

# Developing Entrepreneurship for Hausa People in Nigeria: The Paradox of Reality

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This paper is about identifying the issues which have hindered the Hausa people achieving optimal entrepreneurial development as a society. Hence the corresponding economic growth, poverty eradication, income generation and distribution, as well as socio-economic development. Specifically, the contentious issue which serves as the primary motivation for this study is why the Hausas are not as sophisticated in business as the other tribes in Nigeria despite having had a longer tradition of trade and merchandise with the rest of the world. This presents a paradox for the Hausa people as they seem to be entrepreneurially weaker than other tribes who are more economically buoyant. Earlier studies examining the possible factors responsible for the underdevelopment of Hausa entrepreneurship had explored causes such as culture, politics, and, colonialism. However, additional factors need to be identified to elaborate on the reasons that are hindering the growth and development of the Hausa entrepreneurs in Nigeria. That is why it is imperative for a study to be conducted to find out the issues that are associated with Hausa entrepreneurship development. Hence, a literature review was conducted deducing from journal articles, books, online sources as well as facts to extract extensively on the factors responsible for the underdevelopment of the Hausa entrepreneurship. Eventually, several significant issues were discovered through the review. The paper thus offers some recommendations to stakeholders for the way forward in ameliorating the state of the Hausa entrepreneurship. Further research, both empirical and non-empirical, must be done in order to uncover more issues by adopting more rigorous scientific methods.

**Key words:** *business, development, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship development, Hausa.*

## Introduction

Entrepreneurship is regarded highly and considered a vital component in social, economic and human development agendas (Abimbola et al., 2011), (Buowari, 2015). It was established that entrepreneurial activities are responsible for exerting favourable impacts on a country's economic and general wellbeing of the citizens. This was evidenced by studies finding out about the positive relationship of entrepreneurial activities towards stimulation of economic growth; employment creation; revamping the dilapidated state-owned establishment; empowerment of the disadvantaged group of the society; as well as socio-economic development of the nation; most especially in less developed countries (Thomas and Mueller, 2000), (Abimbola and Agboola, 2011). Researchers have revealed the significance of entrepreneurship on socio-economic development (Thai and Anh, 2016).

The role of entrepreneurships in economic development and poverty reduction especially in developing countries has been asserted in the literature (Ekpe, 2011). In this sense, development is seen from the perspective of some economic indicators such as the Gross National Product (GNP) that contribute to a country's attainment of developed and underdeveloped status; this differentiates between the less developed and the developed countries. Similarly, indices such as poverty level, inequality and unemployment, rate of political stability and economic crisis are considered part of the indices that could widen the gap between developed and less developed countries (Obi, 2015). Economies are driven greatly by factors such as the economic development level of the society, religion and culture, and the environment (Zapalska et al., 2017).

Entrepreneurship gives individuals the chance to get involved in the economic and societal development through stimulation towards increase in opportunities and new business activity (Ramadani et al., 2015). Literature regarding entrepreneurship and business development done by several scholars have reached the conclusion that sociocultural values exert great influence on success and performance of firms. Some of the studies have revealed how the culture or religion or a particular caste or family background in the society that the entrepreneur originates from affects the establishment, growth, and development of a business, and its subsequent success and performance (Ayande and Sabourin, 2016).

For the benefit of the reader, this paper focuses on Hausa people. The Hausas are the largest ethnic clan in Nigeria, found mainly in Northern Nigeria. This heavy population put them in an inevitable position as partners in trading activities (Limbs and Fort, 2000).

