering	Versatility
Self-confident	Vision
	Self-realisation through action
Stumpf (1992, p.27)	Ball (2011, slide, 20)

McElwee (2006) asserts entrepreneurial personal qualities also include charisma ‘an-eye for a deal’ and the intangibles of attitude, culture, perception and values. Kaplan and Warren (2007) advance the success or failure of enterprises depends on exceptional mixtures of courage, self-confidence and skills. Hence, overoptimistic entrepreneurs have higher risk-taking propensity (Rauch and Frese, 2007). Casson (2003a) asserts although Schumpeter postulates risk could be moderated; the greatest risk is uncertainty regardless of whether the entrepreneur can handle it. Likewise, risk-taking propensity does not distinguish entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs (Brockhaus, 1980), but entrepreneurial attitude (Olson, 1985) and behaviour is central to risk-taking propensity (McCarthy, 2000; Shane, 2003). David Birch captures this risk-tolerance:

*The entrepreneur needs to be able to handle risk, terror, and fear. How many times does the entrepreneur wake up in the middle of the night thinking about where the money is going to come from to pay salaries next week, the next negotiation with the major customer, and so on. How many people can deal with constant terror? Not many, I would argue. And whatever routine they go through to deal with this terror is what makes the entrepreneur successful (Magnus, 2004, p. 291).*

Consequently, strategic choices and attitude to risk advance entrepreneurship (Baumol, 1968). Entrepreneurs believe they can positively change situations (Smith and Air, 2013). They embody the concept of ‘personal initiative’ a ‘behavioural syndrome’ which suggests self-starters high in self-efficacy, and proactive to enable firm mission, long-term views, goal and action-orientation, and persistence through barriers; high

personal initiative directs problem-solving enabling need for achievement, self-employment, stress tolerance and implementing career plans (Frese *et al.*, 1997; Speier and Frese, 1997). These indicate the practical relationship between personalities and competency (Casson, 2010). Therefore, Casson (2003a) contends at the micro level, entrepreneurs make decisions reallocating scarce resources, but economic theory is largely silent about this entrepreneurial role yet instinct conveys a correlation between personalities, quality, firm growth and profitability. Additionally, Rauch and Frese (2007) argue the entrepreneurial traits literature needs to recognise certain task-related characteristics, such as “need for achievement, innovativeness, proactive personality, generalised self-efficacy, stress-tolerance, need for autonomy, internal locus of control and risk-taking” are important. According to Shane (2003, p.109) entrepreneurs have more internal locus of control than the rest of the population, and individuals with stronger locus of control recognise more opportunities, obtain resources and develop organisational strategy, and as confirmed by the National Federation of Independent Business are motivated to succeed and less likely to fail in business. A Hollenbeck and Whitener (1988) model shows personality traits impact on individual performance when moderated by the influence of ability and mediated by motivation. Therefore, entrepreneurial traits and motives are important for understanding entrepreneurial behaviour (Carsrud and Brannback, 2011), including entrepreneurial performance (Hollenbeck and Whitener, 1988; McClelland, 1961; 1965; Rauch and Frese, 2007).

### **Social Networks**

Social theory and the views of sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and historians believe social relationships influence personal and institutional behaviour (Granovetter, 1985). Giddens (1977, p. 14) theory of structuration, advocates “structure is conceptual as generative rules and resources drawn upon by actors in the production and reproduction of systems of interaction”. Giddens coins ‘duality of structure’ to emphasise that agents exert strong influence in the relationship with the environment, that, humans initiate, understand and utilise numerous production structures within their societies (Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1987, 1991). Thus, social structures foster entrepreneurial activity by linking the entrepreneur (agent) and structure (context) in a dynamic relationship of interdependence and “being embedded in the social structure creates opportunity and improves performance” (Jack and Anderson, 2002, p. 467). Consequently, entrepreneurship involves extricating worth from the environment since

the community and entrepreneur are usually embedded in a network of relationships (Jack and Anderson, 2002; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006). Granovetter (2005) identifies four central principles of social networks and economic outcomes (see table 21):

**Table 21: Four Core Principles of Social Networks**

<b>Social Network Principles</b>	<b>Features</b>
Norms and network density	The shared standards of behaviour that encourage trust and are firmer the denser the social network.
The strength of weak ties	Weak ties and acquaintances are usually important sources of new information absent within our immediate cycles.
Importance of structured holes	Similar to weak ties but useful exploitation by being connected to different multiple networks.
The interpenetration of economic and non-economic action	Most of social life is non-economic (culture, religion, politics) however linkages to economic activity cause 'social embeddedness' to create economic action.

Granovetter (2005, p. 34-36)

Therefore, networks affect economic outcomes because by determining the flow and quality of information; also such personal sources can be vital sources of rewards and even punishments (Granovetter, 1985; 2005). Thus, people mobilise resources from personal and extended networks to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities (Diomande, 1990; Dubini and Aldrich, 1991; Marsden, 1992; Morrison, 2000; Shane, 2003). Brush et al. (2009) supports small firms have difficulty accessing external finance and often resort to personal finance. Most entrepreneurs source supplement funds from personal networks for new ventures (Brush *et al.*, 2009; Morrison *et al.*, 1999). Hence, social networks are important at all stages of the enterprise process, from learning (Bosma *et al.*, 2012), to utilising information to validate ideas, at exploration gaining access to 'elite social networks' and 'gate keepers' plus other influential multiple linkages, becoming part of numerous networks at opportunity exploitation and continuously negotiating access and establishing markets to developing contractual sources and synergy (Casson, 2010).

Social networks assist opportunity perception, testing ideas and gathering resources to start new ventures (Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986). However, young people often lack effective networks (Salami, 2011). Nevertheless, in West Africa there are unwritten rules that family and community organisations help each other (Diomande, 1990). Aldrich and Cliff (2003) further argue though most opportunity recognition can be attributed to family; transitions, resources, and norms, attitudes, and values,

entrepreneurship theories largely neglects this aspect. Significantly, networks contribute to the persistence and survival of small firms, and affects prices because people prefer to trade with those they know, additionally this trust embedded in the political, economic and institutional environment affects hiring, productivity and innovation (Granovetter, 1985; 2005). Embeddedness emphasises the importance of concrete personal relationships and structures (networks) (Christoforou, 2012). Ray (2007, p. 6) supports “*aspirations, mind-sets and development*” are created and conditioned by the experience of those in the “cognitive neighbourhood” e.g. role models, relative income, information transmission; peer attached internal goals and standards.

Furthermore, the social learning theory or social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986) emphasises developing tasks and skills from persons considered role models (Diomande, 1990; Lindquist *et al.*, 2012; Owualah, 1999; Scott and Twomey, 1988). Basically, working with entrepreneur’s increases desire for the lifestyle (Dyer, 1994), and this is because individuals’ select role-model careers, be it positive or negative (Gibson, 2004), generally, occupational choices are increasingly being determined by role models, including those in the media and the biographies of popular entrepreneurs (Bosma *et al.*, 2012). Hence, entrepreneurial parents, other social networks and peers or the regional effect produces areas with high entrepreneurial initiatives (Wennekers, 2006). Thus, entrepreneurial intentions are influenced through growing up in entrepreneurial households or peers (Falck *et al.*, 2009). Conventional wisdom indicates those closest to us are major sources of resources for personal and business success or survival (Steier *et al.*, 2009). Many studies observe family expectations (Kamau-Maina, 2006) and parents influence the need for achievement (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Kuratko, 2009; Thomas and Mueller, 2000). Various studies conclude knowing the self-employed are a greater push motivation toward business (Arenius and Minniti, 2005; Owualah, 1999). Likewise, family and extended networks serves as inter-generational role models providing tangible and intangible support (Collins *et al.*, 1964; Morrison, 2000). Essentially, role models enhance self-efficacy through providing knowledge regarding the successful ways of exploiting opportunities (Shane, 2003; Arenius and Minniti, 2005). Therefore, role models are important sources for vicarious learning, gathering information regarding markets, industries, regulations, and administrative drawbacks (Granovetter, 2005; Ozgen and Baron, 2007). Bosma *et al.* (2012) alleges those better educated have the capacity to absorb lessons from role models to develop their human

capital, and given enterprise experience is usually lacking in *de novo* entrepreneurs; role models recompense for this stage (Bosma *et al.*, 2012).

Hence, the traditional view is that entrepreneurs fill market gaps, however Giddens theory of structuration considers entrepreneurship a 'social undertaking' within social a context (Sarason *et al.*, 2006). Schoon and Duckworth (2012) declare agency and social structures are essential to the entrepreneurial career. Individuals are alert to local opportunities, and understand business modalities within their environments (Giddens, 1977, 1987; Jack and Anderson, 2002; Sarason *et al.*, 2006).

### **Prior Knowledge and Experience**

This process of discovering and exploiting opportunity requires previous knowledge of markets, methods to serve and knowledge of customer concerns (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003; Shane, 2003; Scott and Twomey, 1988). Storey (2011) argues prior experience is connected to learning, however the link between prior experience and business practice is inconclusive. Nevertheless, prior experience can be a valid antecedent to opportunity discovery and exploitation, both the individual and the organisation play valid roles in the career choice process, that is, the individual in deciding to become an entrepreneur and the firm in supporting and creating entrepreneurs (Stumpf, 1992). Theodore Schultz finds human capital important in entrepreneurship (Jennings, 1994). This human capital includes skills for solving problems acquired through age, education and experience (Cooper *et al.*, 1994). Knowledge, experience, education, aptitude and behaviour are hoards of information known to every individual (Dew 2009). Drucker (1985) points out knowledge application equates to new technology. Therefore, prior experience guides decision structures (Palich and Bagby 1995), prior experience and training impact business choices (Owualah, 1999). For example, many successful West African entrepreneurs start selling for others before acquiring useful contacts, experience, and capital to build their businesses (Diomande, 1990).

Hobbies are another aspect of prior knowledge, where individuals turn their passion into a business (Scott and Twomey, 1988). Similarly, the PSED study of Norway 1996-1999 discovers level of experience vital to venturing (Kolvereid *et al.*, 2009). Idiosyncratic knowledge indicates differentiated opportunity identification and exploitation ability (Dew 2009; Eckhart and Shane, 2003; Gaglio and Katz, 2001; Shane, 2003; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000; Venkataraman, 1997). Therefore, societal knowledge distribution

is uneven, which clarifies why some recognise overlooked opportunities (Corbett, 2005; Gregoire *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, prior knowledge combines with existing competency, such as, intellectual ability to make timely decisions from information, and piece together jigsaws (Casson, 2010), connect dots (Baron, 2004; 2006; 2012), combine soft skills and practical business skills (accountancy, law, IT and so on) to facilitate ideas implementation; however only competency determines success (Casson, 2010).

Basically, experience enables higher entrepreneurial intentions and reduces uncertainty; these five types of career experience are “general business experience, functional experience, industry experience, start-up experience and vicarious experience” (Shane 2003, p.75). (See table 22)

**Table 22: Career Experience**

<b>General business experience</b>	Past involvement in other young and small businesses (Aderemi <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Bosma <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Elkan, 1988; Gartner, 1985; Gibb, 1987; Kolvereid <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Shane, 2003).
<b>Functional experience</b>	Based on personal or technical expertise (Reynolds and White, 1997).
<b>Industry experience</b>	Either as a past supplier or even a customer (Diomande, 1990; Elkan, 1988; Parker and Belghiter, 2006; Shane, 2003).
<b>Start-up experience</b>	Past involvement in starting up another venture (Campbell, 1992) Collins <i>et al.</i> , 1964; Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Dyer, 1994; Kets de Vries, 1977; Rogerson, 2001; Shane, 2003).
<b>Vicarious experience</b>	Learning by observing others (Bandura, 1977; Diomande, 1990; Shane, 2003).

Furthermore, higher education enhances opportunity recognition and exploitation skills (Scott and Twomey, 1988; Shane, 2003), and improves access to valuable networks (Casson, 2003a). Casson (2010) asserts, “Free education is the key to opportunity equality” and substitutes for lack of personal wealth. Thus, aspirations are developed through investment in education and income producing activities (Ray, 2007). The educated adapt to the environment (Mead and Liedholm, 1998), and operate in knowledge-based sectors (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000). Hence, many less educated African entrepreneurs start within the informal sector, while the more educated start formal, and many are educated to at least secondary school level (Elkan, 1988). Additionally, entrepreneurship education positively influences youths to become entrepreneurs (Kamau-Maina, 2006; Llisterri *et al.*, 2006; Schoof, 2006; World Economic Forum, 2009). Grable and Lytton (1998) state education significantly

increases risk tolerance, and educated entrepreneurs demonstrate stronger knowledge acquisition, assimilation, and transformation capabilities, which facilitate the generation of entrepreneurial initiatives and comprehension of strategic operations. Furthermore, business education re-orientates individuals towards self-reliance, independent action, creativity and flexible thinking, motivating entrepreneurial behaviour and enhancing the internal locus of control and innovation. It also equips individuals with technical skills of accounting, marketing, finance and so on (Mueller and Thomas, 2000).

### **Decision Making**

Decision-making is central in entrepreneurial activity (Casson, 2003a, Casson, 2010; Cole, 1946; Shane, 2003; Stauss, 1944). The complete process of entrepreneurship involves exercising judgment (Casson, 2003a, 2010), and Casson (2003a, p. 20) acknowledges, “An entrepreneur is someone who specialises in taking judgmental decisions about the coordination of scarce resources. A judgemental decision is one where different individuals sharing the same objectives and acting under similar circumstances, would make different decisions” (Casson, 2003a, p. 14). Thus, rational judgement is implicit and a timeless principle which is tacit, a personal quality and part of social intelligence (Casson, 2010).

Furthermore, Simon et al. (2000) supports during new venture creation heuristics leads to low risk perception, and this overconfidence is due to cognitive biases, or control illusions. Hence, resource-starved entrepreneurs construe meaning rather than wait to gather all information before making decisions (Holcomb *et al.*, 2009; Mitchell *et al.*, 2007; Tversky and Kahneman, 1973). However, the reality of decision-making is entrepreneurs frequently neither have information nor thorough cost-benefit analysis before making decisions, they possibly accept risk partially in anticipation of escaping it (Low and Macmillan, 1988). Furthermore, many entrepreneurs start ventures without formal knowledge of business creation strategies (Mitchell *et al.*, 2007; Wickham, 2004, 2006). It is argued the utility of biases and heuristics are one reason why some entrepreneurs are bad managers (Busenitz, 1999). However, Baron (2008) supports although entrepreneurs ‘make it up as they go along’ past mistakes and errors are taken into consideration when making opportunity decisions (Baron, 1998, 2012).

## Entrepreneurial Learning

Entrepreneurial learning is concerned with meaning, how individuals interpret the process of recognizing and acting on opportunities to create and manage ventures (Rae and Carswell, 2001). According to Bond et al. (1998) learning occurs in two ways cognitively and experientially. Hence, 'much of what entrepreneurs do' is dependent on tacit knowledge developed from experiential activities (Honig, 2004). Furthermore, vicarious learning is learning through observation (Bandura, 1977). Entrepreneurial heuristics are cognitive thumb-rules (Dewy, 1933; Manimala, 1992; Shaver and Scott, 1991; Simon *et al.*, 2000; Wickham, 2004; 2006). While heuristic learning involves knowledge accumulation through experiential and vicarious learning. Basically, personal experience, actions, behaviours and penalties information are processed to sort inconsistencies (Holcomb *et al.*, 2009).

Minniti and Bygrave explain entrepreneurs learn and respond by repeating promising choices and discarding bad choices. Hence, although planning for success, failure is also informative. Furthermore, entrepreneurs are rational but also allowed myopic foresight and mistakes, which updates decisional choice banks to improve performance (Minniti and Bygrave, 2001).

Additionally, Cohen and Levinthal (1990) assert growth organisations have 'absorptive capacity' and ability to recognise valuable new information, assimilate and implement knowledge for successful operations. However, small businesses have limited capacity to take advantage of external knowledge (Phelps et al., 2007). Gladwell (2000) uses 'tipping points' to describe problems firms encounter during the growth process. These six tipping points are "people management, strategic orientation, formalisation of systems, new market entry, obtaining finance and operational improvement" (Phelps et al., 2007, p. 8). A maturity model by Phelps et al. integrates 'tipping points' and 'absorptive capacity' to form a maturity model proposing learning states growth firms encounter; at baseline firms are "*ignorant*" and unaware of important issues, but start to realise at "*awareness*", and subsequently gain new "*knowledge*" actively or passively to address the issues. Finally, the "*implementation*" state involves actions for real change. However, these states are only illustrative and firms likely skip one or more of the states, and move from awareness to implementation without adequate understanding and knowledge of issues (Phelps *et al.*, 2007).

## Venture Strategy and Growth

Venture strategy includes business development, core values and operational strategy. A company's core values are its unchanging internal timeless guiding principles, while strategy constitutes operational practices and changes (Collins and Porras, 1994). Strategy comprises of deliberate plans and emerging alterations (Mintzberg, 1987), and is both proactive (intended) and reactive (adaptive), combining planned activities and on the spot adaptive reactions to freshly developing industry and competitive events' (Thompson and Strickland 1998, p. 9). Thus, strategy describes the way an organisation pursues its goals, given the threats and opportunities in the environment, and the resources and capabilities of the organisation. The business environment is characterised by discontinuous change, and firms respond to remain competitive.

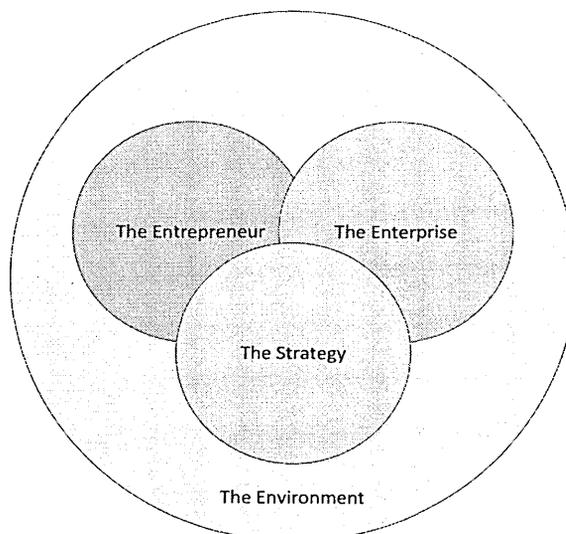
Strategic planning is an essential part of entrepreneurial management (Carland *et al.*, 1984; Kuratko, 2009). Drucker (1985) states a new venture can sell, earn revenue and gain profits but will never become sustainable if not toughened with good management where visions, roles, targets and expected results are visibly defined and predetermined. Drucker asserts:

*Entrepreneurship is based on the same principles, whether the entrepreneur is an existing large institution or an individual starting his or her venture singlehanded. ...The rules are pretty much the same, the thing that work and those that don't are pretty much the same, and so are the kinds of innovation and where to look for them. In every case there is a discipline we might call Entrepreneurial Management. Yet the existing business faces different problems, limitation and constraints from the sole entrepreneur (Drucker, 1985, p. 131).*

Furthermore, Burns (2001, p. 271) considers with regards to firm growth "we know the ingredients, but the precise recipe can vary from situation to situation". According to Low and Macmillan (1988) a study of organisational births and deaths (e.g. Carroll and Delacriox, 1982; 1983) finds venture births can be explained through macro factors such as technological and demographic changes, while surviving the business environment is determined by micro factors such as strategy. Therefore, competitive advantage is achievable through internal firm responses, resource-based view (RBV), or industry environmental responses, market based view (MBV) (Henderson and Mitchell, 1997; Makhija, 2003; Penrose, 1959). Penrose (1959) states firms possess a subset of internal resources to achieve competitive advantage (rare and valuable assets), and a subset to create superior long-term performance, and these allow for long term sustainability to achieve a quasi monopolistic position to protect against, resource

imitation, transfer, or substitution, empirical evidences that support the RBV (e.g. Makhija, 2003; Wade and Hulland, 2004). While MBV depends on the external environment, and the behaviour of suppliers and buyers is outside the firms control (Porter, 1980). Figure 2 shows influences on firm growth.

**Figure 2: A Framework of Influences on Enterprise Growth**



Storey (1994); Smallbone and Wyr (2006)

### **Venture Life Cycle**

A life cycle model explains the complete entrepreneurial process, and these are broad characteristics that accompany the different stages of business start-up, new venture situation and progression (Stumpf, 1992). Nonetheless, the entrepreneurial process is heterogeneous and lifecycles should be used with caution (Stokes *et al.*, 2010; Wright and Marlow, 2012), however, for ease of analysis life-cycle models explain the broad characteristics of the entrepreneurial process, initiation and progression (Stumpf, 1992), including decline and closure (Stokes *et al.*, 2010). Low and MacMillan assert studies only documenting entrepreneurial start-up stages are of questionable value and those that identify major accomplishment tasks possess practical value (Low and MacMillan, 1988). Low and MacMillan emphasise lifecycle models show how studies go beyond the start-up phase to demonstrate the different management and strategic issues relevant at different stages of development. Drucker (1985) asserts four main factors firms need through their lifecycle (i) Market focus (ii) good financial (cash flow) management (iii) foresight to build a management team before needed, and (iv) the founder's role changing to accommodate developed business.

The nascent stage involves the start-up process (Bosma and Harding, 2007), which includes potential entrepreneurs evaluating ideas to determine viability, and these 'feasibility checks' examine markets, products and financial costs (Scarborough, 2011). Hence, access to information plays a crucial role because this supports business planning, feasibility analysis and informal checks (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003).

Eventually, growth occurs through increased sales (Carter *et al.*, 1996; Shane, 2003; Stokes and Wilson, 2006), while low performers struggle with sales and marketing (Phelps *et al.*, 2007). David Birch advises there is an unfortunate gap in entrepreneurship regarding encouraging the young through access to networks additional to teaching individuals how to sell (Magnus, 2004), or the effectiveness of sales and marketing advice on firm growth (Phelps *et al.*, 2007). Granovetter (1985; 2005) states personal networks are often the initial customers of young businesses. Hence, networking is an avenue to expand sales and Carson *et al.* (1995, p. 2011) describes small firm networking as “an activity in which the entrepreneurially oriented SME owners build and manage personal relationships with particular individuals in their surroundings”. Networking contributes to marketing and many owner-managers engage in extensive and proactive networking to develop strong links (O'Donnell, 2004). However, Curran *et al.* (1993) argues small ventures face time constraints to effectively network yet networks are important for collaborations (Curran *et al.*, 1993; Storey, 2011).

Furthermore, Stokes and Wilson (2006) declare firms unable to compete with rivals decline losing competitive advantage. Grant (2008) advises firms to recombine tangible and intangible firm assets, including human resources. The tangible resources include physical equipment, land, plants or financial assets, while intangible resources include reputation, technology, culture or knowledge. Sometimes innovation, new products or rebranding existing products are required (Schumpeter, 1947; Stokes *et al.*, 2010; Zahra *et al.*, 2006). Additionally, the blue ocean strategy enables competition through uniqueness, subtle innovation, customer focus, value addition and low cost strategies (Kim and Mauborgne, 2005, 2009). Human resources represents knowledge, skills, motivation, learning, competence, and teamwork to achieve firm goals (Grant, 2008), and businesses realise its greatest assets are people and competent management teams (Drucker, 1995; Grant, 2008; Penrose, 1959). Entrepreneur are potential leaders (Shane, 2003) who struggle with creating teams, delegation and managing others (Phelps *et al.*,

2007; Penrose, 1959; Stokes *et al.*, 2010; Stokes and Wilson, 2006). Hence, ventures may experience recurrent employment crisis (Stauss, 1944), and these affect opportunity ideas, experience, and knowledge development therefore firms recruit visionaries through luck, while others developed them (Penrose, 1959).

Additionally, partnerships are an important feature to start and exploit opportunities (Casson, 2010; Kuratko, 2009; Reynolds and Curtin, 2008). Sharing equity influences growth through additionally financing, innovative partnerships and retention of management teams (Stokes *et al.*, 2010). Research shows that groups of entrepreneurs are more dynamic and outperform one-man businesses (Westhead and Wright, 2011; Wright and Marlow, 2012). However, associated tensions and activities impact new venture creation and development (Wright and Marlow, 2012). Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1998) argue for co-competition as a partnership strategy between businesses, this is part competition and part cooperation to dynamically change the business environment to generate more profits. Dagnino and Padula (2002) state such 'hybrid behaviour' indicating a strategic relationship between competitors is beneficial for innovative management. Also, slow technological take up create less dynamic ventures (Berchicci and Tucci, 2006; Penrose, 1959), as technological changes in the late 20<sup>th</sup> to early 21<sup>st</sup> century encourages the potential for new products/services and expands entrepreneurial opportunities (Wennekers, 2006). Additionally, ICT, biotechnology and nanotechnology have been prominent examples of potential entrepreneurial opportunities worldwide (Wennekers, 2006).

In the enterprise lifecycle existing entrepreneurs further recognise and develop opportunity, hence “portfolio entrepreneurship is the simultaneous ownership of several businesses” (Carter and Ram, 2002, p. 371). Entrepreneurship can be heterogeneous and some entrepreneurs have equity stake and decision-making capacity in more than one venture, this implies enterprise is habitual rather than a single event, which allows for building entrepreneurial careers (Executive Forum, 1986; Westhead *et al.*, 2011). Favourable opportunities are often discovered after already starting, when the entrepreneur has greater information, better contacts, available products, and access to more viable markets, competitive resources and time (Cooper, 1970; Ronstadt, 1988) . Ardichvili *et al.* (2003, p. 120) state “The greater the number of previously successful opportunity identification events, the higher the probability of future successful

opportunity identification events". This "corridor principle" elucidates multiple venture operations (Ronstadt, 2007), when repeat or serial entrepreneurs have enhanced ability to recognise opportunities, and are highly successful at opportunity development (Baron, 2004). Therefore, entrepreneurial behaviour is heterogeneous through habitual activities, serial entrepreneurs owning businesses sequentially or portfolio entrepreneurs owning concurrently (Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2006; Westhead *et al.*, 2011). Ronstadt (2002, p.32) assert entrepreneurship is a "dynamic multi venture process" and more studies need to reflect this fact rather than the saturated linear model which assumes the ventures process only entails the prestart, start-up, and post start phase, assuming successful entrepreneurs start and develop single ventures till exit (through death, retirement or being forced out). Ronstadt contends the static approach involving single venture study in entrepreneurship prevails because researchers, journalists, filmmakers and others communicate the entrepreneurial phenomena with excessive emphasis on high growth ventures, and this celebrity status is a sexy replica, but not the norm.

Furthermore, the recognition of an opportunity does not mean an opportunity really exists or informs about resultant competition nor value (Venkataraman, 1997). Similarly, opportunities are not always profitable due to errors in estimation (Shane (2003). Individuals are not always sure about the end results of their efforts due to limited information which only surfaces during exploitation hence entrepreneurial efforts sometimes fail, but failed ventures also go through the entrepreneurial process (Shane, 2003). Shane affirms it is backward lens to only study entrepreneurship as success because outcomes are not always successful. Casson (2003a) proclaims anyone can start a firm but the person, ability and skill are the great barriers. Ucbasaran *et al.* (2012) defines business failure as discontinuity of ownership. Additionally, Casson (2010) asserts people, strategy and performance continuously change, and therefore retirement or death is vital in entrepreneurship. Thus, DeTienne (2010) explains the act of removing oneself "from the primary ownership and decision-making structure of the firm" is entrepreneurial exit, a central issue least understood in entrepreneurship studies. Casson (2010) argues firm are legally designed to outlive founders. Dahl (2005) reviews a PricewaterhouseCoopers report into a survey of 364 CEO's of fast growing privately held companies, and discovers extensive future plans without any inclusion of exit strategies. However, sometimes firms thrive but entrepreneur exit, and even in failure situations founders can remain entrepreneurs through starting other firms (Stokes *et al.*, 2010).

Therefore, Wright and Marlow (2012) argue venture creation is heterogeneous, due to contextual factors, such as, focus, ambition, revenue goals, technological capability, adaptation, institutional contingencies, the economy, new venture creation or portfolio diversification (new firm or new unit within a firm), market conditions, and risk levels. Therefore, any discussion of lifecycles has to acknowledge the robust dynamism within venture lifecycles (Storey, 2011). Essentially, most enterprise lifecycles describe management styles and business functions, and the venture lifespan generally involves start-up, development, growth, decline or exit (Stokes and Wilson, 2006).

### **3.6. IMPLICATION & CONCLUSION OF THIS LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews entrepreneurship and career theory to situate the research context and support the aim to develop a model of the career and entrepreneurial process.

The chapter shows the evolution of entrepreneurship knowledge an essential first step to studying the phenomenon (Low and MacMillan, 1988). It elucidates scholarly need to concentrate on the entrepreneurial opportunity process. Furthermore, review of existing career theories identifies gaps and directly focuses on knowledge required for an entrepreneurship career theory. Additionally, entrepreneurship as an experience and associated emotions are not prominent in entrepreneurship literature (Cardon *et al.*, 2012; Schindehutte *et al.*, 2006), but emerge as a valid contribution after the data analysis, and this new literature is addressed within the discussion chapter. Furthermore, to appreciate this thesis contribution the reviews of chapter 2 and 3 provide the background to interpret some findings (Greener, 2008), and these confirm the multidisciplinary contributions of this research. The next chapter examines the study methodology, qualitative approaches and epistemological reflexivity.

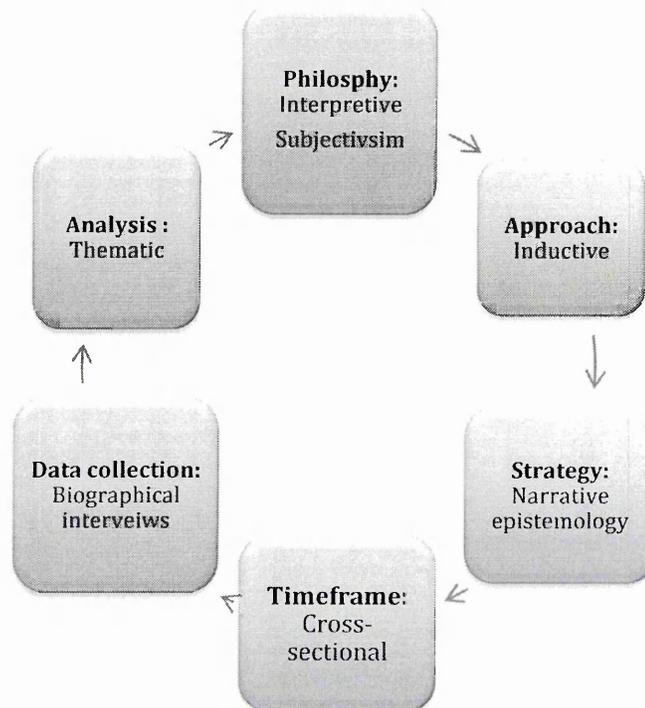
# CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

## INTERPRETIVISM AND NARRATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY

### 4.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the research objective to design an appropriate methodology to investigate the Nigerian youth entrepreneurs' career decisions, actions and experiences. The methodology chapter presents a comprehensive and justified account of the research design to address the aim and objectives, explains the ontological and epistemological positioning of this research, details the narrative methods, introduces the forty participants and their selection, examines the generation and interpretation of data, highlights validity and ethical issues including methodological reflexivity, and concludes by considering the implications of the research methodical decisions.

**Figure 3: Methodology Strategy**



## 4.1. PHILOSOPHY

Willis (2007) clarifies ontology and epistemology are two features of philosophy known as metaphysics; ontology addresses the nature of reality, and epistemology how we know what is real. This English word originated from the Greek 'Episteme' meaning knowledge, and epistemological concerns involve what is knowledge, what it constitutes, obtaining it, ensuring acquisition, and the limitations (Johnson and Duberley, 2000; Willis, 2007). Consequently, social and human behavioural sciences aim to either 'predict' or increase 'understanding' (Dubin, 1969). Wilhelm Dilthey in the 18<sup>th</sup> century states the goal in social science human lived experience research is '*Verstehen*' (understanding) (Willis, 2007). Hence, the aim to understand career and enterprise experiences (triggers, preconditions, and core processes) through the participating entrepreneurs.

### 4.1.1. Subjective Ontology and Epistemology

This study accepts 'metaphysical subjectivism' signifies human perception and human creations are real (Willis, 2007). Johnson and Duberley (2000) assert realist ontology assumes social and natural reality occurs externally autonomous to cognitive structures, a position rejected in this research. This study supports the subjective ontology that external social and natural reality is a creation of conscious cognition. Therefore, the cognitive processing of career and opportunity information and entrepreneurial practice are understood subjectively. Similarly, Kant and others reinforce that 'implicitly or explicitly' we influence the observable through 'prior beliefs, sentiments, theories, background knowledge and experiences' and these are the career experiences collected from the Nigerian entrepreneurs. Essentially, every inference concerning reality comprises cognition, social and emotional processes where language is the instrument of expression (Johnson and Duberley, 2000) a reality gathered through participant narratives. Furthermore, Steier (1991) declares constructionist researchers are active constructors recognising impossibilities of maintaining external existence. Therefore, as the researcher I actively partake in the construction of this thesis, through my epistemological decisions, exclusions and authorship.

This study indicates humans primarily express their experiences and mnemonic occurrences in narrative form, such as 'stories, myths, excuses, and reasons for action or inaction' (Bruner, 1991), and this perspective believes human perception and

experience are mediated historically, culturally and linguistically, and reality in various cultures is contextual for diverse understandings (Willig, 2001). An instance, within this thesis is the definition of youths as 15-35 years; similarly the findings and discussion chapters address the participant circumstances as situated in the milieu.

#### 4.1.2. Interpretivism

This study is positioned within the subjective interpretative paradigm. Willis (2007, p. 8) defines paradigms as a “comprehensive belief system, worldview, or framework that guides research and practice in a field”. Willis states in qualitative research there are generally three paradigms; post positivism, critical theory and interpretivism (e.g., Cupchick, 2002; Gephart, 1999; Green, Benjamin and Goodyear, 2001, Guba, 1990; Smith, 1989). Morgan and Smircich (1980) maintain the relationship between theory and method is to be inherently clear and table 23 shows this research distinction.

**Table 23: Burrell and Morgan’s Four Paradigms**

<b>Radical Change</b>			
<b>Subjectivism</b>	<b>Radical Humanism</b>	<b>Radical Structuralism</b>	<b>Objectivism</b>
	Socially constructed realities entrap people who are complicit in their sustenance. The aim is to release people from these ideological constraints through developing alternatives	Society/ Organisations are dominating and exploitative. The aim is to analyse these processes and their contradictions objectively so as to identify how they can lead social change.	
	<b>Interpretative</b>	<b>Functionalism</b>	
	Since organisations have no prior independent existence they are to be understood from the participants point of view with the aim of understanding how shared versions of reality emerge and are maintained.	Society and its institutions have a concrete tangible existence, which produces an ordered <i>status quo</i> that is analysable objectively through the rigour of what is taken to be the scientific method.	
<b>Regulation</b>			

Burrell and Morgan (1979); Johnson and Duberley (2000, p. 80)

Interpretivism in social science rejects positivism, asserting in the study of human behaviour the environment is important and subjective perceptions are how individuals interpret their world (Willis, 2007). Furthermore, through interpretivism differences in humans as social actors and their roles are interpreted through attributed meanings, this viewpoint requires empathy and this thesis shows the challenge of entering the Nigerian youth entrepreneurs' social world to understand their unique and complex perspectives (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Hence, conscious reflexivity and self-comprehension censors my personal philosophy and epistemology, directing focus to observing and exploring alternative knowledge in the social and world (Johnson and Duberley, 2000).

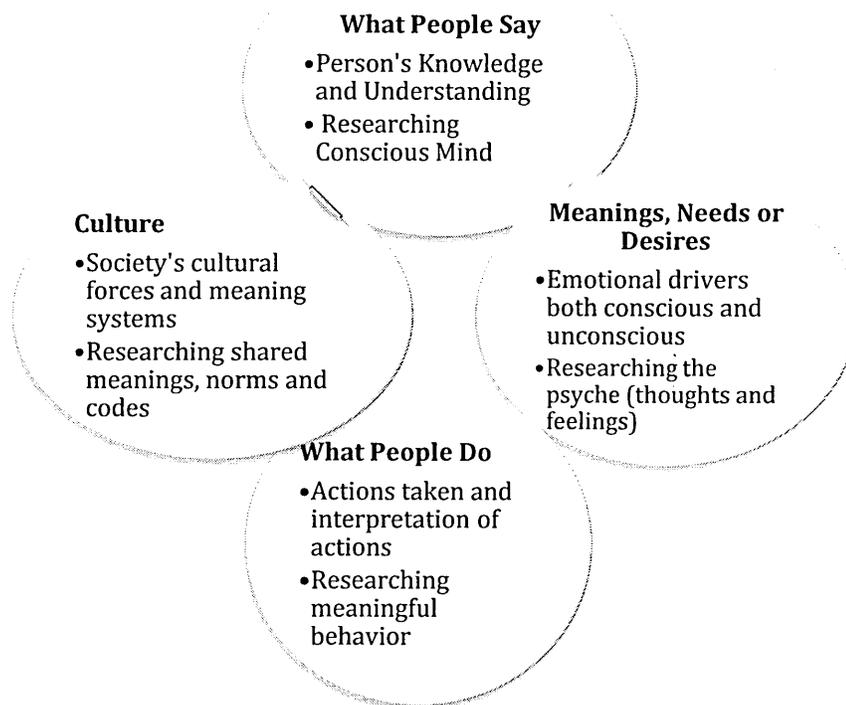
Interpretative construction communicates the central focus of episodes through stories (Steyaert and Bowen, 1997, p. 51). Social construction the interpretative approach for this study implies a “descriptive/interpretive inquiry into how and why opportunities, entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial processes and entrepreneurship are constructed in social interaction between people” (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2009, p. 31). This is achieved by stepping into the social world of the entrepreneurs with empathy to recognise emotions, feelings, and cognition, a requirement for career theory. Cohen et al. (2004) attest social constructionism in career studies go beyond conventional conceptualisation and positivist approaches that ignore power and ideological issues. This research comprehensively increases understanding into the meanings attached to vocational choices, including relationships between career choices and the social context. Chell (2000) declares when individuals consistently behave a certain way, patterns are identifiable through social constructionism “concerned with how individuals and groups create their reality and make sense of it” (Chell, 2000, p. 65). This knowledge supports the final model.

Therefore, the interpretive approach is best in researching the entrepreneurial experience (Mitchell 1996; Rae, 2000; Steyaert, 1997), because entrepreneurship is still mystified and society fails to understand this practice (Neergaard and Ulhoi, 2007). Consequently, the model for the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process advanced through this interpretive research provides a framework for understanding the entrepreneurial career and business lifecycle in Nigeria. This study hopes this interpretative knowledge contribution enables society to better understand and support youth entrepreneurial careers for individual, social and economic development.

## 4.2. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Scholars called for more qualitative approaches in entrepreneurship research (Bygrave, 2007; Gartner, 2010b; Gartner and Birley, 2002; Neergaard and Ulhoi, 2007). Qualitative research chosen for this study has the ability to contribute progressively to the academic field of entrepreneurship, it allows for previously unexplored aspects of the field to be investigated in greater depth (Neergaard and Ulhoi, 2007). The previous chapters explained the paucity in African entrepreneurship literature and career theory. Likewise, this qualitative study meaningfully contributes to the Nigerian youth entrepreneurship context. Hence, this research considers entrepreneurship a process best understood through career experiences rather than a stable phenomenon. This explains the shift away from statistical research, which can indicate change without providing deep understanding into the triggers and occurrences (Bygrave, 2007; Neergaard and Ulhoi, 2007). The significant questions asked within this study are best answered through qualitative studies (Gartner and Birley, 2002). Additionally, figure 4 from Ereat (2011) “Qualitative research has multiple focal points” encapsulate the numerous study concentrations, showing some of the meanings Nigerian entrepreneurs attach to the phenomena.

**Figure 4: Multiple Focus of Qualitative Research (Ereat, 2011)**



Similarly, this qualitative study captures relevant features of career choice and opportunity recognition. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) support the defining characteristics of this qualitative research include; the overall perspective and importance of the participants frame of reference, the flexible research design with rich and voluminous data, distinct analysis approaches, interpretations and outputs achieved. These are enabled through awareness of the practical constraints of time and money, a reality of the research context and settings. Table 24 summarises qualitative research characteristic and my researcher role.

**Table 24: Characteristics of Qualitative Research and the Researcher**

<b>Qualitative Research</b>	<b>The Qualitative Researcher</b>
Takes place in a natural world	Views social phenomena holistically
Uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic	Systematically reflects on who she is in the inquiry
Focuses on context	Is sensitive to their own personal biography/social identity and how these shape the study
Is emergent and evolving rather than tightly prefigured	Uses complex reasoning that is multifaceted and iterative
Is fundamentally interpretive	Provide social world meaning and interpretation.

Rossmann and Rallis (2003, p. 8 and 10)

#### 4.2.1. Qualitative Versus Quantitative Research

Gartner and Birley (2002) assert certain questions in entrepreneurship research such as those pursued in this study (why, how, what, when, where) can only be answered through qualitative research, these require common sense and intuition, an area ignored by quantitative research.

Quantitative and qualitative research methods arguably represent different epistemological frameworks for comprehending social phenomena and conceptualising social reality (Smith, 1984). Silverman (1993) supports for the constructivist no data is pure, but consequential from the meanings attached to it by both the researched and the researcher. Likewise, my evidences agree with Mckenzie (2007) who expresses his experience as both a researcher and an entrepreneur reveals entrepreneurship studies can suffer inaccuracies through cold questionnaires, and participating entrepreneurs dislike the paper work and succinct measurements. Furthermore, to clarify findings during presentations quantitative researchers often resort to telling short stories (Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997). This narrative research presents data (e.g. participant personal words within the findings section), which builds trust allowing readers to sight the raw data that produces results or themes unlike claims made by quantitative studies, an absence of seeing their data may influence thoughts of results derived through flawed analysis (Gartner, 2010b). The excerpts of pure raw data directly quoted from the entrepreneurs within this study offer much (McAuley, 1998):

*In relating this to entrepreneurial activity I would argue that the purest insights come straight from the entrepreneur in person unfiltered by any academic foil. However, as observers of entrepreneurial activity via our questionnaires and interviews we process (analyse) and alter the light from the 'mirror-lamp' before again reflecting it out in our writings only for further distortion to take place and readers bring their own individual perceptions to bear on it. This raises all sorts of questions about our methods and the influence they have on what we are trying to represent (McAuley, 1998, p. 721).*

Furthermore, qualitative research is an approach not a set of techniques, and the nature of the social phenomenon investigated determines the best approaches to use (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). Table 25 summarises the main differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches, showing the relevant epistemology of this study a departure from quantitative study.

**Table 25: Difference Between Quantitative and Qualitative Approach**

Quantitative Approach*	Qualitative Approach*	Approach Application
'Numeric and 'Simple' data	Rich and 'Complex' data	Data Generated through Stories
Measurements	Meanings	Communicated through participant stories
Explains	Understands	Career and opportunity decisions
Predicts	Interprets	Analyse and interpret stories
Generalisable	Contextual	Knowledge situated in youth and Nigeria
Sample representative of population	Purposive sample	Participants gathered given time and availability convenience
Tests Hypothesis	Explores	Investigates entrepreneurs
Objectivity	Subjectivity	Construction of knowledge
A closed system (Experimentally controlled)	Open system (Ecologically valid)	Specific Social world

Willig\* (2001)

#### 4.2.2. Qualitative Research Theory Construction

Theories are best built from qualitative research (Shah and Corley, 2006). This research is grounded in the experiences of the participating entrepreneurs, which generates understanding and makes clear the multiple perspectives of the phenomenon studied. These categorise contextual issues and interconnections (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Hence, interpretive research and data are loaded with theory (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Mintzberg (1979) states data only becomes theory when researchers express empirical patterns, and explain observations, a richness achievable through qualitative research.

*Theory building seems to require rich description, the richness that comes from anecdote. We uncover all kinds of relationships in our 'hard' data, but it is only through the use of this 'soft' data that we are able to 'explain' them, and explanation is, of course, the purpose of research. I believe that the researcher who never goes near the water, who collects quantitative data from a distance without anecdote to support them, will always have difficulty explaining interesting relationships . . . (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 113).*

In attaining the aims to develop knowledge about entrepreneurship as a career for youths from Nigeria, this study adopts Dubin's approach to theory. Dubin (1969) contends others may differentiate that theory explains principles and models represent reality. However, Dubin argues the terms "theoretical model, model and system" are interchangeable. Theoretical models are constructed from the empirical study of human senses in the environment, and the buzz of scientific discovery is when the outcome of an inductive (or deductive) approach constructs a model (such as the model for the

career, opportunity identification and development process) showing interconnecting relationships in the empirical world. Rae (2004, p. 195) expresses “practical theory emerges from the implicit, intuitive, tacit and situated resource of practice, whereas academic theory is abstract, generalised, explicit and seeks to be provable”. This research represents practical theory from the narrative study of Nigerian young entrepreneurs. Charmaz (2006, p.180) believes theories are strong when positioned “within their social, historical, local, and interactional contexts”. Therefore, although human behaviour is unpredictable, models are retrospective and unable to depict all categories of a phenomenon; models as developed within this study significantly raise questions and provide understandings subject to further improvement (Gillespie, 2010). Therefore, this study recognises ‘theories guide action, the real world is messy and meanings generated from developed theories are desirable although a different way to travel around the world’ (Down, 2010).

The absence of a quantitative element implies a non-holistic theory (Shah and Corley, 2006), and non-universal local truth (Willis, 2007), a contextual locally valid theory (Steyaert, 1998), and retrodictive theory (Casson, 2010). However, theory building is important to knowledge creation, and entrepreneurship being a young field of study, rigorous empirical efforts to develop theory is encouraged (Neergaard and Ulhoi, 2007).

#### **4.3. NARRATIVE CONTEXTUAL EPISTEMOLOGY**

This study uses participant stories/narratives to understand the nature of youth entrepreneurial careers and opportunity recognition. Narrative research is the professional terminology for qualitative research about participant stories (Polkinghorne, 2007; Willis, 2007). According to Rankin-Brown:

*Narrative research involves using stories to inquire about events, feelings, thoughts, and the meaning of a story with another. Narratives attempt to connect individuals with others, develop creativity and critical thought, and transcribe academic research and writing for a larger, public audience. Narrative research recaptures the act of storytelling and draws attention to its important role in sharing knowledge with others (Rankin-Brown, 2006, p. 3).*

Some studies consider narrative research is ‘structured, detailed and systematic’ beyond stories (Willis, 2007). “Narrative approach and the narrative form in specific are appropriate to engage in entrepreneurship as a process-oriented, multi-perspective and contextual reality and science” (Steyaert and Bowen, 1997, p. 51). Hence, the primary

methodology for this research is the narrative approach a construction that undoubtedly uncovers substantial events and subjective philosophical conventions (Chell *et al.*, 1991).

#### **4.3.1. Narrative Epistemology**

This research into youth career and entrepreneurship primarily uses narrative inquiry to gather, analyse and interpret the stories from the selected entrepreneurs (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). According to Beeka (1993) human behaviour represents a complex interplay between the individual and environment. This is because personalities are unique, physical aspects are inherited while psychological aspects are primarily learnt. Hence, to understand people we have to study their background and how they live (Beeka, 1993). This narrative research introduces enhanced “conceptual, epistemological and methodological reflection” (Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997, p. 61). This inductive research aims to enable better comprehension and understanding of the unique perspectives inherent to the entrepreneurial career in Nigeria.

Casson (2010) declares business biographies are considered anecdotal and unscientific but corroborative evidences confirm entrepreneurial prediction. Furthermore, oral histories center on participant working lives and community functions (Atkinson, 1998). Gartner (2007) asserts narrative approaches and methods are reflexive, conducted through the simultaneous lens of analysing entrepreneurial studies, and being aware of our own stories, the why and how we are conducting the research. Gartner labels entrepreneurial narratives “science of imagination”. The stories practitioners (participants) ‘tell’ and researchers ‘retell’ contribute to understanding how entrepreneurs initiate, create and modify their future. This implies the construction nature of this study in undertaking the analysis, interpretation and producing the conceptual model. Gartner (2007) asserts stories are powerful, both for the imagination and the models that explain entrepreneurial phenomenon.

This methodology provides understanding into career choice and practical entrepreneurship opportunity recognition from a Nigerian perspective through stories (Gartner, 2007, Mitchell, 1996; Rae, 2000; Rae and Carswell, 2000; Wilkinson and Birmingham, 2003). This empirical insight is needed since the entrepreneurial practice constitutes a dynamic process, with many variables negotiated to actualise goals

(Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997). This generates insider views, personal reality, mnemonic, and opulent content (Berglund, 2007; Flick, 1998; Johansson, 2004; Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Neergaard and Ulhoi, 2007; Mckenzie, 2007; Steyaert, 1997; Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997). Furthermore, the narratives recounts of past happenings and experience stories (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Bruner, 1991; Rubin and Rubin, 1995), shows identity construction and how the entrepreneurs make sense of their world (Bruner, 2002; Riessman, 1993, 2011). Their entrepreneurial actions enable developing contextual theory depicted in the precondition, trigger and core process of career identification and development.

#### **4.4. THE PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study brings out the relationship between theory and practice (Jennings, 1994). This research process started with pilot studies which further enriched the research experience, allowing a focus for the initial literature, clarifying access, data generation, ethical, validity, and mistrust challenges. The pilot importantly tested out the research approach, modified and strengthened the rationale before implementing this research design (Kvale, 2007; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Hence, careful plan, design and pilot of the research strategy contributed reliable data, after addressing the unanticipated behaviour of participants (Hewson *et al.*, 2003).

The pilot meaningfully refined this complete study given the weaknesses, anticipated flaws and limitations before implementing the final research design (Kvale, 2007). The pilot participants were derived through personal networks and came from two zones of the eventual six final regions within this study of forty participants, and their interviews established the story telling approach. The general guide interview questions within this thesis were generated from the exploratory study, directing knowledge toward initial triggers, antecedents and core processes. These clarified the research sub-questions to generate the findings, and also improved the research objectives.

The pilot study reiterated the importance of focusing on agency within the social context from the participants' view. The pilot showed the individual should be the main unit of intellectual analysis rather than specific business sectors, with focus on the

career, opportunity identification, and development process regardless of sector making entrepreneurial actions more important than sectors of operations.

This pilot study unstructured interview method utilised open questions. The method was straightforward the participants were simply asked to give a background to why and how they became entrepreneurs, their opportunities, prospects and unique challenges. They were also asked to describe events experienced during business start-up or during the course of business, both positive and negative. For eight participants this gave an insight into their pull and push drivers about an entrepreneurial career including opportunity recognition decisions. The inductive analyses of narrative data lead to emergent themes, and a review of entrepreneurship literature revealed similarities with some themes in Ardichvili et al. (2003). This contributed to the initial literature review regarding the variables that contributed to career choice, and firm creation. In totality the pilot, primary data from forty entrepreneurs and literature developed more comprehensively the final entrepreneurial career triggers, preconditions and development to elucidate the entrepreneurial career as a feasible career option.

The exploratory studies led to the development of two papers. The feedbacks were insightful and encouraging and the papers were published (Beeka and Rimmington, 2011a, b). One paper (Beeka and Rimmington, 2011b) the reviewers suggested a re-title to replace “Africa” with “Nigeria” to reflect the fact the participants were solely from one country Nigeria rather than the entire African continent of 54 countries. This insight also led to the thesis topic changing from “Entrepreneurship as a Viable Career Choice for African Youths” to “Entrepreneurship a Viable Career Choice for Nigerian Youth”. Therefore, peer review feedback from conferences, and journals contributed to the underlined word change in the thesis topic.

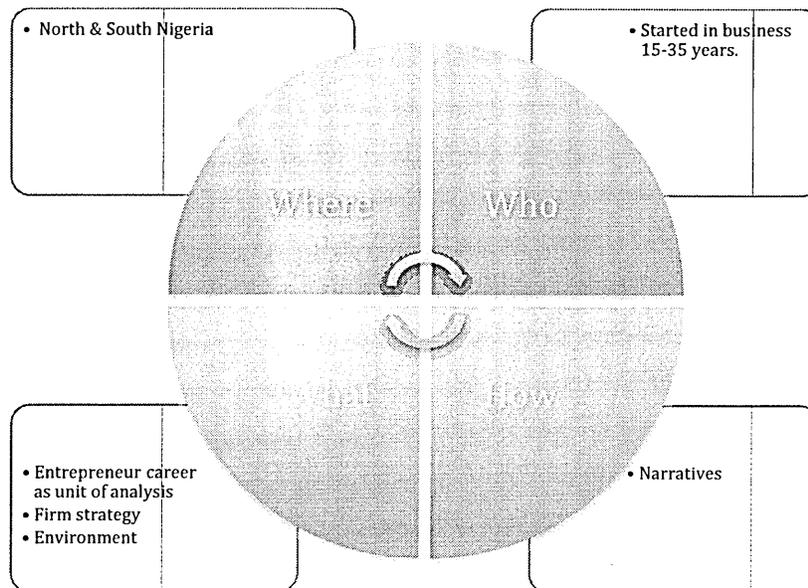
Generally, the pilot showed this research was both relevant and achievable. A topic should be selected and embarked on based on three components “do-ability” “should-do-ability”, and “want-to-do-ability” (Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p. 115; Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 4). The first two address feasibility, scholarly relevance and methodological requirements. However, the last component is most essential, this is the main reason and motivation that carries research through the process of why topics are started, consistently maintained and ultimately completed (Rossman and Rallis, 2003).

My personal reflexivity section 1.6 within the introduction chapter clarified this study interest.

#### 4.5. THE SAMPLE

The sample for this study comes from the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN). These entrepreneurs represent both genders; diverse age groups, social classes, and operational sector, which vary from traditional services to manufacturing and technology. Nigeria is divided along six geopolitical zones (North-East, North West, North Central, South-South, South-West, and South-East) and although this thesis interviews at least one entrepreneur from each zone to further protect identities these entrepreneurs when identified are simply said to be from the North or South. Figure 5 provides an overview of the sample:

**Figure 5: Participant Overview**



##### 4.5.1. The Participants

To accumulate rich data from oral entrepreneurial stories this research investigated forty (40) Nigerian entrepreneurs who started their business young. This dynamic sample covered careers from the desired context, providing first-hand knowledge into the experiences sought by this study. The entrepreneurs came from different businesses sectors, structures and backgrounds making this a heterogeneous sample. The

homogeneity criterion being that all entrepreneurs started their businesses within the defined youth age of 15-35 years old (see 1.1 for youth definition). However, some are older to achieve a generational element to this study of the entrepreneurial career but all participants started within this crucial age group. See Table 31 for participant pseudonym, gender, and business sectors.

#### **4.5.2. The Sampling Strategy**

Sampling in any research is “inevitably a compromise between the desired coverage and practical considerations”. This study proves a design that requires in-depth interviews will certainly have limited coverage due to the volume and time required to analyse the data gathered (Collins *et al.*, 1964, p. 28). The practicality of this research shows participants identified through personal recommendations, and business networks. The time, energy and travel required including entrepreneurs from unknown sources being too costly. Furthermore, the respondents are selected through both purposeful sampling from early to existing entrepreneurs within the defined youth ages of 15 to 35 years.

The ‘convenience sampling’ selection is based on being the easiest to obtain given time and availability (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The convenience sampling aspect includes 34 entrepreneurs between 15 to 35 and six over 35 years old engaged in informal or formal businesses to ensure maximum heterogeneity helpful in findings. All entrepreneurs are past the nascent stages to provide richer insight into entrepreneurial careers from identification to sustainability. The benchmark for those over 35 years old is they also started in business within the defined age of 15-35. This saves time, money and effort at the risk of reliable information (Miles and Huberman, 1994). However, consistent with this narrative study all have experience stories (Plummer, 1983), about entrepreneurship career and opportunity recognition. Most qualitative studies use purposive sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1984), conversely the purposive or ‘judgemental sampling’ a non-probability sampling process (Saunders *et al.*, 2009) used within this study is based around table 26:

**Table 26: Purposive Sampling Strategy**

Strategy	Characteristics	Application
Heterogeneity	Participant variation to collect different views	Participants varied by gender, age, structure, sector and location for diverse views
Homogeneity	Participant similarity for distinctive data into vital themes	All started business within the defined youth age of 15-35
Critical	Participant can significantly add to the subject, and understanding their view produces coherent conclusions	All started and operate ventures and have at least two years entrepreneurial career experience stories for the career lifecycle
Typical	Participant illustrates what would be insightful benefits for readers not familiar with the subject matter	Their narratives revealed valuable information about entrepreneurship understandable even for rookie readers
Snowballing	Participant recruited from referrals	Few already interviewed created contact with other participants
Opportunistic	Unexpected decisions that led to participant attained through unforeseen leads	Primarily, networks offered contacts, but five entrepreneurs were discovered during fieldwork straight from the streets.

Guba and Lincoln (1989); Miles and Huberman (1994); Patton (2002); Saunders *et al.* (2009)

#### 4.6. GENERATING DATA

The primary contribution to date generation for this study is participant interviews. “Qualitative data are sexy. They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 1). These qualitative data interviews are analysed into concepts (Saunders *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, field research extends theory rather than merely provide a relationship between variables (Silverman, 1993). Hence, while positivists collect data, constructionists in interview interactions generate data (Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997). The narrative research recognises that entrepreneurs construct reality through stories, which called for active listening to subsequently allow voices to be heard (Rossman and Marshall, 2011). Table 27 depicts the data generation steps within this thesis:

**Table 27: Three Steps to Data Generation**

<b>Plan (Pre-interview)</b>	Prepare for the interviews important for grounded data to understand youth career and opportunity
<b>Do the interview (Interview)</b>	Conduct the interview and record narratives
<b>Transcribe and interpret (Post-interview)</b>	Transcribe the stories, give to the participant to either confirm or make changes, then interpret

Atkinson (1998)

#### **4.6.1. Ethical Requirements**

Ethical issues surface when generating data, during analysis and dissemination (Creswell, 2007). Interviews are insightful but also interferences that reveal ethical challenges as quality interviews bare ‘thoughts, feelings, knowledge and experience’ to both interviewer and interviewee (Patton, 2002), given interviews necessitate trust and mutual interaction akin to friendship (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Therefore, it is best the interaction is safe and not harmful for the entrepreneur but a reciprocated activity, which protects identity throughout the study (Creswell, 2007; Marshall and Rossman, 2011), accordingly empathy and sensitivity are ethical requirements (Cole and Knowles, 2001).

Therefore, consent is required before data generation and this is obtained from the entrepreneurs before the interviews and audio-recordings. These involve verbally explaining to the participants the purpose for the study and extent of their involvement, providing information sheets detailing the research aim, objectives, purpose and eventual dissemination (Appendix 3: Participant Information), and if they were happy to go ahead and participate they sign the consent form (Appendix 4: Consent form). Likewise, their transcripts are sent to them to judge the accuracy of their accounts. In addition, the confidentiality promised the participants are achieved through anonymity; aliases and ensuring their stories are a composite representation (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, during the one-to-one interview generation it is pleasantly surprising the openness in which these entrepreneurs willingly tell their stories, and despite this being our first meeting some trustingly communicate secrets. In one instance, an entrepreneur exposes ‘what has never been shared with anyone’. This story unfortunately will never see the light of day (at least not from me), due to the anguish observed in its recount but also I swore to keep the secret.

#### **4.6.2. The Story Telling Interview**

The selected entrepreneurs are interviewed through an in-depth storytelling and general interview guide approach. The data generated provides insight into the entrepreneur's perspectives, an interpretation of their beliefs and motives, but most importantly the attached meanings (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Therefore, the one-to-one storytelling and general interview guide instruments explored questions with phrasings applied with variations between interviews (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The story-telling interview

invited insights into the entrepreneurial biography, personal experience and oral history allowing the participants shape their narratives (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Subsequently, depending on the narrative depth some of the participants are further asked some general interview guide questions to understand their enterprise, career choices, what triggers the decision to start a business, the role of networks, environmental influences, personality attributes, prior knowledge and cognitive heuristics. Thus, the interview guide allows flexibility to cover original subject areas, and probes are used throughout to encourage continuity or clarify stories, this interview styles provides a general and sufficient narrow base to elicit and seek elaboration to gain specific views, experienced events and actions (Charmaz, 2006).

### **The Story Telling Interview Instrument**

The story telling interview entails asking open questions to gather personal experience, oral history, and recounted biographies to understand entrepreneurship as a career choice motivation for Nigerian youths and their opportunity recognition patterns. It is been suggested such interviews are best collected through unstructured interview methods (Johansson, 2004; Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997). The strategy in this research involves applying a loose structure by starting with an open general question “tell me your entrepreneurial story...” and then proceeding with probes (see appendix 5). This is highly naturalistic and provides participants the utmost freedom to shape and reconstruct their experiences (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). These identity constructions provide a good link between actions and business operations, which supports vital stories about career histories (Chase, 2008). Furthermore, these entrepreneurs easily cover essential topics when allowed to talk with little interruption (Collins *et al.*, 1964; Musson, 1998; Steyaert and Bouwen, 1997).

#### **4.6.3. Recording the Interview**

After settling down, re-introducing the interview project aims, reaffirming consent and reassuring all respondents of confidentiality, the interviews were audio recorded (lengths between one to three hours), and few notes taken during the interviews. This allowed for listening to the entrepreneurs and knowing when to probe. The audiotape method captured accurate and precise recordings, including hesitations and tones allowing the interviews flow with fewer interruptions (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). All narratives were transcribed verbatim. Additionally, a journal of analytic and self-

reflective memos was recorded making my implicit thoughts explicit to expand and enhance the data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The journal contained musings, questions and speculations regarding the data collected and evolving theory, this self-reflective memo documented my reactions to the narratives; some observations are elucidated in the findings. At the end all participants were thanked, confidentiality reassured and asked for future access for more information or to reconfirm any interview aspects.

#### **4.7. DATA ANALYSIS**

Narrative approaches analyse “the stories that people tell” (Gartner, 2007, p. 613). The qualitative analysis procedure in this study examines and interprets data to elicit meaning, obtain better understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Through personal experience, the meanings and intentions of story construction are taken into account (Riessman, 1993). The stories are analysed and organised as narratives with common themes, vital concepts and categories (Plummer, 2001; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The data analysis starts with a ‘holistic’ reading of the complete voluminous data to highlight contextual meanings. Next is a ‘detailed or atomistic approach’ of manually and technologically breaking data into segments, codes and interconnecting relationships to shape the model (Willis, 2007). This process is simplified by Kvale (1996) as three diverse interpretation contexts; first using self-understanding to shorten and frame participant meanings; secondly, using common sense to position accounts; and thirdly using theory to give the data (narrative) an academic viewpoint. This is represented academically as the final model and shows the systematic entrepreneurial study into the Nigerian youth.

##### **4.7.1. Analytic and Interpretation Procedure**

Data analysis involves processing data, from reducing to convenient sizes, arranging text, actions and giving meanings (Wolcott, 1994; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). There is duality to data and the collection of forty interviews to the analysis implies “a hybrid between oral discourse unfolding over time, face-to-face, in a lived situation-where what is said is addressed to a specific listener present-and a written text created for a general distant public” (Kvale, 1996, p. 182). Mishler (1991, p. 277) asserts “how we arrange and rearrange the [interview] text in light of our discoveries is a process of testing, clarifying and deepening our understanding of what is happening in the

discourse”. Hence, this thesis may appear well thought out and planned (Potter and Wetherell, 1987), but some processes are ‘messy’ (Denzin, 1997). The critical mess approach requires immersion in overwhelming narrative data to achieve understanding through thematic analysis, which creates superior theories (Gartner, 2007, 2010b). The process being forty transcripts as voluminous data purposefully reduced through their meanings (Wolcott, 1990). This active process involves “selection, focusing, abstracting, and transforming” of transcripts to inventive and manageable conclusive sizes (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

### **Coding with Nvivo procedure**

The analysis is challenging but also exciting, achieved through originality and the systematic scrutinizing of large raw data condensed into emergent concepts, detailed descriptions, classifications, patterns and explanations (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Nvivo eases this process of analysing my voluminous transcripts, which could take more months of intense work (Basit, 2003). The narrative accounts are extracted given critical themes as stories or plots are scattered throughout the transcripts, and thematic analysis helps interpret these stories. Hence, all 40 transcribed interviews are loaded one by one into Nvivo, and codes are created by selecting specific quotations that aligned with certain codes or themes, the events that appear critical to the questions asked are selected e.g. decision to become an entrepreneur, parental influence, changes in risk perception, and so on, then right-clicked adding the extract to a child node, tree node or free node. Line numbering is not utilised because the narratives are difficult to number line by line, since quotes ran over (Basit, 2003). Therefore, although researcher analysis is prevalent, Nvivo supports ‘managing’ the messy data, administrating ‘*ideas*, easy *querying*’ of data and contemplation, including ‘*generating reports*’ (Bazeley, 2007). Possibly, this computer software adds to data analysis rigour due to the comprehensive methodical and conscientious improvements from the manual labour of cut, label and file (Basit, 2003; Bazeley, 2007; Welsh, 2002).

### **Manual Coding and Analysis**

The verbatim accounts excluded are intermissions, such as, laughter, and exclamations that provide perspective to active narration (Oliver, 2008). Furthermore, free participants convey private things forgetting a thesis becomes a public document, and despite consent these are edited out (Mckenzie, 2007). Secondly, raw data is condensed through making decisions which critical experiences were influential to the events

described (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Thus, clear entrepreneurship principles and clear patterns emerged applicable to the entrepreneurs, and this enhances validity with the knowledge traceable to general entrepreneurship literature (Musson, 1998; Neergaard and Ulhøi, 2007). Similarly, stories are analysed avoiding chronology to concentrate on critical elements, turning points, conditions, and adaptation to the phenomenon of study (Mandelbaum, 1973). Such interpretation derives themes, concepts and models (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Thomas, 2006), which establish the pattern (Baron and Ensley, 2006) of the final conceptual model. This summarises the inductive analytical approach, “where you collect data and develop theory as a result of the data analysis” (Saunders, 2000, p. 87). Furthermore, although this study is qualitative research substantive tables are used extensively in the thesis to ease reading.

The findings chapter shows how stories are analysed and organised as narratives with common themes, vital concepts and categories (Plummer, 2001; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003), with relevant indicative and illustrative quotations (identifiable through italics) used to communicate meanings, and these are direct experience descriptions (Atkinson, 1998; Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 1998). The findings chapter cites every participant/entrepreneur, however some are quoted more than other because their words best communicate collective expressions for a theme or category. For instance, out of the five sub-questions (see section 1.3.2 and table 28), the first two addressing career and opportunity identification quotes all forty entrepreneurs. However, the next three questions about venture creation pattern (core process), preconditions and challenges shows collective findings. The challenge section especially avoids personal attribution of quotes, a protective and confidential measure for the participants. Hence, this technique organises and reduces the voluminous data from the forty entrepreneurs into manageable forms (Marshall and Rossman, 2011; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The findings and discussion exemplify how Gartner (1985) expresses that entrepreneurs were diverse but once the differences are acknowledged, then similarities are classified and characteristics grouped together. This informal and formal entrepreneurial study therefore combines relevant micro and macro patterns to subsequently generate the conceptual model (figure 10). Table 28 depicts chapter 5 (findings) structure.

**Table 28: Theme, Definition and Question Answered**

Main theme	Definition	Question answered
Trigger [5.2 & 5.3]	Critical variables that alert to the career and opportunity	<b>Question 1:</b> Why do they become entrepreneurs? [5.2] <b>Question 2:</b> How do they recognise career and business opportunity? [5.3]
Precondition [5.4]	Background supports for the career	<b>Question 5:</b> What supports the entrepreneurial career [5.4]
Core Process [5.5, 5.6 & 5.7]	Central behaviour and actions to develop business and sustain career	<b>Question 3:</b> What path do they take to start and operate ventures? [5.6 & 5.7] <b>Question 4:</b> What challenges the entrepreneurial career and opportunity [5.5]

Furthermore, the discussion chapter builds from the findings chapter (see table 40) to examine influential factors facilitating the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process. This chapter discusses both micro and macro features given the multidimensional nature of the entrepreneurial career and opportunity process to ease understanding into how the final comprehensive framework depicted in the conclusion chapter (7) develops. Table 29 depicts chapter 6 (Discussion) structure.

**Table 29: Knowledge Contribution**

Concept	Knowledge	Theory contribution
Trigger [6.1]	The initiating process to becoming an entrepreneur and opportunity discovery	Entrepreneurial career and opportunity identification process.
Precondition [6.2]	The prerequisite process influencing the career, and resources enhancing opportunity	Entrepreneurial career and opportunity Precondition process.
Core Process [6.3]	The main process of venture start-up, growth and sustaining the career	Entrepreneurial career and opportunity development process.

#### 4.7.2. Interpreting Talk into Academic Text

The entrepreneurial narrative account of events, experiences or occurrences, and their interpretation are the meanings derived from stories (Atkinson, 1998). Narratives are ‘innate psychological blueprint’ (Atkinson, 1998), which we communicate through the way we think, speak and convey meaning (Atkinson, 1998; Riessman, 1993). “Narrative analysis allows for a systematic study of personal experience and meaning: how events have been constructed by active subjects” (Riessman, 1993, p. 70), and this interpretation of experience represents participant interpretation (Bruner, 1990; Riessman, 1993). Therefore, meanings explored through reality construction (Marshall

and Rossman, 2011), are appropriate for studying identity and subjectivity because stories are claimed identities (Riessman, 1993). Nevertheless, imagination (Gartner, 2007) and human agency (researcher) determines which narratives got incorporated and omitted (Riessman, 1993). Consequently, although an uncomfortable aspect of studies, the researcher's personal background, research questions, epistemological and theoretical positions and values often determine how narrative accounts are written and presented (Gartner, 2007; Riessman, 1993; Willis, 2007). Hence, I actively contribute to the way the Nigerian youth entrepreneur's stories transform into academic text. The complete thesis is structured into seven chapters; see section 1.7 (Thesis structure).

Furthermore, Willis (2007) asserts that scholars richly describe participant stories in their own words and perspectives; short story or novel (e.g., Sikes, 2005). The nature utilised in chapter 5 involves using direct quotations in combination with researcher analysis and in chapter 6 interpreting through drawing on common themes pertaining to theory (e.g., Skjorshammer, 2002). I retain the participant's voices and present raw data, and this first-person narrative removes researchers 'as much as possible from the text' (Atkinson, 1998).

*I have felt it is important, in trying to understand others' positions in life of description of themselves and their relation to others to let their voices be heard, to let them speak for themselves first (Atkinson, 1998, p. 5).*

Hence, the entrepreneurial stories within this thesis convert into academic text and tables to provide in-depth understanding of the social world of the Nigerian youth entrepreneur. This approach hopefully gives better shape to the findings, discussions and conclusions within the thesis to draw out implications for future entrepreneurial career research and practice. These qualitative stories, communicate a concrete, vivid, intense and significant message to readers, like other researchers, policy-makers and practitioners than multiple sheets of summarised statistics (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 1). The outcome is the final integrative conceptual model of the entrepreneurial career and opportunity lifecycle.

#### **4.8. AUTHENTICITY, VALIDATION AND EVALUATION**

This qualitative research took extensive steps to design, collect, analyse, interpret, and develop understandable knowledge from extensive fieldwork and personal contact with entrepreneurs. An essential element of any research is the question "Did I get it right?"

for what standards determine validity? (Creswell, 2007) since narrative accounts cannot be assessed using any conventional criterion that promote correspondence and ‘trustworthiness’ and there is no formula or ‘canonical approach’ to validate interpretive research (Riessman, 1993). Angen (2000, p. 387) supports in interpretative research, validation is “a judgement of the trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research”. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300) totally oppose this positivist term within qualitative research, proposing credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Hence, career narrative studies should construct sound and trustworthy realities (Young and Borgen, 1990). Nevertheless, narrative approaches come with their own epistemology, theories, and methods that must be met on their own terms (Gartner, 2007, p. 614).

Fundamentally, human entrepreneurial experiences and mnemonic occurrences are directed by narrative necessity, not logic. Thus, narrative construction adheres to verisimilitude and it is ironic when stories are characterised as accurate or untrue (Bruner, 1991). Therefore, in narrative research truth is irrelevant with fact and fiction inconsequential (Skjorshammer, 2002). However, this thesis demonstrates ‘integrity’ through quality craftsmanship (Kvale, 1983).

*Knowledge claims are so powerful and convincing in their own right that they, so to say, carry the validation with them, like a strong piece of art. In such cases, the research procedures would be transparent and the results evident, and the conclusions of a study intrinsically convincing as true, beautiful and good. Appeals to external certification, or officially validity stamps of approval, then become secondary. Valid research would in this sense be research that makes questions of validity superfluous (Kvale, 1996, p. 252).*

The quote above is achieved in this research as follows; narratives being interpretive require elucidation and communicated language symbolises reality. Hence, whatever the opinion is about participant accounts, their stories are their truth according to personal experience (Riessman, 1993). ‘Reliability’ is realised through quality recording and verbatim transcription of field data (Silverman, 2005). The data analysis, and showing raw data creates ‘credibility’ (Gartner, 2010a, b; McAuley, 1998), ensuring different voices are heard provides ‘authenticity’, while ‘criticality’ is realised through appraising all features of this research showing areas of agreements and disagreements (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Also, the narratives ‘confirm’ some predictions of entrepreneurial theory (Casson, 2010). Similarly, ‘confirmability’ and ‘dependability’ are realised by auditing the entire process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Additionally, ‘integrity’ involves

reflexivity the self-critical element (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999; Willig, 2001), plus awareness of co-constructing the meanings within this study. Furthermore, 'ethical validation' is addressed through delivering practical answers to the thesis questions, enabling dialogue, and raising questions that present new possibilities in the conclusion. 'Substantive validation' documents the thesis understandings (Angen, 2000). Hence, we validate through understanding knowledge claims (Polkinghorne, 2007). In addition, the 'thick descriptions' enable information 'transfer' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) and these imply this 'persuasive' thesis could generate 'consensus' and 'credibility' (Eisner, 1991, 1997).

#### 4.9. EPISTEMOLOGICAL REFLEXIVITY

*Reflexivity requires awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999, p. 228).*

Reflexivity is increasingly seen in research as a fundamental human quality that enhances understanding (Holland, 1999), we consciously locate our own personal history while engaging in research, and personal Reflexivity acknowledges the values, experiences and interest of the researcher (Willig, 2001). Thus, my personal values, experiences, interest, and commitments shaped this research confirming the real-life context of research (Holliday, 2007, p. 120).

This methodology chapter explains and justifies the research ontological, epistemological and methodological decisions and positions. It elucidates epistemological reflexivity the path and thought process to positioning this interpretive study. This reflexive 'critical gaze turned toward the self' (Koch, 1998, p. 1184), critically assesses the research process (Maynard, 1994). Especially for interpretive and critical studies that portray reality as socially constructed, it is necessary to examine the positioning of the nature of such knowledge (Alvesson *et al.*, 2008).

*We believe that reflexivity is important to the understanding of what happens in research. Reflexivity means thinking through what one is doing to encourage insights about the nature of social science and, especially, the role that language, power/ knowledge connections, social interests and ideologies, rhetorical moves and manoeuvring in the socio-political field play in producing particular accounts (Alvesson *et al.*, 2008, p. 497).*

Bhaskar (1989) asserts philosophy does not stipulate precise theoretical or substantive claims, but enlightens about the ontological and epistemological conditions for human inquiry. Therefore, I constantly went back to my research aim, objectives and questions to check their coherence with the chosen ontology, epistemology and strategic methods adopted. As a developing researcher I was already aware my topic originated from my background. However, on many occasions I questioned my choices, even after accepting researchers mix rather than stick to one method (Mishler, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994). That it was possible to use methods from different paradigms without the need to adopt their fundamental values, especially between interpretivism and critical theory, when critical theorists results are generalisable, while interpretivist accepts participants construct knowledge relative to the social context. Thus, the same topic could be investigated in either paradigm, the differentiation being the questions, certain methods and conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Moreover, data analysis was a personal creative process and researchers often reach dissimilar conclusions given the same data (Gartner, 2007; Jones, 1985), we analyse data given prior knowledge, ideas, theories and methods (Gartner, 2007).

Popper (1972) stated in research and search for truth, while we make statements building from previous work, we should at least plan to get as close to the truth as possible through simplicity rather than technicalities. Thus, sponging knowledge as I develop in this field, I have followed the advice of the scholars cited in this study but also acknowledge there are inherent limitations in my epistemological choices. Therefore, my approach has been to aim for conscious reflexivity and this self-comprehension has allowed me to moderately criticise my personal philosophical assumptions and epistemological understandings, while becoming aware of different perspectives of knowledge (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). The process required to provide insight to any entrepreneurial phenomena as we sort through messy data contains inefficiencies (Gartner, 2010b). Essentially, there are no clear-cut solutions to epistemological anxieties, and no fundamental principles to assess each and every discipline. Therefore, it is unproductive to expect any theory of knowledge presupposes all the conditions regarding justified knowledge (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Consequently, going through and applying the various positions regarding truth, epistemological and methodological positions, conclusions about epistemology are

impossible, and one may agree with Foulkes (1976, 1977) that research truth or warranted knowledge has no single solution. Gladwin et al. (1995) proclaims no worldview is accurate or inaccurate. Thus, I hope the carefully selected and justified ontological, epistemological and methodological positions within this thesis legitimise my contribution to knowledge.

#### **4.10. RESEARCHER AS CO-AUTHOR**

The way we interact with participants determines the structure of the study, their talk and our listening leads to the joint creation of narratives (Riessman, 1993). The challenge in this narrative study is ensuring personal interest does not bias the study since interviews involve personal interaction. Nevertheless, interpretivist believe the collection and interpretation of data in qualitative research is inherently subjective, no matter how close we get to technical standards our discoveries are hardly objective truths (Willis 2007, p. 160). Therefore, regarding the exact authorship of this thesis, each participant is the author of their story, while I author the interviews (Thompson, 1988). As co-author this thesis represents systematic skills used to construct the whole study (Gartner, 2007; Willig, 2001).

#### **4.11. LIMITATIONS OF METHODOLOGY**

This qualitative study is not generalisable. Furthermore, participant age may or may not be a limiting factor but many participants are currently at the latter end of the youth age, and all entrepreneurs operate within urban areas (hence no rural perspective). These participants all recollect career and entrepreneurial stories from the nascent stages of their businesses, and selective memory possibly ensues during the interviews, additional to the issue that other forgotten or unaware factors may have also impacted their career choice and opportunity recognition patterns. Hence, the narrative approach is critiqued for relying on retrospection and self-justification bias (Carter *et al.*, 2003; Gregoire *et al.*, 2010). Yet these narratives are learning episodes, and thus the meanings derived from entrepreneurial experiences.

Furthermore, it is possible the interpretation level the participants' want is not achieved; I could have misinterpreted their self-interpretation (Mckenzie 2007). Likewise, studies

such as these can be criticised for multiple interpretation, the participants already interpret their experience, which is reinterpreted, but this is unavoidable for accounts have to be reduced (Berglund, 2007). A possible drawback is the focus on individuals, their experiences and meanings (Ogbor, 2000). However, an aim of the study is to understand entrepreneurial career and opportunity decisions and this cannot be done without agency. Also, most accounts go beyond the individual to historical background and social embeddedness, therefore there is a wider context to the study (Berglund, 2007). Hence, narrative studies are not all fictional but derived through skilful application (Gartner, 2007).

Additionally, narrative data by nature is challenging as researchers have to locate their position, and this may not protect their identity when reorganising voluminous data (Mckenzie, 2007). Furthermore, the use of Nvivo technology for data analysis does not exclude the intellectual process of predetermining the categories, thinking, deliberating, and (de) generating the codes, the software only allows for depth (Basit, 2003). The table 30 summarises some strengths and limitations I developed given the thesis methodology:

**Table 30: Strength and Weakness of this Narrative Research**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Entrepreneurs happy to tell their stories	They may get carried away conversing things irrelevant to research aims.
Method of collecting stories straightforward	Have to build confidence due to close interaction to get quality stories
Collect rich subjective evidences on career and opportunity experiences	Some stories appear fictional or participant may have selective memory
Narratives are concentrated descriptions of different life plots	The data generation interviews often very time consuming limiting participants
Narratives open nature allows for collecting themes not envisaged	As confident researcher may be compromised being told secrets
Verbatim data transcription enables remembering generous meanings	Process of transcribing stories verbatim can be time consuming
Narrative analysis and interpretation can generate multiple meanings to understand phenomenon.	Can be tasking and messy, immersing in voluminous data to place multiple meanings within themes or patterns.
Process of co-construction, participant authors their stories, while researcher authors the interview analysed, interpretation and dissemination.	The meanings intended by the participants may be diluted given need to contextualise and present in academic format.
Narrative research provides rich retrodictive contextual theory	Theory generated has limited generalisability.

Finally, entrepreneurial scholars question the notion of using non-homogenous samples to formulate theories and generate universal insights (Steyaert, 1998), and mixed methods can claim universality for the final model (Shah and Corley, 2006). However, historical data also confirms performance and entrepreneurship theory (Casson, 2010). Furthermore, this research concentrates on context limited to a locally valid theory (Steyaert, 1998; Willis, 2007).

#### **4.12. IMPLICATION & CONCLUSION OF METHODOLOGY**

The chapter confirms the subjective ontological and epistemological positioning, and shows the research design and beneficial use of narratives to investigate the subjective entrepreneurial career and opportunity process. It addresses the research objective of designing an appropriate methodology to investigate the Nigerian youth entrepreneurs' career decisions, actions and experiences. This chapter highlights philosophical narratives as truth hence authentic through systematic knowledge contribution. It provides an account of the process taken to generate empirical data, and discusses the implications of methodological decisions. The forty participants are introduced as selected via networking and convenience sampling. This chapter shows the comprehensive narrative critical mess approach of being immersed in selecting emergent themes through vast narrative stories and understandings achieved through thematic analysis, which creates superior theories (Gartner, 2007, 2010b). Hence, qualitative research provides the appropriate framework to address research questions, and elicit understanding rather than seeking to predict, and this complexity enables the final conceptual model in the conclusion. The chapter communicates a reflexive dialogue about epistemological considerations, including my role as co-author in this social construction of knowledge. The chapter concludes with limitations, after highlighting the thesis contextual contribution to knowledge. The next findings chapter details participant characteristics and the empirical evidences relevant to the study.

## **CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS**

### **THE ENTREPRENEUR, CAREER AND ENTERPRISE**

*If I want to know the unique experience and perspective of an individual, there is no better way to get this than in the person's own voice. So I have held on to a story told in the teller's words (Atkinson, 1998).*

#### **5.0. INTRODUCTION**

This findings chapter addresses the research objective to identify and analyse what initiates enables, and challenges the Nigerian youth entrepreneurial career. It introduces the entrepreneurs illustrating how the research questions relate to each entrepreneur. The chapter provides ideas, motives, backgrounds, supports and skills influential to opportunity alertness, antecedents and exploitation themes, and these empirical evidences are career and opportunity triggers, precondition and development processes.

#### **5.1. PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS**

The socio demographic information of the entrepreneurs are summarised in table 31. These depict relevant characteristics, such as, age, marital status, educational levels, business portfolio, age of current ventures and years in business.

**Table 31: Socio-Demographic Profile of the Entrepreneurs**

Entrepreneur	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education	Business Portfolio	Age Started	Years in Business
1. Abraham	M	19	Single	Secondary	Mat Rental and Entertainment	17	2
2. Bala	M	22	Single	Primary	Photography	19	4
3. Chichi	F	23	Single	Diploma	Business Call Centre, Mobile Phone Top-up	21	3
4. Diamond	M	24	Single	Secondary	Events, Mat Rental and Entertainment	12/21	12/4
5. Enyi	M	25	Single	Undergraduate	Public Relations, Real Estate, Oil and Gas	22	3
6. Fata	M	26	Single	Secondary	Photography	18	8
7. Goro	M	26	Single	Diploma	Mat Rental and Transport	24	2
8. Happy	F	27	Single	Undergraduate	Holistic Beauty and Consultancy	22	5
9. Inga	F	27	Single	Undergraduate	Events Management, PR, Magazine, Hospitality	25	2
10. Halle	F	29	Married	Undergraduate	Fashion House Couture	23	6
11. Kobo	M	29	Single	Secondary	Photography and Importation	15	14
12. Ladi	F	30	Married	Undergraduate	Household Retail and Manufacturing	26	4
13. Mainama	M	30	Married	Primary	Butcher, Livestock Farming and Commodities Trade	17	13
14. Ngozi	F	30	Single	Primary school	Business Call Centre, Mobile Phone Top-up	28	2
15. Ore	F	30	Single	Undergraduate	Art and Interior Decor	12/19	18/11
16. Peace	F	30	Married	Undergraduate	Photography, Media and Film	22	8
17. Pev	M	30	Single	Undergraduate	Hospitality	25	5
18. Yesa	M	31	Single	Undergraduate	Fashion Designer and Entertainment	27	4
19. Joy	F	31	Married	Primary	Hair and Beauty Salon	22	9
20. Rose	F	32	Married	Undergraduate	Fashion Boutique	23	9
21. Walt	M	32	Single	Undergraduate	Entertainment, Events, Magazine	13	19
22. Xavier	M	33	Married	Masters	Photography, Film and Television Production	29/31	4/2
23. Yeni	F	33	Married	Undergraduate	Interior décor, Bridal Make-up/Over and Training	26	7
24. Zoro	M	33	Single	Undergraduate	Internet Trade Platform and Magazine, Renewable Energy, Consultancy and Real-Estate	28	5
25. Goodluck	M	33	Single	Undergraduate	Mobile Service Centre and Project Management	26	7
26. Tor	M	34	Single	Undergraduate	Telecommunications	27	7
27. Binta	F	34	Married	Masters	Hospitality, Event Management and Training	26	8

28. Hembra	M	34	Single	Undergraduate	Art and Non-profit	26	8
29. Vadoo	F	34	Married	Undergraduate	Maternity and Baby Fashion	32	2
30. Eniola	F	34	Single	Undergraduate	Fashion Apparels & Procurement	24	10
31. Likita	M	35	Married	Undergraduate	Information Communication Technology/Telecoms	30	5
32. Dan	M	35	Single	Undergraduate	Magazine Publishing and Fashion	30	5
33. Mbee	M	35	Single	Undergraduate	Fashion, Tourism, Event Management and Training	28	7
34. Dooshima	F	35	Single	Undergraduate	Jewellery	25	10
35. Nyari	F	36	Married	Masters	Author, Fashion, Art Academy and Vocational Training	25	11
36. Ayamya	F	36	Married	Undergraduate	Hospitality and Event Management	33	3
37. Tomdoo	M	37	Married	Undergraduate	Fashion Design and Fashion House	22	15
38. Fakwagh	M	40	Married	Undergraduate	Author, Printing and Publishing	25	15
39. Ngodoo	M	41	Married	Masters	Information Technology and Security	24	17
40. Aboki	M	43	Married	Undergraduate	Bookstore, Construction, Mobile Telephony, Photography and Fashion	24	19

Source: Field Work

## **Gender Composition**

This study of forty entrepreneurs constitutes 23 male and 17 females an indication this research is reasonably balanced for gender considerations.

## **Age Group**

The participant composition by age group is five (5) are 15-25, twenty-nine (29) within the ages of 26-35, and six (6) over 36 but all started in business within the age of 15-35. Hence, the largest age group are within 26 to 35 years old.

## **Participant Education**

The participants are all educated past primary school, the educational completion being four primary schools, four secondary education, two diploma, twenty-six university first degrees and four masters' degrees.

## **Classification and Portfolio of Entrepreneurs**

The business sector shows engagement in diverse sectors, retail, wholesale, and manufacturing. Most participants are portfolio entrepreneurs, that is, 36 out of the 40 run more than one business. For confidentiality the entrepreneurs are classified into North South, hence there are 18 entrepreneurs operating within the South and 22 within the North.

## **Total Years in Business**

These entrepreneurs have vast experience of trade right from their teens, but the total years of business experience is calculated based only on the present enterprises to the year ending 2010, sparingly regarding any experience gained in previous ventures. Thus, for these 40 entrepreneurs their aggregate experience amounts to about two hundred and forty-nine years (249). The least experience within the 'current' venture is two years and the maximum nineteen years.

## **Formal and Informal Sector**

There is a mixture of formal and informal entrepreneurs with the majority operating limited companies. Three (3) are informal sole traders, five (5) self-employed cooperative members, and 32 operate limited companies. By sector prevalence, there

are more business to consumer (B2C) ventures, followed by joint business to consumer and business (B2C & B2B), and only three strictly business-to-business (B2B).

## 5.2. TRIGGER: CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION

This trigger theme answers the research question why do the participants become entrepreneurs? The empirical result shows the desire to become an entrepreneur (alertness to the career) occurs through intentions, strong motives and employment choice drivers. Also, others discover and pursue an opportunity first (alertness to opportunity) before alertness to the career occurs. This section finds two simultaneous paths, first, wanting the career before finding an opportunity. Xavier says, *"I always wanted to be an entrepreneur"*. Secondly, Diamond conveys, *"I can't work for anybody now that I've discovered self-employment"*, which is, finding an opportunity and subsequently becoming an entrepreneur. Hence, to become an entrepreneur these two dimensions (table 32) have to occur, that is, alertness to the career and alertness to the business opportunity.

**Table 32: Alertness to Career and Opportunity Process**

Trigger	Characteristics
Alertness to career	The intention, motive, career anchor and employment choice identified to become your own boss
Alertness to opportunity	Connecting dots using information within the micro or macro environment to discover market or technology needs.