(Ologunwa, 2014) recounted that during the colonial period, cultural crafts and designs of Hausa in Northern Nigeria had been used as vital resources contributing to the Nigerian economy. During that time, through the trans-Saharan and trans-Atlantic trade, cultural



activities and crafts and designs contributed over 50% to Nigeria, much higher than agriculture with just 40 % to the economy. Kano has been famous that time for crafts such the arab factories at Gingau, the lantimi shoes made at Alfindiki designed for export for the Royals to Tripoli, the silk embellished slippers being exported to states in Northern Nigeria like Sokoto, Nupe, Gwandu, and Adamawa. However, in Nigeria, the performance and effectiveness of its entrepreneurs as the agents for economic growth and development, has been a topic of discussion for long time. The discourse developed as a result of low performance and inefficiency delivered by the enterprises in their functions towards the country's economic growth and development (Ihugba et al., 2013).

It is quite worthy to note that entrepreneurship has been the sole profession of the Hausa people right from time immemorial. However, the Hausa people in the Northern part of Nigeria seem to be lagging in terms of socio-economic development, and they are plagued with the highest rate of poverty and unemployment, least educated with more illiterates, more homeless kids and street urchins, more gender disparity with females being subdued in almost every sphere of society, higher vulnerability to disease, and many of these negative impacts. Similarly, as it was recently reiterated by (Louis and Osemeke, 2017) since the time of British imperialist activity in Nigeria, the Hausa people have defied the colonists' attempt to Westernise their societies in terms of education, lifestyle, system of governance, administration as well as religion. Hence, the repercussion was that the Hausa people were left behind in several areas of socio economic, educational spheres as well as the general wellbeing of the citizens in Nigeria as it became hard for Hausas to gain meaning employment in the government as they had fewer people with Western education (Louis and Osemeke, 2017). Therefore, their only option was taking entrepreneurship as a source of income in Nigeria.

There is also a general agreement that the Hausas are relatively more backward, though Hausas could be spotted almost everywhere across the West African sub-region trading and being merchants selling goods (Harris, 1969).

As discussed above, the problems related to the development of Hausa entrepreneurship in Nigeria are immense. Therefore, the intention of this paper is to unearth the myriad of problems hindering the optimal development of Hausa entrepreneurship. Therefore, the paper is divided into sections that elaborate on: the background of the Hausa people, the issues involved in the entrepreneurship development of the Hausa people, as well as the factors that hinder the Hausa people's entrepreneurship development.

## **Factors Hindering the Hausa Entrepreneurship Development**

This paper has done an extensive literature review on identifying the factors that are most likely responsible for the hindrance of the entrepreneurship development of the Hausa people. Therefore, this attempt has led to several discoveries about the myriad of issues bedevilling the Hausa entrepreneurship development milieu through several journal articles, books and documents. Under this section, the factors are illuminated:

### ***A. Colonial Imbalances***

As stated by (Zalanga, 2000) innovations and entrepreneurial competence are consequences of culture and institutions that were molded through the history of the people. However, the first key social adverse effect caused by British colonial rule in Nigeria was the unequal distribution of Western education between the Hausa region in the North and the Southerners. Equally, the indirect rule administered in the North brought with it unpleasant ramifications as meagre amount of development was witnessed in terms of socio-economic and political advancement in the Northern part in Nigeria; while the contrary was observed in the Southern part of Nigeria [31]. Verily, the imperialists really shortchanged the Hausa Muslims of Northern Nigeria as they failed to impart them with an ambitious mind focusing on the future and equipping them readily for that. However, they allowed a culture of complacency to grow and imbibe them with longing for political ambitions. Similarly, the colonial bureaucracy was mostly established in the Southern part, where the headquarters of federal offices were located, hence, this prevented greater employment opportunities; especially in Lagos compared to the Hausa Northern part.

In the same vein, (Ologunwa, 2014) colonialism equally brought with it negative consequences that affected the ingenuity of the indigenous craftsmen in Hausaland who were earlier the source for provision of technology. However, with colonialism, their traditional creative works and craftsmanship was relegated to the basic and that of the colonials was favoured instead.

### ***B. Religion***

The religion of Islam is said to be encouraging its followers to take up entrepreneurship as a career (Kayed and Hassan, 2010). The principles and instructions guiding the conduct of entrepreneurship and business practices are derived from the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah (traditions) of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W which is the Hadith. Indeed, the benefits and fortunes derived from entrepreneurship have been extolled in the holy Qur'an and the hadith.