### 5.2.1. Career Intention and Motivation

The forty responses in table 33 show career intentions motives, values, and needs. The D1 to D7 meanings are shown in figures 6 and 7.

**Table 33: Intention and Motivation for an Entrepreneurial Career**

Participant	Why did you become an entrepreneur?	Symbol
1. Abraham	<i>I learnt business from my brother. I feel that working for myself I have freedom, I have the passion to close from work at any time and other advantages.</i>	D1, D2, D7
2. Bala	<i>My big brother introduced me to the business and I enjoy it, it pays the bills.</i>	D2, D3, D6
3. Chichi	<i>I was brought up in a family that is not very rich so I should be able to help myself grow.</i>	D2, D6, D7
4. Diamond	<i>I can't work for anybody now that I've discovered self-employment. It is the best, I can use my God given talent, use my initiative and I think more and working for others I can't do that</i>	D1, D2, D4
5. Enyi	<i>It's like it's in the blood, I had my own focus and I think I've gotten enough experience to be by myself, instead of running around like a mad person for somebody else.</i>	D1, D2, D6
6. Imo	<i>Money motivated me and you meet a lot of people, make friends become somehow popular and then get more jobs and exposure.</i>	D3, D5
7. Goro	<i>I found that with this I would not beg or carry gun [steal] to do bad things, its freedom and self-dependence. As a creative person I am always thinking of ways to make money. Now I am doing many businesses that fetch me money.</i>	D2, D3, D4
8. Happy	<i>Passion and the vision. Many people think its money and it's not, it's understanding what you want to do and mapping out a plan.</i>	D1, D2
9. Inga	<i>It was obvious from night and day that I had the spirit of doing things...</i>	D1, D2, D4
10. Halle	<i>A lot of personal time to do other things [kids, family, travel] you can't really pay for that free time you get.... Loving what we do we don't find ourselves going out to work; we focus on making it rewarding financially and as a career all together.</i>	D1, D2, D4
11. Kobo	<i>God gave me the knowledge and experience to be successful in this business, with this I can afford what I want and also take care of my younger ones in the village, now everyone in my village is very happy.</i>	D2, D3, D7
12. Ladi	<i>[Former job] was interesting but it wasn't fulfilling for me, it just wasn't what I wanted to do, working behind the scenes, another person's vision...</i>	D1, D2, D4, D6
13. Mainama	<i>Since I was a kid, I witnessed this business and was away from home a lot wrestling but as I became older, I had to do practical things so it was best to stay in one place and do this.</i>	D1, D2, D6
14. Ngozi	<i>I prefer to be in business by myself... I was working with somebody, he would not give me that chance (flexibility) and I am determined within me that I will never ever go to someone and say help me.</i>	D2, D3, D7
15. Ore	<i>I love my art it gives me joy, I love painting, if there is no God the next thing I would worship is Art!</i>	D1, D2, D4
16. Peace	<i>I worked proper work wearing a suit, I was even the head of human resources in the last job that I had and then I left for my Masters in media and communication, and I was on study leave for a bit. Actually studying, doing the photography and working at the same time. I used to work Mondays to Fridays and then weekends and evenings I shoot, when I can and then after that I came back and I just couldn't get back to work after school so I resigned. I just couldn't imagine sitting there every day and then constantly begging [for time off] like Fridays if I'm doing weddings.</i>	D1, D2, D4, D6
17. Hembra	<i>I remember my father working for people all his life and I was like 'no I'm not gonna do this'...I discovered who I am...I like doing my things, my way, my own time; I'm kind of extremist sometimes.</i>	D1, D2, D4

18. Pev	<i>I am a great cook and highly passionate about food, the best restaurants are owned and managed by the owners.</i>	D1, D2, D4
19. Yesa	<i>I had a desire to practise; you have to love what you do. It requires your mind, body and spirit to actualise your dreams.</i>	D1, D2, D4
20. Joy	<i>I have to get money because I am poor I don't want my children to suffer the way I did, my children have to go to school.</i>	D2, D3, D7
21. Rose	<i>Starting [a business] has always been a dream, my motivation is about self-interest, making the plus sized woman look good...selling has always been a personal interest</i>	D1, D2, D4
22. Walt	<i>I studied electrical engineering for my parents, right now I am doing entrepreneurship engineering for myself</i>	D1, D2, D4
23. Xavier	<i>I always wanted to be an entrepreneur. I wanted to be rich and I did not want to steal so the best thing to do is to do business. In developed economies business people determine what happens to money in the economy, they make the real money.</i>	D2, D3
24. Yeni	<i>After my [maternity leave] I was planning to go back but decided I wanted to now do my own thing. I want to grow my own business, work for myself.</i>	D1, D2, D4
25. Zoro	<i>I always wanted to do a couple of things on my own. When I left school naturally NYSC you don't have the option, so I served with [an agency] that was my only experience working in a government office. It was the most horrible experience in my life and I said no more. I think that was when I was inspired to do something</i>	D2, D4, D5, D6
26. Goodluck	<i>I know what I want out of life and I always go for it, I have never believed in impossibilities</i>	D1, D2, D6
27. Tor	<i>You want to make something of yourself and I like the challenge of doing my own thing. I have never been afraid.</i>	D1, D4, D6
28. Binta	<i>I always had it at the back of my mind that I would run my own business, what pulled me was the idea of independence, flexibility, being my own boss.</i>	D2, D6
29. Vadoo	<i>Owning my own business is something I always wanted to do. All along my sister and I were just industrious.</i>	D1, D2, D3
30. Eniola	<i>They were not paying me very well and I realised I could have excess money doing my own thing, what I loved best</i>	D1, D2, D3
31. Likita	<i>I just had it in me that 'nobody could do it as well as I could, so the only way to do it well was to go and do it myself'.</i>	D1, D4, D6
32. Dan	<i>I wanted to live my dreams.</i>	D1, D2
33. Mbee	<i>Tourism has always been a passion and is something I thoroughly enjoy.</i>	D1, D2
34. Dooshima	<i>I had to go back to what I knew how to do best and that was buying and selling.</i>	D1, D2
35. Nyari	<i>I'm into fashion I always like it, I started from the early age of 7-8, it all started really as a dream in the heart of a young girl...</i>	D1, D2, D4
36. Ayamya	<i>My passion motivated me to start a business and that's what I tell people, don't ever start what you don't have a passion for because when the chips are down it is your passions that will drive you. At least that's why keeps me when I cry myself to sleep, when I have bills to pay staring at me at the end of the month.</i>	D1, D2, D4
37. Tomdoo	<i>I have a passion for it and I enjoy it</i>	D1, D2
38. Fakwagh	<i>The freedom to be able to contribute and a passion in contributing to the development of the country.</i>	D1, D2, D7
39. Ngodoo	<i>The admiration I had for my Dad when I saw him transacting, at the same time when I was growing up I noticed a lot of people that work [entrepreneurs]. There is a Yoruba proverb that says "you work to feed yourself but you trade to be successful" and I choose to be a trader.</i>	D1, D4, D6
40. Aboki	<i>Freedom, I have never received any salary from anyone and I am happy for it. Also, I feel that you can never be rich</i>	D1, D2, D3, D7

*working for other people and right from primary school I realised being a salary earner will not solve my problems, being the first born I have to take care of my younger ones. Financial independence is the goal.*

The narratives quotes from the 40 entrepreneurs in table 33 summarises their main entrepreneurial career intention and motives in figure 6.

**Figure 6: Career Intention and Motivation**

- Self-realisation, confidence, maturity, dissatisfaction (30 entrepreneurs D1)
- Independence, freedom, passion, work-life balance (36 entrepreneurs D2)
- Financial security, money (10 entrepreneurs D3)
- Creativity, innovation (19 entrepreneurs D4)
- Status, recognition (3 entrepreneurs D5)
- Role model, entrepreneurial family (11 entrepreneurs D6)
- Family hero, community hero, community security (7 entrepreneurs D7)

### 5.2.2. Career Values, Anchor and Self-Concept

This section shows that career anchors and the self-concept elucidate why these participants become and remain entrepreneurs. Hence, for these participants the entrepreneurial career is desirable and feasible because it addresses their wants and needs, hence there exists strong intentions, dislike for monotony and ‘proactive’ pursuit of freedom to achieve personal goals and determine ‘lifestyles’. These entrepreneurs want to determine their destinies, and in demonstrating ‘self-belief’ Aboki communicates *"If you believe in yourself no matter what people say or tell you, just do what you feel is right for you"*. All 40 entrepreneurs believe they possess requisite enterprise skills to achieve career goals and are prepared to overcome any ‘challenges’, a self-discovery element that sustains their careers.

Additionally, depending on a salary limits personal freedom and decision-making abilities, Aboki expresses, *"There are always certain decisions you want to take but cannot because you are working for someone else and they don't appreciate the effort you are putting into the business. They don't appreciate it because of the stipend, the salary. I have never worked for anyone and I am happy for it"* and ‘financial independence’ *"you cannot be rich working for anybody"*. Dan enjoys irregular working regular hours:

*I am not going back to working for anybody. I have thought about it but I've never been a 9 to 5 person. At times I'm working 10pm to maybe 4 or 5pm its important with the kind of work I do, if I'm not in the mood you can't make me. I can't think or write, anytime I get on my computer I'm working away to early hours of the morning with the rest of my staff it's not a conventional 9 to 5 job; today it's a photo shoot, tomorrow is a party, the day after you are interviewing a celebrity, sometimes you are interviewing regular people, every day is different and then there is a lot of travelling (Dan).*

Tor and Likita are confident doing their own thing and Abraham wants to become a super-star entertainer. Vadoo after witnessing her father retire, and subsequently become an entrepreneur similar to Rose believes it is best to start a business young. Mainama and five females (Yeni, Halle, Ngozi, Vadoo, and Rose) credit ‘maturity’ for their career concept. For instance, Yeni after motherhood believes in ‘independence’ and ‘work-life balance’ *"when younger you always see yourself in the bank working up and down talking to clients and all that but as you grow older, ideas come and at first you can't put them together"*. Dan is pursuing a purposeful life and needs autonomy after the legal profession.

Ladi, Eniola, Abraham, Diamond and Goro. Ore, Hemba, Zoro, Ladi and Inga experience work 'dissatisfaction' with the one-year NYSC "*waste of one year of my life because I learnt nothing, gained nothing it was a boring time of my life*". Ore thrives on proactivity:

*I can't just do just one thing, I can't. That is why I can't work; I can't work in an office. I can't imagine doing the same thing every day I wake up; I'll dress the same dress, the same environment. I can't just do the same thing every day. When I was working with the construction company I just got tired. I came back and said to my friend 'I'm tired of this job, how can every morning at this particular time I wake up and I go to this particular place and I'm seeing the same people every day and just doing the same thing every day?' Even my teaching practice I almost went mad, just staying in the same environment every day, every day I almost ran mad (Ore).*

Additionally, 'family security' appears important especially for the less privileged; Mainama sponsors his children through good schools for a better life. Ngozi, Joy, Chichi yet to have children are saving for future family financial security. Similarly, Chichi, Aboki, Joy, Kobo, Diamond, Fata, Hemba and Joy as firstborns have family funding responsibilities. Chichi says: "*I'm the first daughter of the family and I have 6 younger ones that I help, sometimes I send money to my mum for their school fees and so on...*". Other firstborns like Ladi, Ngodoo, Goodluck, Zoro and Peace from more privileged backgrounds utilise 'parental careers' to engage in similar sectors. Those with entrepreneurial family members (Likita, Tor, Mainama, Enyi, Fakwagh, Ngodoo, Goodluck, Halle) the enterprise career 'role' is important. Furthermore, Ngozi, Xavier and Goro feel 'personal earnings' confer dignity, preventing the young from engaging in degrading theft or beseeching. Ngozi communicates, "*I will never ever go to someone and say help me*". Chichi supports, "*it's better to hustle and get what is yours rather than waiting for someone to give you, I want my own*".

Dan captures the social goals tone with "*it's more about giving back*" all participants engage in 'social causes' and want to give back to society accomplishing this through foundations, vocational training, mentoring other young people, advocating for youth enterprise, funding youth businesses, arranging talks, a free magazine for secondary school boys, and taking care of all family or community needs. Hence, all 40 entrepreneurs are committed to giving back and this goal concept is being the 'hero (male) or shero (female)', which appears to strengthen the entrepreneurial career/business resolve. These entrepreneurs consider their profitable ventures business, and non-profit activities altruism. About 33 are now 'giving back' through non-profit foundations, social causes and future goals.

Walt's 'passion' and 'talent' is a source of strength, Diamond similarly believes his talent is God's gift, while Goodluck, Tor, Zoro Tor utilise their 'technical competences' and all 40 entrepreneurs now have experiential 'knowledge'. Tor, Zoro and Goodluck are in pursuit of 'creativity' that enables recognition and status. Tor asserts "*innovation, the nature of our businesses, our generation we want to be written about*". Generally, asides from two participants, these entrepreneurs place little emphasis on pursuing enterprise for the sake of money. Hence, the finding responses (table 33) in combination with this section shows strong intentions to pursue an entrepreneurial career, these motive figure (6) have been stabilised by the career anchors in figure (7) and these produce actionable entrepreneurial career behaviour.

**Figure 7: The Self-Concept/Career Anchor**

- Autonomy, Independence, Freedom (**30 entrepreneurs D1**)
- Creativity, Innovation (**36 entrepreneurs D2**)
- Challenge (**19 entrepreneurs D4**)
- Dedication to Social Causes (**30**), Family Security (**3 entrepreneurs D5**)
- Lifestyle, Work Life Balance (**11 entrepreneurs D6**)
- Talent, Knowledge and Technical Competence (**7 entrepreneurs D7**)

This section shows two career identification paths, wanting to become an entrepreneur (career alertness) and searching for opportunity (opportunity alertness), or secondly finding an opportunity (opportunity alertness) before becoming an entrepreneur (career alertness). The career desires are strong intentional motives, and career needs are sustained through career anchors. The next question (5.3) provides more details regarding career and opportunity alertness.

### **5.3. TRIGGER: CAREER AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION**

This trigger theme answers the research question how do they recognise career and business opportunity? It shows the alertness to the entrepreneurial career opportunity, and the business idea generation and indicative operational business sector. Table 34 depicts direct quotes how entrepreneurship became an employment choice.

**Table 34: Employment Choice and Opportunity Identification**

Entrepreneur	How you made the career decision and recognised the business opportunity?
Abraham (P1)(P4)	<i>I decided to come to [the city] to hustle. A colleague brought me to this park, I have a talent and I sing very well and that is what brought us together.</i>
Bala (P1)	<i>Due to illness I could not complete my secondary school. I started gradually by assisting, carrying equipment, to using the camera and was trained in printing and gradually became proficient my brother bought a camera and gave me...</i>
Chichi (P3)	<i>I was looking for a business that would give me time to do other things...when you work for others you cannot control your time...</i>
Gold (P1)(P3)(P4)	<i>I discovered myself as a singer after I lost my Dad and we lost everything and became destitute, being quiet I wrote 66 songs in 3-4 months, did some events and it showed that people appreciate the songs and the talent. [2<sup>nd</sup> venture] I relocated and the second day while doing security work I met this guy who said, you can work with us, he brought me here and showed me, you are given the privilege to handle your own business after serving.</i>
Enyi (P2)	<i>It so happened that I got one or two contacts. I was working in a bank and I had my contacts so I incorporated a company.</i>
Fata (P1)	<i>I learnt photography as a hobby...then I worked with someone for six months, then I bought my equipment and started on my own</i>
Goro (P1)(P3)(P4)	<i>I regretted doing that job [security] it was stressful and no freedom. I found myself doing this business through a friend, I found joy in this because at the end of the day I had money to sustain myself.</i>
Happy (P2)	<i>Initially I was doing freelance make-up in university. I decided not to get a paid job, I saw that people need these things and were beginning to discover their potential.</i>
Inga (P3)	<i>There was a market for the kind of skill that I had. I tried to find somewhere that had use and need for my skill and I didn't and while I was searching it just occurred to me 'why not start your own business no matter how small'. We keep hearing about starting small.</i>
Halle (P3)	<i>I guess for both of us [siblings] not finding a job was on our minds. Then we had the idea together we've always been particular about fashion, we didn't think about going into business per se but we always had fun when we were younger just cutting fabrics.</i>
Kobo (P1)(P3)	<i>I was a professional photographer in my state I started since primary school; my brother advised me that [this city] is bigger with more opportunities.</i>
Ladi (P2)(P3)	<i>[1<sup>st</sup>] I had other ideas, I wanted to do interiors, add a little bit of kids' stuff, just add a little bit of everything let it be like a one stop shop for any house. [2<sup>nd</sup>] I was travelling with my brother and I said, "you know we can actually produce something", and we kept brainstorming and I said what of [current product]? [3<sup>rd</sup> venture] I wanted something different that would be more attractive and fulfilling anyways, so went for trade fair again and stumbled on these beds for kids, so I started the furniture section for kids so now what we do is that we do furniture's for kids from age 3 to teenage age and all of that.</i>
Mainama (P3)	<i>This business has been in my family for generations from my great grand fathers and mothers; we have all been in this business.</i>
Ngozi (P3)	<i>After I left a job I was thinking of what to do with the little money I had saved. I had stayed with a lady who was doing the same business; she left the business but taught me how to run the business.</i>
Ore (P2)	<i>I decided to because I said no matter what I would still come back to painting.</i>
Peace (P2)	<i>I got cameras as gifts from my Dad and I fell in love with photography. Then going to events and people coming over I'm always everywhere with my camera and then I go to wedding and they end up asking me 'can we please have the pictures you took, they are much better than the ones we paid for', it got tiring to keep constantly going as a friend and you are working cos they know they would end up getting it and that's how I started commercially.</i>

Pev (P2)	<i>When people sort out accommodation the first thing that comes to their mind is they look for the best place to eat... the best restaurants are owned and managed by the owners.</i>
Joy (P1) (P3)	<i>I am from a very poor background so nobody to train me but I went to school primary school and stayed with my sister. I would sell oranges and I decided to go and learn a vocation. My father wanted me to learn tailoring, I told him I did not want tailoring, because while in primary school I use to braid and everybody liked my hand so Christmas period I would make hair and make income. When I decided to learn my sister bought the form (vocational studies) and I started. That time I was 20 years old I packed my things and my father brought me to the place where I stayed and learnt hairdressing for three years then I graduated and became a professional.</i>
Yesa (P2)	<i>When people see my designs they scream "wow" that is an opportunity.</i>
Rose (P3)	<i>I was working when I lost my job. I decided that since I am on the big size I loved seeing the plus size woman looking good and decided to open a plus size boutique.</i>
Walt (P2)	<i>I was born like that I 'talk' I realised it's one of my greatest strengths...I was fulfilled whenever it was entertainment</i>
Xavier (P2)(P3)(P4)	<i>Africa heart project came to encourage Nigerians in the Diaspora to come and do business and grow the economy. I was always a hobby photographer and I was also into TV production so I invested to test the waters, the returns were good and I took the plunge.</i>
Yeni (P2)	<i>(1<sup>st</sup>) (A mentor) encouraged and talked me into it and the following year I decided to take part and formally I met someone in interiors and worked with them for a while and learnt, when I finished I did my letterhead and started. (2<sup>nd</sup>) I knew I had a flair for it [bridal make up and wears] but didn't see it as a business until someone pointed it out and I saw it clearer.</i>
Zoro (P2) (P4)	<i>On one of my trips abroad I realised that [Internet advertising] was growing and it was a platform where you could find anything. I'm also doing three different things now, we do renewal energy we are consulting for renewal energy infrastructure and providing in areas of solar power streetlight bulbs bore holes. That's an area we think due to infrastructure challenges in Nigeria there is a lot of opportunities, and there's a lot of growth so we think there is a future there you look for opportunities and you chase it. We also do strategy consulting cos my partner has vast experience in privatisation and by virtue of development areas even in energy there is going to be a lot of Public, Private Partnerships (PPP) we think we can offer services there. The other company we do real estate, from experience with [name] which is my first company we realised in our economy we are not crazy about new things, we are in real estate something my family has always been into so I basically delved into it because I know that's a genuine area where you can't go wrong.</i>
Goodluck (P2)	<i>[1<sup>st</sup>] The opportunity presented itself from the inadequacy of a service centre I took advantage on it. [2<sup>nd</sup>] Lack of project management culture in Nigeria, I took advantage of it so it's about taking advantage of the situation the opportunities that present themselves in form of challenges</i>
Tor (P2) (P4)	<i>There was a peculiar event that took place for me when I travelled. I needed to find a cheap flight back [home]. I asked, "how can I find [an airline]?" And they were like just dial [shortcode] and they were like, do you have a pen? I was taken, so there was a number that had every business phone number? Wow, obviously the spark of the idea came from that whole dialling [shortcode]. Another thing that tied into us starting [the business] was about that time was when the GSM thing started so all those things sort of pulled together; there was no reason not to. Companies were growing exponentially and I was like wow commerce is seductive, websites were just being started...dot.com and all those things sort of, they play at the back of your mind, and then when opportunities present themselves, you say why not me?</i>
Binta (P2)	<i>I always wanted to have my own business, even if I wasn't doing this I'd be doing something else, another reason why I choose this business was hobby, something I'm passionate about...</i>

Hemba (P2)	<i>I have done school since [2000] but at the peak of my graduation, which is 2002 [Fine and Applied Arts] I begin to realise that I would basically want to do my things, find a path and make a career in this field and discipline of arts so...of course that has to be a sole journey and if I have to embark on this I have to give it everything I've got, my time, my money even my passion so I took on the journey.</i>
Vadoo (P2)	<i>I wasn't fulfilled with that job...I was doing very well but somehow, I just said, I need to leave this work; I need to leave! I got pregnant... I would wear my maternity and anywhere I go out people would be asking me "where did you buy this?" because I was travelling and shopping for myself, and already at that point I knew where I could get stuff, so I told myself and discussed with my husband if I eventually get a shop in a good place, I think I would resign to go into full time business for maternity' and that dream I nursed for 2 years, before it happened.</i>
Eniola (P2)(P3)	<i>What drove me out of working was the salary. I was buying and selling with my pocket money in university so I decided to go ahead and do what I loved.</i>
Likita (P2)	<i>Prior to starting [business], I worked in a telecom firm as a communication engineer for about 5 years. I just got to a point and I realised it was high time I started my own thing and I resigned and started with 2 staffs, but the whole concept was born between me and my two friends however they couldn't resign immediately so I had to take that first little steps worked for about 6 months, before one of the guys joined me and a few more years before the third guy joined me.</i>
Dan (P2)	<i>[1<sup>st</sup>] After law school I worked in a law firm for a year and a half, but while working there I just realised that law wasn't really for me and I wasn't earning as much as I would have wanted to earn after spending almost a decade studying the course and I took time off for a year I was in England and it hit me. There was nobody doing what I'm doing when I started... [2<sup>nd</sup>] It was a flair you can't keep selling people's clothes all the time, you just might as well start making your own.</i>
Mbee (P2)	<i>[1<sup>st</sup>] Due to reckless and careless neglect the company (public sector) was going down so I got a business name from the CAC and started surviving doing shows [events]. [2<sup>nd</sup>] I met a [businessman] who was relocating back to his country so he sold on the business and I started selling doors.</i>
Dooshima (P3)	<i>There was a ban on employment in the civil service. You had to work for one-man (illiterate) businesses, and you were at their mercy as they could pay you peanuts and I worked there, I decided then that 'I didn't pick my degree from the gutter' let me start doing my own thing.</i>
Nyari (P3)	<i>After my NYSC I just decided to look inward to work on the talent that I had, and I started sewing I just went back into my business [As regards vocational skills training] we can tell people that they can sack you from a job but they can't sack you from your skill</i>
Ayama (P2)	<i>My first job got a bit monotonous, I just wasn't excited going to work and I'm a bit of a restless person so I had to move on...I love cooking.</i>
Tomdoo (P2)	<i>I was already selling clothes when I was on campus, I did several fashion shows and the encouragement pushed me...</i>
Fakwagh (P2)	<i>I worked with my brother [printing] and worked in a magazine before I started mine</i>
Ngodoo (P2)	<i>I recognised that security doors is the first entrance to any customer entering [a building] and I capitalised and empowered myself on that.</i>

Aboki (P2)

*I love watching movies and reading so I thought it's better to start a business where I can watch movies and also read for free.*

### 5.3.1. Career Identification and Employment Choice

The entrepreneurship career alertness arises from decisions in response to both internal and external factors. Table 34 shows the following career identification and employment choices; six entrepreneurial careers are due to necessity push [P1], twenty-five are opportunity pull [P2], fourteen identify both pushed and pulled [P3], and six indicate identifying the career through serendipity [P4]. Therefore, the three main career decisions are preference (opportunity), available alternative (necessity) and happenstance (serendipity).

**[P1] Necessity Push:** For six entrepreneur's career identification and employment choice are necessity push. Bala is unable to complete secondary education and the entrepreneurial career becomes an alternative. Nyari unsuccessfully seeks employment after NYSC and is pushed back toward the entrepreneurial career *"I really wanted to be like one of my friends who were getting these so called white-collar jobs. But that didn't work out so I had to follow my passion"*. Asked if she would still become an entrepreneur if employed? *"Maybe, it would just be a part-time thing"*.

**[P2] Opportunity Pull:** For twenty-five entrepreneurs their career identification and employment choice is opportunity pull. Peace a manager within a multinational company resigns to pursue an entrepreneurial career; *"I had seen everything, right now I know there is no place I would work into and they won't take me, it's not possible, I get offered just sitting down at home and you get offered juicy things, you will get a car, this and that, but that's not what I want"*.

**[P3] Necessity Push and Opportunity Pull:** For fourteen entrepreneurs their career identification and employment choices are from being both pulled and pushed. Inga applies for jobs after NYSC but decides to pursue an entrepreneurial career although the social environment is critical of youth enterprise:

*I think a little of both [push and pull] but more of pulled because I could have kept looking. Eventually, I found the job I really wanted but by then I already felt like, if I am going to work for this people for this kind of salary. Why don't I just do what I am doing for myself, and make what I am making even if it's not steady. A lot of the time people who would rather be entrepreneurs get jobs. A lot of people don't take entrepreneurship seriously especially when you don't own a shop or this or that they don't take you seriously. They say go get a proper job, what are you doing? Sometimes its shame that drives people to go and get a job but you would make more on your own than working (Inga).*

Inga similar to Nyari prefers enterprise although the general advice is that employment equals security. All graduates the compulsory unproductive one-year NYSC work experience creates desire for entrepreneurship:

*I served with [an agency] and that was my only experience working in a government office. It was the most horrible experience in my life. I think that was when I was inspired to do something. I studied Business Administration, I went to school for four to five years I was in NYSC, and I just think there was so much that I could do. But I was in an office where the best they could come up with was having me receive newspapers every day. So it was a terrible experience and it paid pretty well (Zoro).*

**[P4] Serendipity:** Six entrepreneurs' career identification and employment choice are from being serendipity. Through, happenstance Tor is pulled into self-employment, he recognises his current entrepreneurial opportunity by chance while travelling and the seed idea for a new venture is embedded.

### 5.3.2. Opportunity Identification

The nature and origin of entrepreneurial opportunities are generally passion, market needs, and technology needs from changes attributable to political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal (PESTEL) environments. These are evident from tables 31, 32 and 33 additionally some opportunity identification needs appear from rapid urbanisation creating demand for certain products and services e.g. parks, entertainment, government regulatory and technological changes which creates opportunities for instance in telecoms. These coupled with passion (hobby) and advice from friends, family, mentors, and colleagues are strong market and technology drivers to venture within the sectors shown in table 31 Socio-demographic profile.

**Political, Economic, Social, Technological Changes and Market Needs:** Due to demographic changes the conscientious and youthful population produces opportunities in entertainment, the national park, IT, holistic beauty and so on. Similarly, increasing incomes and urbanisation boosts modernisation creating hospitality opportunities, Pev expresses: "*When people sort out accommodation the first thing that comes to their mind is they look for the best place to eat*". Nyari believes given Maslow's second hierarchy of needs clothing is an essential sector. Additionally, vocational training is an area to build self-sufficiency within a country plagued with unemployment.

**Regulatory (Political and Legal) and Technological Changes:** The IT boom of the 2000's becomes a contributory factor to advance technological opportunities within the

environment, Tor adds about his alertness “*obviously the spark of the idea came from that whole dialling [shortcode]*” given “*the convergence of circumstances, technology and government reforms*”.

**Hobbies, Interest and Prior Knowledge:** Some sectors arise from hobbies, interests or pursuing lifestyle. Peace says “*I always thought of the media*” and Dan expresses, “*I believe if you are going to go into any business it should be something you know about, [something you are] passionate about. I've always believed in stick to what you know*”. Passion and relevant knowledge are recurrent and expressed succinctly:

*I love my art it gives me joy, I love painting, if there is no God the next thing I would worship is Art! (Ore).*

*I was always passionate about advertising so law was just, do something at that time, and do what you like after (Tor).*

*I never actually thought I'd be doing it as a job, because I love it, it is a passion (Peace).*

*I think it's important to do what you love; it's not about the money you have to find what you enjoy (Dan).*

*It's not about the money per se 100% but now I have to make profit to feed the passion (Peace)*

Dan credits a “*Purpose Driven Life*” and “*It's important for everybody to find their God given purpose or gift*” all forty entrepreneurs are passionate (see section 5.6.3 and table 37) about their career sectors.

**Social Changes and Pragmatic Information from Networks:** Some business and career opportunities are recognised from direct and indirect advice from friends, family, role models, mentors, colleagues and contacts. For example, the cooperatives like Abraham, Gold, and Bala learn from each other. Yeni receives industry advice from a mentor, while Peace, Dan, Ngodoo, Goodluck, Zoro operate within their parents sectors:

*Dad was a major media person, and I've always wanted to have a media house, a full production house, news and everything and this was my way of starting, with photography a way of connecting (Peace).*

Hence, business ideas can arise from ability to process information and recognise where value could be added. Goodluck expresses “*The blue ocean strategy*” that “*Do what others are doing but differentiate*” to take advantage of opportunities and create your market. Furthermore, Likita explains ideas have to be viable:

*Is it a dream that people would pay money for? You have to be sure that whatever you are going into is something that somebody will be willing to pay for. The whole essence of business is to make money anyway so that is the first things you need to ask (Likita).*

**Technological and environmental Needs:** Technological advancement enables Zoro's renewable energy opportunity: *"That's an area we think due to infrastructure challenges in Nigeria there is a lot of opportunities, and there's a lot of growth so we think there is a future there, you look for opportunities and you chase it"*.

Generally, the question why and how these participants become entrepreneurs clarifies both their careers and industry opportunities and shows two distinctive two-career paths. First, wanting the career before searching or finding an opportunity (opportunity pull), Xavier explains, *"I always wanted to be an entrepreneur"*. Secondly, Gold conveys, *"I can't work for anybody now that I've discovered self-employment"*, which is discovering the career and an opportunity to become an entrepreneur.

#### **5.4. PRECONDITIONS: CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY ANTECEDENTS**

This precondition theme answers the research question what supports the entrepreneurial career and opportunity. The prominent career and opportunity antecedents are knowledge (prior experience, hobbies, education, and training), social networks (friends and family, role models, mentors, contacts and nurture) and Psychological characteristics (traits, attitude, genetics, self-efficacy and cognition).

##### **5.4.1. Psychological Characteristics**

This section shows attitude, abilities and skills, which are valuable preconditions to both the career and capacity to successfully develop entrepreneurial opportunity.

##### **Personality Characteristics**

These entrepreneurs have diverse personality characteristics and skills, which are preconditions to successfully pursue an entrepreneurial career, start and operate a business. All sections within chapter 5 show the motives, skills, traits and self-efficacious behaviour essentially why the career is feasible.

##### **Personality Traits and Self-Efficacy**

All forty entrepreneurs appear to show personality traits that support venturing in pursuing the entrepreneurial career and opportunity opposed to working as employees. The personalities support being resilient, innovative, creative, risk tolerant, optimistic, taking initiative, and having confidence in one's ability.

*You can also boil it down to personality you know. There are actually people that if you give them a blank page they are lost. There are also people that if you give them pages with dots they are lost. There are people that you have to give them a blank page to start from or people that you have to connect the dots, and before you know what's happening whatever comes out of it is beautiful. You have to discover who you are really, like me under pressure I can do anything whatever (Inga).*

All 40 participants believe in personal ability to succeed as entrepreneurs. Hence, for these participants the entrepreneurial career is feasible, they want to determine their destinies, and in demonstrating 'self-belief' Aboki communicates *"If you believe in yourself no matter what people say or tell you, just do what you feel is right for you"*. All 40 entrepreneurs consider they possess the requisite skills to achieve enterprise goals and are prepared for entrepreneurship.

**Risk-Tolerance:** The study finds these entrepreneurs know and perceive high levels of risk yet engage in business. The entrepreneurial risk is inescapable and acceptable to all 40 entrepreneurs who feel risk is part of *"human existence"* to achieve goals. These entrepreneurs understand environmental issues and consider these none overwhelming. Basically, having a long-term plan mitigates risk *"It's a risk but the risk should be minimised by your business plan, your passion and your will to succeed"*. According to Ore her products sell and the unsold stock increases in value *"for me there is not much risk because they appreciate. Art appreciates"*.

**Resilience and Determination:** To operate in business and sustain an entrepreneurial career all forty participants are resilient and through willpower repeatedly advice that *"don't give up"* since it is essential to learn from experience and move forward.

*I would love to tell you something else about growth and personal but no, it will take your heart first, it will take your being first, your business must first break you and then, you can in turn break it, in Nigeria it must take you apart it must near destroy you and when it's done with you then you can get up and face it back (Tor).*

*Don't give up but most importantly this is something I always talk about, like when I started with [the first business]. I realised that business or entrepreneurship or whatever you want to call it is not about sticking to one idea; it's an experience (Zoro).*

*Resilience, you've just got to keep at it, don't give up keep at it. I was at a [leadership] conference recently and if you keep at something one day it will break. It may take a year, or two years, five years or ten years but one day it will break. That's why you've got to have passion for it and just keep at it. That's what I've learnt don't give up just keep at it, people that did not believe in you one day will come back to you (Dan).*

Binta and Happy attribute their determination to “*Passion*” and “*vision*” and Inga expresses “*Patience, perseverance, discipline, adapting one’s personality and surrounding oneself with other business people*”.

*A lot of finance, resilience, but number one is passion; if you don’t have passion you will give up, and then you need the finance, and the resilience to just keep at it, people need to be sure you are here to stay...*

**Positive Thinking and Optimism:** 38 of these entrepreneurs possess high levels of optimism about their careers, and their positive thoughts develop with time.

*I have been working on my thinking capacity I understand now that is the difference. Having a positive attitude to everything is a big difference. If you can change your thinking process you can change the world (Hemba).*

Furthermore, more than half choose not to focus on negatives during the interview, finding it difficult to easily recount negative incidents. Hence, the optimism about their opportunities appears to facilitate deliberately forgetting challenges.

*Negative, it's crazy a lot of them anyway but I don't take them. You know one thing; I just choose not to remember any of them (Hemba).*

**Sacrifice:** All 40 entrepreneurs believe in delayed gratification and consider the entrepreneurial career a long-term plan that through hard work they can reap future benefits according to personal goals. At the start 25 desire to become their own bosses, and six discover self-employment (see 5.2)

*I believe I can, no matter what it will take and no matter how long it will take, I believe in myself and even when I am going to starve, it's a matter of time I will achieve it (Tomdoo).*

**Observation:** Three randomly chosen entrepreneurs (one informal and two formal) reveal my observation about the participants given reflexive notes. The general observation from all 40 entrepreneurs is that they are bold and unafraid of being different from societal expectations of getting jobs instead of being self-employed, and appear confident about the entrepreneurial career and their businesses.

- **Chichi-** “*I know what I want*”. Her disposition communicates a highly disciplined person who believes she would remain self-sufficient as a businessperson. She wants to retain her dignity, appears mentally strong, observant, humble, and good at building relationships. At 24 years of age, she is young and a bit shy but also possesses a respectable presence. She is mentally strong and exceptionally focused on

improving her life as a personal goal and also for future generations, hence nothing is going to stop her entrepreneurial career.

- **Peace-** Appears easily bored, very proactive and on her toes 24/7 very focused on accomplishing goals, but there are many ideas swirling around her head consistently. She is very knowledgeable, fearless, restless, enthusiastic, assertive, jovial, observant, a fast-learner, welcoming and possesses an unshakable can-do mentality, believing there is no impossible goal. She possesses a good balance of vulnerability and assertive. She is very confident, comfortable in her skin and good at influencing others. In fact, after speaking to her I feel all pumped up with inspiration.
- **Tor-** Appears quite fearless, fast and focused. He is very charismatic, knows what he wants and consistently chases after it. He walks tall, is very articulate and sharply dressed. He understands the environment exceptionally well, appears very intelligent, observant, and comfortable with his personality. His presence grabs attention; he is confident, enthusiastic, logical, professional, perceptive, imaginative, organised, self-controlled, authoritative, and mentally strong. He appears to have a dose of humility, thinks out of the box and is determined to be successful. Similar to Peace it is inspirational interviewing this knowledgeable entrepreneur.

Relatedly, given the narrative recounts about the entrepreneurial career, venture creation and operations in Nigeria after listening to each of these entrepreneurs, one thought is "wow these entrepreneurs are inspirational they seem indifferent to obstacles". They feel like a breath of fresh air, I am especially impressed by the foresight, knowledge and confidence of Peace, Ladi, Tor, Zoro, Vadoo, Inga, Chichi, Nyari, Goodluck, Dan, Ngodoo, Likita, Tomdoo, Halle, Diamond and Chris for being very futuristic. Table 35 lists the personal traits and behaviour observed from interacting with all 40 entrepreneurs including deduced from the narratives. These words depicted in no particular order confirm that no set of characteristics determines the typical entrepreneur.

**Table 35: Personality Characteristics**

<b>Personal Characteristics Observed and Identified</b>				
Ambitious	Risk-taker	Optimistic	Problem-solver	Persuasive
Proactive	Flexible	Creative	Influencer	Energetic
Efficient	Achiever	Initiator	Self-efficacy	Motivated
Confident	Diplomatic	Streetwise	Versatile	Independent
Intuitive	Decisive	Focused	Committed	Resilient
Disciplined	Networker	Humble	Adventurous	Assertive
Cheerful	Considerate	Leader	Dependable	Imaginative
Enthusiastic	Friendly	Insightful	Humorous	Hard worker
Organised	Logical	Mature	Open-minded	Shy
Outgoing	Patient	Perceptive	Persistent	Polite
Smart	Poised	Productive	Quiet	Realistic
Practical	Dreamer	Resourceful	Controlled	Uncertainty tolerance
Articulate	Observant	Dignified	Respectable	Foresight
Negotiator	Restless	Charismatic	Learner	Free
Intelligent	Satisfied	Restless	Reflective	Skilled
Tolerant	Winner	Successful	Planner	Achiever
Hasty	Boldness	Thinker	Go-getter	Content

#### **5.4.2. Knowledge and Socialisation**

A valuable precondition to the career for 29 participants is that enterprise as a career experience is traceable to early childhood and teen background experiences. Ngodoo expresses *"I'm one of these young people that always sold stuff when they were young"* and this helps in acquiring antecedent general business knowledge.

Furthermore, early years for 38 entrepreneurs consists of prior involvement in diverse trade activities building up commerce knowledge through active participation and learning. In this study, only two participants Vadoo and Walt have no recollection of exposure to early commerce. The less-privileged assist the family trade around primary school, alternatively the more privileged learn vicariously often engaging in trade from secondary school or university. The educated engage in informal entrepreneurial ventures while at university even though peculiarly the Nigerian environment does encourage the young working until after graduation. Hence, within this study experience of early trade is a valuable antecedent knowledge source for both the career and assisting in developing the current portfolios.

**Career Early Experience and Parental Influence:** 21 entrepreneurs (Ngodoo, Goodluck, Peace, Enyi, Halle, Ladi, Ore, Pev, Yesa, Rose, Zoro, Binta, Tor, Eniola, Likita, Dooshima, Ngodoo, Ayamyia, Ngozi, Chichi and Yeni) are socialised toward the entrepreneurial career including learning to develop opportunity through watching or

participating within their parent's businesses, this is influential to gaining early business knowledge and responsibility. Ngozi voices mother "*taught us a lot of things*", while Chichi helped her mothers business including travelling to source supplies

*I learnt from my mum, I was helping her sell. There was a time I had to postpone schooling to help my mum when one of my sisters became seriously ill. I would help to cook and feed them. My Mum was selling yam then and I would help sell or travel to other markets to buy. From that I learnt buy and sell. This really helped me because now I am no longer at home. But I can still trade and help myself.*

**Early Business Knowledge and Experience:** An important opportunity precondition for 22 participants is their background in informal ventures during primary, secondary and university education.

*My best friend and I came up with what I now realise was a business plan. It was comical, and naturally it was half of my name and half of his name- horrible name (laughs). But we thought it was the best idea in the whole wide world. We were thinking of making leather shoes, leather belts and leather goods from the northern part of the country and selling them in the southern part of the country. We were like 10 or 11 it was amazing (Zoro).*

*When I was in secondary school I used to develop and sell comics. I'm quite good in arts so I would make leather wallets and funny enough I think I probably operated one of the first private banks in Nigeria. It was a successful bank that went under after some time because the boarding students would save their money and get loans, as far back as 1985 I already had a computer so the bank was also computerised. But like any young person you just squandered what you made, we even paid off dividends (Likita).*

*My very first business was in secondary school, third form. We borrowed a camera and that was my first profit NGN50. We bought film, took people's pictures during inter-sports games and sold it to them. We did a nightclub in University, we sometimes sold cloths; what did we not do in university? We sold car alarms (laughs) when I was in law school during the call to bar, we hosted accommodation and got good deals for accommodation and got [clients], we did penny and kobo businesses (Tor).*

Ladi, Happy, Ore, Hembra, Chichi, Goro, Kobo, Yesa, Rose, Walt, Yeni, Tor, Zoro, Vadoo, Eniola, Dan, Dooshima, Tomdoo, Likita, Fakwagh, Ngodoo, Aboki have experience engaging in informal businesses while at university. Ladi voted the best-dressed student at university capitalises on this "*I just took that as an opportunity, if people know that one of the best dressed students is selling clothes everyone would be saying 'let me come and buy my bafs [clothes]. I just took advantage and I did that throughout [university]*".

Vadoo and Tor admit past experiences illuminate commence:

*The idea took hold and it did not immediately transfer itself into a business idea. I mean I've done a little bit of business with my friends buying and selling done a night club thing in university so I had an idea of what commerce was like (Tor).*

However, a common aspect of the informal enterprises are the sporadic nature due to short term focus and attributing these activities to youthful exuberance, Zoro communicates *"You really don't learn anything from them because we didn't put the money in the bank; we didn't reinvest, we just enjoyed the money. We enjoyed the fame. But now we are in the game, now its life or death"*. In university Peace would snap pictures of anything interesting without long-term planning that this would become her career/business. Zoro reflects *"No saving, no business plan, there wasn't any idea to make it a regular thing nothing beyond leaving school"*, but now entrepreneurship is a career decision.

*I think my first proper foray into business is this. I have given blood for it. I understand the business and we are growing so all those things were youthful exuberance. We all did little things in university, but those are the things you do, you don't necessarily look at them like commerce just doing things (Tor).*

The educated assumed they would get jobs and everything will fall into place after university until they defined their needs from a career and decided on full-time business. Ladi echoes, *"After working I was like o.k. I've tried this corporate world, and there is nothing to it"*.

**Educational Knowledge:** Another precondition to the opportunity is that seven (e.g. Goodluck, Ngodoo, Likita, Ore, and Hemba) feel their university education impacts practice, and I observe they operate within the sectors of their degrees. For instance, Binta and Dan suggest their degree assists in business and opportunity development skills, Dan communicates *"being a lawyer has helped because I can cross my "T's" and dot my "I's"*, while Binta's Business Administration Bachelors and Masters facilitate a feasible business plan *"I know that it's different when you do the theory and the practical but this is the real experience for me, it's helped me and given me a guide"*.

**Training and Knowledge:** Ladi learns to operate a manufacturing plant through training at a family friends factory. Similarly, some embark on further entrepreneurial training to assist opportunity pursuit. Hence, 18 participants acquire knowledge through direct business training as apprentices, workers (Abraham, Goodluck, Diamond, Goro, Ngodoo and Bala), or through business and entrepreneurial training courses (Ladi, Peace, Nyari, Ayamya, Yeni, Mbee, Goodluck, Mary, Happy, Ngodoo, Walt, Yesa and Tomdoo).

*When I finished my secondary school I identified that I liked to be an engineer and I learnt practical electrical work by the roadside. I went and learnt how to repair radios and all those things and how to wind electric models (Ngodoo).*

Subsequently, after university education Ngodoo continues seeking knowledge:

*I went to the [entrepreneurial training] to do an emerging entrepreneurship program, then later I went to [business school] to empower myself on the proper management of my company. Then I went to [University] to learn about HR (Ngodoo).*

All the cooperatives aside Kobo train through the apprentice scheme within their trade before commencing. Happy believes formal entrepreneurship education and training facilitates understanding how to start and run a business "*I went to [entrepreneurship training] and they taught me about business plans*".

**Work Experience, General Business Knowledge and Economic Resources:** 20 participants have access to economic resources (e.g. land, labour, capital, enterprise skill or knowledge), including experience of working in other businesses and private companies. This increases entrepreneurial attractiveness and general business skill and confidence. Anita and Inga build experience working for a small business owner, Inga practically ran the complete affairs of the business. Vadoo, Zoro, Tor, Happy, Mainama, Ngozi, Pev, Yesa, Mary, Rose, Walt, Yeni, Binta, Dan, Tomdoo, and Ngodoo all have experience of other ventures besides those in this study. Goodluck in telecoms and project management, Walt's opportunity is in entertainment and working within a media house, other experiences include holiday jobs or entrepreneurial ventures, which Dan credits working for a law firm, his sister's charity and personal entrepreneurial pursuits have built "*office management and international customer relation's skill*", as regards the charity "*no experience is wasted*". Hence, early experiences increase the ability and determination for self-employment, and especially for those that have done more than one business, Zoro believes, "*Yes, we are now learning from the 2-3<sup>rd</sup> businesses*".

#### **5.4.3. Social Networks, Funding and Socialisation**

**Social Networks and funding:** All 40 entrepreneurs rely on social structures, such as, family, relatives, friends and other contacts to acquire start-up capital. Dan echoes "*If you take a good plan to your uncles or aunties, if it's a serious plan even if they don't have the money they would look for the money*". Hence, raising funds is down to "*friends, family and God*".

*My dad helped, I had personal funding. Some of my friends brought in a bit of money. The money's we borrowed were always from individuals never from the banks, and I think we were lucky there. One, the banks wouldn't have given us money for an idea (Tor).*

**Social Networks and Genetics:** Role models and entrepreneurial parents influence these entrepreneurs. Six (Mainama, Tor, Halle, Likita, Fakwagh and Chichi) are from entrepreneurial families where everyone operates a business; others have at least one parent who ran a business. This variety receives support, exchange top tips, and learn from each other directly or vicariously.

*I didn't grow up in a house where my Dad had a job for 20 years. I didn't so I didn't have that example to follow neither did my mum. I didn't have any examples to follow in terms of work. I asked [Father] "should I do my own business or should I go and get a job? and he said "Look the opportunity is now for you" (Tor).*

*Yes, my dad had a private practice. He's a medical doctor and he went into private practice in his late 30's and my mum and my senior brother too have never worked so to a certain extent we are a family of entrepreneurs (Likita).*

*My parents were self-employed. Funny enough in my whole family maybe we can only remember my parents working for some time but everyone in my family right now has their own business, all seven of us. Nobody goes to any office, all of us, everybody has their own business, so I guess somehow we help to push each other we can encourage each other and when someone is talking about their challenges when it comes to having a business, you know they understand it perfectly well. They understand it 100% (Halle).*

There is direct parentage influence for Zoro, Dan, Chichi, Ngozi, Dooshima, Fakwagh, who cited their entrepreneurial mothers as their role model, for Goodluck and Ngodoo's role model it is their fathers. Similarly, Mainama and four others believe entrepreneurship is genetic, Aboki says, "I would say it's in the blood" Mainama's family for generations operate within the livestock trade, Halle's in Fashion. Similarly, influences for operating in specific sectors are connected to parents Ladi-Household Retail, Peace-Media, Goodluck-Mobile Technology, Zoro-Real estate, Ore-Arts, and Halle-Fashion.

*My mother has always being a businessperson. I use to travel with her a lot when I was young so I learnt the art of buying and selling from my mum (Dan).*

*My mum has always been a businesswoman and clearly my own inspiration even when I did not know how things were going to turn out. That's where I learnt the importance of managing customers, and customer service so that is my background, my business background (Zoro).*

*My father used to be a businessman selling building materials when I was young. He was a retired soldier before going into business. When I was in secondary...I started supplying the interested lecturers and teachers their accessories (Ngodoo).*

*My father is an entrepreneur, a Telecoms Engineer one of the few in those days. I caught the bug of technology going to the office with him. When everybody else was going for holidays, I was going to the office so I got the entrepreneurial spirit. I caught the bug then and, ever since, I have been fascinated by electronics, computers, mobile phones etc (Goodluck).*

**Social Networks Subliminal Influence:** The educated or more privileged even with entrepreneurial parents some feel the influence for an entrepreneurial career is indirect/vicarious, perhaps this is due to the importance placed on degrees as a path for gaining employment. However, the less privileged readily admit parental enterprise as direct influences their career choice.

*She [Mother] is a businesswoman. First of all she was braiding, when we were in [a city], then we moved down here she opened a salon and braided. Then tried a restaurant then tried a provision shop. Yes, I helped out in funny parts; you won't believe it the braiding. Yes! Mum taught me, when she gets plenty customers, she would do half of it and I would do the rest (finish it up). I wasn't thinking about it then (Hemba).*

*My parents have always been very supportive, my father is a lecturer in Physics and he was always a scientist, but from the time while I was in secondary school he created a room for me. He would come into the room and check on my sewing, to ensure my lines were straight. He really showed support, and he has always been supportive, same with my mum (Nyari).*

**Social Networks and Information Sources:** All 40 entrepreneurs have experience of receiving advice and other valuable information from contacts to further develop:

*It was really fun doing those pitches; it was fun seeing people react to the presentation, a lot of insight, and a lot of people helped us tweak the idea. They questioned a lot of things and it was nice, that was how we were able to raise money we didn't go to any bank, we didn't have too many places we could leverage money from (Zoro).*

**Social Networks, Mentors and Contacts:** These entrepreneurs look for inspiration, advice and resources from mentors at different stages of their ventures building strong and weak relationships. All forty participants agree other entrepreneurs are valuable support for the career and opportunity development. Binta believes, *"the experience of people who have been there before has been of tremendous help to me"* and in agreement are Peace, Tomdoo, Vadoo, Rose, Yeni, Zoro, Walt, Abraham, Bala, Chichi, Diamond, Inga, Ladi, Peace, Pev, Yesa, Rose, Goodluck, Tor, Binta, Eniola, Dan, Mbee, Nyari, Ayamya, Fakwagh, and Ngodoo. These role models and mentor sources include entrepreneurial families, friends, contacts and other unconventional modes, such as, real-life or success books and movies. Zoro mentions entrepreneurial autobiographies teach young entrepreneurs to avoid illegal businesses given the consequences. Yesa learns from business television.

*We live in a world where we are influenced by many things. We were probably influenced by the culture we found amongst us, the books we read on success. I read a lot of books growing up (Tor).*

*I have some people who have been running businesses even in my village. You see someone who have been selling foodstuff in smaller quantities right from primary*

*school days, before you finish schooling the guy has a factory processing food and you keep telling yourself if this man can achieve this, it is possible for me. I read about entrepreneurs and all I notice is that if you are consistent and fortunate you will have people that will come your way and build you (Tomdoo).*

Hemba's says "I call them Angels who come and help you at the point and go" sometimes mentors become partners one supports Hemba actualise the dream of starting a capacity building non-profit, and Yeni's mentor assist entry into the interiors sector. Although, Hemba, Inga and Dan explain that sometimes encouraging words are usually enough "well-done" and "a pat on the back really goes a long way". Zoro advises getting surrounded with mentors and other young entrepreneurs for additional inspiration. Nyari appreciates her husband "I would call him my backbone because he's been into strategies for the business and been very, very, very supportive".

According to Dan "we have received a lot of support from mostly individuals it's strange". Hence, contacts are important to gain clients, partners, or open doors 'who you know' matters:

*The phone call made... for example there is something I'm trying to get from [a corporation] if I get one of the guys who is on the board of directors to call the [person] in charge it's done. But I call, I beg, I email him and he doesn't respond. But if that guy calls him he will call me. It is sad but true. I am in a commercial environment, a competitive one. If you sell fabric get a guy to take you to the Governor's wife, it sounds sad but that may be the place where you will sell your first ten fabrics, which allows you to sell to others (Zoro).*

## **5.5. CORE PROCESS: CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY CHALLENGES**

This theme addresses the core process and answers the question regarding what challenges the entrepreneurial career and opportunity? The supporting narratives and themes in Appendix 6 show how the entrepreneurial process is full of highs and lows, dilemmas and contextual issues that threaten the career or hamper growth. However, all forty participants accept challenges are part of the entrepreneurial career, remain resilient and tolerate of the risks.

*It is a harsh business environment. I mean it is really hard you are dealing with a myriad of issues. The people you are selling to 'why should I think about this thing that this guy brought to my office? Besides I haven't seen it on TV'. It's extremely expensive to advertise in Nigeria, also funding is hard, payment platforms [cash based] are still very primitive, [media] did a survey on registering business it takes 57 business days to register a business in Nigeria.*

*It is harsh, for example things don't work, I have people calling me 6-7 months ahead, but you don't know what's going to happen in the next 6-7 months there is no stability. An office for example, you are not sure in the next year, what your rates would be,*

*increase in rent for example. There is no plan; you can't plan, even with your business plan. The [suppliers] can decide the dollar went up today; we have increased [prices] by 200%. Even if you have a business plan properly done it doesn't work, the contingency is ridiculous.*

Table 36 summarises the internal and external challenges from Appendix 6, which provides more details, these are career and opportunity development dilemmas which some express the external are direr. These challenges especially impact the core career and opportunity process.

**Table 36: Career and Opportunity Challenges**

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
<b>Career Dilemmas</b>	
Individual identity, attitude and skills	Identity legitimisation
Social and investment network issues	Aversion to youth or female enterprise (Duality of structure)
Informal & home working issues	Partnership issues
Stress management	Company structure issues
Work-life balance	Lack of targeted enterprise education
<b>Opportunity Dilemmas</b>	
Lack of business management skills	Lack of funding
Financial mismanagement	Cash-based society and out-dated platforms
Lack of business plan	New ideas and slow business take-off
No savings culture	No business incentives
High cost of marketing/advertising	Bureaucracy and corruption
Human resources quality issues	Lengthy licence registrations
	Multiple taxation
	Lack of basic infrastructure
	Lack of entrepreneurial targeted policy

## 5.6. CORE PROCESS: CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This theme addresses the **core process** career development categories of identity, dilemmas and outcomes.

### 5.6.1. Identity Legitimacy

These 40 entrepreneurs consider business their jobs and career identity acceptable by discovering what they want and what they do not want out of life, according to Tor *"Now we are in the game, now its life or death"*.

*At times I ask myself if I was not doing this, what else would I have done? And I can't see myself doing any other thing if I wasn't doing this (Ladi).*

*I can't work for anybody now that I've discovered self-employment (Diamond).*

*I am not shy I know what I want (Chichi)*

*I think for entrepreneurship to work you have to be content with a certain way (Peace).*

The participants accept their actions and activities are explainable within the context of entrepreneurial careers but in pursuing their dreams some did not deliberately set out to become entrepreneurs, but strong motives trigger the propensity to act to become entrepreneurs. Hence, about 30 are pursuing their own goals with about 14 being both pushed and pulled dissatisfied with the alternative in favour of vocational independence. Therefore, the entrepreneurial identity takes time to adjust to especially since young entrepreneurs encounter many challenges, like being called truants or “*Briefcase MD’s*” by society making the young entrepreneurs feel enterprise is a dodgy career. Hembra communicates “*I am beginning to see myself as an entrepreneur*”. Also, each entrepreneur’s title and identity is different, some are managing directors, CEO’s, business owners, founders, traders, engineers, others simply refer to their selves as self-employed. About eight participants refer to themselves as “hustlers” or “traders” and are coming to terms with the entrepreneurial label. This “hustle” term is not restricted to males; the informal and co-operative entrepreneurs use it consistently that they have to “hustle” to earn. Chichi’s business creates self-sufficiency therefore “*This recharge card business has really helped me and my money has increased from when I started. It has really helped me solve many of my problems, those of my [siblings]... so I have to hustle*”. Tor despite years of early trading and heading a strong innovative organisation only considers this current seven-year-old business the “*proper foray into business*” associating entrepreneurship with intelligence.

*Funny enough, I don’t exactly consider myself as an entrepreneur but I guess people tell you that based on what you’ve done you probably are. I think by virtue of the Nigerian economy I consider myself more of a hustler just trying to make a dollar out of a cent, or trying to make value where people would appreciate whatever the provider can put on the table. That’s basically how I like to describe myself (Zoro).*

*When you say it like that it sounds like I’m clever [i.e. being called an entrepreneur] I’m not. I tried to rent out my bicycle before [in primary school] and I didn’t see my bicycle for four hours. The guy took off he was supposed to pay me one Naira and I didn’t see him for four hours, when he came back I was crying...So when you say that, you make me sound like the real entrepreneurs of the world, I’m not, I’m not terribly commercially inclined (Tor).*

## **Leadership**

These entrepreneurs accept they are now leaders of their careers, firms and destinies. About 10 persons from less privileged backgrounds life forces leadership roles from an

early age through taking care of family and enterprise participation. All 40 participants are responsible providers for their families, colleagues and staff. Goodluck communicates *"I felt this sense of responsibility over the people being my own people being my followers and my staff"*. Goro, leader of the mat rental co-operative motivates the team:

*All these boys I motivate them, being the president I have to be a good leader, some of them don't allow me to rest. It's not about money it's about sharing ideas. I have 199 ideas for me but there are some that I share with them and they can go and use their head and implement it and I thank God that through me some have taken a different path in life and that gives me some joy, you know if you help people and they improve how does that make you feel? You feel good, I am nobody but glory be to God (Goro).*

### 5.6.2. Emotions and Dilemmas

**Work-Life Balance:** It is common being preoccupied with business but some manage to achieve work-life balance, but others have no life outside the business. For example, Pev argues business is not for anyone who wants a social life, they best wait till retirement because owning a business requires attention 24/7.

*I don't have time to cook, like going to the market that is just out of the question. There is never food in my house its just bread, there is no time, and to even make my bed is a problem (Ore).*

However, seven married women feel that an entrepreneurial career and enterprise enables balancing work and family life increasing career motivation and satisfaction. For instance, Ladi is hands on, every day from early morning she operates at two business sites, starting at the factory and ending up at the retail store. While at the manufacturing operations *"I am hardly in the office because I am walking around, I mean you can go to my office and see the empty table. The work is not done in the office, it's around [the factory]"* and *"I leave the factory back here [to the store] to be able to close up with them"* this way each arm of business is supervised. Thus, being so busy, when does she rest?

*I'm used to it so, it's like if I wake up in the morning and I don't have anything doing I feel a little bit weird like something is missing, so I always have something doing. Not like I don't take time off, off course I do. My weekends I try as much as possible not to mix work with my weekend, at least my weekend are when my kids can have me (Ladi).*

**Stress Tolerance and Management:** All 40 entrepreneurs agree stress is part of the journey of pursuing an entrepreneurial career, starting and running a business. Dan opines business is *"very interesting and fun but it is also stressful at times"*. Enyi reflects that every entrepreneur needs time-out to avoid stress to use his or her *"mental*

energy and take time out to beef up (recharge batteries)" that calculated work reduces expended energy "it's been working for me and I think it still works for me so it's good for me". Furthermore:

*I just keep pushing and take my day one day at a time. One day I'm all out the next day I might just be relaxed and take my time as long as I know things are moving. I'm working from the house and I can make a phone call. I don't necessarily have to run around like a mad man it's all results of calculated work. You need to calculate your work, take time to rest and don't let yourself be stressed, have fun and party too (Enyi).*

Through observation some entrepreneurs look in good shape and appear charismatic, two believe in mental and physical fitness to de-stress, saying that exercise is their downtime and a medium of thinking away from hectic business schedules:

*We try to work out because for an entrepreneur one of the best things I would say is exercise. But when I tell people they say 'is it for your body?' and I say "No, it's for your mind". An entrepreneur should find time no matter how little to exercise because it's the only time that your mind is clear, and you just want to finish the 15 minutes on the treadmill, because any other time you are sincerely and severely worried about business (Zoro).*

**Emotions, Uncertainty and Re-entry:** All 40 entrepreneurs communicate that the career and opportunity process journey is filled with successes and failures, emotions, uncertainties, high and low experiences "*We were keying in slowly but not fast enough for our business to survive, our business might die before we key into it*". There are doubtful instances when business ideas go wrong, when impractical business strategies are implemented, when partners disagree, when staff become incompetent "*staff can be a problem, even the dedicated ones you just need to be on your toes*", when products need adaptation, or when the business needs to acquire more customers to increase earnings when expenses exceed of revenue. The participants echo, it is common to lose everything and re-start to continue the career. Tor expresses:

*I cried that day, I remember that day, I was sitting on my chair and it was afternoon. I came back home from work and I had given up. I said fine you know what? I've made a big mistake; I should have started something (else) (Tor).*

Ayamyia counsels after the tears passion sustains the entrepreneur, and all 40 participants advocate the importance of learning and carrying on instead of stopping, Dan equally advocates resilience, and Yeni advices "*I believe there is a time for everything in life and when the time is right things fall into place*" hence entrepreneurs must be ready for/to adapt and change because they often end up in sectors other than

where the entrepreneurial journey starts. Zoro articulates an exit strategy is important and if a novel idea proves tough then change business direction:

*Like I would say 'we started out trying to sell peanuts, maybe Nigerians don't like peanuts maybe that's why we are not successful. Why don't we take this experience and move forward, because we now know how to market. Why don't we go into pharmaceuticals, why don't we go into transport?' Those are the areas where we know things are happening, because we've already tried and we've lost (Zoro).*

Tor's business strategy involves business alliance with big corporate companies. Zoro advises starting small and learning from past failures *"I used the experience of [the first business] Luckily I got a friend who is a partner and we have the same ideas, so we started [this business], together."* Likita learns vicariously:

*For some reason my case is a bit unique, because I have worked in an organisation that started very well, private firms. A lot of promise and lots of opportunities, but somehow somewhere they sort of practically folded up. For me while lots of people learn from very well ran organisations, I think I learnt from organisations that had lots of opportunities but basically were not run very well. I think, I knew practically everything to do not to make an organisation fold up (Likita).*

Furthermore, the "experience" of entrepreneurship enables exit and re-entry, and Zoro expresses one of the best quotes about the entrepreneurial career (and opportunity) *"I realised that business or entrepreneurship is not about sticking to one idea, it's an experience"*.

### 5.6.3. Personal Goals and Outcomes

**Self-actualisation, Satisfaction and psychological Wellbeing:** The narratives show entrepreneurial awareness of career anchors, interests, skills and future goals. Many operate in personal interest areas and pursue their own goals, and this increases career satisfaction and psychological wellbeing maintaining the determination to remain an entrepreneur and this explains the career anchor. Halle explains, *"The thing with doing what you enjoy is that it doesn't feel like work"*.

The main motivation for an entrepreneurial career is achieving long-term goals rather than money, only two (Fata and Vadoo) out of 40 entrepreneurs strongly emphasise being directly motivated by money, 38 express money is important but not the sole career driver because money is achievable with success. Hence, the entrepreneurial desires are to achieve future goals [being your own boss, pursuing interest, becoming famous, being appreciated, family security, helping others (social cause), leadership and so on].

Additionally, passion remains a source for developing knowledge and a strong motive for sector choice, and this interest keeps the participants from giving up. Hence, money pays the bills but is not the sole motivator (see table 37).

### Table 37: Passion and Career Satisfaction

*My passion motivated me to start a business and that's what I tell people. Don't ever start what you don't have a passion for because when the chips are down it is your passion that will drive you. At least that's what keeps me when I cry myself to sleep, when I have bills to pay staring at me at the end of the month (Ayanya).*

*It is not really money, it's really freedom and the creativity, people learn from me and I get joy like all these boys I motivate them, being the president I have to be a good leader, some of them don't allow me to rest it's not about money it's about sharing ideas (Goro).*

*I like talking, sharing knowledge, decimating information and really I just like seeing transformation too and really the fact that someone comes in two months they already started sewing that's joy, of course it's important they you make money anyway. But really besides the money it's seeing people transformed and from there it's taking it to another level (Nyari).*

*That why I'm telling you that I'm doing this because I love it. I'm just doing this because I love it not really for the money (Ore).*

*For me it's not just a kind of magazine to make money but to touch lives and we deal with health issues that relate to men ... and we talk to young men on the importance of owning a home before you start buying the flashy cars, once you start having children saving up for their education and future so it's more than just lifestyle (Dan).*

*A true entrepreneur we are not concerned with profit, we should be but we are not. It's almost a spiritual experience when an entrepreneur gets paid, a true believer, he experiences a high. It's like drugs; the amount of money he spends to get this amount of money doesn't matter. The fact is I don't know how much I'm going to make and it doesn't matter this is sad to say. But this is business and the most important thing is as long as the business is growing, I am happy. Plus profit is the by-product of success and you cannot measure that. But anyway we are here, we battle every morning and look for new ways everyday (Tor).*

*We are cold now, we are not emotional this is business, yes we get excited and ... yesterday I got a cheque for NGN 900, 000 Naira. That's great but the excitement level when we started we would have freaked out on a NGN9, 000 cheque but now we are cold. We are glad for the period of learning, now we know that there is value in NGN5, 000. Any expenditure for the business we wait or think it through, we watch now cold and clinical, we are still warm about the business but we are cold and clinical about the money (Tor).*

*But honestly the money was never really the motivator. Started out good, I felt good like yeah we are going to be big papers and in magazines. It wasn't so much about the money to be honest. It was just to know that you'd created something that people were going to be like "that's the [brand name] guy" not "that's the millionaire". It was more like "that's Coca-Cola" and for us we thought it would be nice to have a lot more people think like that, so that was motivating at the time (Zoro).*

*It's not money... Everyone's character is different; some just want to get money and spend shopping buying clothes, cream etc. to look like others. But you have to save because we have to think of the future. I'm suffering now to earn but I'm not suffering because I am better than others, and I know that everything I'm doing today is for my future and my children's future so they won't suffer in their own time and I will plan how many children I will have too. So I am saving for them and me (Chichi).*

*I am passionate about what I do this inspires me during tough times. I see the big picture rather than 'I don't have this or that'. Then I create something different. Recently I put out some new flyers and got something going and it's all done with passion; just create something. That's the main thing, passion and creating things (Happy).*

*Passion was the main drive that was the main drive. Money was never part of my motivation; it has always been the passion. The look I see on people's face when they see the design and are so happy with it that they are willing to pay below the price. In fact, even for people who buy above the price if I don't see that look of satisfaction I may decide not to sell to you (Tomdoo).*

Happy concentrates on the entrepreneurial mission *"Many people think its money and it's not, its understanding what you want to do and mapping out a plan"*. However, Nyari and Likita explain besides the desire to add value, create an innovative business or achieve future goals career dreams have to be financially viable.

Therefore, all entrepreneurs are achieving career satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. Chichi strongly asserts she knows what she wants and Zoro declares, *"I have never been afraid"*. The participants have 'wow' elements of boldness, overcoming adversity, focus, resilience and self-motivation *"people don't know that all you need is motivation"* necessary to become an entrepreneur. Hence, there are similarities and also differences among these participants relevant to entrepreneurial behaviour in terms of traits, interests, needs, skills, strengths, learning styles, values, assumptions, preferences, structures, and challenges, however all entrepreneur have personal definitions for success.

*You have to first of all define your success. Define success by yourself then it would be easier for you to say that I am successful, or not. If you don't understand what success is for you as a person, then you would probably miss out, and at the end of the day you keep running around doing the same thing and find out you don't know what you achieved because what was success for you, success for John should not be success for James (Hemba).*

Ladi, Peace and Walt explain when enterprise gets tough their acquaintances run back to employment, but these entrepreneurs would not *sell-out* (leave the entrepreneurial career), Peace narrates how *"A friend of mine just sold out, he had a wonderful [business], then everything just went, he's working in a bank now, he's miserable but desperate to pay the bills so that's the problem"*. Hence, all 40 participants emphasise they would remain entrepreneurs no matter what, and with each business accomplishment and career experience they achieve self-actualisation, goal satisfaction and psychological wellbeing.

#### **5.6.4. Decision Making**

The narratives about career, opportunity identification and exploitation actions show all 40 entrepreneurs learn an enormous amount about entrepreneurship through trial and error (heuristics), making decisions on their feet (heuristics) including decisions through value judgements regarding the co-ordination and implementation of scarce economic resources given past experiences, Zoro terms "Street MBA" how past experiences shape entrepreneurial behaviour and future decisions.

*I joke about this with my friend, I think what we've been through, what I've been through is like a business school. I think we've been through a business MBA on the streets because I have listened to some of the biggest name in business, both in Nigeria and out of the country speak and I always feel like, I would like to have a chat with him, I know what he's talking about (Zoro).*

*In 6 weeks we would teach you more than any business school in four years in Nigeria. We teach you patience; we teach you the skills-set to start small. The first customary base is everybody on the phone, first sell to the 900 people on your phone before you try and sell one thing to a stranger and let them assess you. But... you start a business and you want a big office and get a fancy car with no idea of what to do next, even this car drive yourself, you don't need a driver, and this is all from experience, you can even start from home (Tor).*

### **5.6.5. Learning**

This study finds all entrepreneurs making opportunity decisions and learning more about operating a business with time. They start businesses with little entrepreneurship information but after commencing learn the rest along the way through heuristics, experiential, cognitive and vicarious learning. Hence, cognitively they all advise it is best to start small, learn and grow. Zoro believes if possible start a business that does not require large start-up funds, while Happy and Yeni advocates taking the leap of fate and learning. These participants show that consistently at each stage, little formal business experience does not deter opportunity recognition when they feel the time is right, Tor explains “*it seems like a decent time to start this business, so with no experience and I won't lie to you no business plan*”. Hence, 36 initially start without formal business plans, and two did, but did not follow it through 100% given the inconsistent environment; they think on their feet, adapt to changes and develop their cognition.

*Yes, I did start with a business plan. Did we follow the business plan to the latter? I heard this from a mentor. I think most people will use a business the same way a drunkard uses the streetlights, just as needed. The truth is, it's a guide it helps you sort of develop your strategy. I'm going to market to this person, this is what we are going to do, but the truth is that you learn as you go (Zoro).*

Zoro initially starts with a formal business plan but when business declines, for the next venture relies on past experience to start again without a formal business plan.

*This time we didn't start with a business plan, we are tweaking it as we go, we are constantly adding ideas on where we want to be, what we want to do, we are setting goals for ourselves and setting up strategies how to achieve those goals, so it's sort of a business plan but I don't think it's a typical business plan, we are not dealing with a bank (Zoro).*

All entrepreneurs learn and build venture development skills from their daily activities, four (Peace, Ayamya, Likita and Pev) worked to management levels before branching out

which helps but 36 did not start with formal management experience. However, they all continue to learn the intricacies of business management experientially. The learning includes being responsible for business strategy and staff, additional to having budgetary discipline, separating business and personal finances, reinvesting revenue to avoid business failure. Inga calls these having *"the discipline of God"* meaning extraordinary responsibility preventing the young entrepreneur's spending pressure to keep up with a flashy society.

Additionally, *"I learnt that you can't do business with just anyone especially friends"* and for partnership to work individuals have to *"separate themselves from their business"*. Goodluck expresses it could take about three years for a business to finally become stable and patience is essential. Additionally, it is very important to use client and colleague feedback to improve business models, including building diplomatic skills, on the other hand selling on credit is discouraged.

Hence, real-life business experiences improve business strategy, Zoro says, *"Yes, there is now learning from the 2-3<sup>rd</sup> businesses"*. This effective understanding of the entrepreneurial process enables 38 participants to diversify becoming portfolio entrepreneurs. Ladi articulates, *"If you wake me up in the morning, I know what to do. It's all at the back of my hand and it's just a part of me now"*. See Appendix 7 for quotes about experiential learning.

#### **5.6.6. Failure and Uncertainty**

The highs and lows in the career and business environment are cushioned through coping with uncertainty. These 40 entrepreneurs overcome challenges through, resilience, ambiguity tolerance, portfolio enterprise, not concentrating on problems, seeking opportunities including having sector and environmental knowledge. Peace says, *"Sometimes entrepreneurship is not about the skill, so forget skills; the main skill is knowing Nigeria"*. According to Joy *"If you are not lazy you will be ok"*. Basically, these entrepreneurs echo the experience of losing everything and coping through resilience to re-start other ventures, that is, exit and re-entry (also see 5.6.2 Emotions, Uncertainty and Re-entry). They survive the environment through maintaining clients for repeat business,

knowing the environment, being determined and most importantly rather than emphasising threats remaining committed to pursuing opportunities.

**Repeat Customers:** From the informal to formal, all entrepreneurs indicate the importance of repeat customers. Dan and Peace advocate guarding one's reputation and good customer service. Tor narrates that the environment is peculiar but works because once an entrepreneur builds a client base; the repeat patronage keeps businesses afloat:

*You have to always be nice even if you don't want to, for business to work. Once you have a bad reputation, and make one person upset... we are very intimate people, we take things personally we are very family-oriented in Nigeria so once you piss-off one person, everybody else follows (Peace).*

*We are peculiar but again it is in this difficulty that there is vast opportunity. But it is peculiarly difficult to do business; you must understand the spin of your people. We do not operate like anyone else. We do not understand the nature of business [new products] so we [prospective clients] say no until four years later when everybody is using one [a product]. The thing with us is, once your product is popular, your work is reduced. We are able to perpetuate products without advertising unlike other economies if [e.g. multinational beverage company] stops advertising today; they will tell you their income has dropped. Here [in Nigeria] [same multinational] can stop advertising for two years, and its revenue will not drop because we are very fixed in our ways, we are repeat customers, we go to the same stores, eat the same food (Tor).*

**Surviving the Harsh Environment:** These participants will not pull out of the career despite the harsh business environment "*the opportunities are out there for anyone to benefit from the external environment*" and "*Nobody pulls out*". Others put a spiritual spin on it Dooshima, Mainama and Ngozi feel their success goes beyond personal efforts, that to remain in business some issues require divine intervention. Hemba believes with self-belief and God all things are possible "*I can be anything that I want to be as long as I put my mind, my time and my energy on it, there is nothing that's impossible, with God there is nothing that's impossible*". Zoro summarises to operate in the harsh business environment it is beneficial to be surrounded with mentors and people with similar entrepreneurship goals, also, if a business is not working try another. Yeni agrees starting is the major step because operational sectors can always change, this being true for about 30 entrepreneurs especially considering their backgrounds.

*The business environment is considered too harsh and impossible but I say 'no' there are people who are doing it, somehow they are doing it. I have not spoken to anyone [entrepreneur] who said I am going to pull out now. They say the challenges are there, so what? We are here and we are not going anywhere (Tor).*

*There is just something in it that actually works but the environment is very harsh, that's why I say you need to look for inspiration and you need to look for mentors and you just need to look for a way around, to make it happen for you. But like I said there are tremendous opportunities here, anyone who has the right fix should look for inspiration. There is no reason why you shouldn't get it as there are no job opportunities. Just don't stick to any idea or venture just keep trying until you get one that works (Zoro).*

Therefore, it is paramount to maintain focus on goals, motivation, remain resilient and keep the company of other young entrepreneurs to learn. While business can be hard there are vast opportunities for corporations and indigenous entrepreneurs. Furthermore, entrepreneurship can resolve societal issues.

*It's not easy you have to really find the motivation because there is nothing out here that is going to motivate you unfortunately but the opportunities are there. The fact that we are so set in our ways and not exactly crazy about new ideas means that there are huge opportunities here. That's why you have people still coming in from different parts of the world into Nigeria with new ideas every day. [Telecom giant] came had a very different business plan and business model. They had a lot of ideas about how the Nigerian market would be they have surpassed all their expectations financially. Nigeria is one of their biggest markets, same thing for [Digital TV]. I mean the examples are there the [Biggest Indigenous Entrepreneurs] most of them are into buying and selling. In fact most people in the country are into buying and selling. The biggest names [large multinationals] they import, they buy they sell, a few of them manufacture products that they have patented here in Nigeria. But the truth is, this is the only way we can actually solve a lot of problems (Zoro).*

**Challenge Represents Opportunity:** All participants assert there is opportunity within every challenging situation and entrepreneurs should have the tolerance to keep pushing because there is a solution to each problem because hardship contains opportunity. 32 do not consider the prevalent lack of basic infrastructure an issue. Ngodoo believes "Nigeria is the best place to do business" the opportunities outweigh the problems.

*What I believe is in every challenging environment lies opportunities. Every problem comes with opportunity but an average Nigerian want's to have it all. We are not born in the [West] we don't get allowances. We are born rugged and that is who we are and nobody cares, you care for yourself. The government do not pay you any allowance, no stipend, even the students most don't get bursaries so we are used to this way of life. So why complain that there is no funding, there is no SME support or whatever? even though they are supposed to do this, in the absence I try to look beyond the problems. I don't romance my problem I find solutions to it. There is a solution next to you, if only you can take the initiative to look beyond the problem and see it as an opportunity (Goodluck).*

*There is too much opportunity in Nigeria. Nigeria is a developing country and any developing country has potentials. In any country you have little players, in any industry you have little players and the population of Nigeria is so wide we have not even started tapping the opportunity we have in Nigeria. So it is the best place to do business (Ngodoo).*

*It is profitable running a business in Nigeria and a lot of people have been successful in Nigeria (Happy).*

## 5.7. CORE PROCESS: HOW TO START AND OPERATE

This core process theme addresses the question what path do these entrepreneurs take to start and operate ventures? They become entrepreneurs (career) by exploiting opportunity and this section provides some of their career and opportunity development strategies, business planning, funding, structure, location, team, marketing, branding, competition, technology, portfolio, values and sustaining institutions.

### 5.7.1. Business Plan

About 36 venture start-ups occur without formally written business plans because they rationalise the most important aspect of business is accumulating customers and learning, five put plans together after commencing operations. Zoro starts with a formal business plan but as this business declines subsequent portfolios only rely on experience. With or without a formal business plan the environment is unsteady and adaptations are necessary to cope with difficulties and changes.

*It's in between both, I follow the plan and at the same time the environment can change and you know how it is, so I can say that I have a laid down plan which I try as much as possible to follow, at the same time I don't. I leave room for spontaneity, room for flexibility. I can't follow it like a robot. I have to leave room for evolving new ideas (Nyari).*

**Informal Business Plan:** Many hit the ground running with targets, clients, mission, and vision of future business achievements but no formal business plan. Peace plans from her head, however seven (Dan, Zoro, Ladi, Nyari, Vadoo, Rose, Ngodoo) partially acquire knowledge through market research. For Ladi the issue with starting without a plan however is underestimating the capital-intensive nature of manufacturing "*started the factory with a feasibility plan the others just spur of the moment*" and Dan expresses:

*I mean if you go to business schools you would learn otherwise. But for me I was reading law, it was optional and obviously by taking business courses I learnt that you need a business plan. But like I still say even when you have a business plan you are going to keep changing it to succeed in Nigeria, you can't have a business plan and want to follow it through and through. No, things just don't work the way they are meant to here (Dan).*

**Formal Business Plan:** Ngodoo business plan emerges only after 10 years in business. Happy explains "*I was putting ideas together before then. Yes, I would say I had a business plan*", but similar to Ngodoo only develops a plan when the business becomes

formal. Binta admits the plan guides operations but aspects are constantly changing "it's not followed 100% maybe 70% but it's a guide".

*From the beginning at least I worked with a business plan to see how feasible the business was going to be, and the prospects identifying the strengths, the weaknesses and the opportunities I could get from establishing the business here (Binta).*

*We developed our business plan when the business was already in place. I just knew what I wanted to do and where we were going so we didn't go through the rigors of coming up with a business plan before we started (Likita).*

*Business plan? There was nothing like that! It just evolved and later on I went to [entrepreneurship training] in 2001, and I got introduced to the business knowledge aspect and I got trained in the aspiring entrepreneurship program, and that's the first time I ever heard of business plan. Then later on, much later, in 2008 I went for a course in [a University]. I did a business course in entrepreneurial management, after I did those courses I had to refine, rearrange, and to re-strategise and all of that. It was later on that we had more of a roadmap (Nyari).*

### **5.7.2. Funding**

These entrepreneurs raise start-up capital through private channels, none receiving a bank loan, 38 utilise personal savings, social capital from friends and family and two achieve private investor funding. Goro also explains, "You don't need money to start something you must have ideas and with that you can start doing something".

*I started with zero Naira cos I started with an idea, a vision and from there it started booming. Well, personal funds, friends and family (Nyari).*

*My dad helped, I had personal funding. Some of my friends brought in a bit of money. The money's we borrowed were always from individuals never from the banks, and I think we were lucky there. One, the banks wouldn't have given us money for an idea (Tor).*

*We had to do with what we could raise ourselves, which is basically the salaries we had saved and for some reason I would also say that we were so fortunate because to a certain extent we just hit the ground running. So in those initial days it was just enough to keep the business running and of course I had consultancies going on with my previous employer. The day I resigned I got hired by my employer as a consultant and so even though I wasn't working there anymore, I was earning what I was earning as an employee, and I divided that to pay the rest of my staff. Yeah, so we needed funds, which we didn't have but somehow we were able to go on (Likita).*

*I already knew what I want to do so set aside money for the basic things needed. I just bought and kept and started with goods worth a half a million, and equipment of NGN600, 000 I have not had to borrow money. One of the things I want to achieve is show people that you can run a business without borrowing money. It might be tedious but it's possible (Ayamya).*

*I don't like loans. I don't like credit. I don't like it for anything; especially in an economy like Nigeria sometimes it's very funny. You actually get the loan and then interest rate fluctuates, and if what you invested in is not forthcoming as you expected... I have a lot of people around me with that particular problem. They got loans from banks and responding is now a problem (Yeni).*

Zoro and Ngodoo continuously raise finances from private individuals, Zoro believes, *"The lesson was raising money, people appreciating the idea; they thought it was a timely venture and they put in their money"* hence feasible ideas generate funds:

*Knowledge based capital is the best and if you acquire the right knowledge and you have goodwill you can start from there. Though money is very vital these are two things that if you don't have even if you have money it will be useless (Fakwagh).*

Ngodoo explains, *"If I had to go to the bank, the bureaucracy of getting the loan and collateral would have slowed me down"*.

*I did a lot of research ... and I realised what was big in other parts of the world were Venture Capitalist and other Business Angels. So I put together a pitch of the business. We did a presentation and I took it to a couple of people a lot of people were interested. That was really encouraging they thought the idea was unique, fresh and was needed. We did about 60 different pitches. I'm not sure if half of the people we were pitching knew we were asking them for money because we approached it like we came to ask for advice. They were like wonderful, wonderful, great stuff, at the end of the day luckily we found two particular investors, and one of them promised he was going to bring in like NGN10million, the other promised to bring in NGN15 million. They wanted a stake. That is the kind of motivation you need to start up, that's it, that's how we started (Zoro).*

Ngodoo's financial strategy is *profit sharing arrangements* with past investors taking 90%, 80% and 50% of the profit to finance large projects but current investors happily invest in exchange for 10%. He suggests to become a force in your sector, young entrepreneurs should share their profit with those who can assist develop ideas, deliver projects, build capacity and exceed expectations.

### **5.7.3. Structure**

**Start Small:** All 40 entrepreneurs advocate starting small before growing, Inga explains, *"You keep hearing about starting small, it doesn't have to be anything fantastic and large scale"*. Happy advocates that individuals start with one product and diversify with growth. Tor clarifies starting big without planning causes failure *"We left our office and moved to a smaller office"*, hence better to start small and operate a lean structure with enhanced technology. Thus, for all 40 entrepreneurs starting small provides the opportunity to get

good at learning the required social, legal, economic, political and technological (SLEPT) aspects of business.

**Formal and Informal:** Generally there are three informal, five co-operatives and 32 limited liability ventures. These entrepreneurs operate within three structures, formal limited company, co-operatives and informal businesses. It appears easier to start trading as informal sole-traders before becoming formal. Five sole-traders and the less educated formalise their structures through joining co-operatives, 39 have past experience of operating informally, while 16 narrate starting their current business ventures informally before making the transition to become formal. Hence, it appears the more educated are attracted to limited companies.

Regarding informal to formal transition, business expansion enables the realisation certain organisations only deal with formal companies. Hembra operates informally for four years before becoming formal to facilitate growth and international transactions "*We were supposed to go to [abroad] and one of the things they were asking for is registration, 'how long have you been running the business?' I was like "4 years", "But you've not been registered?" I was like "Yes', I said it's a passion". Ore formally register from being informal to "function at a higher level"; Ayamya after five years operating formalises two years ago to compete in the corporate world:*

*I started informally I was just doing it and seeing people travel and do certain things I had to ask, what does it costs, what will it take for me to achieve this and they said first of all you have to have your registered company and.... If you really like what you are doing you have to make it corporate so I decided to register my company (Ore).*

*I knew I had to (become formal) there are some organisations if you give a quotation and they realise you are not registered you lose the job. But now I don't have problems (Ayamya).*

*I didn't get my business registered until like 2000 after I had to go through business changes, right now things are more structured and we wanted to do things well, to operate the business the way it should be, so we thought it was necessary to get registered. I mean every business should think about that (Nyari).*

Hence, informal ventures become limited formal companies to be taken more seriously, to expand, accommodate growth, compete, meet official contract requirements, gain longevity and build institutions. The cooperatives formalise through an umbrella body that protects them from public agency harassment and competitors.

#### 5.7.4. Location

These entrepreneurs advise the right location is essential to increase brand value and market-share, and 32 have external offices and eight work from home.

**Rural-Urban Migration:** Eight of these young entrepreneurs have higher ambitions and while searching for greener pastures migrated to current city locations from rural areas due to limited opportunities to build wealth besides farming and petty trading. Also, four initially migrate to attend higher institutions in urban areas hence the more educated (university graduates) settle in towns due to NYSC work. While the least educated, that is, primary or secondary school after migration originally gravitate towards low skilled jobs before starting ventures. For instance, Diamond moved from one big urban area to another chasing opportunities *“I didn’t have anything to do except security and someone told me to come do security because except you have a big certificate you can’t work anywhere except for [house help] and security”*.

**Urban Location:** All entrepreneurs are located in urban cities, operating from home, offices and retail shops. The informal entrepreneurs have dedicated selling spots, five have office locations and branches in more than one city, and 21 transact internationally. The technology companies all host abroad through partnership agreements, and about 30 participants source raw materials and products from abroad.

*I shuttle between [1<sup>st</sup> city] and [2<sup>nd</sup> city] because my clothing store is in [2<sup>nd</sup> city]. But because of the magazine I’m based in [1<sup>st</sup> city], because [1<sup>st</sup> city] is still the financial nerve centre all the (advert) agencies in Nigeria and a bulk of our magazines are retailed in [1<sup>st</sup> city] for population and our target audience (Dan).*

*My office is in [1<sup>st</sup> city] but my work is all over Nigeria because everywhere [client’s business] is my office. I have my technicians moving round the country to be able to make sure the needs of our customers are met (Ngodoo).*

**Home Working:** Most entrepreneurs’ like Nyari start-up working from home before expanding into external offices to increase business exposure, Nyari says, *“I started in my father’s sitting room”*. Happy and Ayamyia have dedicated space at home. Currently, eight worked from home to cut unnecessary expenses, operate lean structures, and gain stability before branching out. Ore and Hembra as artists find it easier to produce work from home, they feel staff add little value given ability to showcase artworks at different galleries and online:

*I have been working from my house, but before that I had a small shop I still have it. I own it that's why, I am trying to do more for myself and this involves me working from home, also involves me travelling and most times if I'm not around things don't seem to be happening....and at the end of the day I pay people for not doing anything. When you are not there they [staff] don't do anything. I said fine, at a point in time I let go all the staff and I ask for youth corpsers like every year (Hemba).*

### **5.7.5. Team and Human Resource**

**Start-up Partnership:** Five of the entrepreneur's start developing opportunity through partnerships. Likita's company consists of highly experienced engineers with prior experience in big corporate organisations. Tor starts with two friends, Zoro and Halle with one. Hence, different individuals came together and pooled together resources and strengths to operate in business. There is however bad experience of partnerships with various lessons, such as, dissimilar values, committed persons and role definition. Likita expresses partnerships require taking advantage of individual strengths.

*It's not easy for two or more people to come together and agree on things. We have our strengths, 2 of us are Communication Engineers and one is a [another] Engineer with path in finance so there is a tendency that the two of us get carried away by the beauty of technology and the beauty of ideas without realising the commercial benefit of such ideas, having a third person that see's things from a different perspective has also helped. Five years and still together it's impressive for partnership (Likita).*

**Staff:** 33 have staff/teams to achieve goals; collectively the lowest employee number being one and over highest two hundred. Ladi experiences managing seven people to over 200 within the next venture. Some with little permanent staff employ on an ad-hoc, auxiliary basis outsourcing to deliver jobs. Meanwhile, those with permanent staff advocate vigorous recruitment procedures, diverse staffs that come from different parts of the country (diversity), hired based on merit not just personal and family networks. Ladi for instance, does not employ extended family because their entitlement mentality implies they put in less effort. Furthermore, hiring the best people strong in areas of need is advisable.