However, (Ramadani et al., 2015) asserted that despite what Islam teachings brought regarding

entrepreneurship, in today's business transactions many Hausa entrepreneurs violate most of these Islamic principles. Despite the fact that Islam praises and encourages entrepreneurship, such direct and obvious praise virtually does not exist in the informal social or in the formal education process. Informal religious institutions such as the mosque, Friday sermons, religious schools, public speeches, study circles and other religious activities could play a crucial role in promoting entrepreneurship by raising awareness of, and explaining, entrepreneurship from an Islamic perspective (Kayed and Hassan, 2010). Equally, the religion has been used to wage defense for the wrong reasons for indolence and religion has been misinterpreted as well, in essence, the people simply misinterpret the religion to suit their disposition. (Halliru, 2013) asserts that Islamic faith which teaches the role of destiny in human life helps re-affirm the belief that what is destined to be yours will be come what may. The inability to strike a balance between these two extremely opposing views has not helped in entrepreneurial development (Halliru, 2013). Because if the leaders of the communities have been propagating the essence of entrepreneurship in Islam, there would not have been many beggars, destitutes and laidback attitudes by some of the Hausa people who feel disposed to be begging rather than taking up a job or being self-employed. The opposite of this situation could be seen in Malaysia as (Hamidon, 2014) elucidated that the Islamic institutions in Malaysia introduced a modern ideology of the religious practice which has helped in ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of the people.

Notwithstanding, some studies have confirmed that religion has had a negative impact on economic activities, however, (Zakaria, 2001) study was able to prove that the religion of the Hausas in Northern Nigeria does not preclude the engagements of the women economically in the society as there was no distinction found to be apparent between the Muslim and the non-Muslim Hausa women in their economic livelihoods.

Following Max Weber's study on Protestantism and the development of capitalism in the West, it has been argued that Islam with its fatalistic, warrior ethic and otherworldly inclinations is incompatible with modern economy and polity. For instance, in his oft-quoted statement, (Lerner, 1964) referred to the modernisation processes in the Middle East and Turkey and has argued that Muslims had to choose between "Mecca or Mechanisation" meaning that Islamic values are not compatible with the modern capitalist economy. Lerner seemed to suggest that Muslims had to either give up Islam or accept underdevelopment as their fate (Adas, 2006). Similarly, if this statement could be true of Hausa people in the Nigerian context, because they are seen as the backward in terms of economic advancement, civilisation, technological knowledge and industrialisation.

### ***C. Lack of Compliance with Islamic Teaching in Business***

Meanwhile, the major avenues for poverty alleviation and human sustainable development in

Islam and among the Muslim populace are zakat, sadaqah and waqf. For instance, studies found that, the institutionalisation of zakat as well as waqf is an alternative strategy that would provide the foundations for sustainable development and good life (hayattayibah) (Damilola et al., 2015), (Hassan et al., 2017). It should be noted that the main focus of zakat in Islam is human development based on characteristics. This is because the wealth of the rich is used to enrich and develop the poor people in order to become a zakat payer in future. Based on this, several studies on zakat shall be explored in relation to the human development. However, in Nigerian case, and that Nigeria being the largest Muslim country in Africa, (Ahmed and Muhammad, 2017) posited that the implementation the zakat practice has not been taken seriously by the Islamic clerics, scholars, academicians and stakeholders for decades taking into consideration the significance of execution of zakat towards the improvement of Nigeria's socio-economic system.

Equally, the same notion with the Muslims like the Hausa people in Nigeria, because Muslims are required by the doctrine and are bound to pay “zakat” which is compulsory every year. This was done with the aim to empower the less privileged and breed other sets of entrepreneurs. If the Hausa people have been observing and paying the zakat as obligated, it could have gone a long way in eradicating poverty and repeating the cycles by empowering other entrepreneurs (zakat beneficiaries). Because the main Islamic mechanism for promoting the welfare of the poor—the zakat which required each Muslim to give 1/40th of his possessions to the poor each year—assumed that people make zakat payments large enough to improve the lot of the poor significantly as reiterated by (Hassan et al., 2017). However, Kano as community which is habituated and controlled by mostly Hausa people entrepreneurially, and has a lot of successful entrepreneurs, but then the poverty rate still remains high despite that the zakat principle is aimed at eradicating poverty. Could it be they are not practicing it as ordained by the teachings of Islam?

Another issue, if the Hausa community is one of the largest Muslim communities in sub-Saharan Africa is it really abiding by the practice of giving Zakkat well as ordained by the Islamic faith, this would have a panacea to the poverty ridden region of Nigeria. Yet the number of poor people in the Hausa region kept increasing everyday more than any other region in the country. This is unlike what is obtainable in Muslim countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Arab Gulf Countries where the Islamic institutions have emphasised the proper execution of zakat payment which has improved the socio-economic lives of their populace significantly (Ahmed and Muhammad, 2017).

#### ***D. Attitudes, Traditions, and, Beliefs***

(Aluko, 2003) claimed that the Hausa customs exhibited preference towards favouring servility, respect for authority, allegiance to management or whoever is powerful, and

submission. Such a tradition is frowned at the self-assertiveness of the worker. Their individual initiative and self-instigated actions towards goals not sanctioned by one's superior were negatively evaluated (Louis and Osemeke, 2017). Apparently, this is one of the reasons a Hausa man can be working under his boss for decades as an apprentice without being free to establish his own. This weakens their initiative skills in being innovative, servile absent of self-expression, as well as being indolent, nonchalant, having a lazy attitude and lacking passion for the business. It is equally said that the Hausas lack the modern skills in managing the business when they were said to lack vision for the business and poor customer satisfaction management.

### ***E. Societal Structure***

Equally, the society in which Hausa people live emphasises a more patron-client relationship whereby for a person to succeed in some arena or attain some level of social mobility, that person needs to attach him/herself as a client to an influential person that has already succeeded whether in business or politics. Hence, it plays out like a favour from the patron for the client to climb up the social hierarchy in society, as well as an opportunity for the client to get elevated from his or her social background by being integrated (Smith, 1965).

### ***F. Educational Level***

Western education throughout the world, since the period of the Enlightenment in 18th century' Europe, has been a dominant force in social change and development up to the contemporary era. The British did a great disservice to the Muslims of Northern Nigeria by not emphasising to them the real essence and future in Western education. Similarly, recruitment into the colonial government established schools that were essentially restricted to persons connected to the royal families, either as princes, nobles, slaves of the palace, or clients to people in the ruling class. Only on rare occasions were the sons and daughters of commoners allowed to be enrolled (Zalanga, 2000).

The low literacy level of the Hausa people did not make it possible to have enough academics to carry out studies about them especially in the entrepreneurship field. The few studies carried out were mostly done by outsiders that are considered non-Hausas, which could as well have given some misrepresentation about the Hausa people. Scholars from non-Hausa extraction and then study about Hausa do really give wrong and ignorant or misleading facts about the Hausa attitudes, values or culture, which authors like (Limbs and Fort, 2000) had given very wrong and shallow accounts of facts about Hausa. (Ologunwa, 2014) added that Western education was criticised for establishing schools with curricula that could not advance the course of traditional crafts and technology.

### ***G. Family Institutions***

In Muslims establishments, members of the family perform the task of taking vital decisions regarding key business functions instead of professional managers. Similarly, the workforce in companies owned by Muslims is said to be manipulated under the disguise of invocation of Islamic brotherhood. The employers regard labour organisations most especially trade unions as a threat to the harmony and bureaucracy in the organisation by inciting conflict and frail relationships between employers and employees. Hence, they use the notion of Islamic brotherhood as a cover up to use the Muslims workers while leaving them underpaid as they work longer and inconsistent hours despite lack of social security (Adas, 2006). This is equally typical of a Hausa business establishment.