Similarly, the challenge of being first time managers for some is cushioned through ensuring staff understand corporate goals through quality leadership, Ladi, Goodluck, Goro, Ngodoo, Likita, Inga and more believe in leading by example. Goodluck empowers employees through providing a free hand. Halle's staff retention is high due to creating a partnership-led work environment. Likita attributes the company business success to their

recruitment process that employs only the best, ensuring “*we are all one family*” which Nyari terms “*creating an environment of love and family*” she does not have retention or revolving door issues; most staff have been employed for 10 years. Likita summarises that the right teams is essential to success “*having the right people on ground because if you get the wrong people and you use their ideas definitely you are bound to fail. First of all you must have the right people to give you the right ideas before you can succeed. People are key to a successful business*”.

#### **5.7.6. Contacts and Networking**

These entrepreneurs enhance competitive advantage through collaborating with business contacts, partners, and networking, which increases balance sheets. Hence, to expand in business some participants partner with relevant stakeholders. Abraham, Bala, Diamond, Fata, Ladi, Yesa, Mbee, Peace, Yeni, Tor, Goodluck, Hembra, Vadoo, Eniola, Likita, Dan, Dooshima, Tomdoo, Fakwagh, Inga, Ngodoo, Nyari, Ayamya, Enyi, Goro, Fata and Zoro (27) recognise the importance of utilising contacts to develop business. Peace cooperates with other photographers to deliver jobs, Ore and Hembra collaborate with other artists to organise exhibitions. Inga and Enyi gain business leads through contacts, Enyi advocates networking builds future assets. Zoro’s strategic alliance with big corporations assists with business growth. Ladi learns manufacturing from prolific family contacts:

**Network Contacts:** “*I was lucky that I had the right background and support. Not financial support- like people who were ready to give advice, I had people who were ready to give their contacts*” (Inga).

**Industry Contacts:** “*To start a good business you need to have your contacts first, and you never know everyone is key. You cannot look at another person and think that the person does not matter. Everyone matters really because I’ve been in situations where someone you think is no one next thing you see the person as someone, but if you had tapped into that person back then, you never know the amount of resources you would have gotten, so whoever you are dealing with just treat everybody right, you never know*” (Enyi).

**Strategic Alliance:** “*These are the things I tell everyone, worry less about how great your idea is and worry more about who can take your idea to the market and the next level. One positive thing that happened was getting one of the networks to adopt our products. And when they adopted the product it just showed us that like the ant and the elephant you don’t need to be an elephant, just get on the elephants back and anywhere it is going it will take you with it*” (Zoro).

**Training and learning:** The co-operatives operate an apprenticeship model where they teach, support and guide new colleagues at start-up. Also, for Ladi in manufacturing

*“before we started ours [factory], I went there [another factory] for like a month to learn the process from the factory, I actually went through all their departments. But they [were] doing different things, but you know it's still a factory. I needed to know the factory process; who did what and what happens with the store and all of that. I went there for training before we started off” (Ladi).*

### **5.7.7. Marketing**

These entrepreneurs engage in proactive marketing to gain more customers advocating business development should start with word-of-mouth, networking and referrals before graduating to other mediums.

**Word-of-Mouth, Networking and Customer Service:** To promote businesses these participants start by advertising to friends and family instead of spending money on expensive mediums, Tor explains this assists to refine the business idea, *“the first customary base is everybody on the phone, first sell to the 900 people on your phone before you try and sell one thing to a stranger, let them assess you”.*

Ladi asides running the retail store also employs a business development person to acquires sales orders. Dan advocates adapting to what works, building relationships and being confident about company products:

*It depends on the kind of business, my business involves people relations, you need to be able to approach people talk to people nicely and have marketing skills because you need advertising and you need to be able to convince people. You have to believe in what you are doing before you can convince people to advertise (Dan).*

Furthermore, Dan advocates good customer service is essential *“when you pick up a phone you have to smile because, the person can hear it over the phone”.* However, Ayamya being an introvert finds advertising challenging, but her strategy involves giving out freebies and collaborating with event managers and churches *“occasional I make samples and give it out to people in the neighbourhood, in my office, husbands office I just make food and this gets [business]”* she is also developing a website. Likita operates business to business and markets through direct advert and networking *“the right channels”.*

**Internet and Other Media:** The Web is a valuable marketing medium, utilising technology through having websites and engaging in social media to create publicity. Additionally, Inga runs a blog and Nyari actively leverages social media including using

other media, such as, flyer inserts in popular magazines against other forms of print advertising:

*You know that print media is really expensive. It cost NGN35, 000 for a quarter page. It's expensive but we put [leaflets] in soft sell magazines. We also employ online platforms, we got registered with [an online business directory and portal] this is a free Nigeria directory where you can list your business and people searching come across your business. We also got listed on [another popular portal] when you type [sector] and our names come up. We are also on Facebook, we send messages, we create videos; recently I posted a video on U-tube inviting people to an event coming up on Friday. I leverage the net (Nyari).*

Tor engages in different advert mediums although advertising is expensive, Vadoo explains advertising print, radio and television is beneficial to increase market share. Ladi utilises radio and print promotions rationalising that enterprises have to make noise to increase exposure.

**International Leads:** These entrepreneurs are proactive and successfully operate with companies overseas, for example, Ore, Hembra, Peace have foreign alliances, while Ladi exports manufactured merchandise. Thus, situations that require collaboration, advertising or client acquisition these firms source both internally and abroad.

*I think more Nigerian companies should advertise but unfortunately, in Nigeria its tricky it's all about who you know and despite the fact that I'm from a relatively well-known family everything I have achieved [with the business] has been on credit. I never used my name or [my parents], a few people have made phone calls for me but mostly it's been on credit, and like I said if I can't get adverts from Nigeria, I go look for adverts outside Nigeria (Dan).*

*I do my jobs not just in Nigeria; I've travelled the globe to do jobs. As long as I get paid and there is a way to get there I'll go because I love travel (Peace).*

### 5.7.8. Competitive Advantage

**Competition:** To remain competitive some form alliances to keep out competition like the five co-operatives. Also, all 40 focus on building positive relationships with customers to ensure repeat business, sustain the career and enterprise.

*At a point I used to say to people that I don't sell art. I sell relationship and that's how I retain them [customers]. I try to keep a relationship with them. I try to socialise. I try to call them up. I try to send them current information about my events and projects, and they keep following, [keeping] track on me (Hembra).*

Furthermore, to overcome competition they ensure clients consistently receive quality and innovative products. Another plus is good popularity, which Dan believes, "*copycats came and they are gone right now we are the only one in the market consistent*". Tor,

Dan and Zoro chose technological driven businesses to boost quality and their brand image. Currently, Zoro has little competition, which is both positive and negative because competition enables exposure:

*Its good because you are not fighting, not only are you trying to get the customer, the customer is alone for you to get. Bad because sometimes you are better off when there are [companies] in your industry to promote your industry so it's good and bad. But it's decent we have the chance to own the market or open the door for someone else to walk through and own the market (Zoro).*

**Pricing:** These entrepreneurs price products according to target markets, low or high class. Abraham, Diamond, and Goro charge similar prices being part of one co-operative. Ore, Hembra and Dooshima's products are high because their clients are wealthy, while Ladi, Tomdoo and others recommend that new business should adopt prevailing product prices. Hence, to get away with charging higher prices Rose advises for diligence, having quality products and building a strong brand, and this strategy involves starting affordable, gaining customer a base and subsequently increasing prices to cover operations.

*Let people believe in you, when the [business] name is celebrated then you can increase the cost of your jobs, which I have been doing. We keep reviewing our price based on our exposure and the amount of customers that keep coming. I keep saying to myself that if we can clear all our bills then we are doing well. It is difficult to expand but paying your bills is so important you are paying your workers, suppliers, rent and personal salary and since we have been able to do that we've been fine (Tomdoo).*

*When we started out we had to be lower than the competition to attract people. We had to suffer that loss for the time being, that's the only way we could convince people to buy because Nigeria we are sensitive to price. But now people are getting to know our product and they are beginning to know the difference between our product and other products. We have increased our prices like up to two times since we started, and it's like when you increase price, there's a slow response. Your balance sheet for that month might be low but the thing is just give it another 2 or 3 weeks and people will just [come back] (Ladi).*

**Brand Recognition and Commendation:** Brand recognition is a great business asset; essentially building a valuable brand name through quality enhances opportunity development. Eleven of these entrepreneurs are leaders in their sectors through consistency, innovation, quality, and having unique selling propositions (USP). They concentrate first on exceeding customer expectations rather than on profit, which increases their client base creating brand success. Hence, profit is a by-product of success:

*We've gotten calls from America, they did some research and we were the magazine.... I'm always happy when we get recognition, we shift copies to the UK and people are like 'is it printed*

*in the UK?' and I tell them "its 100% Nigerian". It's not the best quality but its 100% Nigerian and this is fantastic quality. I'm a proudly Nigerian kind of guy (Dan).*

*Whenever I have a project the first thing that comes to my mind is my customer, profit does not come first because I know I would make it in the long-run. This actually made me to be a force to reckoned with in the industry, because I deliver more than expected (Ngodoo).*

Furthermore, diversified portfolios operate under one brand name, for instance, Ladi runs three businesses and plans to start another under the same trademark *"If people see [the brand] as quality, anything you associate with it people will accept as good quality"*.

Yesa, Tomdoo, Nyari, Halle ensure on time delivery, creativity and ensuring clients are happy, they aim to keep create a wow factor to retain patronage. Goodluck believes in the blue ocean strategy and creating a niche. Tomdoo's USP keeps his promises through distinctive customisation and an unbreakable 48-hour delivery period. Similarly, integrity is essential to Tomdoo *" No matter how difficult or easy, make sure you uphold your integrity, your integrity matters a lot in whatever you do"*. Ayamya concentrates on providing creative choices while Dan listens to customers and incorporates their ideas and feedback to ensure excellence. Likita's emphasis is on *"creative pacesetting"* and remaining number one.

*We are blessed with a few thousand subscribers we are the number one [sector] in Nigeria, we've been consistent for four years, blood and sweat. We've featured a lot of reputable people because it is also important the kind of people we feature ...Now we have international adverts we've gotten [many foreign designers] and now we are dealing with the companies directly in [Europe] and for me that is a great achievement for a group of young men from Nigeria. We've retail in every state in Nigeria. We get emails from some places and I'm wondering how did the [product] get there? It's always wonderful seeing people you don't know read the magazine (Dan).*

Four of the participants have won industry awards creating durable brand identities, which improve their entrepreneurial career and business profile, increasing work satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. They remain humble and communicate that excellence opens doors. Nyari says *"I took part in Nigerian fashion show, which is an annual event, which I won and I won an award so that helped to spur up my business again. You go in as a contestant and you win I mean that's positive"*. Likita's views *"Feels good to know that somebody appreciates what you are doing"*.

### **5.7.9. Technology**

Technology is important to opportunity exploitation, and all 40 entrepreneurs use mobile phones and 14 entrepreneurs including Inga, Ladi, Zoro, Tor, Ngodoo, Goodluck, Happy,

Peace, Tomdoo operate within technical areas, daily utilising tangible and intangible technological resources like websites, computers, machines and so on. This technology enhances operations, ensures up to date trainings, knowledge and resources allowing Bala, Fata, Kobo, Peace, Xavier update their photography and media businesses skills. Zoro's operations are mostly online, and Happy is developing private branded environmentally friendly holistic products abroad. Zoro operates within the renewal energy sector with foreign firms. Ladi functions using state of the art automated machines requiring constant technical skills training for the engineering staff, similar for Goodluck as a computer network engineer and Ngodoo whose engineers undertake annual training. Furthermore, the participants feel when the target is young people then being part of the Internet community is essential for exposure and business development:

*I find that people are now quite technologically savvy, a lot of young people are always on the Internet surfing, and our target audience are mainly those people who see us on the Internet. It is easier for them because they see us as a serious organisation with better package than some other training schools and before you know it, they sign up with us (Nyari).*

#### **5.7.10. Portfolio Enterprise**

The process of opportunity identification and development occurs consistently throughout the entrepreneurial career. Hence, 36 out of the 40 participants run more than one business, this simultaneously ownership of more than one business makes them portfolio entrepreneurs. They start small, grow, learn and identify other opportunity and diversify to sometimes venture in sectors completely different to their original core business. The rationale being to expand, reinvest earnings, engage in other interest areas, ensure stability or reduce risk, there are also indications that to survive in Nigeria entrepreneurs need to have more than one business (see table 38). These entrepreneurs accept all the uncertainties of the environment and continue to seek opportunities, rather than dwell on difficulties

**Table 38: Portfolio Entrepreneurship Reasons**

Reason	Why started another business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Reduce risk</li> </ul>	<p>Every young person should have three businesses, one that brings you money every day, one that brings you money monthly and one that brings you bulk sums maybe once, twice, thrice a year, its important that's the only way to survive in this country</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversification,</li> <li>• Invest earnings</li> </ul>	<p>The thing is, with this business I get money to take care of my expenses and gather the rest to find something. If you go to my account you will find only NGN1, 000, I don't want my money to just sit in the bank I put them in different business and at the end of the month I get my returns.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify other businesses</li> </ul>	<p>I have 199 hundred businesses in my head, and I am implementing four now. I provide [ideas] [to other colleagues]. These are my ideas I can't just sell my ideas to [colleagues].</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt/ change</li> </ul>	<p>It's not where you start that you end up.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passion</li> </ul>	<p>I wanted something different that would be more attractive and fulfilling.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-invest funds,</li> <li>• Growth</li> </ul>	<p>Just saved up and was like let me just start something small. It's kind of been good, it's been improving so it's business, you know the way it is, you find it hard to spend so you have to keep re investing and the only way you know if the business is doing well is if you keep on expanding. That means what you are putting into the business is expanding. It's just hard for you to take out of it, like o.k this is my profit let me go out and spend it. Some business models you won't understand how they survive because they never have cash in their bags (laughs) you just find it hard to spend because you are always thinking God if I spend this money now it's supposed to be for one thing [business].</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market-Pull</li> <li>• Diversification</li> </ul>	<p>The kind of business I started was events management. Then I went onto PR and then publishing. The publishing was borne out of a PR gap; there were no real PR channels that catered for [the city], so the magazine was borne out of the need to fill that gap and then hospitality, that's the lounge now. Off course other channels keep on opening as people realise this person has entrepreneurial spirit and background. All my businesses are tied together; as a matter of fact each one helps the other.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build brand</li> </ul>	<p>That's a new business [the other business] you can't keep selling people's clothes all the time, you just might as well start making your own.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate funds</li> </ul>	<p>A clothing store for me was a flair to open the shop, but we were constantly lending money to the magazine [the money recycles] one-company makes one company spends.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial security</li> </ul>	<p>As an entrepreneur you need that, when you have a 9 to 5 job you know that this is coming in but as an entrepreneur you are never sure, so you need something to keep the house running daily, something that comes at the end of the month and in bulk like a contract.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Diversify</li> <li>• Follow passion</li> </ul>	<p>Those are the areas where we have been able to breathe a sigh of relief because we are now providing service to government agencies and government is the most guaranteed source of revenue. Even with your first check you don't feel as fulfilled honestly, no matter how much you make so that's when you probably know, am I in this for money or am I in this because I get a kick out of seeing people appreciate what I do?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survival</li> </ul>	<p>The environment is harsh an entrepreneur has to do plenty at once.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different hats</li> </ul>	<p>If you ask many entrepreneurs they would give you the same answer and it won't be far from, you really need to, and in Nigeria you</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Survival</b></li> <li>● <b>Traditional ideas</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>can't stick to one idea. You can't stick to one idea, it's not wise, no matter how brilliant the idea is. You need to make sure you are looking at more than one source of revenue stream, because you never know which one is going to fail. Most importantly mix it with the traditional ones that is, food, shelter, transportation.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Boredom</b></li> <li>● <b>Multi-task</b></li> <li>● <b>Proactive</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>I can't just be doing one particular thing. I love to explore, in school it was just oil on canvass but when I came out and starting going to exhibitions I discovered other methods. I just don't want to exhibit oil on canvass, I want to exhibit pastel, I want to exhibit acrylic, I want to try charcoal, I work with mirror I just don't want to do one thing because I'll just get bored.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Stock as assets</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>I was brought up with a saving culture but the business you would spend all your savings to keep your business alive so you don't have savings anymore so as money comes it goes. I've done quite a number of businesses. I had a video club I use to calculate, if you give me NGN100 I'm calculating how many tapes to buy and with the clothing line business I'm thinking 'how many boxes of clothes can I buy when I travel out'. For me my savings are my stock, I've got a store maybe I've got five million Naira worth of clothes that is my savings. Whenever I need money I call a few friends around to come and buy and you've got liquid cash rather than just money sitting there. I personally would never put my money and just let it sit in the bank I'll lend to people that would turn it over or I'm turning it over.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Nurture business</b></li> <li>● <b>Patience</b></li> <li>● <b>Break-even</b></li> <li>● <b>Delayed gratification</b></li> </ul>	<p><i>What I have learnt over time is that if you have a business or an idea or a dream, they call it your brainchild. Children don't feed you, so don't depend completely on your dream at the beginning, because its either you are going to get frustrated or you're going to choke your dream because there is a lot of demand on you and your dream. So if you have an idea, if you have a dream, you have a business you want to do, find something else to support yourself. Because it is a brainchild, just think this through, it's just logical how can a child feed you? People always have a dream and they just expect it to start giving them funds or start depending on it now, now, now. These things have incubating periods, they have establishing period, there is time to expand. What I say is, if you have a dream, support your dream but don't depend on it because it is your brainchild and your child can't feed you.</i></p>

### 5.7.11. Core Values and Venture Strategy

These 40 entrepreneurs for both the informal and formal it is hard to separate the individual from the business, they appeared one and the same. However, some operate ideologically driven firms. Ladi, Tor and Likita are selected in this section given their extensive description of their operations. Ladi advocates leadership by example, constant staff retraining and knowledge of corporate policies advantageous to sustaining core values. Their company is customer-focused and results-oriented; they valued integrity, honesty, transparency, accountability, the partners and employees remain committed to the highest quality.

*You are sinking it into their heads that these are my core values. This is what I want and this is what the company is all about. Yes, we are selling [the product], yes, we are making profit, yes, but we are more than that. We are more about the core values, we don't joke with punctuality, with decency, and it just becomes a big part of them. If you also lay a good example, if you are leading the core values every day [staff] get used to it and get better (Ladi).*

Furthermore, Tor's business thrives on ideas, value addition, ideas transformed into viable applications, affordable rates and the continuous pursuit of new products and services. While Likita leads through creative pacesetting, quality, exceeding customer expectations, integrity, teamwork, community work environment, continuous improvement and leadership. Additionally, the organisation is well structured, in terms of staff, processes, government obligations, and asides life insurance they have well-organised pension, payee, and medical care plans. Table 39 summarises these company core values and strategies in no particular order.

**Table 39: Core Values and Strategy**

	<b>Ladi</b>	<b>Tor</b>	<b>Likita</b>
<b>Core Values</b>	Quality, efficiency and results	Ideas	Leading edge innovation
<b>Strategy</b>			
<b>Vision &amp; Mission</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Structure</b>	Limited Liability	Limited Liability	Limited Liability
<b>Leadership</b>	Entrepreneur + Strong board	2 Partners	3 Partners
<b>Core business</b>	Household Manufacturing	Data, Routing, Short Message Service	Data, IP, Broadband and Consultancy
<b>Location</b>	North	North & South	North & South
<b>Team</b>	Diverse workforce	Diverse workforce	Diverse workforce
<b>Current Workforce</b>	207	5	30
<b>Clientele</b>	Business to Business (B2B) & Business to Consumer (B2C)	Business to Business (B2B) & Business to Consumer (B2C)	Business to Business (B2B)

Furthermore, all businesses within this study but one are first generation, however, all have ambitions to build businesses that would last for generations. For instance, Peace, Ngodoo, Tor, Ayamya, Happy, Likita, and Nyari communicate they want their companies to outlive them, and run limited liability companies to achieve the goals of building institutions. Ayamya enacts a corporate board to be accountable to board of directors. Ayamya and Happy cite going to entrepreneurial training to strengthen their ventures accordingly.

*The desire to build something that would outlive me, for me it hasn't always been about me. It has been about building an organisation that would also build up people. To also build something that other people won't look and say 'they can build better'. So build something that people would use as an example how a company should be. We are not there yet but we'll get there (Likita).*

*I never wanted to have a business on the side. I wanted to build an institution; it's about having something that would outlive me that's why I needed the [entrepreneurship] course. I knew what I wanted but I couldn't explain it and after the business education I could break down my goals short-term and long-term (Ayamya).*

## **5.8. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

This findings chapter shows the results of the sub-questions within this study and comprehensively introduces the main themes. The chapter establishes the participants consider entrepreneurship their careers and navigate through internal and external environmental variables in the milieu to identify and develop opportunity. Table 40

depicts a summary of the findings grouped according to the career and opportunity triggers, preconditions and core process main themes, sub-themes and categories. The next discussion chapter draws from these to interpret the career and opportunity entrepreneurship process.

**Table 40: The Main Theme, Sub Theme and Categories**

Main theme	Sub-theme	Categories		
<b>Trigger/Alertness Process (Feasibility)</b>  <b>What do I want to do</b> Career and Business Idea (sector) identification /selection	Career Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intention</li> <li><b>Motivation</b></li> <li>▪ Independence,</li> <li>▪ Self-actualisation,</li> <li>▪ Creativity</li> <li>▪ Role model</li> <li>▪ Financial security</li> <li>▪ Hero or shero</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Autonomy</li> <li>▪ Technical competence</li> <li>▪ Creativity</li> <li>▪ Dedication to a cause</li> <li>▪ Pure challenge</li> <li>▪ Lifestyle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Necessity push</li> <li>▪ Opportunity pull</li> <li>▪ Serendipity</li> </ul>
	Opportunity Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Origin of Opportunity</b></li> <li>▪ Political changes</li> <li>▪ Economic Changes</li> <li>▪ Social changes</li> <li>▪ Technological changes</li> <li>▪ Environmental Changes</li> <li>▪ Legal Changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Nature of Opportunity</b></li> <li>▪ Market needs</li> <li>▪ Technology needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Sources of Information</b></li> <li>▪ Interests</li> <li>▪ Networks</li> <li>▪ Knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Precondition Process (Desirability)</b>  <b>What can I do/What do I have to use</b> Resources already possessed or tapped into	Career Antecedent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Psychological</b></li> <li>▪ Personality</li> <li>▪ Characteristics</li> <li>▪ Genetics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Sociological</b></li> <li>▪ Family background</li> <li>▪ Early childhood experience</li> <li>▪ Networks, and role models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Economic</b></li> <li>▪ Hobbies and interests</li> <li>▪ Prior Knowledge</li> <li>▪ Economic Resources</li> </ul>
	Opportunity Antecedent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Personality Characteristics</b></li> <li>▪ Personality traits</li> <li>▪ Self-efficacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Sociological/Networks</b></li> <li>▪ Friends and family</li> <li>▪ Role models, mentors</li> <li>▪ Business contacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Economic/Knowledge</b></li> <li>▪ Hobbies and interests</li> <li>▪ Experience</li> <li>▪ Education and training</li> </ul>

<p><b>Core Process (Propensity to Act) (Competence)</b></p> <p><b>How do I go about it</b> Resources used to begin and sustain operations (implementation)</p>	<p>Career Development</p>	<p><b>Identity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Legitimacy</li> <li>▪ Self-Employed</li> <li>▪ Business Owner</li> <li>▪ Trader, Leader, Sector e.g. Engineer</li> </ul> <p><b>Decision-Making Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Judgemental</li> <li>▪ Heuristics</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dilemmas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stress Management</li> <li>▪ Work-life Balance</li> <li>▪ Uncertainty Coping</li> <li>▪ Contextual Issues</li> <li>▪ Re-entry, Retire,</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vicarious &amp; Cognitive</li> <li>▪ Experiential</li> </ul>	<p><b>Outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Future Goals</li> <li>▪ Leverage Skills</li> <li>▪ Satisfaction</li> <li>▪ Psychological Wellbeing</li> </ul> <p><b>Operational Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Core Values</li> <li>▪ Structure</li> <li>▪ Planning</li> <li>▪ Sales &amp; Marketing</li> <li>▪ Human Resources</li> <li>▪ Competitive</li> <li>▪ Advantage</li> <li>▪ Partnerships</li> <li>▪ Technology</li> <li>▪ Contextual Issues</li> <li>▪ Diversification/Multi- Venture</li> </ul> <p><b>Exit and Re-entry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discontinuance</li> <li>▪ Re-entry</li> </ul>
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## **CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION**

### **ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER, OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

#### **6.0. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the main empirical findings and addresses the research objective to generate insight and examine influential factors, which facilitate the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process. The chapter organises the contribution to knowledge using the themes within chapter 5 to show concepts that corroborate, challenge, or enhance the phenomenon of the entrepreneurial career and opportunity. This chapter examines the trigger process to entrepreneurial careers, intentions, motives, anchors and employment drivers including the origins and nature of opportunity, and discusses the circumstantial entrepreneurial antecedents within psychology, economics and sociology, and finally shows the core process of developing the career and opportunity. These three processes collectively represent the entrepreneurial career and opportunity lifecycle.

#### **6.1. CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS**

This trigger concept discusses career identification/alertness and opportunity identification/alertness. Furthermore, studies (e.g. Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003; Kirzner, 1973, 2008; Nicolaou *et al.*, 2009) find that opportunity alertness ignites the entrepreneurial process. However, this research suggests an advancement from other studies, that both career and opportunity alertness trigger the entrepreneurship process (see table 32, and figure 9), and this departure is due to the dual focus on the entrepreneurial career and opportunity recognition while past studies only emphasise opportunity.

##### **6.1.1. Career Identification/Alertness**

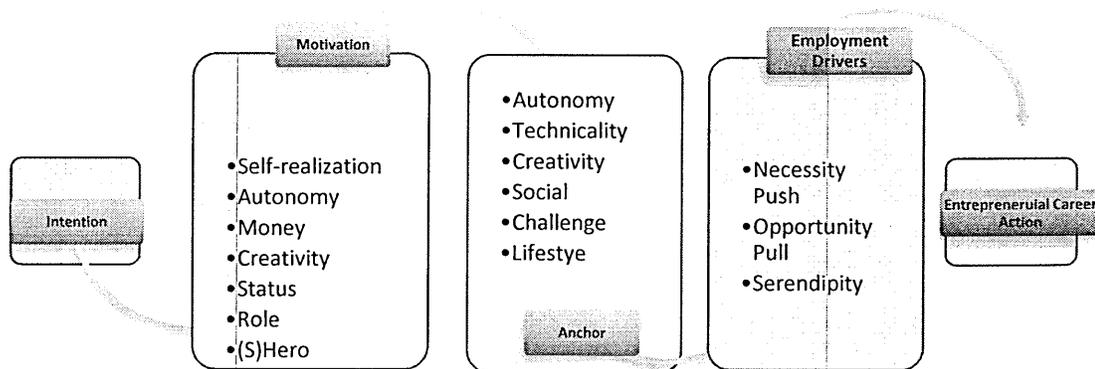
This study discovers that entrepreneurial career identification involves intentions, motivation, the self-concept, and employment choice drivers, which trigger the career.

While opportunity identification is driven by opportunity origins and the nature of market or technological/innovative needs.

### Career Intentions

This section constitutes a psychological contribution to the entrepreneurial career theory; through the discovery some individuals want to become their own bosses (career) before identifying how (an opportunity). Thus, prospective entrepreneurs have personal conviction of capacity to successfully operate a business, and these intentions adhere to Bandura’s (1977; 1986) theory of self-efficacy the personal conviction of outcomes being feasible and achievable. This is consistent to Shapero’s (1975, 1982) model of the entrepreneurial event that entrepreneurial intentions depend on perceptions of personal desirability, feasibility, and propensity to act. Hence, this study shows these Nigerian youths realise entrepreneurial intentions because they believe their desires are feasible and they possess the personal ability to operate as entrepreneurs (See figure 8).

**Figure 8: Intention to Entrepreneurial Career Action Link**



The empirical evidence shows intentions, motivation, career anchors and employment choice trigger/initiate entrepreneurial careers. These intentions are personal beliefs of feasibility, desirability, and propensity to act, while career motives include self-actualisation, autonomy, financial security, creativity, status, role, and (s) heroism goals. The career anchors are none-negotiable needs of autonomy, skills utilisation, innovation, giving back, challenge and lifestyle, while employment choice drivers are necessity push, opportunity pull and serendipity. Therefore, entrepreneurial intentions, motives, anchors and employment drivers elucidate the career/opportunity intentions-action relationship/link.

## Career Motives

This section constitutes a psychological contribution to the entrepreneurial career supporting that motivation produces entrepreneurial action. The findings shows career motives trigger latent intention into real action relative to Carsrud and Brannback (2011). Generally, in the enterprise literature the six entrepreneurial motives according to Carter *et al.* (2003) and Manolova *et al.* (2008) are self-actualisation, autonomy, financial security, creativity, status, and role. This research similarly discovers these plus an additional motive, that is, becoming an entrepreneur to become the family or community hero (male) or shero (female) to provide the needs of others. Therefore, within this study the seven motives for choosing an entrepreneurial career in order of importance are independence, self-actualisation, creativity, role model, financial security, hero or shero, and status, however different combinations rather than one initiate the entrepreneurial career.

This research similar to others (Carsrud and Brannback, 2009; Schumpeter; 1934) evidences these entrepreneurs pursuing dreams not necessarily for financial rewards. The clearest link to economic motives is that the underprivileged have higher prospects of improving their situation or social class consistent to the findings of (Anderson and Galloway, 2012; Casson, 2003a; Smith and Air, 2012), thus poverty is a motivation for the career as found in Collins *et al.* (1964) and the African studies of UNECA (2006) and Walter *et al.* (2004). Nevertheless, similar to Wade *et al.* (2003) poverty is not the sole motive for enterprise because all social classes engage and commit to entrepreneurship beyond the poor-boy-made good hero.

Furthermore, the motive of becoming the family or community hero (shero) occurs in this study regardless of social class. However, a possible explanation for this career motive as the findings and contextual literature shows is the deficiency of formal social security in the milieu makes dependence on relatives the custom. Hence, Diomande (1990) also discovers contributing to the community inspires African entrepreneurs to start ventures under resource-starved conditions. Thus, akin to (Harper, 2003; Nafziger 1977) the Western prominence on individualism and self-reliance differs to the African communal and family nexus especially when it comes to hero/shero career motives, although, the worldwide focus of social entrepreneurship is comparable to this motive but beyond the scope of this study.

The seven motives that trigger the entrepreneurial career in this study are combinations of independence seeking autonomy, self-actualisation following own goals, creativity driven by innovation, role models from having entrepreneurial family, seeking financial security, being a hero or shero to address family or community needs, or achieving status and these constitutes a psychological contribution.

### **Career Anchor**

The evidences show career anchors (self-concept) guide career identification, selection and sustenance. Basically, individuals remain entrepreneurs when they discover their self-concept as communicated in the careers literature (e.g. Lent *et al.*, 1987; Parson, 1909; Schein, 1978, 1996; Super, 1954). This corresponds to the theoretical contributions of the first proponent of career theory Parsons (1909), that personality, values, attitudes, perceived abilities, limitations, vocational skills, rewards, compensations and needs influence careers. Furthermore, this study disagrees with Super's (1955) theory of vocational choice that by the age of 35 most persons have stabilised within their careers but supports that the self-concept develops with time through adapting to changing career experiences. Thus, similar to Schein (1978, 1996) the self-concept emerges through obligatory choices relative to self-development, family and career situations, and these are basic career values, motives, desires and needs. Consequently, the self-concept/anchor enables career identification, and the six anchors found within this thesis are 'autonomy' pursuing own goals, 'technical competence' applying functional expertise, 'creativity' starting and managing personal projects, 'dedication to a cause' giving back, 'pure challenge' solving difficult issues, and 'lifestyle' the need for work-life balance. While 'general managerial competence' and 'security' are at variance given these entrepreneurs create their own jobs alternative to waged employment, or seeking mainstream job security. These anchors elucidate why participants identify the career and remain entrepreneurs.

### **Career Employment Choice**

This section constitutes an economic contribution to entrepreneurial career alertness, and finds that career identification occurs through three main decisions drivers, that is, preference (opportunity pull), available alternative (necessity push) and happenstance (serendipity). Hence, the narratives support Arenius and Minniti (2005) that entrepreneurship is an employment choice. Equally, ADB (2010) and FRN (2009) assert

Nigeria is a large economy but unfortunately there are many unemployed young people, hence these participants create personal careers through enterprise.

The push drivers include unemployment, poverty, and lack of opportunity, the situational trigger includes growing dissatisfaction and NYSC negative work experiences, which convinces for an entrepreneurial career also found by Dyer (1994). Therefore individuals through business ownership escape youth marginalisation, unemployment and workplace discrimination (Kets de Vries, 1977). Furthermore, the pull drivers include awareness of market conditions, creativity or strong desire to become their own boss and own a business similar to these findings (Acs, 2006; Arenius and Minniti, 2005; Bosma and Harding, 2007; Caliendo and Kritikos, 2009; Kuratko, 2009; Owualah, 1999; Reynolds and Curtin, 2008; Shane, 2003; Thurik, *et al.*, 2008; Van Stel *et al.*, 2007). However, some decisions are made in response to serendipity. Hence, this study supports psychologist Krumboltz (1998) who argues for the consideration of serendipity in career choices, the reality of the evidences is that occupational decisions are not always rational but involve unplanned events.

Additionally, past African youth entrepreneurship studies highlight necessity-driven entrepreneurship due to poverty and unemployment (e.g. Zambia-Chigunta, 2002b; Kinyanjui, 1996). Chapter 2 shows majority of discussions about Nigerian youths concern unemployment, however at variance, a popular view unemployed African youths are mostly pushed into entrepreneurship is contestable because this driver is relevant but not predominant. Going exclusively with this study, many Nigerian youths entrepreneurs are opportunity entrepreneurs but this may indicate simplification given the higher educational level of the participants. Also, the evidences shows instances of being both pushed and pulled into this career which positively increases the resolve to stay self-employed. Hence, the dichotomy between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurs can be oversimplified if one driver is generalised over the population. Furthermore, corroborating Synder (2004) those pushed embrace entrepreneurship as a long-term career plan. Thus, elements of inferred choice exists with the informal entrepreneurs because many start informal and later become formal through ambition and exponential growth. Hence, this study proposes that informal or necessity entrepreneurs are invaluable to society and with support could become Schumpeterian entrepreneurs, as Elkan (1988) demonstrates in a general study of African entrepreneurs (Nigeria included). Basically, entrepreneurship is a feasible work strategy creating self-employment and generating jobs.

Furthermore, this study establishes entrepreneurship is an employment choice given individuals process information comparing subjective returns against alternatives, and the subjective return to enterprise is positive (Minniti and Bygrave, 1999). A finding consistent to the concept of expected utility maximisation that demonstrates being self-employed outweighs employment (Campbell, 1992; Douglas and Shepherd, 2000, 2002; Hardman and Connolly, 2009). Additionally, regardless of the career drivers individuals make the 'subjective decision' to pursue entrepreneurial careers or, became entrepreneurs through the 'subjective decision' to pursue opportunity. A finding consistent to Goffman (1961) is that entrepreneurship is a socially recognised career.

This study finds that enterprise career identification subjective employment choices are driven by opportunity pull, necessity push or serendipity and this is an economic contribution to the model in chapter 7.

### **6.1.2. Opportunity Identification/ Alertness**

This section contributes to knowledge regarding opportunity identification elucidating the origins and nature of entrepreneurial opportunity. The study shows that the origins of opportunity include access to PESTEL information and ability to process this information to identify opportunity. The natures of such information or business sector ideas are spotting market needs or technology/innovative needs, and this knowledge contributes to the opportunity alertness (origins and nature) sources shown within the model in the conclusion chapter.

#### **Origins of Opportunity**

This study finds responding to change through processing information is meaningful to opportunity identification. The origins of opportunity are generally PESTEL external environmental changes, and/or information deriving from personal environments such as passion/hobbies, education, training, friends, family, mentors, and colleagues. Therefore, ability to utilise different mental connections to perceive, retain, retrieve and interpret information about industries, technologies, markets, and government policies assists processing information into viable market needs consistent to other studies (Baron, 2006, 2012; Barr and Shepherd, 2006; Casson, 2003a, 2010; Gregiore *et al.*, 2010; Shane, 2003; Ozgen and Baron, 2007; Wennekers, 2006). Hence, opportunity is

identified through individual perception and connecting dots between events that appeared independent of each other (Baron, 2006; 2012).

Furthermore, differences in educational level, life experiences, and temperament affects opportunity decisions, this study shows those more educated are involved in more technical fields than the least educated. Hence, Nigerian entrepreneurship sector choices arise from differences in cognition, available information and personal interpretation, which support the findings of (Baron, 2004; 2006; Beeka, 1993; Casson, 2010) that personal experiences, attitudes, values, emotions, and needs influence the internal processing of information. Those part of cooperatives and less educated have limited information and sector identification ability, opposed to those with higher education, entrepreneurial expertise and managerial capacity, the latter implies better information search intensity (Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2006).

This study substantiates (Kirzner, 1973, 2008; Minniti and Bygrave, 1999) that to become an entrepreneur requires coping with uncertainty and utilising superior alertness to identify market needs amidst discontinuous changes. The study demonstrates opportunity identification occurs through systematic search, which involves deliberate search for new portfolios, formal business planning and evaluation or spontaneous exploration (Casson, 2010), including serendipity knowledge (Dew, 2009; Schumpeter, 1934; Vesper, 1980). Related to Casson (2003a) there are also examples of identifying and incubating business ideas but only implementing after years.

### **Nature of Opportunity**

The findings regarding the nature of opportunity demonstrates entrepreneur's process irregular information, respond or initiate change consistent to the theoretical contributions of Kirzner's (1979, 1999, 2008) alertness and Schumpeter's (1934, 1947) creative response, respectively. This study finds the nature of opportunity identification is knowledge of 'market needs' or innovatively providing 'technological needs'.

Furthermore, the nature of opportunity includes connecting market or technological needs to price patterns, technological prospects, and potential future demand relative to Kirzner (2008). This involves making connections between changes in technology, industrial structures, consumer differentiation, demographics, culture, modernisation, (de) regulation and privatisation the IT boom (NCP, 2000; Wennekers, 2006). Within

this study deregulation enables ambitious entrepreneurs take advantage of a combination of “circumstances, technology and government reforms”. Furthermore, given socio-demographic changes the young from rural areas readily migrate to urban areas seeking a better life relative to the findings of (Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; Salami, 2011). Generally, all entrepreneurs within this study operate from urban areas influenced by increasing demographic changes, modernisation, urbanisation, technological advancement and an expanding consumer economy, including increasing disposal income (Olson, 1986). Additionally, the country's youthful population enables market opportunities in entertainment, catering, the national park, IT, manufacturing, holistic beauty and so on. Hence, through ‘analysis heuristics’ entrepreneurs’ process information and ‘synthesis heuristics’ gain perspective to exploit the spotted opportunity (Wickham, 2003).

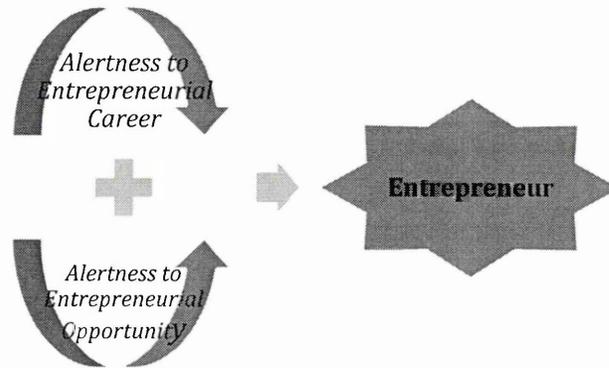
Therefore, at the micro level, market ideas originate from a combination of serendipity, systematic search, and advice from social networks- mentors, formal and informal industry networks, including prior knowledge in the form of interests, hobbies, education, training, and past experiences. While from a macro external environmental level, the changes are political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal in nature. Furthermore, consistent to the creative response theory of Schumpeter (1947) innovative entrepreneurs create, expand and modify markets. Hence, the 'nature' of opportunity akin to (Olson, 1986) is awareness of market and technology needs.

### **6.1.3. Bilateral Entrepreneurial Decision**

This study discovers the decision to become an entrepreneur is bilateral rather than unilateral (see table 32) and these two dimensions support the theoretical contributions of Shapero's model of firm creation (model of entrepreneurial event) which proffer the decision to venture begins from perceptions that business start-up is achievable, additional to a displacing event (Kruger, 1993). This entrepreneurial career decision and instigating event is a phenomenon mentioned by few scholars such as Bhave (1994), Brockhaus (1987) and Meeks (2004); entrepreneurship literature sparsely clarifies this link. However, given empirical evidences this research corroborates the contributions of Meeks (2004) that conceptualising the entrepreneurial decision as unilateral presents issues. The bilateral element involves alertness to the entrepreneurial career “*I always*

wanted to be an entrepreneur" and alertness to entrepreneurial opportunity "I can't work for anybody now that I've discovered self-employment" pursuing opportunity to become an entrepreneur. Hence, the decision to become an entrepreneur is bilateral and occurs through alertness to both the career and opportunity (table 32 and generated figure 9).

**Figure 9: Bilateral Entrepreneurial Decision**



The practical implication is that those who want to become self-employed can find ideas through searching the sources, origins and nature of opportunity to identify business sectors. Similarly, those who discover opportunity could identify their motivation, career anchor and employment driver to sustain interest and outcomes especially during periods of uncertainty.

## **6.2. CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY PRECONDITION PROCESS**

The precondition process concept discusses influential circumstantial findings regarding the antecedents to the entrepreneurial career and opportunity. The psychological, sociological and economic factors in Table 40 encourage the initiation and development of the entrepreneurial career and opportunity to elucidate the question what supports the entrepreneurial career and opportunity recognition.

### **6.2.1. Personality Characteristics**

The evidences suggest the intangibles of personality characteristics and competencies are important preconditions which facilitate the entrepreneurial career (personality characteristics and genetics) and opportunity (personality characteristics and self-efficacy), and this section constitutes a psychological contribution to career and opportunity antecedents.

## **Psychological Characteristics and Genetics**

This study discovers entrepreneurs are attracted to this career because it suits their personality, values, perceived ability, attitude, skills and needs and this is consistent with the career theories in chapter 3 (e.g. Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Ginzberg *et al.*, 1951; Holland, 1959, 1985; Parson, 1909; Savickas and Lent, 1994; Stitt-Gohdes, 1997; Schein, 1996; Super, 1954), that these entrepreneurs seek out the best environment to support their role (self-concept) developed through heredity, life history, and environmental demands. Furthermore, expanding on genetics, this research does not envisage that any participant would acknowledge the role of genetics in entrepreneurship, but literature supports this, and Schumpeter (1947) suggests entrepreneurial functions are biologically transferrable. Similarly, Nicolaou *et al.* (2008) provides empirical evidences that genetic factors are important psychological compositions. Hence, this study accepts career attractiveness due to genetics that some entrepreneurs are born, but going solely with this study, it is possible that having an entrepreneurial family member is attributed to genetics because in the absence of further empirical tests the narratives show vicarious encouragement into the career. Lindquist *et al.* (2012) however argues for both positions, that entrepreneurs are born and nurtured.

The study establishes that entrepreneurial characteristics reveal those with capacity to proactively initiate and actualise career plans. This self-confidence arises from expected success consistent to the SCCT, which extends that career choices originate from combinations of culture, gender, genetics, social context and unexpected life events (Savickas and Lent, 1994; Stitt-Gohdes, 1997). For instance, experience and positive successes shape the decision to become self-employment, and future aspirations increase confidence in entrepreneurial functions creating awareness of personal competence. Similarly, attitude to risk is important for choosing the entrepreneurial career. Therefore, personality characteristics including genetics are important antecedents for the entrepreneurial career.