Furthermore, (Abimbola et al., 2011) reported that the women in Hausa society are being subordinated to a lower position than any other tribes, a factor that attributed to the nature of women submission to their male spouses encouraged by religion. This is worrisome as (Barkow, 1972) stated that the whole population in Hausaland is constituted of about half female composition and due to their comparatively low economic activities in the standard open market may cause societal retardation and degradation. This was opposed by [33] who expressed that the domicile economic transactions carried out by the Muslim Hausa women which are often ignored can shun the standard formal market and make massive inputs to the economic development of that society.

(Zakaria, 2001) added that the recruitment of female workers in companies was seen by male workers as awkward. Similarly, Muslim women are often viewed and subjected to elements of pity by being assigned marginal and counterproductive status in the society, as the Muslim Hausa society depicts epitome of the idea of gender asymmetry based on women function in society (Coles and Mack, 1991). Some researchers further described that women in home confinement in Hausa societies in Northern Nigeria is a "terrible restriction of human liberty", though others have verified that female subjugation is a phenomenon that is not only restricted to Hausa Northern Nigerian societies. Similarly, (Abimbola et al., 2011) found evidence that considered the extended family members as a source of social support, the majority saw the extended family as a detriment to entrepreneurship development which is often referred to as 'The Care Syndrome' and the Hausas in particular are widely known for their extended family style.

### ***H. Dependency Culture***

The 'Care Syndrome' plays a huge role in families where it happens to breed the attitude of dependency of the family members. Therefore, this discourages the family members to get busy being productive, and then grows the tendency of the less successful ones looking up to



the more accomplished ones in the family for support. However, this is different from what is obtained in Asian entrepreneurship where family bonds are supportive as each family member is contributing their bits productively in achieving a set of organisational goals unlike, the extended family system in Nigeria which makes members rely on other successful family members, which eventually impacts negatively on the finances (Abimbola et al., 2011).

(Halliru, 2013) equally revealed that the Northern Nigerian culture is predisposed to the dependency culture, where less abled ones are deemed to rely on the well-to-do ones for succour, which has paradoxical implications, though the culture breeds good attitude of empathy and consideration, but it infringes on the individual sense of independence which is detrimental entrepreneurship development. Equally, the method of apprenticeship developed by Northern Nigerian Hausa entrepreneurs does not specify time span within which the apprentice would gain the needed skills and knowledge for self-development needed for self-independence.

### ***1. Contradiction with Western Theories***

Additionally, contradiction with Western concept of entrepreneurship and Hausa due to norms and beliefs that are inimical to the modern, conventional wisdom has contributed to the inefficiency in business conduct in Northern Nigeria. This is confirmed by (Halliru, 2013) who claimed that the Northern entrepreneur is not necessarily driven by the fear of not succeeding since hard work does not always bring fortune. This is contrary to the position of (Mangwende et al., 2011) who argued that fear of failure for entrepreneurs is a predictor of performance.

Entrepreneurship develops and changes based on context so it is important to understand societal evolution to see how business has been developed (Ramadani et al., 2015). However, Hausa culture is changing but drifting away from entrepreneurship that it was known for.

### ***Culture***

Although the relationship between development and culture is well established and well documented, it is somehow controversial; on the one hand are the modernisation theories advocating cultural transformation of the underdeveloped nations, and on the other are the advocates for cultural-based development. Muslims, profoundly, have concerns regarding Western cultural domination. They view the imposition of Western cultural values, especially the unlimited and unrestrained freedom for the individual, as a threat to their own conservative values (Kayed and Hassan, 2010). It could be agreed that a society could develop on its own terms without having to adopt the Western cultural domination of concept of development, as is the case of Chinese and Japanese entrepreneurs. However, the Hausas

have failed to leverage off the unique attributes of their culture and forge ahead to develop their methods of operations, management, and operation, and have yet to adopt the optimum alternative provided by the Western model just the same way the other tribes had done and met success in excellence in business.