## **Personality Characteristics, Traits and Self-efficacy**

The study shows some firms are an extension of the founders personality just as Chell *et al.* (1997) asserts personalities lead and shape enterprises. This research similar to some of the literature does not measure traits but consistent to the general literature observes, need for achievement, internal locus of control, risk-taking propensity, ambiguity

tolerance, over-optimism and autonomy needs (Delmar, 2000; Low and Macmillan, 1988; McClelland, 1961). Furthermore, coherent with McClelland's (1961) 'The Achieving Society' these Nigerian entrepreneurs dislike monotonous work, have high achievement needs, take risk and are responsible for their actions, and learn from decisions. They are highly motivated, have high locus of control, seek autonomy, believe in ability to actualise their destiny, and have strong self-efficacy. The finding also demonstrates comparable to Schumpeter (1947) these entrepreneurs have personal qualities of boldness, imagination and creativity. Likewise, similar to McElwee (2006) these study entrepreneurs have personal qualities that include attitude, charisma, and being able to spot deals. This study shows that entrepreneurial characteristics and traits are important antecedents that support opportunity identification and development especially when these come together serendipitously, but no definite personal characteristic embodies the Nigerian youth entrepreneur.

Furthermore, the evidences suggest a strong correlation between self-efficacy and opportunity development. Similar to the discussion regarding the theory of self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions, self-efficacy assists with business venturing, handling situations, identifying opportunities and threats (Bandura, 1997; Krueger and Dickson, 1993). Smith and Air (2013) reason the efficacious believe in their ability to change situations to achieve desirable outcomes. Therefore, this research shows that self-efficacy is a valuable precondition to opportunity career identification and opportunity exploitation. Other researchers (Arenius and Minniti, 2005; Shane, 2003; Davidsson, 2006; Kuratko, 2009) support those with higher self-efficacy exploit opportunities more than those with less self-efficacy.

This study discovers comparable to Rauch and Frese (2007) that these task-related personality characteristics encourage entrepreneurship "need for achievement, innovativeness, proactive personality, generalised self-efficacy, stress-tolerance, need for autonomy, internal locus of control and risk-taking" and these indicate the practical relationship between personalities and competency (Casson, 2010). The study finds entrepreneurial behaviour similar to Casson (2010, p. 160-61) that entrepreneurs confidently exercise judgment, challenge conventional thinking, openly defend minority views, oppose status quos, advocate change, are modernisers and improvers rather than conservationist, sleep at night aware of a self-determined destiny, readily accept blame for any career failures, and take full responsibility for outcomes. They favour results

rather than intentions, are pragmatic, self-motivated and achievement-oriented opposed to conformist, and status conscious. Therefore, personality characteristics importantly elucidate the behaviour beneficial to the pursuit of the career and opportunity.

### **6.2.2. Knowledge**

This section constitutes an economic contribution to the entrepreneurial career and opportunity process revealing that knowledge is an influential antecedent to the career and opportunity. This study supports that existing knowledge, prior experience; education, training, aptitude and behaviour constitute human capital important to the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development.

#### **Prior knowledge and Career Choice**

This study finds prior knowledge is an important antecedent, which contributes to familiarisation, and inclination toward the enterprise career. Hence, early lives influenced by family enterprises, education, first jobs, vocational, and professional learning prepares for an entrepreneurial career, and this is consistent to these findings (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003; Campbell, 1992; Dyer, 1994; Gregoire *et al.*, 2010; Owualah, 1999; Rae, 2000; Shane, 2000). Therefore, vocational opportunities are identified through hobbies, past employment in certain sectors that build technical skills, industry experience, and management experience. These early trade experiences include assisting parents; the family business or personally starting micro and small ventures and these previous activities built human capital and encourage the entrepreneurial career choice. Kolvereid *et al.* (2009) states experience is the most important factor to becoming an entrepreneur. This study generally discovers five antecedent career experiences “general, functional, industry, start-up experience and vicarious experience” (see table 22).

Bosma and Harding (2007) state those employed full and part-time are more likely to become nascent entrepreneurs rather than the unemployed, students or retirees. This is at variance with this study, which shows a strong career pull amongst students and the educated, including the unemployed. Furthermore, given the higher graduate rate of the participants; educated youths are attracted to self-employment. Chigunta *et al.* (2005) discovers in Zambia a connection between educational attainment and enterprise. Hence, there is high educational completion within African youths, while those in the informal sector become self-employed as alternative employment. Finally, knowledge and

competency in recombining economic factors of production facilitates and enables the entrepreneurial career.

### **Prior Knowledge and Opportunity Recognition**

This study finds knowledge influential to the discovery and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunity, and this is consistent to Theodore Schultz who emphasises the prominence of human capital in entrepreneurship (Jennings, 1994). This study similar to (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003; Campbell, 1992; Krueger, 1993; Shane 2000, 2003; Storey, 2011) finds that prior work in other small ventures assists learning business processes and functions, including building network of suppliers and buyers. The evidences show past knowledge of commerce, markets and customer concerns (Ardichvili *et al.* (2003), and business or management experience (Hanna, 2004; Shane, 2003) assists opportunity identification and exploitation. Likewise, many of these entrepreneurs operate in hobby areas (Scott and Twomey, 1988) and being young the lack of business exposure or experience is compensated with a focus on passion and interests, which eases the need to keep searching for opportunities. Furthermore, this study supports that idiosyncratic knowledge explains ability to identify and exploit opportunity (Dew 2009; Eckhart and Shane, 2003; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Idiosyncratic knowledge facilitates ability to recognise what others overlook (Gregoire *et al.*, 2010; Kirzner, 2008), and practical competency to successfully exploit opportunity, utilise persuasion, accountancy, Law, IT knowledge (Casson, 2010). Vesper (1980) asserts serendipity is a factor mentioned by entrepreneurs in opportunity recognition, but in reality work experience is the deciding factor. This study agrees that human capital supports opportunity recognition.

Utilising the analogy of Smith (1967) this study finds two types of entrepreneurs through reliance solely on educational differences the craftsmen (henceforth called craftsperson) and opportunistic entrepreneur. The opportunistic are educated, confident, have bigger businesses, operate with more portfolios, have higher sales growth, and make more innovative decisions, lesser for the craftsperson. This finding supports Reynolds and Curtin (2008) and Shane (2003) that entrepreneurship better integrates highly educated or skilled minorities (youths) into the economy. However, Krueger (1993) argues prior knowledge could also be limiting because some experiences are non-transferable, for instance, craft persons cannot comprehend or possibly start opportunity-type firms. At variance this study finds that given time, education and

experience some craftsmen do become opportunistic or Schumpeterian entrepreneurs, through growth making the informal to formal business transition. Hence, prior experience and business practice connection is inconclusive (Storey, 2011). Nevertheless, this study finds those more educated or vocationally trained have greater capacity to handle the harsh environment comparable to (Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Elkan, 1988; Grable and Lytton, 1998; Mead and Liedholm, 1998; Marsden, 1992). These entrepreneurs operate formal ventures in knowledge-based sectors, utilise advanced technology, are better equipped to handle business risks, employ different operational strategies and assimilate contrary to the less educated who are informal or part of co-operatives.

Furthermore, formal education within the country is inadequate in developing enterprise skills (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011; Beeka, 1981; Gibbs, 1987; Oviawe, 2010; Salami, 2011). However, entrepreneurship training courses and other practical training through networks such as peer training and apprenticeships, improve sector ability and these progress personal and technical skills (Casson, 2003a; Mueller and Thomas, 2000). This study finds that targeted education empowers opportunity capacity, competency, access to appropriate networks, and equality (Casson, 2010). Hence, formal education needs revamping toward building entrepreneurial capacity.

This study concludes that idiosyncratic knowledge and human capital are prerequisite to the entrepreneurial career enhancing opportunity identification and exploitation.

### **6.2.3. Social Networks**

This study contributes empirical evidences that social networks influence the entrepreneurial career enabling vocational socialisation, including opportunity identification and development through friends and family, role models and contacts, and this constitutes a sociological contribution to the career and opportunity process.

### **Career Socialisation**

This research finds that individual background and networks predisposes the young toward the entrepreneurial career similar to other studies (Arenius and Minniti 2005; Bosma *et al.*, 2012; Casson *et al.*, 2006; Collins *et al.*, 1964; Delmar and Davidsson, 2000; Diomande, 1990; Dyer, 1994; Gibb, 1987; Gibson, 2004; Granovetter, 1985, 2005; Gregoire *et al.*, 2010; Kuratko, 2009; Lindquist *et al.*, 2012; Morrison, 2000;

Nicolaou *et al.*, 2008; Owualah, 1999; Ray, 2007; Shane, 2000; Steier *et al.*, 2009; Thomas and Mueller, 2000). These youths are conditioned into the career by parents, friends, relatives, and other entrepreneurs (known) and unknown (e.g. media, community). These social structures therefore stimulate careers, and shape interest to available opportunities (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997). This study finds parental enterprise background or informal advice influences the career (Blenkinsopp *et al.*, 2006). Additionally, through having entrepreneurial parents or grandparents some believe enterprise is genetic; this study supports Lindquist *et al.* (2012) that some entrepreneurs are born while others are nurtured into an entrepreneurial career.

Furthermore, this study shows that consistent with the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) through observing entrepreneurial behaviour career socialisation and learning occurs. There are clear links between role models and entrepreneurial intentions (Bosma *et al.*, 2012), with successful entrepreneurial stories from the communities and media important because many young participants decide to pursue the career influenced by the enterprise identity, behaviour examples and opinion of others (Ajzen, 1991; Akerlof and Kranton, 2000; Bosma *et al.*, 2012). Generally, this study shows that knowing other entrepreneurs positively impacts and legitimises entrepreneurial ambitions (Davidsson and Wiklund, 1997; Mueller, 2006), this legitimacy encourages that entrepreneurship is a feasible career path.

### **Social Networks and Opportunity Recognition**

This study finds that social networks support the identification and exploitation of opportunity. This corroborates the social network principles of Granovetter (1985, 2005) and the opportunity antecedents of Ardichvili *et al.* (2003) that social relationships through weak-ties, dense and multiple networks, plus embeddedness influence personal and institutional behaviour. This study consistent to Casson (2010) finds at the opportunity identification stage sector ideas and validation occurs from second-hand information obtained from friends, family, colleagues and customers. At exploration networks enable access to 'elite social networks', 'gate-keepers' and other multiple and diverse networks. At exploitation networks assist to create markets, generate new customers, provide employees and establish links with trade hubs, information synergy, widespread distribution and connection to diverse sources of raw materials (Casson, 2010). This study finds the utilisation of vast networks positively influences venturing.

Furthermore, similar to the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) for these entrepreneurs role models enhance self-efficacy and provide knowledge about opportunity exploitation (Arenius and Minniti 2005; Shane 2003). Bosma et al. (2012) assert role models inspire growth and future ambitions in older and better-experienced firms but questions the effects of role models on those with no prior entrepreneurial experience. However, in contrast this study finds role models important for sector learning and human capital development in both new and existing entrepreneurs.

Additionally, due to difficulty in accessing funds from traditional institutions social capital from networks for the entrepreneurs within this study are very important sources of funding. Also, social bonding occurs between networks (friends, family, role-models, other youth entrepreneurs) for emotional support, encouragement, business advice and mentorship (Wennekers, 2006).

Overall, the finding about networks empirically supports the theoretical contribution of Giddens (1977) theory of structuration that all entrepreneurs are embedded within their social context and this study supports that understanding the milieu assists entrepreneurs cope with difficult issues because entrepreneurship involves extracting value from the environment (Giddens, 1977, 1987; Jack and Anderson, 2002; Sarason *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, entrepreneurs thrive because opportunities, resources and actions to realise ambitions are connected to social structures. Networks are valuable antecedents because entrepreneurs are alert to opportunities in their milieu that others overlook and understand business development within their operational environments.

### **6.3. CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

This core process section contributes to knowledge regarding the development of the entrepreneurial career and opportunity. The study finds through immersing in the massive narrative data that there is no single lifecycle pattern to the career or opportunity advancement nonetheless the comprehensive commonalities (see table 40) are valuable to the development process and these findings contribute to the conceptual model in the conclusion chapter. Furthermore, in light of the novel evidences this section introduces and discusses new literature surrounding entrepreneurship experiences (emotions, dilemmas, and outcomes).

#### **6.3.1. Entrepreneurial Career Development**

This study finds the career lifecycle involves legitimising the identity, handling dilemmas and emotions in pursuit of desired entrepreneurial career outcomes.

### **Entrepreneurial Emotions and Experience**

The career literature advocates developing career theory requires understanding the internal and external sequence of life (Arthur *et al.*, 1987; Dyer, 1994; Goffman, 1961), and this study establishes the entrepreneur (agency) and experience are central to the career, opportunity identification and development process. This research supports that entrepreneurs are the micro foundation of entrepreneurship and need more recognition in process studies (Abell *et al.*, 2008). The literature review chapter (3) does not really address entrepreneurial emotions, which is contained within this section because this study surprisingly finds during the data analysis that emotions are an intrinsic part of the entrepreneurial career process. Hence, while the literature review chapter indicates gaps in entrepreneurial career theory, and acknowledges the role of cognition in opportunity recognition the venture creation process to leverage skills, resources and build legitimacy needs more research (Abell *et al.*, 2008). Thus, entrepreneurial emotions, in reference to affect, emotions, moods, passion and feelings within the entrepreneurial process are at the heart of entrepreneurship and a hot understudied topic (Cardon *et al.*, 2012). Similarly, Schindehutte *et al.* (2006) declares the entrepreneurial process; venture creation and growth are often studied extensively remaining silent about the “experience” of entrepreneurship. Essentially, what entrepreneurs experience cognitively and emotionally on their journey because as Smith and McElwee (2011) express, the real-life impact of negative emotions are important. Hence, Baron (2008) through the concept of ‘affect’ asserts feelings and moods influence opportunity recognition, resources acquisition, developing broad networks, response capacity and tolerance for intense stress. Affect also influences cognition and behaviour particularly in unpredictable situations, and discontinuous changes results in inability to ‘follow well-learned scripts’ requiring adaptations along the journey.

An empirical contribution within this study is the finding that the entrepreneurship career is often a revolving door of numerous entries and exits as part of the lifecycle (Stokes *et al.*, 2010), but this fact is missing in prevailing single venture entrepreneurship studies (Ronstadt, 1986, 1988, 2002). This study is able to show that habitual venturing sustains the entrepreneurial career (Westhead *et al.*, 2011). Hence, entrepreneurship is a 'dynamic multi venture process' and more studies need to reflect

this reality (Ronstadt, 2002, p.32). Furthermore, this study demonstrates the entrepreneurial context has peaks and valleys characterised by relatively high pressure, stress, uncertainty, ambiguity, additional to stable and predictable periods. Therefore, more studies should advance entrepreneurship as a vehicle for optimum human experience (Schindehutte *et al.*, 2006). This study finds senses and emotions deep-rooted components of the entrepreneurial experience and career.

### **Career Identity**

The entrepreneurial career is an identity (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000), and this study empirically shows the young have capacity to become entrepreneurs because this is a socially recognisable vocation and opportunity exploitation creates the career identity (Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Grossman and Stone, 1964). These entrepreneurs pursue enterprise within a harsh environment because career identities arise from personal definitions (Van Maanen, 1977).

Therefore, for the entrepreneurs who want to become their own boss the desire for the identity motivates entrepreneurial behaviour. The evidence shows the individual and firm can have one identity, and this reinforces Stauss (1944) strong assertion that the entrepreneur is the firm, the main decision-maker and head. Also, using the classification theory of Webster (1977) (table 15) these entrepreneurs are industry-makers, administrative entrepreneurs, and small business operators, absent are the independent entrepreneur category, but few surpass this phase to become administrative entrepreneurs. However, this study finds that some entrepreneurs hardly refer to themselves as entrepreneurs (Van Maanen and Barley, 1984) but often mention their vocational backgrounds e.g. Network engineer, photographer, project manager or the proactive nature of activity e.g. hustler (go-getter), trader, retailer, and so on which is understandable given none of these entrepreneurs have undertaken career counselling (FRN, 2009) to confidently accept the term 'entrepreneur'.

Additionally, with career progression the identity can become a watershed from either defining the role or gaining approval from society. The two ways in which identities forms are through the individual and generally through what society finds acceptable, which is, the shared definition for successful careers. This study shows parental and societal issues with young entrepreneurs and these factors influence entrepreneurial legitimacy (Goffman, 1959; Shane, 2003; Smith and Air, 2012; Van Maanen, 1977).

From the formal to the informal, all entrepreneurs encounter, at one point or another acceptance issues. Hence, given the dualism of structure, failure to negotiate a position in the social world, or meet performance expectations obstructs the entrepreneurial career identity and opportunity. However this study shows that regardless of societal discouragement, through individual 'specificity' enterprise identities are created regardless of the collective values, attitudes, behaviour and characteristics prevalent in society (Morrison, 2000).

These entrepreneurs evidentially show commitment to the career, because the least experience in the current businesses is two and the maximum nineteen years. The entrepreneurs encounter failures but remain resilient pursuing more opportunities rather than quitting, which establishes young entrepreneurs (formal and informal) consider entrepreneurship their career. Essentially, it is a vital identity and substantial lifestyle (Reynolds and White, 1997; Synder, 2004). Hence, this study finds young entrepreneurs consider entrepreneurship a work identity and 'long-term career plan'.

### **Duality of Structure and Specificity**

This study finds surprising and noteworthy instances of social structure duality (Giddens, 1977, 1987). The evidence shows the environment optimistically and pessimistically influences youth entrepreneurship, hence the term 'dualism of structure'. The positives being tangible and intangible support from networks, and the negatives ambitious and capable individuals discouraged from entrepreneurial careers (Casson *et al.*, 2006; Chigunta, 2002b; Schoof, 2006). This study shows social networks and society, for instance, parents advise the young to get jobs rather than pursue entrepreneurship, and this negative effect on youth enterprise is similar to (Chigunta, 2002b; Magnus, 2004; Theil, 2008; World Economic Forum, 2009). Also, relative to the informal participants constantly facing harassment, Smith and Air (2012) affirm entrepreneurs are seen as the 'pinnacle of achievement' yet minorities are considered the reverse of anything entrepreneurial. This study suggests the aversion toward female and youth enterprise unfortunately needs addressing because these affect entrepreneurial success and failure. Through context duality, individuals are both empowered and discouraged by social structures through the entrepreneurial process. Nevertheless, supporting the findings of (Jack and Anderson, 2002; Sarason *et al.*, 2006) external environmental influences are conflicting but uneven concentration on barriers shifts focus away from understanding the successful micro actions young entrepreneurs

undertake to start and sustain entrepreneurship. Essentially, through ‘cultural specificity’ (Morrison, 2000) individuals venture and overcome dominating environmental forces (Chell, 2000). Therefore, given structuration and the interdependence of actors (participants) and social systems, these entrepreneurs’ utilise social networks at different stages for advice, vicarious learning or gathering resources, and even when structure limits behaviour, as reflected in discouragements, entrepreneurs are capable of focusing on other networks or acting independently (Giddens, 1977, 1991).

### **Career Dilemmas**

This section contributes to the negative emotions research by documenting entrepreneurial career dilemmas. The results provide important insights into personal and business dilemmas. Hence, this study finds that anyone could pursue entrepreneurship but the activity involves obstacles (Casson, 2003a; Dyer, 1994). These obstacles include stress, achieving work-life balance, aiming for business competency, dealing with venture strategies and other youth specific and gender issues, plus planning for career and enterprise longevity.

Personally these entrepreneurs deal with stress, uncertainty, and ambiguity, therefore, relative to the contributions of Schindehutte et al. (2006) more models could incorporate the “*sensory*” and “*emotional*” experience of entrepreneurship, given these affect growth, stress levels, ability to balance work and personal life demands, operational strategies, management styles, firm exit strategies, on-going and changing motives, cognitive processes, and the self-concept.

The study finds that over the lifetime of entrepreneurial careers various personal, family and work dilemmas require role adaptation (Dyer, 1994; Schein, 1978), and inability to handle the negatives could cause career change (Smith and McElwee, 2011). Hence, despite institutional issues and bureaucracy these entrepreneurs cope with the harsh environment and the dilemmas, seeing opportunities more than threats, they continue to efficaciously make decisions, think on their feet, manage finances, reduce spending, build networks and client bases; set aside family days, even attend gyms to think, and these enable personal career endurance, especially within this context with high uncertainty, entrepreneurial emotions tips the balance more than in predictable environments (Baron, 2008).

## **Failure, Dilemma and Entrepreneuring (Exit and Entry)**

This study finds that the life cycle of the entrepreneurial career involves firm entry and exit (Stokes *et al.*, 2010). Hence, a substantial dilemma is the threat or actual failure of the firm and career. The evidences discover the career lifecycle of entry and exit occurs at different stages, which verifies, “*I realised that business or entrepreneurship is not about sticking to one idea, it's an experience*”. These entrepreneurs learn through failure, and have experience of more than one, other than one single firm entry and exit. Hence, when ideas or business fails these entrepreneurs temporarily suffer shame, stress and other negative emotions before accepting responsibility to recover (Smith and McElwee, 2011; Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2010). These entrepreneurs can now cope because experience of the career shows they can restart new or multiple businesses and have overcome the fear of failure (Hannadi, 2010). Therefore, through successes and the failures of multiple venturing, portfolio enterprise sustains careers (Vesper, 1980).

*It fairly frequently happens that one entrepreneur will start a venture, possibly succeeding in it, possibly not, and regardless whether it succeeds or not, go on to start a second new venture, a third, and so on, building an entire career on entrepreneuring (Vesper 1980, p. 80).*

This study captures this reality of developing and extending the career through diversification. These entrepreneurs mitigate their risks, and own several ventures some creating a series of successful ventures (Stokes *et al.*, 2010; Westhead *et al.*, 2011). This study demonstrates that entrepreneurship career exits are lower than venture exits, and this is because personal goals sustain the entrepreneur therefore when firm failure occurs few entrepreneurs abandon venturing (Ronstadt, 1986).

Similarly, the evidences support scholars (Carter *et al.*, 1996; Minniti and Bygrave, 2001; Segal *et al.*, 2005; Smith and McElwee, 2011; Storey, 2004) that provide alternate failure views, and challenging figures against the over-emphasis on firm failure (Headd, 2003; Kirchhoff, 1994; Philip and Kirchhoff, 1989; Stokes *et al.*, 2010). This study suggests educators and society need to better communicate the misconception many businesses fail in the first year, because overstressing these cause low youth enterprise expectations and choosing the career (Segal *et al.*, 2005). Smith and McElwee (2011) advise educators need to communicate that recovery is possible after temporary helplessness and there is a future after failure.

This study supports Farley (2000) that, more youths need to realise uncertainty, risk, and failure are recurrent in life, and that career re-entrants view past experiences as valuable street education learning. This finding indicates the entrepreneurial career requires resilience, not giving up on entrepreneuring, learning and moving onto the next experience more knowledgeable. Thus, having (or developing) a positive mind-set and competency to recombine scarce resources is necessary to survive (exit & re-enter) and sustain the entrepreneurial career. Hence, during firm failure the founder remains an entrepreneur through starting another venture (entrepreneuring).

### **Entrepreneurial Career Outcomes**

This study shows active utilisation of abilities and skills to pursue entrepreneurial career goals and derive gratification enables wellbeing. All businesses have reached the two-year mark, which suggests career commitment, and this section tackles the question raised by Feldman and Bolino (2000) that even with increase in self-employment little studies address the extent to which entrepreneurship fulfils important needs. This study discovers although enterprise motives differ, these entrepreneurs are generally satisfied with their careers and lives, and they express this through using their skills to pursue their passion, career outcomes, job satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, and future career plans. Hence, for many the entrepreneurial career is a lifetime goal (Reynolds and Curtain, 2008).

Additionally, this study finds that awareness of motives and career anchors/self-concept keeps the internal career intact especially when experiencing traumatic changes in the external career (Schein, 1996) hence younger people need to become aware of their anchors. Likewise, benchmarking against Parsons (1909) "The Wise Choice of a Vocation" these entrepreneurs know what they want from a career; understand their selves, cognitive and technical abilities, and these create job satisfaction. The OECD (2001) similarly shows that young self-employed individuals boast higher 'life satisfaction' like the female entrepreneurial satisfaction from achieving work-life balance and lifestyles within this study that encourages the persistence seen in extreme threat situations.

Furthermore, enterprise facilitates self-development, independence and self-esteem (Anderson and Galloway, 2012), and this study shows entrepreneurship enables the less

privileged to better their lives, hence (Casson, 2003a) and Smith and Air (2012) argue that entrepreneurship is seen as ideal field for the underprivileged to get to the top of society through personal merit, yet encounter social and economic barriers. Nevertheless, within this study prospects remain higher for the disadvantaged (minority youths, the informal) to improve their positions within society rather than any other field (Casson, 2003a). Additionally, this study agrees through the obstacles and demands of the entrepreneurial process; periods of ultimate performances are self-actualising resulting in peak experience, self-validation, fulfilment and joy, (Schindehutte *et al.*, 2006). Hence to an extent, the entrepreneurship experience often becomes the reward influencing further entrepreneurial pursuits and the push for more achievements. Schumpeter (1934) equally captures this finding that when entrepreneurs pursue dreams, financial results become by-products of victory, and as the joy of creativity and ingenuity takes over, entrepreneurs endure dilemmas for the ultimate goal. These participants have their own definitions for success and delight in continuous personal achievements. This study evidences psychological satisfaction central to why these Nigerian youth become self-employed, stick to an entrepreneurial career, and consider it a viable career. Hence, consistent to Chigunta (2002b) African entrepreneurs consider entrepreneurship an employment option. Therefore, identical to the contributions of Green and Amat (2012) entrepreneurship is a legitimate way to earn a living, and hence can become a mainstream career.

### **6.3.2. Entrepreneurial Opportunity Development**

The study finds the entrepreneurial process initiated through alertness, supported through preconditions culminates into the entrepreneurial identity and entity (firm) through venture operations. This section discusses the opportunity development elements of decision-making, learning, operational strategies including exit and re-entry.

#### **Decision-making Strategy**

This study finds the complete process of the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development involves making decisions, and this supports that entrepreneurial thinking is a universal culture and entrepreneurs worldwide share distinctive cognitive processes (Mitchell *et al.*, 2002a, c). This study finds entrepreneurs utilise two central decision types throughout the process, that is, judgmental (rational)

and heuristics (bias), with the latter more noticeable during nascent stages, or when there is little information available to make rational judgements.

First, entrepreneurs make judgmental decisions to recombine scarce resources, and these are rational, calculated and deliberate (Casson, 2003a, 2010). Secondly, heuristic decisions involve making decisions on ones feet given incomplete information consistent to these authors (Baron, 2012; Beeka and Rimmington, 2011a, b; Holcomb *et al.*, 2009 Mitchell *et al.*, 2007; Tversky and Kahneman, 1973; Schwartz *et al.*, 2010; Wickham, 2004, 2006). The study finds past mistakes and success assist new decisions but is unable to validate the literature that argues that heuristics creates bad management decisions (Busenitz, 1999; Schwartz *et al.*, 2010). However, especially for these entrepreneurs' their reality is uncertainty, information gaps, scarce resources and a harsh unplanned environment, and the heuristic trial and error method becomes 'rule of thumb' decisions. This study shows during the complete lifecycle of venturing, heuristics enable confidence in assessing and perceiving low risk (Simon *et al.*, 2000; Tversky and Kahneman, 2000). Therefore, innovative decision-making is fundamental in adjusting to social, economic and business forces (Cole, 1946).

### **Learning Strategy**

This study discovers venturing is largely a learning process, and entrepreneurs experientially build up entrepreneurial knowledge. The evidence shows most youth entrepreneurs start businesses without formal awareness of business rules and regulations (Stumpf, 1992) but learn and adapt along the way acquiring “street education”. These entrepreneurial firms learn vicariously through others, cognitively (reasoning) and experientially (learning by doing) (Bond *et al.*, 1998). However, to a greater extent the entrepreneurship learning within this study is experiential.

This study supports through experiential learning the reflective entrepreneur/firm develops internal and external survival strategies. Thus, prior experience enables ability to operate current ventures formally, these firms realise Gladwell's (2000) tipping points, additional to learning from both success and failure to update subjective knowledge (Minniti and Bygrave, 2001). However, the disparity within this study is that some have few experiences to draw from being first generation. Furthermore, similar to Cohen and Levinthal (1990) "absorptive capacity theory" the firms identify, assimilate and implement knowledge.

Furthermore, Falck et al. (2009) argues entrepreneurs learn through experience therefore the entrepreneurial identity cannot be taught. But this study counters that entrepreneurship training develops capacity. Saravathy and Venkataraman (2010) declare entrepreneurship can be taught and unleashes human potential. Atkinson (1998) suggests stories assist challenges, which clarifies how these entrepreneurs learn through the media and books. Furthermore, this study finds for both informal and formal firms the main elements of the process are the same contrary to Carland et al. (1984) who insists entrepreneurs are different to small business owners. Saravathy and Venkataraman (2010) support that the enterprise process is similar for 'extraordinary successful and ordinary entrepreneurs'. This study advances a powerful element to sustaining enterprise is experience (and street education) because actual start-up and operations develops tacit knowledge and opportunity development skills.

### **Operational Strategy**

The operational strategies include core values, structure, planning and funding, marketing, human resources, competitive advantage, partnerships, technology, diversification, and multi-venture entrepreneurship discussed below:

**Core Values and Venture Strategy:** The evidences show formal and informal firms specialise, recombine factors of production and develop an operational strategy, which includes leveraging markets, human resources, and firm development.

This study confirms the findings of Collins and Porras (1994) that the best performing entrepreneurs and sustainable companies are driven ideologically. Also, similar to the contributions of Grant (2008) strategic intangible and tangible firm assets are beneficial for firm development. The intangible and invisible resources include the entrepreneur's (and teams) attitude, company internal knowledge, culture and core values. These maintain firm reputation (brand, relationships), technology (copyright, trademark, intellectual property). While the tangible and visible resources include machinery, computers, land, and financial assets and so on. Hence, strategy involves how these firms creatively pursue venture goals with resources and capabilities, given internal and environmental pressures. The ambition of especially the formal ventures to build generational institutions through developing strong core values corroborates Collins and Porras (1994). These entrepreneurs chose corporate mottos as core values and these timeless principles guide operations and strategy modification, which akin to Mintzberg

(1994) assists mitigate risk and uncertainty. The thesis corporate strategies include articulating vision and mission statements, ensuring employees follow the corporate culture through constant retraining, developing competent leadership teams, operating from the right location, recruiting diverse workforces, gathering and retaining core clientele.

Low and MacMillan (1988) as this study finds argue through the diverse phases entrepreneurs became aware of strategic management issue and the resources needed at each stage critical to firm success, to avoid planting seeds of future problems. Therefore, comparable to Phelps et al. (2007) entrepreneurial firms operate sporadic, opportunity based practices, growing businesses through a shift in focus from opportunistic reactive work practices toward proactive and deliberate strategies achievable through adaptation, including planning operational strategies. These entrepreneurs concentrate on niche clients to develop their brand and market positions.

**Planning and Funding:** This study finds opportunities start as ideas and sometimes become businesses through feasibility checks, involving screening markets, products or financial costs (Scarborough, 2011). This study finds feasibilities done mostly informally but with awareness that dreams and ideas need to have *commercial benefit*. The opportunity development stage in committing resources beyond time is evidence of positive evaluation of the business concept (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003).

The findings shows entrepreneurs face severe financial difficulties with unavailable or unfavourable interest rates from mainstream channels. This study finds consistent to the findings of Brush et al. (2009) that firms raise start-up funds privately and grow organically through sales and strategic alliances, rather than large injection of capital funds or external finances.

Furthermore, in the nascent stages most firms start without formal business plans, a finding consistent to NBS/ SMEDAN (2010) that Nigerian SME's operate without business plans. This study supports the insights of Collins and Porras (1994) that clear missions even without formal business plans creates ventures. The reality within this research adds depth to Mintzberg (1994) who challenges the fallacy of expecting entrepreneurial desires to be kept on hold waiting for grand start-up business plans. However, this study finds this works for some firms but can also cause enterprise

decline. Nevertheless, business plans are not cast in stone but modified given the reality of operating within a spontaneous and insecure environment (Austin, 1990; Mark, 2013; Salami, 2011).

Campbell and Nardi (2007) just like some firms within this study find on average nascent entrepreneurs invest four to five years planning and at least six months to make business work to avoid wasting time, which this study cannot verify except to agree that most firms do not wait for start-up business plans “sometimes strategies must be left as broad visions, not precisely articulated, to adapt to a changing environment” (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 112). Therefore, strategic planning, which involves selecting direction and making decisions about the scarce coordination of resources within this study is done both formally and informally.

**Business Structure:** The result shows two operational structures, formal and informal firms. The study finds informal entrepreneurs/firms remain within this structure due to government bureaucracy and other institutional barriers, including the nations inability to provide basic support, and infrastructure especially for the less privileged, which corroborates (Acs, 2006; De Soto, 1987; Elkan, 1988; Rheault and Tortora, 2008; Thomas and Mueller, 2000). Furthermore, those operating long-term in the informal sector are often less educated or from deprived backgrounds. Additionally, instead of encouraging self-employment to enhance economic status the informal are constantly harassed and considered illegal but this study supports the informal sector is necessary to access economic resources to improve personal situations. This research finds bureaucracy impedes business creation and economic growth (Acs, 2006), but at variance counters the assertion necessity-driven informal entrepreneurship is negative for development because these firms appear willing to contribute the right taxes in return for being allowed to operate, similarly informal entrepreneurs improve their standard of living including those of the family/community. Therefore, this study supports Williams (2011) that society needs policies that recognise informal self-employment, because not all informal activities should replace by formal activities. Basically, informal enterprises can become the alternative to formal employment. The World Bank (2012) agrees informal firms are normal and transform jobs within economies.

Furthermore, the study finds it is best to start small, that subsequent venture growth stimulates the informal to formal transition, and formal business structures enable longevity and internationalisation. Hence, firm ambitions within this study are that formal structures are vehicles to outlive founders (Casson, 2010). This study finds regardless of structure informal or formal, all entrepreneurs experience similar career, opportunity identification and development processes. Therefore, informal entrepreneurship is equally important in studies of the entrepreneurial career and opportunity.

**Sales and Marketing:** This study discovers viable firms are able to sell venture products or services through diverse reactive to proactive marketing strategies used to gather and retain customers. However, some firm find marketing challenging, but having clients implies having a business and vice versa so evidentially each firm strategy is connected to ability, finances and choices but consumer behaviour awareness is helpful. The study unearths building a client-base sustains business because Nigerians are repeat customers. Hence, consistent to Phelps et al. (2007) awareness of market and consumer needs ensures sales and targeted marketing, and these convert into revenue and further opportunities.

This study finds similar to (Carter *et al.*, 1996; Shane, 2003; Stokes and Wilson, 2006) sales increase indicate growth. Additionally, the initial customers of young firms are personal networks (Granovetter, 1985, 2005). Furthermore, regarding business expansion, networking is an essential marketing strategy for product exposure and accumulating clients, especially for the best performers. Therefore, proactive networking develops strong links (O'Donnell, 2004). This study finds the more educated or privileged have greater access to high value networks. While the informal entrepreneurs, co-operatives and some formal entrepreneurs their micro or small sizes are deterrents to accessing extensive or high value networks (Curran *et al.*, 1993), because as Storey (2011) explains such networks take time to build. This study accepts that existing customers, sales and good customer service are vital to remaining in business, however relative to Smith (1967) the craftsperson possesses limited scope and sales growth, opposed to opportunistic entrepreneurs.

**Human Resources:** This study discovers a firms greatest asset is people (Grant, 2008; Penrose, 1959), because opportunity lacks agency (Abell *et al.*, 2008; Shane, 2003), and the entrepreneur is central to firm direction (Stokes *et al.*, 2010). This study finds hiring

staffs an indication of growth consistent to the findings of Shane (2003). Also, supporting Grant (2008) human resources represents the firms knowledge, skills, motivation, learning, competence, and staff collaboration to achieve business goals. However, ability to transcend from self to staff management is challenging, many struggle with managing others, or creating management teams. This study finds difficulties with delegation, and building teams due to lack of leadership experience but once this skill develops, the stable firms achieve longevity preventing revolving door situations.

Evidentially firms need to entrench a suitable corporate culture, human resource practices, and reward systems to nurture entrepreneurial staff. Ultimately, competency and ability to recombine various resources depends on the entrepreneur and team. Drucker (1985) indicates growth businesses build management teams. Thus, within this study the development of “ideas, experience, and knowledge” between managers and the entrepreneur is crucial (Penrose, 1959, p. 85). Thus, human capital is key because effective decisions made by entrepreneurs and staffs sustain firms, hence this study finds a firm’s greatest asset is the entrepreneur and team.

These entrepreneurs by selecting this career have chosen the path of leadership, some aim to lead by example. Casson (2003a) states entrepreneurs are potential leaders. The study shows creating formidable enterprise cultures requires core values, the high performers advocating vigorous recruitment procedures, such as, and competency and staff diversity. Hence, similar to Phelps et al. (2007) to make the transition from micro ownership into a professional large-scale structure the firm needs people management/leadership skills.

**Competitive Advantage:** This research corroborates the entrepreneur; firm strategy and environment are essential to gaining market position, growth and competitive advantage (Smallbone and Wyer, 2006; Storey, 1994). It is evident as Schumpeter (1934, p. 65) supports that to remain competitive firms become innovative utilising original or existing knowledge, resources, equipment etc. The ability to compete is one catalyst for the informal to formal transition, and the creative response strategy of each firm occurs within the internal and external environment. Hence, these firms operate strategically and compete through internal resources, resource-based view (RBV) (Penrose, 1959) or environmental responses, market based view (MBV) (Porter, 1980) which influence

firm performance, profitability and company value, findings consistent to (Henderson and Mitchell, 1997; Makhija, 2003). Therefore, relative to Low and McMillan (1988) firm survival and growth is achievable through strategy at the micro level, and at the macro level through adapting to environmental changes.

Furthermore, strategic management of physical tangible and abstract intangible assets enables competitive advantage; intangible assets include reputation, awards, gaining brand exposure, and achieving USP's. These ventures effectively utilise valuable assets and diversify reorganising existing products or creating new products (Schumpeter, 1947; Stokes *et al.*, 2010; Zahra *et al.* 2006). Hence, similar to Shane (2003) these creative entrepreneurs diversify their portfolios and the simple fact differentiation occurs no matter how mild, such as, recipe customisation implies innovation, although mild Kirzner rather than grand Schumpeter. This demonstrates support for the blue ocean strategy extended by Kim and Mauborgne (2005, 2009), these firms create their own niche markets regardless of competition through subtle innovation rather than radical changes, utilising differentiation, uniqueness, focus on buyers rather than competition, value addition, and pursuing low-costs strategies, which builds market share regardless of competition. This strategy is sustainable for both informal and formal ventures given the vast untapped opportunities within urban areas.

**Partnerships and Coopetition:** The study discovers some start-up through partnerships; hence entrepreneurship does not have to commence solo (Reynolds and Curtin, 2008). Entrepreneurial teams enhance competitive advantage enabling access to multiple resources and experiences given partners share the entrepreneurial role, making important decisions together and sharing responsibilities (Casson, 2010). The study finds that diverse competency and focus on strengths creates formidable firms. Westhead and Wright (2011) argue a finding within this study that when entrepreneurial teams proficiently combine resources, skills, and experiences their dynamism outperforms sole traders. Also, similar to Stokes *et al.* (2010) equity sharing enables additional funds, innovation, diverse management teams, joint skills, experiences, and resources to develop opportunity. However, the reverse is also evidenced when nonperforming partnerships result in dilemmas, business decline or failure.

A surprise similarity with the Nigerian Gallup poll (Rheault and Tortora, 2008) is that men partner with none relatives, while females often partner with trustworthy family

members, but this could be attributable to cultural constraints from being a masculine economy.

Furthermore, strategic alliances are important for competition and growth, and some entrepreneurs including the co-operatives utilise this approach. This study supports Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996) about co-petition, a competitive advantage strategy involving simultaneous competition additional to collaborating with competitors and aligning with conglomerates, such alliances increases market-share and growth, for instance, *"like the ant and the elephant you don't need to be an elephant, just get on the elephants back and anywhere it is going it will take you with it"*.

**Technology:** This study finds technology supports opportunity recognition and business commercialisation, and although a new development, African youths utilise ICT relatively well. Some opportunities within this study result from telecom deregulation, a viable sector given the large population of over 170 million people, also Nigeria is one of the fastest growing telecommunication markets in the world (DeRouen and Bellamy, 2008; NCC, 2011). These entrepreneurs all use technology to boost competitive advantage, especially the larger firms (Berchicci and Tucci, 2006). Also, similar to Wennekers (2006) technological changes expand the entrepreneurial opportunities, and technology eases businesses because the informal or formal depend on technology through smart phones, computers, the Internet, websites, social media; and these enable swifter goal achievement.

Furthermore, technology supports the firm process, performance, communication, update of technical skills, increase in productivity, achieving scale economies (e.g. use of automated machines in manufacturing, photography, film, broadband), leveraging of market position, having web presence, extending the brand, promoting career legitimacy, enabling exposure and customer acquisition, becoming resellers and trading internationally. It also allows ventures appear bigger than their actual physical size, for instance those informal or working from home. This study shows relative to Wennekers (2006) that ICT permeates business activities encourage start-ups and reduces operational costs, additional to assisting scale economies and empowering smaller companies to compete with bigger corporates, although Wennekers (2006) argues some economists see this trends as temporary. This study concludes technology eases youth

entrepreneurship and agrees with Penrose (1959) inability to absorb modern technology could limit growth.

**Unique Contextual Issues:** This research discovers entrepreneurship is a cross-cultural phenomenon confirming Mitchell et al. (2002a, c) that entrepreneur's worldwide share a similar culture through cognitive processing. This study extends the findings of Elkan (1988) that African entrepreneurs actively pursue opportunity, and Marsden (1992) that their actions are similar to depictions by classical and mainstream economists. The career decisions, opportunity identification and development concepts from Nigerian youth entrepreneurs are similar to the general entrepreneurship literature, and these form the final conceptual model in chapter 7. Nevertheless, due to institutional constraints existing studies focus on difficult operating conditions (Elkan, 1988; Marsden, 1992). Therefore, contextual issues in chapter 2 are some areas of departure from general literature and tables 5, 12 & 36 contain some of the contextual endogenous and exogenous challenges relevant within this thesis. Key challenges include specific dilemmas of aversion to youth and female entrepreneurship, the duality of structure, lack of educational and policy support including trying to operate in a seemingly unplanned harsh economy.

This study discovers comparable to Africa Commission (2009) and Woldie and Adesua, (2004) socio-cultural constraints obstruct youth and female enterprise. The study suggests culture changes slowly, but hopefully education and regulatory policies could contribute awareness to assist society comprehend entrepreneurship thereby increasing confidence in the career. This is because the participants express relative to (Brijlal, 2011; Oviawe, 2010; Salami, 2011) that formal education does not encourage self-employment. Thus, the quality, accessibility and awareness of entrepreneurial support in Nigeria needs to improve, given the NBS/ SMEDAN (2010) survey finds many are not aware of available supports. Hence, this study suggests similar to UNECA (2006) that youth entrepreneurship could develop through providing capital simultaneous to training in enterprise and management skills. The entrepreneurs within this study believe targeted enterprise development would make the difference, agreeing with Down (2010) who expresses through quality education and training, institutions and governments could shape and transform attitudes, expectations and possibly entrepreneurial behaviour.

This study discovers unfortunately that informal entrepreneurs are considered illegal yet many young entrepreneurs actively avoid illegal practices, but few chasing profit to prevent economic or social standing deterioration take advantage of legal grey areas (Baumol, 1990; Engdahl, 2008; Fadahunsi and Rosa, 2002; McElwee and Smith, 2012; Smith, 2011; Smith and McElwee, 2013). Therefore, to curb these unproductive activities and encourage an enterprise culture government needs better regulations, also suggested by (Baumol, 1990). Furthermore, these entrepreneur give back, therefore society needs to understand that entrepreneurship involves social and economic value addition beyond selfish materialism (Casson, 2010). The entrepreneurs and this study advocate for indoctrinating enterprise for the society to accept that entrepreneurship legitimately builds personal careers, enterprises and economies.

Furthermore, this milieu creates tougher entrepreneurs able to cope within the harsh environment. The severe difficulties appear overwhelming however these entrepreneurs survive, growing viable businesses, and no one pulls out "*they say there are challenges, so what? We are here and we are not going anywhere*". Hence, the ability to develop opportunity and build a client base is important to remain in business. This study finds contextual institutional factors beyond the immediate control of entrepreneurs with potential to cause business decline, or failure. Therefore, environmental crisis threatens firm survival, however consistent to Schumpeter (1947) entrepreneurs see opportunity (possibilities) and cope with inherent issues, resistance and the intricacies. This study deepens the findings of (Adegbite *et al.*, 2007; Marsden, 1992; Oyelaran-Oyeyinka, 2002) by also showing that African entrepreneurs survive. Hence, although enterprise potentially thrives in more favourable environments, for these entrepreneurs, innovative decisions, good firm strategy and adjusting to external forces ensures existence a finding related to Cole (1946). This study joins Marsden (1992) in describing these African entrepreneurs as 'pioneers of development' who advance with institutional support, but still prosper in harsh environments. These entrepreneurs have high-risk tolerance and cope since they cannot choose their business environment. This supports Delmar (2000) that ingenious actions, decisions and ability to interpret and adjust to the environment enable the entrepreneurial career and opportunity.