Equally, another setback prominent in the practice of business affairs in Northern Nigeria is the method of apprenticeship adopted by Hausa entrepreneurs. It does not specify time span within which an apprentice should gain the needed skills and knowledge for self-development needed for self-independence, unlike the Igbo entrepreneurs who have that embedded in their policy of apprenticeship (Halliru, 2013). Equally, (Plumly et al., 2008) corroborated this position as their opinion is that entrepreneurial development needs a non-conventional adoption that centres around building potential entrepreneurs understanding about how to face challenges in business activities based on hands-on experiences to allow attainment of entrepreneurial goals. (Lawan et al., 2015) confirmed that the students of Hausa origin were the only ethnics found to have a significant effect of negative attitude towards entrepreneurship.

### ***J. Population***

Even though population for its significance in human resources capital availability is usually regarded as a vital developmental resource for a country to leverage from, however, opposing views were offered in the Nigerian case. Scholars such as (Edewor et al., 2014) had expressed their concern on the population outgrowth in Nigeria due to the fear that it acts as hindrance to sustainable entrepreneurship development. This outgrowth has the tendency to cause over utilisation of limited resources, infrastructures, and facilities provided by the government, as well as excess rural-urban migration (Worldometers, 2018). With Hausa comprising the largest in the population of Nigeria, this poses a bigger challenge to the Hausa ethnic clan in terms of over population.

### **Conclusion**

Developing countries can enhance the condition of their economy through entrepreneurship development, and economic development. This is a multifaceted aspect which not only depends on the conventional economic model factors but takes into account elements such as culture, form of business, gender type etc (Galbraith, 2008). Therefore, this paper has gathered through literature factors that were reported by several scholars to have hindered the entrepreneurship development of the Hausa people in Nigeria. These factors include colonial imbalances, religion, lack of compliance with Islamic teaching in business, attitudes, traditions and beliefs, societal structure, educational level, family institutions, dependency culture, contradiction with Western theories, culture, as well as population.

Hence, this findings from this paper have made significant discoveries into identifying those factors responsible for the backwardness of the Hausa people in their entrepreneurship development. As (Kayed and Hassan, 2010) for development (theory and practice) have drawn from this study is that of context. Just as there is no one-way or best way to pursue development, there is no one best model of entrepreneurship germane for all nations. As with development, “entrepreneurship is embedded in society, and the latter is affected by historical experience and cultural values” (Dana, 1999; Apter, 1965; Sardar, 1997; Senam et al., 2017; Senathip et al., 2017; Sethi and Ghatak, 2018; Shehry and Youssif, 2017; Siddiqui and Anjum, 2013; Tronzano, 2018); therefore, entrepreneurship must be promoted by utilising contextual approaches sensitive to the social, economic and cultural distinctiveness of each society.

(Hassan et al., 2017) called on Nigerian Muslims especially the clerics to wake-up to their responsibilities. However, the study fails to justify empirically how zakat can enhance human development in Nigeria. It was suggested that Nigeria, the largest Muslim country in the African region, should collectively identify the importance of zakat institution hence, introduce it to the hearts and minds of the Muslim Ummah and set the stage for its takeoff with the aim of putting in place Islamic financial institution’s activities that are centrally controlled by Shari’ah Supervisory Board (SSB).

Apter (1965) drew a clear distinction between the “indigenous” and the “Western” types of modernity. He further concluded that all nations would inevitably change either willingly or in response to outside pressure. All nations will become more modern by creating their own form of modernity (Watts, 1995): and the nature of their modernity would reflect their own cultural, environmental and historical profiles. Ziauddin Sardar rejected the implications of modernisation theories that traditional societies are static and argued that “on the contrary, traditional cultures are dynamic entities, they are constantly renewing themselves and changing, but they change according to their own logic and grammar” (Sardar, 1997).



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