**Multi-Venture Entrepreneurship:** This study discovers many youth entrepreneurs are portfolio entrepreneurs, starting with one venture and then simultaneously exploiting other opportunity similar to the contributions of (Baron, 2004; Carter and Ram, 2002,

Ronstadt, 1988; 2002; 2007; Stokes *et al.*, 2010; Westhead *et al.*, 2011). This suggests other opportunities arise after venture start-up due to access to industry information, contacts, available products, resources and time. This supports the theoretical contribution of the corridor principle indicating new opportunity identification to operate multiple ventures (Ronstadt, 2007) because portfolio entrepreneurs have an easier psychological process making further start-up decisions. Hence, Baron (2004) asserts entrepreneurs know what to expect and have prototypes through drawing upon richer exemplars. The study finds entrepreneurial behaviour meaningfully heterogeneous through habitual activities, serial enterprise owning companies successively or portfolio owning concurrently relative to the findings of (Ucbasaran *et al.*, 2006; Westhead *et al.*, 2011). The study evidences diversification strategies due to scale economies, brand extension, or survival like (Carter and Ram, 2002). It is interesting also to discover multi-enterprise is a valid strategy for combating entrepreneurial risk, there are instances of planning for different streams of income to combat the unstable environment, which extends the entrepreneurial career and enterprise. Also, these entrepreneurs are dedicated to social causes as part of operational portfolios, suggesting social enterprise.

Furthermore, from this evidence of multiple portfolio start-ups, this study supports Ronstadt (2002) that entrepreneurship is a “dynamic multi venture process”. Thus, similar to Ronstadt (2002) and Stokes *et al.* (2010) when a firm declines the entrepreneurial career succeeds through moving onto other ventures.

### **Exit and Re-Entry**

This study discovers that not all enterprising efforts succeed and exit is part of the entrepreneurial process (DeTienne, 2010). However, during firm failure the founder can remain an entrepreneur through starting another venture. Stokes *et al.* (2010) argues the general literatures appears to focus on the identification, evaluation and exploitation of opportunity which insinuates the early stages of new venture creation, however, the entrepreneurial process covers the “complete life-span of an enterprise and career of the entrepreneur” (Stokes *et al.*, 2010, p. 115). Shane (200) similarly supports that failed firms go through the entrepreneurship process. Furthermore, within this research entrepreneurs plan for business longevity but besides the goal, operating legal entities, enacting company boards, and forming alliances, few discuss exit strategies or

succession plans. This suggests entrepreneurship studies could increase knowledge into succession or retirement, as an area for further research.

The study finds micro and macro factors can cause discontinuance, given that the self, ability, and skills are barriers to the entrepreneurial career (Casson, 2003a). Essentially, the entrepreneurs' influence is central to the firm (Shane, 2003; Stokes et al (2010), and evidentially this study supports Feather (1985) that the individuals cognitive-affective system, attitude and values influence ambition and business activities. Thus, entrepreneurial skills cushion entrepreneurs from failure (Olson, 1985). Still, difficulties do arise causing firm failure therefore business discontinuance is part of the entrepreneurial process. Basically, this thesis finds that the life cycle of the business is start-up, development, growth, decline and closure (Stokes et al. 2010), however there is no set timeframe for each stage given multiplicity in each firms' lifecycle.

#### **6.4. IMPLICATION & CONCLUSION OF DISCUSSION CHAPTER**

This chapter addresses the objective to comprehend and examine influential factors, which facilitate the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process. The chapter contributes to career and entrepreneurship theory elucidating the entrepreneurial career and opportunity trigger, precondition and core process lifecycle. It demonstrates informal and formal entrepreneurship follow similar principles asides management, and entrepreneurship is a transcultural phenomenon with western paradigms applicable in Nigeria. This thesis acknowledges difficulties but concentrates on what facilitates the entrepreneurial process. The chapter illustrates what facilitates entrepreneurship as a feasible career choice involves multidimensional micro and macro factors consistent to the behavioural school of entrepreneurship.

The research generally finds the trigger process includes bilateral alertness, intentions, motives, anchors and employment drivers including the origins and nature of opportunity. The circumstantial antecedents are psychological, economic and sociological, and the core process of developing the career and opportunity includes identity legitimacy, dilemmas, emotions, satisfaction, decision-making, learning, strategy and re-entry all knowledge invaluable for theory and practice. The next conclusion chapter summarises the thesis contributions and uses the comprehension within this discussion chapter to depict a conceptual model for the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process.

## **CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION**

### **THE ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY MODEL, CONTRIBUTION AND LIMITATIONS**

#### **7.0. INTRODUCTION**

This final chapter encapsulates the complete study and constitutes the theoretical contribution to knowledge. The chapter addresses the research objective to advance knowledge about entrepreneurship as a feasible career for youths and develop a conceptual model. Chapter one introduces the thesis articulating the rationale, aim, objectives, questions and interests. Chapter two examines the Nigerian context, business and youths. Chapter three reviews entrepreneurship and career theory, and chapter four justifies the research methodology. Chapter five analyses and presents the empirical findings regarding the triggers, preconditions and core process concepts, and chapter six discusses these findings furthering knowledge about the entrepreneurial career and opportunity lifecycle. This conclusive chapter generates a comprehensive model of the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process, and recapitulates the contributions to theory, methodology, practice and policy, and provides insights for academicians, policy-makers, advisors, enterprise service providers and potential entrepreneurs. This chapter ends with limitations, recommendations for further research and a closing statement.

#### **7.1. WHY STUDY NIGERIAN YOUTH ENTREPRENEURIAL CAREERS**

This original study uses the narrative epistemology of 40 Nigerian entrepreneurs to develop a model for the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process. The study aims to encourage youth entrepreneurial careers as a resourceful way to change young lives, enrich wellbeing, advance society and enable economic growth.

Nigerian youths constitute up to 70% of the population of 177 million people, a valuable human resource that currently occupy minority status within the economy. Yet, enterprise can innovatively assimilate both entrepreneurial and employed youths into the economic environment given changing career paths. This research presents youth entrepreneurship as viable for individual and economic advancement, and encourages

developing more youth entrepreneurs, including advocating for a change in the general entrepreneurial perception, so communities and the African development agenda can recognise the potentials of the young to contribute to job creation, poverty alleviation and economic transformation.

The existing African studies appear to concentrate on the environment and youth unemployment; these extensively show social and economic difficulties, the harsh business environment, the informal sector, youth and graduate joblessness. This thesis acknowledges these difficulties but focuses on factors that facilitate youth entrepreneurship allowing the voices of existing Nigerian youth entrepreneurs to be heard. Thus, there is paucity of literature regarding youth entrepreneurship especially in Nigeria, Galloway and Cooney (2012) affirm minority studies in entrepreneurship are scarce. Similarly, career theorists overlook the entrepreneurial career (Dyer, 1994), meanwhile Stumpf (1992) asserts the goal to become an entrepreneur is explored by many, especially those between the ages of 17-30, and what is equally interesting is that similar to this study scholars find venture creation concentrated within the well-defined age group of those between 25-34 (Bosma and Harding, 2007; Chigunta, 2002a, b; Reynolds, 1995; Reynolds and Curtin, 2008; Nwankwo, 2005; Walter *et al.*, 2004).

This study finds Nigerian youths have high entrepreneurial intentions, self-employment inclinations, and already dominate the small business sector, but their entrepreneurial careers, including opportunity identification and exploitation patterns remain unaddressed within existing literature (see appendix 1). This thesis tackles these theoretical and empirical shortcomings, and shows relative to Galloway and Cooney (2012) and Ogbor (2000) that non-western entrepreneurship studies elucidate the diverse motivations, actions and outcomes of entrepreneurial practice. This research gives the participating entrepreneurs voice and develops knowledge that shows value extraction from the environment. These Nigerian youth entrepreneurs consider entrepreneurship a viable career choice consistent to Chigunta (2002b) and Green and Amat (2012), and their pragmatic lessons could potentially inspire young people to actualise entrepreneurial dreams. Hence, when capable youths venture these could alleviate associated youth issues. Likewise, by adopting entrepreneurial roles the young become competitive whether they venture (become founders) or not (become employees) (Chigunta, 2002b; Young, 1997).

This study demonstrates when it comes to theory western literature regarding the triggers, preconditions and core process of the entrepreneurial career and opportunity process are equally applicable to Nigeria. Hence, entrepreneurship is a multicultural phenomenon because empirically the Nigerian youths' cognition, experience and behaviour are similar to the general literature; the participants consistently identify and develop enterprise careers and opportunities despite severe disadvantage from institutional constraints and the harsh environment. These motivated and tough youths thrive in all environments, have high-risk tolerance, understand their dual structured environment, think on their feet, cope with dilemmas, learn and operate multiple ventures. Similarly, those starting informally make the transition to formality through increase in resources, competency, ambition and growth. Hence, these formal or informal entrepreneurs concentrate on opportunities rather than threats and consider business a rewarding and long-term career path.

Furthermore, the developed theoretical framework (see 7.2.1) elucidates the entrepreneurial career and opportunity process, and this qualitative study provides overdue empirical insight into enterprise as an achievable career for Nigerian youths. The conceptual framework hopefully increases appreciation of the variables that cover the lifecycle of the career, which have implications regarding the type of support required at each lifecycle to encourage youth entrepreneurship in Nigeria. This study could raise young entrepreneurial potentials and their capacity to contribute to social and economic growth. Indeed, consistent to Smith and Air (2012) entrepreneurship feasibly empowers and transforms lives. Furthermore, by illuminating the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development process, this thesis contributes conceptually and empirically to entrepreneurship knowledge, including the encouragement of an entrepreneurial economy.

## **7.2. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTION**

This section contributes to knowledge providing a comprehensive conceptual framework for the entrepreneurial career identification and development process, which contains systematic levels of analysis incorporating greater variables at the individual, firm and environmental level. The conceptual model figure 10 depicts core concepts,

assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support this research (Miles and Huberman, 1994) showing how this research is one of the first to concurrently depict, integrate and build a comprehensive model for the entrepreneurial career and opportunity process.

This study establishes that central to the entrepreneurial career is the ability to make the career choice, identify and consistently develop business opportunity. The entrepreneurial theories and phases are addressed in 7.2.1 showing the career and, opportunity discovery and exploitation process requires '*alertness*'. This '*trigger*' is enabled by '*preconditions*' and the contingent factors of personality characteristics, networks, economic resources and idiosyncratic knowledge. The '*core career process*' involves establishing an identity, handling dilemmas and achieving satisfactory goals without exiting the career permanently and the lifecycles depicted are contextual. This study discovers similar to the theoretical contributions of Stokes et al. (2010) that the life cycle of the entrepreneurial career involves entry and exit from enterprise.

#### **7.2.1. A Conceptual Model for the Entrepreneurial Career and Opportunity Identification and Development Process**

The main finding to the thesis question what facilitates entrepreneurship as a viable career option for Nigerian youths is depicted in Figure 10. This model shows the substantial theoretical and empirical contribution of this study. The model is comprehensive, contextual, process-oriented, and depicts interrelating micro and macro variables relevant to the complete entrepreneurial process. The themes, concepts and units have been extensively discussed in chapter 6 and this section constitutes a summary. Additionally, the model illustrates the interdisciplinary nature of the career and opportunity lifecycle, which is subdivided into three main contextual theories (identification, precondition and core process) showing empirical and interconnecting relationships in the entrepreneurial world. This model is also multicultural since the concepts are consistent to entrepreneurship literature and could become a beneficial tool for enterprise careers and venturing in other parts of the world.

## **Trigger Process-Entrepreneurial Career and Opportunity Identification Theory**

This shows the career and opportunity trigger process regarding why individuals become entrepreneurs (see section 6.1, table 40 and figure 10). The model (figure 10) depicts the decision to become an entrepreneur is bilateral rather than unilateral, and two influential factors “career alertness” and “opportunity alertness” kick-start the career and opportunity lifecycle. The entrepreneurial career triggers are intentions, motivation, career anchors/the self-concept, and employment choice, while the entrepreneurial opportunity triggers involve connecting dots to identify business ideas or sectors from PESTEL changes which constitutes the origins of opportunity, additional to personal information and the nature of opportunities being either identifying market gaps or innovation needs. Hence, career and opportunity alertness initiate the entrepreneurial process.

## **Precondition Process- Entrepreneurial Career and Opportunity Precondition Theory**

This shows the career and opportunity precondition process regarding why and how individuals become entrepreneurs including what supports identification and development, and the two components are career preconditions and opportunity preconditions, and the model (figure 10) depicts these circumstantial antecedents (see section 6.2, table 40 and figure 10), showing how they influence entrepreneurial behaviour and support efficacious engagement within the career. The career antecedents are psychological (personality characteristics and genetics), sociological/ socialisation (family background, childhood experiences and role models), and economic (hobbies and interests, prior knowledge, and access to economic resources). The opportunity antecedents are similar asides genetics; these are psychological (personality traits, self-efficacy), sociological (friends and family, role models, contacts), and economic (knowledge, hobbies and interests, experience, education and training).

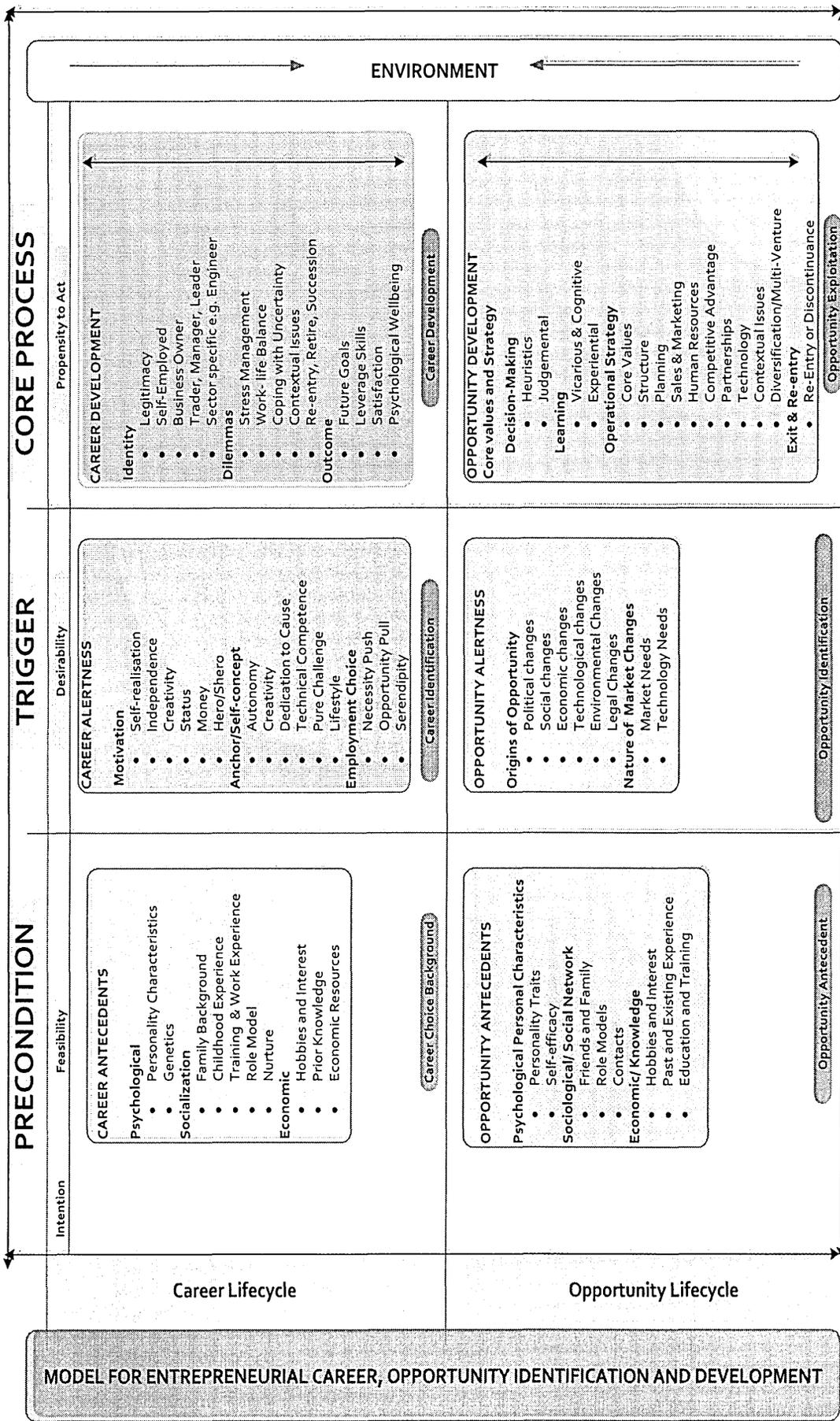
## **Core Process-Entrepreneurial Career and Opportunity Development Theory**

This shows the career and opportunity core process regarding why, when and how individuals become entrepreneurs and sustain business operations (see section 6.3, table 40 and figure 10), the two simultaneous components are career development and

opportunity development. The model (figure 10) depicts the career development core process of embarking and sustaining an entrepreneurial career involves gaining an entrepreneurial identity (self-employed, CEO, Owner, Trader, Manager, Telecom Engineer etc), handling dilemmas (stress, work-life balance, uncertainty, exit and re-entry, succession, and any other contextual issues like gender or youth aversion) to achieve outcomes (career goal, leverage of skills, career satisfaction and psychological wellbeing). While the opportunity development core process involves making decisions (heuristic i.e. thinking on ones feet and judgemental i.e. rational), learning (vicarious, cognitive and experiential) and having a relative operational strategy (core values, informal or formal structure, planning, sales and marketing, human resources, competition, partnership, technology use, diversification, multi-venture and contextual issues), exit and re-entry (re-starting another enterprise after voluntary exit, discontinuance or failure). These two development processes elucidate starting the career and operating business ventures.

Finally, the model reveals the career and opportunity entrepreneurial process occurs within a context and institutional environment whereby strong intentions include goals to actualise entrepreneurial ambition; ‘desirability’ triggers attraction and becomes an anchor to the career and opportunity, ‘feasibility’ acts as a precondition indicating belief in a positive career and venture outcome, and ‘propensity to act becomes the core process indicating that making the subjective decision to start, then putting in consistent effort within operations sustains the career and enterprise. Furthermore, the three main theories (identification, precondition and development) above show that the career lifecycle starts with career entry and ends with vocational exit from a firm, while entrepreneurial opportunity lifecycle starts with business start-up and ends with firm discontinuance.

**Figure 10: Model for the Entrepreneurial Career, Opportunity Identification and Development Process**



Source: Conceptual Model Generated by Author

### 7.2.2. Conceptual Model Boundaries

The model (Figure 10) is applicable to ventures created by habitual independent founders and co-founders formal or informal. It can be used to study the creation and development of the entrepreneurial career and ventures segmented into the trigger, precondition and core process. This includes insights into serial venturing by those who consider entrepreneurship a long-term career plan. Furthermore, the relationships between all the concepts (trigger, precondition and core process) and units extensively discussed in chapter 7 constitute the complete entrepreneurship process. However, these relationships are contextual, and can overlap given enterprise is a multi-venture process with relative career and venture entries including exits.

### 7.2.3. Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy

The study contributes to entrepreneurship literature by advancing and showing these theoretical contributions; Trigger process “when and how opportunities for the creation of goods and services come into existence”, precondition process “why, when and how some people and not others discover and exploit these opportunities”, and core process “why, when and how different modes of action are used to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities” (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000, p. 218), and these also cover the career choice, socialisation, orientation and progression similar to Dyer’s (1994) framework for an entrepreneurship career theory. Additionally, this study shows that entrepreneurial career theory involves multidisciplinary perspectives through elucidating economic, sociological including psychological factors. It shows that western paradigms are applicable in Nigeria, and illustrates what facilitates entrepreneurship as a feasible career choice involves multidimensional micro and macro factors. This substantiates the study is consistent to the behavioural school of entrepreneurship, and the career depends on individual wants, ability, effective strategies, and adapting in the milieu. These confirm the importance of creating conceptual models through perspectives of the individual, the venture, encompassing milieu and the enterprise process (Gartner, 1985).

**Model Usage:** The model provides insights into the entrepreneurial career and opportunity lifecycle. It indicates constraints that challenge careers and enterprises at each lifecycle, especially at the development stage but most importantly it can be used

to understand what facilitates the career and clearly shows the interacting concepts at three clear stages of the entrepreneurship process, through advancing knowledge that interprets why individuals become entrepreneurs and how the career is sustained. The trigger process elucidates the psychological, sociological, economic and environmental perspectives, the precondition process elucidates why and how some individuals but not others discover and exploit the career opportunities. The precondition process explains the psychological, sociological and economic antecedents to the entrepreneurial career and opportunity. The core process clarifies why, when and how diverse activities confirm the entrepreneurial identity to sustain an entrepreneurial career. This core process explains career and opportunity orientation and progression, which include economic, psychological, sociological, historical, organisational, managerial, and regulatory influences.

The thesis knowledge contribution can assist potential and practising entrepreneurs enhance their career and business venturing through realising the resources, attitude and skills needed at each lifecycle e.g. understanding needs from a career, awareness of essential personality characteristics, effective utilisation of networks, idiosyncratic knowledge, strategic economic resources, emotions and strategies to sustain the career and business, including that entrepreneurship is an experience and a 'dynamic multi venture process'. Scholars can use the model to advance research into career entrepreneurship, and the complete entrepreneurship lifecycle. Educators and trainers can use the model to communicate, facilitate and enhance the practical skills needed at each lifecycle. Governments and policy-makers can use the model to target the constraints and implement support needed at each lifecycle e.g. career counselling and environmental changes to initiate career and opportunity at the trigger stage; provision of existing entrepreneurs as role models, relevant enterprise education, and skill development at the precondition stage, and enable regulations at the core process stage like monetary and fiscal incentives to generate resources including business finance, technological uptake, regulation that curbs bureaucracy, corruption and unproductive activity, accessibility of available government support, and consistent youth entrepreneurial policy. Furthermore, the conceptual model built from formal and informal entrepreneurs shows similarities in the career and opportunity lifecycle besides strategic management. The study finds that many participants start their careers informally, hence, informal enterprises start small before likely growing into strong formal ventures (Elkan, 1988) therefore government institutions need to reconsider associating informal entrepreneurs with illegality because self-employment is a viable

alternative to formal entrepreneurship (Williams, 2011). Essentially, this research focuses on what facilitates entrepreneurship to encourage and promote enterprise that adds rather than exploits or destroys (Baumol, 1990; Down, 2010). Hence, to build an entrepreneurial culture, good regulation is required (Baumol, 1990), and society needs to understand as the participants in this study show that entrepreneurship contributes social and economic value rather than selfish materialism (Casson, 2010).

#### **7.2.4. Contribution to Methodology**

This interpretative methodology provides understanding into the entrepreneurial career and opportunity lifecycle. The research design meaningfully researches entrepreneurial experience similar to (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; McClelland, 1961; Collins *et al.*, 1964; Gartner, 2010 a; b; Mitchell, 1996; Rae, 2004; 2005; Steyaert, 1997). Basically, human behaviour represents the complex interplay between the individual and environment, hence to understand situated experiences and generate theory agency, backgrounds and lives are studied (Beeka, 1993). Therefore, this qualitative narrative offers insights into entrepreneurial experiences and behaviour. The contextual epistemology substantiates that stories are valuable to theory generation.

Similarly, narrative discourse informs theory and practice being closer to everyday practice to capture the 'analytical richness of the concept of careers' than mechanical quantitative research (Cohen *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, entrepreneurship cognitive studies are often quantitative, however this study connects stories, actions and events to cognition (Mitchell *et al.*, 2002a, 2007; Berglund, 2007). Thus, narrative and discursive research addresses opportunity questions including why, when and how individual become entrepreneurs. Likewise, thematic analysis complexity creates superior theories (Gartner, 2007, 2010b).

This thesis philosophically relies on subjectivism a departure from predictive theory, statistical and mechanical positivism (Gillespie, 2010), since entrepreneurial behaviour involves unpredictable actions (Neergaard and Ulhøi, 2007). Therefore, while a generalisable theory is impossible, entrepreneurial histories competently compare to entrepreneurship theory (Casson, 2010), and this study demonstrates the relevance of using narrative epistemology to provide rich understandings and unanticipated empirical insights (e.g. bilateral alertness, emotions, multi-venture). Hence, this qualitative

research develops a retrodictive theory of the entrepreneurial process contributing to entrepreneurship career (and opportunity) literature and practice.

### **7.3. THE RESEARCH QUESTION SUMMARY**

The main research question “What facilitates entrepreneurship as a viable career choice for Nigerian youths?” develops knowledge and understanding into entrepreneurial experiences and behaviour. The study uses a cross-sectional and multi-disciplinary approach to discover what facilitates entrepreneurship as a viable career choice for youths is alertness to the career, the ability to make the employment choice and successfully, and in some cases habitually, identify and develop business opportunity without exiting the entrepreneurial career permanently.

This empirical study of the entrepreneurial career, identifying ideas and developing businesses elucidates the complete entrepreneurial process and provides understanding that entrepreneurship is a feasible career strengthened through opportunity recognition, personal inspiration, determination, the ‘internal career’ and extraction of value from the environment. This perspective enables society better comprehend the potential of youths to also contribute to social and economic growth. Essentially, Nigerian youth entrepreneurs lack support and this research through elucidating the triggers, preconditions and core processes hopes to encourage change about the way society; other young people, parents, researchers, trainers, policy-makers perceive, approach, encourage, and develop entrepreneurship in the country. This research advocates entrepreneurship is a legitimate career for youths.

### **7.4. LIMITATION AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are epistemological limitations with scholarly work because every research is a personal creative process (Gartner, 2007); hence it is unproductive to expect that every theory of knowledge presupposes all warranted conditions (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). This is the first study into the phenomenon of the Nigerian youth entrepreneurial career, opportunity recognition and development process, therefore, each limitation provides an opportunity for further research.

## **Model Limitation**

The model for the entrepreneurial process is rich with career and opportunity insights but also limited, Gillespie (2010) explains models significantly depict the past providing understanding to enable optimal decisions for the future but models have difficulty illustrating in totality all interacting relationships, and this is because entrepreneurial careers and firm strategies are heterogeneous. Similarly, entrepreneurial behaviour is unpredictable and individuals are not always rational. Hence, relationships are hard to test and most learning only occurs after events, and when these are incorporated into models some consider such information dated. Therefore, models are best viewed as evolving new issues, thoughts and understandings, which improve over time. The conceptual model within this study raises interesting opportunities for the future.

## **Qualitative Method**

This qualitative research generates data from loosely structured interviews. Similarly expressed by Musson (1998) this is particularly time consuming, gathering, transcribing and analysing voluminous narrative data given many hours of managing numerous ambiguous meanings. Therefore, in future structured interviews or questionnaires may contribute to the consistency of findings and comparability. If possible, longitudinal studies may also be beneficial to study entrepreneurial careers and opportunity.

## **Context and Generalisation**

This study into the entrepreneurial experience provides insightful lessons from the narratives of forty entrepreneurs. Hence, the sample size and method implies limited generalisability (Rossman and Marshall, 2011). However, this research produces a contextual and 'retrodictive theory of entrepreneurship' (Casson, 2010) containing broad entrepreneurship and interdisciplinary principles applicable to individuals. Therefore, understanding the different processes of the career assists both potential and existing entrepreneurs make better decisions. However, the study derives knowledge from founders and co-founders, informal and formal rather than other enterprise forms like intrapreneurs so further research could extend the agenda. Additionally, mixed methods could develop an encompassing theory.

## **Retrospective Bias**

The retrospective stories may be considered self-justification bias (Carter *et al.*, 2003; Gregoire *et al.*, 2010). However, narratives are truth, valid and have merit (Bruner,

1991; Gartner, 2007). Additionally, historical biography confirms the predictions of entrepreneurship theory (Casson, 2010). Hence, the strength of this qualitative approach are stories of entrepreneurial career experiences and behaviour, showing subjective truth, and meanings, including opportunity recognition patterns directly from the social world of participants. This study contributes to entrepreneurship theory and practice, and particularly for the potential young entrepreneur, the stories and model serve as a useful resource for business venturing. It is impossible to study the entrepreneurial career futuristically. However, it is possible to study an aspect, such as, the cognitive processing of opportunity recognition through 'think- aloud verbalisations' similar to the study of Gregoire et al. (2010).

### **Career and Enterprise Lifecycle**

The model provides an insight into the lifecycle of the entrepreneurial career and opportunity. It is possible some variables are discussed more than others, and given a different context, other influences may be more important; this indicates an opportunity for contextual knowledge into the entrepreneurial career and opportunity recognition theory. Furthermore, lifecycle models are to be applied cautiously due to limited predictability. For instance, in reality the stages in this study may vary, with changes subject to internal and external conditions. Nevertheless, this original research is one of the first to concurrently integrate multidisciplinary approaches and build a comprehensive model for the entrepreneurial career process. Hopefully, further studies could extend the phenomenon.

### **Experience and Emotions**

This study and the model indicate entrepreneurs experience peaks and troughs throughout the lifetime of their careers. Therefore, emotional experiences within the career are important, yet these emotions have been understudied in entrepreneurship research (Cardon *et al.*, 2012). This study provides some understanding into the emotions, dilemmas and outcomes entrepreneurs encounter in pursuit of the career. However, given emotion management is fundamental to the entrepreneurial career and directly related to entrepreneurship activity and performance, this suggests opportunity for further research.

## **Youth Entrepreneurship**

This is the first research into the Nigerian youth entrepreneurial career process. It studies entrepreneurs who have started businesses beyond the nascent stages. Hopefully, the youth agenda could be extended, for example, youth entrepreneurship could build skills for the workplace or enterprise, or scholars could study avenues of connecting entrepreneurship and employability in young people. Furthermore, majority of the entrepreneurs are currently at the latter part of the youth age consistent to other study findings that new venture creation is concentrated within the well-defined age group of 25-34 years old. However, there is opportunity for further research to consider much younger or even older entrepreneurs although this may indicate other contextual variables.

### **Agency**

This study solely interviews a partner in partnerships concentrating on the current leader, managing director, and the person who initiates the business idea and can narrate their personal career, business start-up and operations. Consequently, the entrepreneurial career experience story is essential and this research is grounded in the experiences of the participants, hence, the narratives focus on individual action, career decisions and opportunity patterns rather than business type or characteristics of partnerships. The extent other partners are addressed are the views of the participating entrepreneur, Hence, team based entrepreneurship is a separate study to understanding the career choices of an entrepreneur. This indicates an opportunity to study careers from the perspective of team-based entrepreneurship.

### **Gender Differences**

This research finds as expressed by Gartner (1985) entrepreneurs are diverse but once their differences are acknowledged, similarities are classified and characteristics grouped together. Similarly, Hartung and Blustein (2002) propose that models empower when embedded in study contexts and the best career models minimise gender role socialisation and race-based stereotypes. This thesis builds on these concepts to develop a comprehensive model depicting what facilitates enterprise as a viable career for both male and female entrepreneurs. The study does not differentiate amongst gender but serendipitously discovers some threatening issues in the socio-cultural environment for

female youth entrepreneurs. Thus, a possible limitation could be not actively studying differences in gender intentions, motivations and entrepreneurial behaviour, including possible diverse challenges facing men and women. This is an area for further studies.

## **Policy**

This is a novel study into Nigerian youth entrepreneurship, and although there is paucity of literature into Nigerian entrepreneurial development the NBS/ SMEDAN (2010) identifies the small business sector is operated mostly by Nigerian youths. Therefore, further studies could provide additional knowledge into the careers and entrepreneurial behaviours of these youth entrepreneurs, including how targeted policy could assist supply and strengthen the capacity of Nigerian youth entrepreneurs.

## **7.5. CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

This chapter in light of the empirical evidences generates an original conceptual model for the entrepreneurial career, opportunity identification and development lifecycle advancing knowledge about entrepreneurship as a feasible career for youths and agrees with (Green and Amat, 2012) that ‘entrepreneurship is a mainstream career’ choice. The wealth of nations depends on resourceful humans and successful entrepreneurship; Scottish author Samuel Smiles and American Horatio Alger in the 19<sup>th</sup> century through story telling assist propagate self-help ethos in society (Smith and Air, 2012). Collins *et al.*, (1964) credits America’s development occurring through dynamic humans rather than natural resources. Therefore, entrepreneurial careers are central to economic development (Schumpeter, 1947) and by 2030 Nigerian youths not mineral resources could become the country’s greatest assets (British Council, 2010), these youths already dominate the small business sector. Hence, Nigeria is rich in terms of natural and human resources but poor in supporting and converting these into long-term social and economic growth. The country needs to refocus on encouraging and developing the entrepreneurial capacity of especially young people who make up more than half the population of 177 million. A driving force for an economy is entrepreneurial competitiveness and job creation, hence, it would be beneficial for the government to enable internal capacity and diversify the economy through policies that stimulate both MSME and large enterprises, when these pay taxes the economy primarily earns and develops. This would give entrepreneurship its rightful place in society to advance the

economy because Nigerian entrepreneurs are change agents, growing creative ventures and providing jobs within the nation. This concept of the entrepreneurial spirit impacts life and enhances societal achievement (Casson, 2010; Kourilsky and Walstad, 2007).

This study uncovers influential economic, psychological, sociological, historical, strategic, managerial, and leadership factors to understand the entrepreneurial process. Essentially, the risk entrepreneurs undertake to operate offers valuable practical aspects of functioning in a restricted environment. At the start entrepreneurs are motivated to achieve goals, they discover their self-concept and are pursuing an employment choice, and possess the ability to identify ideas from market and environmental changes. Hence, to successfully operate in the Nigerian context requires resilience, confidence and resourcefulness when faced with obstacles, because this facilitates taking advantage of business opportunities. The attractions to these opportunities are drivers within the internal and external environment, and the preconditions and core processes are functional through, pursuing ideas with commercial benefits, self-efficacy, social networks, knowledge utilisation, a tolerance for high-risk, employing a core ideology and a business strategy, cost-reduction approaches and when necessary seeking collaborations, learning, and developing the identity, pursuing future goals and outcomes, handling stress, dilemmas, and importantly imbibing the cognitive heuristic ability of making decisions 'on ones feet' to adapt to changes in the environment, and engaging with entrepreneurship as a multi-venture process, if relevant, to extend the entrepreneurial career. More young people need to become aware of these pragmatics given these provide inspiration for the career, youth entrepreneurial training and development. Indeed, learning from the ideas, tangibles and intangibles of entrepreneurial experiences can contribute to success. This effective understanding and unique perspective is essential for the entrepreneurial career choice, identity and successful business exploitation.

This purpose and desire of this thesis is to contribute to entrepreneurial career perception, the supply of entrepreneurs, including social and economic prosperity through the empowerment of youths. These are essential factors to alleviate youth un/under employment and critical requirements for sustainable development. This research shows those exposed to positive entrepreneurship create decent work, making it important to encourage entrepreneurial careers, opportunity identification and development through targeted education, training, and good regulations. It is essential to empower the young to play a crucial role in the development of Nigeria, because

millions of young men and women aspire to become entrepreneurs to better their lives and stimulate socio-economic development in their communities, but face perennial constraints. This research discovers society discourages youth entrepreneurship through lack of career counselling, and aversion to female and youth entrepreneurial careers from social networks including stringent regulations. Nevertheless, as poverty permeates, unemployment worsens, white-collar jobs disappear and new career paths emerge, entrepreneurship can substantially address the gaps. It is thus, in everyone's interest to contribute to the growth of viable home entrepreneurs who can operate competitively within communities, nationally and even at the international level to redistribute wealth. It may take a long time for culture to change while inspirational young and female entrepreneurs endure the obstacles, but in the words of Michelle Obama (2012) "change is hard and slow but we will eventually get there". There is hope because successful entrepreneurship is an antidote to poverty and under-development with the capacity to put smiles onto the faces of the vulnerable. By sheer numbers and productive age given the opportunities, the creative and resourceful vitality within youths indicates their capacity to drive economic transformation and social change. This society could support the young to take this lead, create jobs, reduce youth unemployment and redistribute wealth. Therefore, entrepreneurship is an authentic career, an employment choice, and a feasible career for youths.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### STUDY RATIONALE AND OUTCOME

A conceptual framework details the principles, core variables, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support and inform research (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Robson, 2002). This study develops a model using the career decisions of Nigerian youth entrepreneur through analysing meaningful empirical evidences, together with scant studies into African youth entrepreneurship and vast studies in western entrepreneurship. Therefore, the final conceptual framework for this study arises from the inductive analysis of narrative data from forty participants, from general career theory literature (Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Ginzberg *et al.*, 1951; Holland, 1959, 1985; Parson, 1909; Savickas and Lent, 1994; Stitt-Gohdes, 1997; Super, 1954), entrepreneurship career literature (Carroll and Mosakowski, 1987; Dyer, 1994; Rae, 2000), theory on identifying and developing opportunity (e.g. Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003; Beeka and Rimmington, 2011a, b; Kirzner, 1973, 1979, 1999, 2008; Mitchell *et al.*, 2002c; Nicolaou, 2009; Olson, 1986; Ronstadt, 1986, 1988, 2007), including the vast scholars within this study while researching the scarce African entrepreneurship alongside the prolific western literature. Baron and Ensley (2006) advise that opportunity recognition studies involve identifying patterns, and this study culminates into the multidisciplinary framework ‘Model for the Entrepreneurial Career and Opportunity Identification Process’. Therefore, entrepreneurship is a multidimensional phenomenon and the multidisciplinary conceptual framework (Figure 10) links different social science disciplines (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003; Casson, 2010; Gartner, 1985a; Schumpeter, 1934; Low and MacMillan, 1988; Saravathy and Venkataraman, 2010; Shane, 2003).

The conceptual model within this thesis (see Figure 10) contributes to knowledge through elucidating the following; Trigger process “when and how opportunities for the creation of goods and services come into existence”; Precondition process “why, when and how some people and not others discover and exploit these opportunities”; and Core Process “why, when and how different modes of action are used to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities” (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000, p. 218), these cover the career choice, socialisation, orientation and progression (Dyer, 1994).

Additionally, this study contributes to African/Nigerian entrepreneurship literature regarding the career and opportunity triggers, preconditions and core processes. This is important because as Ogbor, (2000) asserts entrepreneurship literature largely focuses on the western and masculine society, but this contextual non-Western study provides an appreciation for entrepreneurial lives given relative diverse issues, experiences, and motivations (Galloway and Cooney, 2012). Marsden (1992) argue there is an asymmetrical emphasis on constraints in African studies, which creates inappropriate assumptions that African entrepreneurs cannot succeed. Therefore, this study supports Marsden and Elkan’s viewpoint and shows a reality of African entrepreneurial careers,

how their roles are consistent to illustrations by classical and mainstream economists (Marsden, 1992). Essentially, these entrepreneurs principally identify and exploit business opportunities so ‘there is no dearth of this ability among African entrepreneurs’ (Elkan, 1988). Therefore, learning from the entrepreneurial career activities of the forty participants provides understanding about the process of career entrepreneurship in the Nigerian environment. Fundamentally, theories are strong when situated within “social, historical, local, and interactional contexts” (Charmaz, 2006, p.180).

This research proposes African entrepreneurs need institutional support (education, training, incentives, infrastructure, culture), Marsden’s (1992) survey of modern indigenous African entrepreneurs in Sub-Saharan Africa suggests they have capacity to transform the economy, Marsden calls on interest groups to enact policies and design enterprise programs for small businesses, seen from the eyes of those entrepreneurs, that this perspective possesses the greatest potential to alleviate poverty and stimulate social progress (Marsden, 1992), for sustainable employment opportunities, wealth creation and poverty alleviation (Rogerson, 2001). Therefore, besides from this thesis, no existing literature specifically addresses the entrepreneurial career and opportunity from a Nigerian youth perspective. However, young people in Nigeria want to become entrepreneurs (Rheault and Tortora, 2008). Similar to arguments by (Diomande, 1990; Marsden, 1992; Nafziger, 1977; Rogerson, 2001), it is imperative Nigerian youths learn how successful home-grown entrepreneurs identify the career and develop opportunities; navigate constraints and how they progress to emulate the existing entrepreneurs and get better at problem solving. Stevenson and Jarillo (1990) assert those who select this career path their enterprise processes show ‘teachable’ lessons and skills.

Furthermore, Owualah (1999) in a Nigerian exploratory study advocates tackling youth unemployment and poverty through entrepreneurship proposing assistance through a fail-safe loan scheme. Additionally, studies in drawing out problems challenge addressing poverty through entrepreneurship presupposing mistakenly the poor are unmotivated (Yunus, 2003), an issue extending to some arguments like Acs (2006) who considers necessity enterprise a drain on the economy in favour of opportunity entrepreneurship. Moreover, Farley extends the thought of inspiring and mobilising deprived groups goes against historical expected versions of risk-takers, but the open secret is there can be no retreat from risk-taking to advance, because risk taking personalities develop from targeted education that communicate the reality that risk and uncertainty are 'perennial facts of life' (Farley, 2000, p. 235). Onu (2013) advocates for entrepreneurship teaching, nurture and support using entrepreneurship training throughout the Nigerian educational system in partnership with private institutions, states, local governments and relevant stakeholders. Rogerson (2001) advises policy makers need to identify the diverse constraints that hold back enterprises at each lifecycle, and this study and conceptual model hopes to depict some of the constraints. Therefore, this research through the conceptual model it develops could potentially improve the quality of entrepreneurial support at each lifecycle.

The research agrees with Green and Amat (2012) that ‘entrepreneurship is a mainstream career’ choice. Furthermore, Chigunta (2002b) addressing the Youth Employment Summit (YES) argues contrary to popular belief that youths are only job-seekers or

temporary entrepreneurs, youth entrepreneurship is a viable career option therefore research needs to reveal the contextual factors affecting entrepreneurial behaviour and youth development.

A host of studies (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2011; Awogbenle and Iwuamadi, 2010; FRN, 2009; Onu, 2013; Oviawe, 2010; Salami, 2011) convey the rising trend of graduate unemployment in Nigeria and the myriad of relative problems recommending entrepreneurship as the best intervention to regress this deficit. Similarly, there needs to be an understanding that employment does not always signify working for others and earning a wage (Chigunta, 2002b), and students study entrepreneurship for two reasons, either to acquire knowledge and start a business or prepare for careers in large corporations (Young, 1997). However, this career is still incomprehensible to society due to career theorists' inattention (Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Dyer, 1994; Rae, 2005). Hence, this study investigates why the profession is chosen, and the entrepreneurial context clearly differentiating the individual, social and economic factors that influence the career and venturing (Dyer, 1994), throughout the identification and exploitation of opportunity (Ardichvili *et al.*, 2003; Shane and Venkateraman, 2000).

Finally, this study is enriched by the primary (participants) and secondary (other studies) wealth of knowledge on careers and entrepreneurship. Baumol (1968) asserts entrepreneurial function, including the encouragement and supply of entrepreneurs is fundamental to economic growth (Schumpeter, 1947; Onu, 2013). However, Baumol argues institutions, cause delays with little basis, creating a despairing sluggish 'social and psychological climate'. Yet, it remains beneficial to study entrepreneurial rewards because this could motivate and strengthen entrepreneurial activity without waiting for society to change. Indeed, even if it is the researcher that learns how it is done in this process, this is an achievement (Baumol, 1968).

## APPENDIX 2

### ENTERPRISE SUPPORT AGENCIES IN NIGERIA

#### 1. Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) was decreed in 2003 and established to promote the development of the MSME sector in the Nigeria Economy. The Agency positions itself as a "One Stop Shop" for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development. The vision is to establish a structured and efficient SME sector that will encourage and enhance sustainable economic development (SMEDAN, 2011).

#### 2. National Directorate of Employment (NDE)

The NDE started in January 1987 aims to address unemployment, create and support employment generation schemes; poverty reduction, wealth creation and change the attitude of Nigerian Youths towards self-employment and by extension contribute to the economic growth and development of the Nation. These are to be undertaken through the training of unemployed youths, retired persons aiding Vocational Skills Acquisition, Entrepreneurship or Business Development, Labour Based Works, Rural Employment Promotion and Job placement guidance and counselling (NDE, 2011).

#### 3. National Association of Small Scale Industrialist (NASSI)

NASSI was founded in 1978 as a non-profit making and non-governmental organisation, with secretariat in Lagos, and four Zonal offices. There are two broad industry groups in the association namely: Manufacturing, mining and processing & Service industries. NASSI acts as a sourcing agent for government ministries and state and local government and was also created for the development of small and medium scale business companies (Brtrading, 2011).

#### 4. National Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (NASME)

NASME is a private sector led business organisation established for the promotion of Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in Nigeria. Headquartered in Lagos, its aims to promote the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises, and secondly, coordinating the activities of SMEs and related agencies in Nigeria. The objectives are pursued through: advocacy, exchange of information, training, financial and technical advice, credit delivery, business-support services, capacity building. The major sub-sectors of the association include food processing, timber and furniture, wearing apparel, leather products, non-metallic mineral products, cottage industry amongst others (NASME, 2011).

#### 5. National Association of Cottage Industries of Nigeria (NACIN)

The National Association of Cottage Industries of Nigeria aims to encourage and assist to the growth of cottage (home-based products and services) industries (NACIN, 2011).

## **6. Nigeria Chamber of Commerce Industries, Mining and Agriculture (NACCIMA)**

NACCIMA is the umbrella organisation for all the city/state and Bilateral Chambers of Commerce within the Federal Republic of Nigeria most effective and efficient organ through which the Nigerian Business-class influence government on a wide range of issues affecting Commerce and Industry. Its Business Information Centre provides prospective investors with the latest information on the variety of investment opportunities in Nigeria (NACCIMA, 2011).

## **7. The Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN)**

MAN was formed in 1971, as a national industrial association serving and representing nearly 2000 companies in private and public sectors in manufacturing, construction and service sectors of the national economy. Corporate Headquarters in Lagos, liaison office at Abuja and branches scattered around the entire country, MAN is the veritable umbrella for coordinating the overall interests of manufacturers (Becans, 2011).

## **8. Nigeria Employers Consultative Association (NECA)**

NECA's primary function is to protect employers' interest and enthrone the private sector as a dependable engine of development (NECA, 2011)

## **9. The Industrial Training Fund (ITF)**

The ITF was established in 1971 to raised training consciousness in the economy, but has also helps in generating skilled indigenous manpower in different sectors of the economy (ITF, 2011).

## **10. National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)**

NAPEP was established in 2001 as a government agency to coordinate and monitor all poverty eradication activities nationwide (NAPEP, 2011).

## **11. Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC)**

The RMRDC was established in 1987 to draw up policy guidelines and action programmes on raw materials acquisition, exploitation and development (RMRDC, 2011)

## **12. Small and Medium Industry Equity Investment Scheme (SMIEIS)**

According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2003) the Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) can improve standards of living, bring back indigenous capital formations and high productivity. However, the lack of available finance for the development of SMEs and the Small Scale Industries (SMIs) is the main reason for Nigeria's industrial decline. Hence, the Small and Medium Industry Equity Investment Scheme (SMIEIS) was borne to address the dearth of industries and also contribute to the development of SMEs and SMIs. The innovative concept as developed in 2001 by the Central Bank of Nigeria with voluntary support from all the banks. The idea was that all the Banks in Nigeria would set aside ten % of their profit before tax annually for equity investments in small and medium industries. This was meant to address the problems associated with the interests and charges accompanying normal bank loans, and instead develop the 'real sector' (Udechukwu, 2003).

## APPENDIX 3

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

#### ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A CAREER CHOICE FOR NIGERIAN YOUTH

##### **1. Introduction & Purpose of the Project**

I would like to invite you to take part in this research that aims to learn about the world of the Nigerian youth entrepreneur, and subsequently develop empirical understanding regarding entrepreneurship as a viable career option for Nigerian youths. Before you agree to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information.

##### **2. Organisation**

The research is being conducted by Beem H. Beeka who is a PhD Research Student with Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom.

##### **3. Why have you been invited?**

You have been invited to take part in the study because you are a Nigerian entrepreneur and your insights would be invaluable.

##### **4. Deciding to take part**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

##### **5. What next?**

I would like to interview you. The interview should last from sixty minutes and will cover you telling your entrepreneurial career stories and critical events about: - Your background? Why and how you became an entrepreneur? How you recognised your business opportunity? What pathways you took to start and operate the new venture? How you made decisions? And what supported or deterred your entrepreneurial career?

I will be using an audiotape to record this interview; I would also take few notes. Following the interview I will send you a transcript of my notes so that you can check they are an accurate representation of what you said.

## **6. Confidentiality and Ethics**

All the information that you give will be kept strictly confidential. The only person who will have access to the interview records is me- the researcher. The interview notes will be stored securely. These will be kept for a minimum period of four years and eventually securely destroyed. Anything written, once the project is completed, will protect the names and the privacy of the individuals involved unless you specifically agree otherwise.

The researcher will write a report at the end of the study that will be published in a thesis and journals hard copy. These may be discussed at conferences and seminars.

I have a duty to point out that there are some legal limitations to data confidentiality and that in some exceptional situations it is possible for data to be subjected to subpoena, freedom of information claim or mandated reporting by some professions.

## **7. Further Information**

If you need to contact the researcher about any aspect of the project, my details are below:

**University Address:** Unit 5, Science Park, Sheffield Hallam University,  
Howard Street, City Campus, S1 1WB, U.K.

**Email:** Beem H. Beeka@student.shu.ac.uk  
beemhb@yahoo.co.uk

**Thank you for reading this information.**

## APPENDIX 4

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Why do this study?** - This study aims to learn about the world of the Nigerian youth entrepreneur, and subsequently develop empirical understanding regarding entrepreneurship as a viable career option for Nigerian youths.

**What will participation involve?** - This research involves you recounting your entrepreneurial story and critical events. Why/How you became an entrepreneur? How you recognized the opportunity? What pathways you took/ take to start and operate new ventures? How you made decisions? And what supported or deterred your entrepreneurial career?

**How long will participation take?** – [*The entire procedure will last at least one hour.*]

**As an informed participant of this investigation, I understand that:**

1. My participation is voluntary and I may cease to take part in this research at any time, without penalty.
2. I am aware of what my participation involves.
3. There are no risks involved in the participation of this study.
4. All my questions about the study have been satisfactorily answered.

**I have read and understood the above, and give consent to participate:**

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I have explained the above and answered all questions asked by the participant:**

**Researcher's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 5

### THE INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### a) The Story Telling Interview:

##### Introductory Questions

Researcher: I would like you to tell me your entrepreneurial career story. Please tell me why you became an entrepreneur? Talk about your background, How you started? How you recognised your business opportunity? What pathways you took to start and operate new ventures? What were your prospects and challenges, and what supported or deterred your entrepreneurship career? You can start telling your story...

Entrepreneur: ...

Researcher: General Guide Questions or Probes....

#### b) The Probes

These exploratory probes were used during the interviews; some adapted from Kamau-Maina (2006).

- Tell me more about...?
- Please clarify...?
- Please go back to...?
- What did you do about...?
- Could you please expound...?
- That is interesting could you...?
- Can you tell me what happened during...?
- What was your reaction to...?
- How did you overcome that challenge?
- How did that make you feel?
- How did that happen?

#### c) Interview Close

Thank you very much for your time and for contributing to this research. As earlier mentioned, this interview is confidential and your name and other details will be changed to avoid you being identified in the story. I will type up this interview and send you a copy so that you can amend or check that you agree with what has been transcribed. I hope I can contact you again anytime in the future for more information or to reconfirm any aspects of the interview. Thank you.

## APPENDIX 6

### CHALLENGES

This Appendix 6 (A, B, C) addresses the core process theme and the entrepreneurial career and opportunity challenges question (Chapter 5, Core process section 5.5)

#### A. INTERNAL CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

These are career and opportunity development dilemmas impacting the entrepreneur.

**The Entrepreneur, Attitude, Ability and Skill:** The internal challenges involve identity, values, attitude, ability and skill. These participants feel the greatest challenge with the career is the self that young entrepreneurs become unsuccessful due to failure to competently operate with a clear plan, management and cash flow issues. These cause loss of confidence and self-belief; also some do not practice the concept of delayed gratification, or "*the discipline of God*", being able to manage finances and avoid reckless spending. Hence, a massive challenge involves entrepreneurs trying to live like kings or queens before stability, when in reality business phases requires that young entrepreneurs be prepared for the different issues at each stage "*failing to realise that every business has a phase and there must be a growth phase, the business must grow to a certain stage*". Another issue is, fear prevents youth entrepreneurship "*They are not challenged, they are scared of going out there to start because once you start and you believe you can make it, nobody can hold you back. Some of them (youths) are scared of that fact they prefer, take, take, take; they don't want to work to get*".

**Business Management Skills:** There is struggle with management issues, especially for those with little prior experience. For many, business management is a target improvement area, especially consistency in formal procedures, and also understanding accounting and financial statements "*management skills, like how to manage funds and clients*".

**No clear strategy-** "*We didn't really know what we were doing; we didn't really have a business plan*".

**No business plan, just innovate-** "*Lack of business plan and conducive environment. But as much as I believe in business plans they don't always work in Nigeria. You need to innovate as you go along you just need to study, nothing works the way it should in Nigeria, you've got to be ready for that*".

**Underestimating start-up cost-** "*The start-up fund was tricky. I thought you could start [the product] with two million Naira, I had a million got a friend to put in a million and within a week the money was gone and then I was able to get another million from my Mum, then he got another million and it was gone before the [product] launch*".

**Cash flow problems-** "*Ensuring continuous flow of funds affects operations and ability to deliver*".

**Overspending-** "*I mean you set up the business from day one and you are the CEO and you want to live like the CEO all the time, drive the best cars, have the best offices and*

*all that. It has to be a phase, once you put the interest of the business before you, knowing that if the business is successful money is going to come then the chances of survival will be more”.*

**No savings-** *“We also don’t have a saving culture. I don’t own a savings account and it’s something I’m working on this year. Money goes, it comes, it goes, and it comes”.*

**Growth takes time-** *There is a gestation period for every business. People want to start business today and make profit today, today nobody is ready to start business and give it like 2-3 years before it gives you profit and people are not going to even encourage you because there is this culture of big boy and big girl [flamboyancy].*

**Human Resource Issues:** One common sign of growth is ability to employ staff, however, it is sometimes unnecessary to formally employ others when it is easy to get family to work in the business in exchange for welfare *“It’s hard to employ someone when you are not making any money; I can get my cousins to wash my car for next to nothing because they live with me”.* This could assist the business but may take away value. Also, business growth requires skilled staff but finding competent staff is problematic, even graduates lack basic skills. While those operating from home have no need to employ permanent staff. Hence, the learning curve for people management is steep, as these entrepreneurs proceed from self-management to managing others with contrasting results *“Staff can be a problem, even dedicated ones you just need to be on your toes”.* Many have staff issues and few learn to handle these and from observation, there are difficulties providing the right training to staff. However, some believe the key to reducing staff issues is constant retraining, setting rules and consequences *“when you are setting policies, you don’t just set policies, you don’t just say I want you guys to do this and to do that, but you are also setting consequences that if you don’t do this is what happens”.* See more human resources challenge below:

**Absenteeism-** All entrepreneurs with staff have experiences of staff absences without prior notice. The employee would reappear with flimsy excuses, and the only consequence understood becomes pay cuts. When the accountant withholds salaries for absenteeism cases then workers come in everyday. Also, if the driver becomes reckless having accidents, then salary deductions creates a more careful driver. Hence, staffs respond to economic consequences rather than admonishment talk.

**Uncommitted Staff-** Put in little or no effort into the business, some have to be constantly supervised and trained because they cut corners e.g. selling substandard end products even when told not to, to them a product is a product. Staffs consider the job short-term measures and an avenue to pass time and get paid pending better jobs most often in the preferred public service, banks or oil companies:

*Everywhere you are passing by [e.g. banks], you will find loads of people trying to get an interview, trying to get a job, 4000 to 6000 (unemployed) people trying to get 10 spots, which is not inspirational.*

*Most people from the onset have an employee mentality, and they don’t even give in their best, they don’t try...They just want a place to earn a living and wait for the opportunity to make it big. Nobody really wants to work.*

**Theft-** A cash-based economy implies staffs handling heaps of cash creates theft issues:

*Payment platforms are still very primitive, [others] have been using Visa (electronic payments) since 1972 that's ridiculous it means that you can reduce the way your staff cheat you because they [clients] pay with their cards so the staffs don't touch money. But here if you go away from your business for one day your revenue will drop because we handle cash and cash is tempting, so your staff put cash away, hide, lie, and cheat.*

*I just realised that you can actually make a good person a bad person if you are not educating them well, if you're not giving them the proper orientation they need. I mean you can have someone who has never stolen before and you can now put him in front of cash and it's tempting him and you now make him the lord and master of that department. You are actually turning him into a thief innocently because he looks at it like I am the alpha and omega of this place and this section. That means I can do and undo.*

One entrepreneur curbs theft through constant internal staff rotation and this method ensures staffs check each other and raise alarms. However, continuous retraining reduces issues but sometimes "you deduct from their salary".

**Delegation-** Another problem is the entrepreneur trying to do everything without utilising and staff contribution:

*I believe the reason why you hire people is because you believe they have an input to make so there is no point hiring someone then at the end of the day you don't allow these people to be creative, or provide ideas. I think one of the main reasons why businesses fail is that people don't use the input of others and put their interest first before the interest of the organisation.*

**Partnership and Investment Issues:** Three partnerships issues provide valuable lesson. One participant in trying to diversify loses "you invest and your money is gone". Another partners with a family whose father becomes the chairman in exchange for finance but gets kicked out of the business because the partner is spending recklessly but the Chairman is nonchalant that his son can spend "his money", this participant is given 24 hours to vacate the office and moves on with some staff:

*We set up in 2003; we broke up in 2004. There were two options open to me it's either I dust up my certificate and go look for a job or start something on my own. I had like 3-4 people that look up to me as a boss and I had been paying them salaries, so it beholds on me to ensure their survival vis- a-vis my own survival as well.*

Another entrepreneur encounters team and investor issues "Finding the right partner is a big challenge. We decided to part ways and funny enough he decided to keep the name and I said you know what? The name isn't the business it is the idea" subsequently the investor pulls out not wanting to be caught in the middle. This participant registers another name and forges ahead with another investor who wants quicker returns, requests the invested finance unwilling to run the full course of the model, and resorts to reporting the issue to the police who refuse to get involved because this is a civil matter best resolved amicably.

*I gave him my word that I would give him his money back, we signed an agreement and it was hell. I had to basically shut down everything I had to lay-off staff, at the peak we had like 13 people working for us between [1<sup>st</sup> city] and [2<sup>nd</sup> city]. I had to layoff everyone, and that was one of the hardest things I had to do. That was really painful; I had to turn my apartment into an office, another big mistake.*

**Market Entry and Selling Issues:** New products and businesses are mistrusted; new ideas are hard to sell because "people rely on the brands already established". Hence there are challenges creating awareness. One participant advises to stick with traditional sectors like real estate and catering "I come across a few people who don't understand [our products]". Also, patience is necessary when interacting with rude clients.

*A lot of people don't believe that there is a nice way to let people down. People just treat you like dirt and practically throw you out. I've had people throw me out of their offices and it just hurts, because I'm like, I own my own business and at times it's not the boss, it's someone that works for the boss. I own my own business you are working for someone and you are throwing me out? That's negative.*

*It's extremely expensive to advertise in Nigeria. The people you are selling to, they are both suspicious and they lack curiosity. They are extremely suspicious people but it's not their fault, we live in a society in a peculiar economy that is hard so there is no room to be curious. I barely have daily bread, why should I think about this thing that this guy brought to my office? Besides, I haven't seen it on TV.*

Another issue is late payment from customers of all classes, some engage in credit selling as a competitive strategy to increase their consumer base:

*And some people would collect the recharge cards on credit and would not pay for up to three days.*

*People owe us as well, sometimes they buy and you know these rich people, if you sell to a poor person you can always harass the person and say give me my money but a rich person you can't even cross the gate, you just keep praying that they call you. They are the ones that can bring out money to buy these [products].*

**Sourcing Materials Issues:** Every transaction is cash-based and suppliers refuse to offer credit lines. This is lack of credit facility and bank guarantees during large-scale importation of raw materials:

*If you have to do your own supplies or need raw materials you are not going to get it, as a young businessperson nobody is going to give you credit. But with the bigger names you have people throwing stuff at them, saying don't worry pay in two months time. If you had that as a young business, it would be great. No bank is going to give you a guarantee to get that credit; they don't know you. "Wonderful idea, maybe when we start seeing your turnover", how is the turnover going to start if I don't raise money?*

*They [foreign businesses] deal with you based on cash. They get your cash they send you your goods. We've tried telling them they should put us on a credit facility and they brought up excuses. They sent us long mail of excuses like Nigeria is not credit worthy and their own auditors are refusing to deal based on credit with Nigerians so that's why they can't give use credit. If not they would have been able to give us credit but they have to go through their own procedures too, talk to their insurance people. They said Nigeria is not one of their insured countries.*

## B. EXTERNAL CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

These are challenges outside the immediate control of the entrepreneurs' career and opportunity. The lack of an enabling business environment is a big challenge.

**Lack of Funds:** 38 participants in this study fund their start-ups from social networks, two from investors and no bank loans "*the banks wouldn't have given us money for an idea*".

*Proper business funding in Nigeria is near impossible they only give you money when you have money.*

*Funding is a hard; it is really hard to get money except you have family or friends, then you are lucky.*

*I don't know if I'm allowed to say this, but I have no confidence in Nigerian banks. They won't lend you the money and even if they do nothing is sure in Nigeria so you have to be careful when you are borrowing money. I tell every young entrepreneur borrow from family and friends. They can't kill you and they can't come and take over your business they would help you grow the business so you can pay them back. What banks are going to ask you for is collateral, you wouldn't have it anyway, so yes, funding from friends, and family is the best option. Banks don't lend young people money.*

*There is where we all have problems, just forget it the banks, idea? "O wonderful' they will never tell you it's a bad idea just wonderful but if you're going to wait for them you will be wasting your time, you will never start.*

The participants pronounce that bank loans are only given to those who do not need it, and the interest rates are too high. These are often non-negotiable interest rates of from 22% from commercial banks, and 50% of the amount from microfinance institutions. The entrepreneurs are upset regulators turn a blind eye to this interest rate hikes. However, two of the largest participants are being approached by various banks offering expansions loans with 15% interest rate, which is the official banking regulations CBN approval rate. It appears only big companies can negotiate better interest rates "*Now we are talking to some people, some banks are coming and saying we want to give you loan, we want to give you loan because they've seen the prosperity of the business*". A participant offered funds says:

*The challenge is funds as an entrepreneur to grow in business. You have to aspire to grow more, you need to do something bigger than you and that actually needs funding. I have not been privileged to get funds from the bank. Maybe, because I have not made a good attempt but this year a bank was offering me N50m, which I did not take because it's not attractive enough, but funding has always been a challenge.*

The microfinance institutions have less bureaucratic processes but their lending terms are worse than commercial banks "*Micro finance is killing*".

*I spoke with a particular one, and I was like you guys are actually not micro you are macro they shouldn't call you microfinance because ...the process is that they give you the money fast. If you tell them you want a loan today by next week you are getting it, not like the commercial banks that ask for this and ask for that, you can be on the commercial banks for more than 2-3months sorting out a loan. But for microfinance they give it to you like at the*

*fingertips...but what they ask for in return is killing, I mean you don't want to think about it. I mean its worse, its worse off.*

The two participants who access expansions loans find it a “*headache*” and a liability because the banks take all the profit, and the banks only offer one-year short-term deals with high interest rates, which they accepted needing the capital but “*felt squeezed into a tight spot and stressed*”, this bank would only consider a long-term loan with large collateral, which they do not possess.

Additionally, 37 entrepreneurs remain optimistic but feel the government needs to do more because government dedicated funds for small businesses due to stringent requirements are not reaching the firms. This inability to raise finance at favourable terms implies operating at lower intended levels “*We should be a little further from where we are now if we didn't have the constraints of tight funds. That's an on-going story it hasn't ended but I think it would end*”.

The consequences of limited funds is that careers and enterprises start later than expected, smaller, with low resources, less technology, unable to update skills or expand, unable to complete projects or meet certain expenses and in extreme cases ventures fail, and these entrepreneurs have to start all over again.

### **Identity legitimisation Issues**

**Gender Issues-** The country being a masculine society, women generally have to put in extra effort, prove themselves, behave more professional to gain respect, squash stereotypes and be taken seriously as entrepreneurs. Ten females express how some men talk down at them and they lose business deals due to this attitude, which they would not condone.

*You just tell them that you can do whatever anybody can do and you get over the stereotype. Especially being from the North... sometime they are like “What's a woman doing here? Why?”. But those are all religious and cultural restrictions.*

*My main thing [issue] is number one being a woman, they just feel there are things you shouldn't do and you are not taken seriously.*

Furthermore, one expresses her husband who surprisingly is also an entrepreneur does not appreciate her business achievements and only acknowledges them ‘once in a while’ when she was in the papers. His attitude remains “*You still need to be the woman of the home*” take care of the house and be at home and “*Doesn't care how much you have to do, I don't understand all this time you are putting into your business? You have to be home before me, whether or not I get home late or early*”. She hopes the more she proves herself in business the more understanding he will become. In contrast, another married entrepreneur has the full support of her husband also an entrepreneur, however, the society and their community feel by boldly operating an entrepreneurial career she is encouraging other young women (directly and indirectly) to break the norm and become assertive rather than submissive because women should not be seen nor heard. Hence, she receives numerous death threats almost “*daily*”, but would not stop providing advice and tips if solicited nor would she shut down her business to please the bullies who “*feel if their women can feed herself then they can walk out at any time, they are*

*forgetting you can drop dead at any time, you have kids, you have fees, you have a home to pay for. But things are changing".*

**Parent Issues-** Thirty entrepreneurs with bachelor's degrees at start-up their parents argue they are wasting their degrees including their education fees. Hence, often discouragement from parents makes the young afraid of entrepreneurship. A father expresses wasting money educating [children] who become truants [reference to an entrepreneurial career]. A participant says the concern arises from high failure rates; sometimes it is a protective measure fearing for the young entrepreneurs' safety.

*Just make sure you prepare yourself and do as much research as you can and make sure you are in the right frame of mind because there is nothing here to encourage us, not the banks and not even your own family.*

*My mum who is a businesswoman, at a point she was like "you are always going to [another city]. You are always travelling. Do you have like any other business? You must have a goal. What is the goal you've set for yourself? How much are you trying to make, is it 10million [Naira], is it 20million? Tell us how much you've made and we will see how we can give you the balance so you can stay in one place. What don't you get a job?"*

*My Dad told me to start but later on he was like "isn't there anything else you can do?" parents don't want their children to fail. We are a very secure society and we know what works and what does not, nobody wants to send their child to do something that 80% of the time they fail.*

*Actually my dad wanted me to work in the civil service too. He was a civil servant before he retired. So I tried to get a job but when it was not forthcoming I had to go back to what I knew how to do best and that was buying and selling.*

*My parents were not self-employed. At first they were not supportive and said I should get a job and get financial security. But the passion and the vision I had, with time they began to see that it was beyond [the idea].*

Regarding the reason for some starting informally "*We are laid back people and I think we are a bit lazy and I think we are all still like our parents they did not have business plans they just set up companies and I think that to an extent has rubbed off on us*". However, support from parents does not protect the young entrepreneur from societal career discouragement "*my business friends and I try continuously to inspire ourselves*".

**Society Issues-** Trying to build entrepreneurial identity and legitimacy is a dilemma given dissuasion from society, family, friends including the "*corporate environment saying, what are you doing?*" go get a job or just being plain rude. "*A lot of the time people who would rather be entrepreneurs get jobs, a lot of people [in society] don't take entrepreneurship seriously*". All participants experience pressure to find jobs, especially the 30 graduates the society considers jobs as their only career option:

*I didn't set out to become an entrepreneur. I mean they don't teach you how to be an entrepreneur in schools in Nigeria. It's not even encouraged; you are born, you go to school, you finish, go to university and then the next step everyone is like "you need to get a job" it is so much pressure. If you don't have a job you are almost stigmatised.*

Therefore, is this a cultural issue discouraging young enterprise? These entrepreneurs attribute the problem to bad leadership and politics rather than culture, which destroys enterprise careers and prevents businesses surviving beyond first generations.

*I would not say it's a cultural problem, but I realised growing up when I was in secondary school and everybody used to brag about where their father worked "My father works in the civil service, my father works in [petroleum agency]". Most of my peer's fathers were civil servants so it was more of a challenge to me, when I say to my friends that my father has his own business. He is the CEO of his company. I had my father's compliment cards and then he would produce diaries every year, and they see the diaries and they love it like "Which company is this?" "It's my father's company" it's like they don't understand it. "How can your father own his own company? Everybody's father works". They work for government or an organisation, we've been used to this public service life and parents won't even advice you. They'll say go and get a job for job security. The only security you can have is, owning your own business even of it bring NGN5 to you, it brings NGN500 or NGN500, 000, this is the only guaranteed security but people don't what to nurture things.*

*I think it's just a continuity problem from leadership, politics that we are not transcending [generations], somebody [political or corporate leader] comes in today and he is not even looking at anything good the [past political or corporate leader] had done in the past. Everyone wants to make his own statement so we are not building on legacies; we need to start transferring those skills. However, another thing is the advent of colonisation and military rule eroded [enterprise] because in the olden days a father that is blacksmith would definitely have a child if not all of them that are blacksmiths. A father that is a farmer by the time the kids are growing up would [divide] his farm, you own this and you own that, so you have that trait. Even the herbalist [medicine man] you help them within the house so somebody would pass knowledge to the next generation, succession plan.*

Furthermore, four secondary school leavers are constantly asked when they would complete university education, the co-operatives members explain they will but remain entrepreneurs. Only one informal entrepreneur is bold enough to voice no interest in further education because not everyone is meant to be university educated, because trade is a valid career path in life.

**Lack of Targeted Education and enterprise orientation:** All educated entrepreneurs university feel the educational system and curriculum does not prepare them for entrepreneurship, only two participants express their university courses is relevant to business skills development:

*It's really not very inspiring, most people copy very much everything; we don't learn anything unfortunately so really I don't think I learn much about business from there.*

*I studied [course]; I can't tell you that there is anything I learnt there. I don't even remember anything and you know that's a big problem. It's almost like we go to school earn a degree because that's the only way that you can get a job, because if a lot of us knew that we were going to school to start our own businesses I think a lot of us would take it a lot more seriously. But you know there is no orientation, there is nothing. We just get to school and the next thing, you have to be friends with the lecturers or you are not going to pass. You need to have a clique.*

These 40 participants all levels of education could do more to develop entrepreneurial skills to support the young who decide to pursue entrepreneurial careers "But the truth is we need more people to basically champion this [entrepreneurship], seriously". This

way most youths could learn and compete with the well-known young Ibo traders from the East who start at very young ages as apprentices where they are taught everything about starting and growing a business; some are often hardly educated past primary or secondary education but are the best in business while formal education produces people with "*analysis paralysis*".

*I think we do too much analysis it's like analysis paralysis. They [the Ibo's] seize the opportunity and start running they don't take time to take care of themselves [overworked] but I think I'm hoping there are more people like us who will show that there is a lot more to entrepreneurship, and really all I know is that we need more people to be in this frame of mind from secondary school not just when they leave university. Even before they get to university, they need to know about it [entrepreneurship], it's so sad and it's scary. Young people are now security guards, I have respect for them but it's really sad. It's so sad, people go to school and earn a degree and nobody tells them.*

Furthermore, universities lack practical infrastructure, students studying computer science without computers, science students learning theoretically from textbooks with empty laboratories and "*someone like me that studied Physics in school apart from my 400 level when I decided to do my project on telecoms; I never saw a phone being opened live to see what the circuit looked like. It was my passion so I had to choose that topic*".

**Structure and Illegality Issues:** Within the country the only type of businesses considered formal are limited liabilities or partnerships, other structures, like those operating with business names are considered informal and looked down on and this forces entrepreneurs to become formal. However, limited companies operating without an office, such as, working from home are disregarded from limited exposure, all participants especially at the start of their business without official office premises are called the derogatory name "*briefcase MD's*". They find it difficult to operate with bigger clients and gain large contracts due to lack of an office front.

Additionally, informal entrepreneurs have specific issues being considered illegal and constantly harassed by the local authority and locked up for selling at their locations, losing their wares and having to start again. Although, this is the prevalent retail side of some sectors, like the telecom business; mobile phone calls, sim cards and recharge card (top-up) sales; the contextual 'call centre business' remains ubiquitous. 'Call centre' being the Nigerian official terminology for these micro sole-traders who sell recharge cards and whose phones are used to connect calls for the public. The trade has low-entry barrier and all telecom giants actively encourage these start-ups as a popular consumer sales strategy, there are claims the enterprise enhances the economic status of the unemployed. Yet, almost daily the municipal harasses these sole traders, who are informal due to low-entry including minimising risk and protecting low returns. However, officials constantly confiscate their merchandise calling them illegal, but they stick to their trade, purchase more products and carry on making calls for the populace:

*They come unexpectedly, you are usually not aware they will be coming on that day. They come and carry your umbrella, and you run away because if they catch you, you pay like NGN4, 000 before they release you. But if you don't have the money to pay, they detain you, unless anyone else comes and bails you out. If they cart away your things [products] you need to buy replacements because you know your business and what your gains are.*

Another entrepreneur says, *“They locked me up. The first time, I slept in the office, the second time I slept in the prison”*. But how do they cope with being imprisoned for this trade? The reply is *“I don’t have any other alternative; I asked them at the office what do they want me to do? I had checked and wondered what else would I do but instead of staying at home, I will continue and one day it will be good”*. Hence, despite continuous harassment two participants survive by rationalising this is part of the hassle of earning a living much better than begging *“I feel this is their business and they need the money. The truth of the matter is, without them catching [arresting] us their own business will not move. There is no way they can stop people from selling”*.

However, other government agencies occasionally protect these informal entrepreneurs. For instance, municipal officials try to arrest a participant who runs away, and they proceed to gather this sellers’ sales bag containing money and merchandise and are about to leave, someone from the security services informs them the action constitutes stealing, *“people were arguing with them [in my favour]. They became overwhelmed and gave me my bag”*. These challenges are likely why one informal entrepreneur feels the business is a short-term venture to move on to something better and more formal. The other relies on a higher power, *“at least you make money to take care of your needs I thank God... God takes care of it. I know that when there is life... God will help me increase”*.

### **Unproductive and Stressful Practices**

Public sector procurement is considered a short-term avenue to earn big money to maintain a good lifestyle but remains unsustainable long-term, stressful and risky *“started business on my own, did a few contracts. Thought it was going good, typical story you think ‘this is easy’ next thing you know, you don’t have any contracts”*.

*I have done contracting it is a very tedious way to make money but it is the fastest way to make money. I can do my business for two years and make the same amount of money in four months executing a contract and its one cheque. Business requires that you be paid slowly, certainly overtime. A contract requires a one-off contract and one-off cheque. As a society we live off lump payments, we buy our cars and pay our rents two years in advance. We have no credit system so you need lump money to live a lump lifestyle. My landlord wants two years rent so government is the most attractive for big time business.*

**Egunje-** The ethics regarding business gifts are contradictory in procurement because of "Egunje" a Yoruba word that translates to “bribe” or "PR" meaning gift giving. Two participants think PR is a necessary evil, but 30 participants avoid contracting because PR is stressful *“especially if you have to work with public officials”*.

The two engaging in the practice argue either you give or you take and they would rather give, *“most of the people that work live on bribes and I have always told myself that I would prefer to be the giver than the taker so because of that principle that I believe in, I am ready to pay the price”*. Hence, PR is also a preventive strategy because *“Payment is always a big problem”* with late payment, or company payment files completely disappearing leading to non-payment. How do they overcome this?

*You just treat them right make them feel good. They think in their small offices you talk to them [impolite] but if you come to their level, if you treat them well they can push your file.*

*One or two times you settle them, you call them at their office, on birthday's you visit them. Small, small stuff like that could go a long way.*

Another element PR problem is associated with importation and the flawed duty process:

*I mean you bring in your materials and they are saying you are supposed to pay so and so and so duty and you are like "am I working for [this agency]?" Because you know there are some fees that will not go to the government... so why should I pay it? I'm hoping one day the country will get better I'm just hoping because it can be frustrating...*

**Multiple Taxes-** According to thirty-two entrepreneurs *"the tax system is too uncoordinated and stifling, the government is asking too much of us, we are taxed at all levels at the local, state and federal level"*. They are heavily taxed from high official business tax and subjected to different levels of taxes from different agencies often collecting what other agencies have already collected. These agencies refuse to listen even if the entrepreneur shows payment receipts as long as the payment is not made specifically to them. Generally, the tax system appears to be in shambles and more fiscal responsibility is desired. Also, those working for the big multinationals, difficulties arise because these big businesses *somehow* evade tax, and when the participants are paid the corporates deduct taxes which they either fail to remit or remit late causing problems for these participants.

*I must say that yes multiple tax is the major issue in this country. That is one of the prices you have to pay to be an entrepreneur in Nigeria so we are working around it. It's annoying because you see yourself paying for what you are not earning. The environment is not conducive to do business, you pay so much tax, but that is what you have to do until the government thinks otherwise.*

*Taxes actually have been a problem, because for us we have tried to do everything well but like most of our customers especially the large corporate organisations they deduct taxes before payment which they are meant to remit to the [tax agency] which they don't, and it puts us in a difficult position. So most times our tax certificates are not ready, when due, because customers that have deducted taxes haven't remitted, so the [tax agency] is after you and your neck becomes difficult because you haven't remitted.*

*We spend a lot of time pursuing customers that have supposedly remitted taxes to give us evidences of such remittance so yeah it's not easy at all. Then also you have other taxes from the [local authority] which are just exorbitant, you pay [the region] this amount of money and you want to use a [service or equipment] and [another agency] says that belongs to me, you have to pay me, so there is a whole lot of all this double taxation.*

*Then you have different people from different offices coming to ask for one levy or another. They just wake up and decide this is what they want to take from you.*

However, one participant feels it is not too bad:

*If you have an office or shop front you have the health inspectors, for food you have the local government levy, the food and liquor levy, your state government tax, so many and then you have the almighty (electricity) to deal with and there is so much and its harsh but I don't think it's that hard if you are ready to do the right thing, I don't think it's that bad.*

The entrepreneurs express willingness to pay tax in exchange for utilities and other services. Yet, payments are made but there persistent is lack of desired basic services and infrastructure. Hence, one participant resorts to evasion

*I have to run diesel 24 hours, imagine. I mean if the government come and ask me to pay tax, for what? Cos I will ask please what are you doing for me to pay that tax? Of course, I'll call somebody in the tax office and say "come take N10, 000 I can't pay that [amount] cancel it somehow. That's what happens and at the end of the day the country doesn't get better. I believe at the end of the day the country is not doing anything for me to make my business better so why do they want to collect from me?"*

**Primitive Payment Platforms:** The payment systems are restrictive being a cash-based society is limiting because clients in need of products either provide large sums of cash or pay money directly into business accounts. The entrepreneur subsequently confirms the payment before releasing the product, which takes time and energy. This inconvenience requires extra-effort or causes business loss especially for firms. Hence, the borrowing of the title from an entrepreneur who calls this "*primitive payment platforms*" that "*we still don't have payment platforms that work, go to a bank pay into my account come to my office and I'll give you [the product], payment platforms are still very primitive*". Also, large cash tempts staff to pilfer.

**Lack of Infrastructure:** Another major issue that discourages entrepreneurship is all participants are 'their own government' providing their entire basic utilities and infrastructure. These social amenities are the duty of government but are grossly absent. The participants do not understand why such a rich country would have such terrible infrastructural issues. One entrepreneur summarises "*[huge sigh] let it be on record that I am actually taking a deep breath to talk. I think there are so many things externally that do not encourage entrepreneurship*":

*First of all you have to provide your own real estate for whatever it is you want to do. Light [electricity] is a big problem; power is a big issue you have to provide your own backup power. Then if I think of all the things I had to do before I started making one Naira in [my business] It is just too hard to encourage too many people to do business.*

**Lack of Policy Support:** All 40 participants express they received no support from the government "*No one encourages entrepreneurship, the government set up agencies that really do nothing, they play lip service to entrepreneurship, they don't do anything and it's really sad*".

They wish for government support through incentives, if not for them then to other potential young entrepreneurs through better education, training, career counselling, funding and targeted support to specific sectors, and groups rather than treating everyone collectively since government actions affected business patronage. They feel government agencies are weak institutions that fail to encourage youth businesses. Also, monetary policy is inadequate, and to obtain foreign exchange for importation they often resort to the black [informal] market, so better policies are advocated, and inconsistent policies changes hinder business planning. Hence, businesses are not transcending generations from erratic policy changes, the difficult environment and nepotism "*there are inconsistent government policies, there are inconsistent corporate policies that ensure the deliberate death of businesses*" instead of the government concentrating solely on the public sector business owners also require support.

*The economy is public sector driven you just have to read the budget to see that the easiest way out is just the civil service or working for the oil companies. There is too much political ignorance, stolen money and lack of awareness about entrepreneurship. For instance, people don't know that all you need is motivation, that if I want to start a barbing salon, I need NGN 40 rent, NGN4, 000 clippers, generator NGN12, 000 mirror and chair, spirit and NGN10, 000 [business registration] to make this accessible.*

The micro-informal entrepreneurs specifically suggest government should realise there are different levels of enterprise, and micro ventures also need support to develop and grow because in every society not everyone can attend university and trade is a chosen career path.

*The message I have is that when we are doing something (enacting policies or providing support) we have to think that the fingers are not equal, and when we are creating laws they should think and know that people are not in the same category or they should empathise. It is not our wish to remain hawkers. To my own understanding for a lot of people their intention is to work in government and school but due to circumstances they find themselves doing this thing. I prefer to be in business by myself. If all of us are government workers, who will be buying and selling?*

Hence, despite the challenges entrepreneurial careers and opportunities are pursued, and more than 37 of the entrepreneurs address or overlook challenges, the reason being "if I overcome it [challenges] then I just let it slide" and this supports risk tolerance and entrepreneurial behaviour.

**C. THEMES FOR WHAT CHALLENGES CAREER AND OPPORTUNITY**

**Table 42: Internal and External Dilemmas**

Main	Sub-theme	Categories & Contextual Characteristics
Core process	Career and Opportunity Development Dilemmas/Challenges	<p><b>Internal challenges/Dilemmas</b></p> <p><b>The Entrepreneur</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attitude</li> </ul> <p><b>Business Management Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unclear business strategy</li> <li>▪ Cash flow problems</li> <li>▪ No savings</li> <li>▪ Growth phases</li> </ul> <p><b>Human Resource Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Absenteeism, Uncommitted Staff, Theft</li> <li>▪ Delegation</li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership and Investment Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Partners problems</li> <li>▪ Investment Issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Market Entry and Selling Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Product awareness</li> <li>▪ Customer credit</li> </ul> <p><b>Sourcing Materials Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No supplier facilities</li> <li>▪ No bank guarantees</li> </ul>
		<p><b>External challenges/Dilemmas</b></p> <p><b>Lack of Funds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of credit (expansion)</li> <li>▪ High interest rates</li> </ul> <p><b>Identity Legitimacy Issues &amp; Structure Duality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gender issues</li> <li>▪ Parent issues</li> <li>▪ Young business society issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Lack of Targeted Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Impractical curriculum</li> <li>▪ Employability issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Structure Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informal entrepreneurship</li> <li>▪ Small business</li> </ul> <p><b>Unproductive and Stressful Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Egunje/Corruption</li> <li>▪ Multiple taxation</li> </ul> <p><b>Primitive Payment Platforms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cash based society</li> </ul> <p><b>Lack of Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Electricity, water etc.</li> <li>▪ Institutions</li> </ul> <p><b>Lack of Policy Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Inconsistent policy</li> <li>▪ Unstable environment</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX 7

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

This appendix 7 supports section 5.6.5 Learning

**Table 42: Experiential Learning and Venture Development**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Manage people and finances</li> </ul>	<p><i>How to manage funds, I have found out that you need to have good accounting skills, when you are managing a business you must know how to manage funds, and HR how to manage people too (Hemba).</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Be proactive</li> <li>•New businesses are hard to sell</li> <li>•Get decision-makers</li> </ul>	<p><i>I mean we had an idea of what the business should be like or we thought if we started this week by next month we'll be rich. We wanted to have a subscription-based system without worrying about how people would pay. At the time we didn't have 25 banks, we had a hundred and something. There was no branch networking; there was no Internet, so it was door-to-door sales. We made money doing door2 door but it took too long for the decision makers to get back to you because we discovered that most people are none curious, they don't like new businesses (Tor).</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adapt to change</li> <li>•Lean operations</li> <li>•Use technology</li> <li>•Partner with giants/Alliances</li> </ul>	<p><i>We didn't really know what we were doing; we didn't really have a business plan. We just wanted to charge people to list their phone numbers with us. That business model collapsed, we made a lot of money but our spend was quite higher so when the networks came calling; we said, Listen why don't you have an SMS model? That's when the business switched and even then we were already going downhill. We left our office and moved to a smaller office, nastier office. We let go of most of our staffs. Now we have 2 partners and 5 staffs. Its fully functional now, everything is sort of online we've done the bulk of the work and understand the deal now (Tor).</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Cash flow is seasonal</li> </ul>	<p><i>The day I got my first cheque of four million I couldn't sleep. I was like 'wow this is great, imagine if we start another business maybe the next cheque would be 40 million, but little did we know. The second part was when we came up with the second edition, I was called by a friend who said "Dude, I'm in [a city], good stuff!" people liked it they loved the concept, a lot of people were using the platform, and that was a real high (Zoro).</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Generate funds personally</li> </ul>	<p><i>I own a clothing store. I've always done a bit of buying and selling with clothes but when this [current product] started I needed something to fund it so I opened a clothing store (Dan).</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Diplomacy</li> <li>•Balance goals and people-orientation</li> </ul>	<p><i>O.k. I can say that I've got guts that people misinterpret, misunderstand and I used to be very, very, very, very goal oriented not people oriented. So and if I have project, I'm just thinking about the project. I'm not thinking of how it affects you. Like now you look back and I just see the casualties, o my God. Where you make life... like maybe I'm consulting for an event. I decide who is going to be part of it and I ask artists to submit their profiles and 50 artists submit and I'm looking for five. I used to be that straight to a point if it's not what I want, it's not what I want, so at the end of the day, I'll say it and they'll just hate you. I try to be a little bit goal-oriented and people-oriented; I try to create a balance. With diplomacy, I'll probably say there is a committee that will decide it's not me, so if you have your fire you just send it to the committee (Hemba).</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Don't sell on</li> </ul>	<p><i>In my year two in university I used my pocket money to do a fashion</i></p>

credit	<i>show, and in two and a half months I was able to make NGN90, 000 from NGN16, 000 capital. I said to myself if this can happen then this is a good business. But funny enough I started selling on credit and I lost most of the 90,000 in less than a month. I learnt that if you do good business but you sell on credit you will go out of business (Tomdoo).</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Learn from customer feedback</li> <li>•Refocus according to customer need</li> </ul>	<i>I think for me one of the greatest moments was going to pick up a friend at [an international] airport and watching someone get off the plane holding a copy of my magazine, it's always wonderful seeing people you don't know read the magazine. He opened the first page and smiled, the second page the smile grew wider and I found somewhere where he frowned as he moved on and I had to go meet the man "that sorry I work with this magazine what's wrong?" and he said "there is not enough to read that for a woman this is ok a lot of pictures, but for a man he wants more to read". So I sat down with him, and you know we thrive on information obviously it's not all about the fashion and clothes, men want to learn how to make money and so we are now doing a lot more on finance, business and interviewing more businesses rather than entertainment people (Dan).</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Do not discriminate</li> </ul>	<i>No matter how shabby one looks if they work into the store you must treat everybody with respect and at times the person that looks shabby can buy the whole shop and the person that looks all decked (dressed) up can't afford anything so those are all the things that I learnt and are helping me now.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Train yourself</li> <li>•Learn</li> <li>•Diversify</li> </ul>	<i>I am the one training myself in business and even though I am now a student my head does not sleep I am always thinking of ways to make money. I would work any workable and do any doable as a creative person except what would get me into trouble and police net, only genuine businesses I do a lot of things (Goro).</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Think on your feet</li> <li>•Have a formal plan</li> <li>•Adapt to changes</li> </ul>	<i>The business plan helps you track your deliverables, achievements, and help you notice your mistakes. You see if I'd had a business plan long before I started I probably would have grown faster than this. I probably would not have gotten myself into some particular business transactions and I should have been focused. But I didn't have a plan, I just knew that I want to be a clear leader in the industry and I did everything that I thought to get there but not as planned, and unfortunately business plans don't work very well in our environment because the environment is not even planned. So if you are planning in an environment that is not even planned then anything can just come up. O.k we spoke earlier that I'll be in [another city], but because [a client asked impromptu] that I should bring a proposal on monitoring and the presentation is tomorrow, so if I had a plan that in another two months I would [do this interview for this thesis] and they were calling me and I didn't go then I would have missed [the opportunity]. So business plan is a good idea but you have to plan along with the environment, and as the environment changes you change your plan along with the environment. So that is what I see, but I tell you, business plans are very, very relevant in any business (Ngodoo).</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Success occurs through series of endless goals</li> </ul>	<i>How do I define success? Simple, being able to finish what I start. However, I'm just beginning to find out something. I just saw recently that "At the end of the beginning" it's funny right? That with every end there is a beginning. I have come to discover that at any point you think you've finished there's something else that comes up (Hemba).</i>