

ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: AN EVALUATION OF ARTISANAL ACTIVITIES IN BAYELSA STATE

HELEN OPIGO PhD.

Department of Entrepreneurship & Marketing
Faculty of Management Sciences
Federal University Otuoke
Yenagoa Bayelsa State
Nigeria.
helenopigo@yahoo.com

IFEANYI MADUMERE PhD.

Department of Accounting
Faculty of Management Sciences
Federal University Otuoke
Yenagoa Bayelsa State
Nigeria.
ceify2@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Bayelsa State has an almost non-existent commerce, with an economy almost solely dependent on the government. Consistent decline of artisanal activities and services in the state has constituted a bad omen for socio-economic development. Therefore there is need for Baylesans to be involved in commercial activities with a view to sustaining economic development in the state, the need for this study. To effectively carry this study, literature in related area was extensively reviewed, 100 questionnaires each was distributed to the 8 local government areas in the state using their youth leaders as the anchor persons. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is 0.70, entrepreneurial venture=0.978 with 7 indicators, with a Standard deviation of .41109 while $x=2.8825$ and socio-economic development with 7 indicators is 0.978, x value =28908; and a Standard deviation of .41109. We therefore conclude that artisanship and entrepreneurial ideas very paramount in every state and should be encouraged by government. Therefore, we recommend among others that, Bayelsa state should encourage her indigenes to see entrepreneurship/artisanship as an alternative to wealth creation, government should build more technical colleges across the state to encourages the youths and also implement tax incentives for craftsmen, as a means of encouragement.

Keywords: Artisanal, Entrepreneur, Socio-Economic Development, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

A fundamental ingredient of any successful market economy is respect for basic human values, honesty, trust, and fairness. These values must become an integral part of business culture and practice for markets to remain free and to work effectively. Private business is at the strategic centre of any civil society. It is where people go for a job or to

invest savings to realise the aspirations for their families. Small businesses and civil society must also be involved in finding solutions to community problems. They can help in the fight against the corruption that has sapped our national resources. They must reform the unethical business practices that breed cynicism and distrust in communities. Through responsible business conduct, they contribute to the essential social capital of trust and fairness that makes good governance and free markets possible.

These qualities are gradually disappearing in our economy which can be attributed to the craze of quick money by our youths. Everybody wants to be rich without work, without making any serious effort; hence they see politics as the shortest and easiest way to get money without consideration for artisanship and entrepreneurial venture. Venturing into entrepreneurship by young people is a great relief to government as it reduces the rate of unemployment, crime, drug addiction and all sorts of vices. Venturing into entrepreneurship contributes to the growth of economic activities.

Entrepreneurship is a very exciting and potentially highly rewarding activity for entrepreneurs and the nations in which they launch their ventures; and conduct their operations. Thus, entrepreneurial ventures/artisanship is creating and bringing to the market new products and services that make our lives easier, enhance our productivity at work, improve our health, and entertain us in new and fascinating ways even during worst challenging economic conditions in the global.

A master artisan is an entrepreneur, willing and able to take business risks for gainful purposes. He has a strong desire to be independent, to work at something and also enjoy later rather than wait for unplanned political money which we are not sure when it will come. He operates at his own pace for prestige and to be recognised (Eneh, 2007). An entrepreneur, according to Baber Kistruck, Webb, Stutter & Ireland, (2011) is an economist and political scientist, who disturb the equilibrium of the stationary state. He is the prime cause of economic development and is responsible for the innovation and technological change of the nation, as well as make things work in the economy of the country (Dees, 2004). In line with this theories, it is the entrepreneur, such as the artisan and technical services' providers, (such as the fine art workers, performing artists, caterers, printers, metal workers, wood workers, auto workers, garment workers, construction workers, electrical/electronic workers) and others, that drive the economic development of a nation.

Not too long ago, Bayelsa State had a thriving economy occasioned by the high revenue that accrued to the state from the federation account. The state was at some point in time receiving about N 30 billion monthly from the federation account. For a state with a population of about 1.7 million people, the revenue profile was considered quite enormous, and an envy of other states. Bayelsa state today is virtually broke due to the crash of oil prices in the international market and other economic factors. The state now receives about N 3 billion monthly on average from the federation account, not enough to pay her workers. The drop in federal allocation to the state has expectedly brought economic activities to a stand-still, with several traders and artisans relocating to other states, creating a vacuum that cannot be filled because not many Bayelsa indigenes are involved in commercial activities to fill the gap. The Bayelsa state government seems not to have answers to its dwindling revenue since the civil service is the only industry it has, except for the small businesses owned by non-indigenes especially those from the South-East and South West, geo-political zones.

The Research problem and purpose of the study

Increasingly, economic development experts are abandoning traditional approaches to economic development that relies on recruiting large enterprises with tax breaks, financial incentives, and other inducements. Economic development experts are paying greater attention on building businesses from the grassroots, supporting artisanship growth and existing SMEs. The reason is to develop and support entrepreneurs and small businesses, expand and improve infrastructure; and to develop or recruit a highly skilled and educated workforce. To a reasonable extent, these activities contributes to improving the quality of life in the community; creating an attractive business climate, job creation role and innovative prowess of entrepreneurs; and small businesses, creating an environment conducive to many small businesses that may produce more jobs and reduces vices among youths. This is not the same in Bayelsa state. We observed that over 99% of artisans (the welding shops, furniture houses, eateries, hair dressing salons etc.) are owned by non Bayelsan. We went further to know how many of the apprentice are Bayelsan and the figure was discouraging.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact/contribution of indigenous artisans and entrepreneurial venture in the economic development of Bayelsa state and the reason for not imbibing the culture of artisanship among Bayelsans unlike their counterparts in other towns like Aba, Onitsha, Owerri, Warri, Ugheli, Benin and Lagos.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Development is the outcome of economic growth. This is evident when in different studies; Minniti (2008) Lambury & Kuehi (2007) posited that “economic development and growth results from structural changes, savings and investments in an economy”. Succinctly, Barringer & Ireland (2007) assert that, the failure of economic growth in most developing and developed countries in the late 1970s, to deliver corresponding social goods and solve problems of unemployment, poverty, disease, hunger, illiteracy and ever increasing crimes and wars, necessitated the new thinking, and redefinition of development from economic growth centred perspective to human centred approach. In this light, Davidson (2003) sees development as a broader concept that recognises psychological and material factors that measure human well-being.

Thus socio-economic development which is part of development can be defined as the process of social and economic transformation in a society. Socio-economic development embraces changes taking place in the social sphere mostly of an economic nature. It is the process of empowering people to maximize their potentials, and develop the knowledge capacity to exploit nature to meet daily human needs (Wiklund & Shepard, 2008, Bygrave, 2004, Minniti 2008). The transformation of the society and the emergence of new social and economic organizations are critical indicators of development (Hansen, Shrader & Monillor, 2011). Socio-economic development is measured with indicators, such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Changes in less-tangible factors are also considered, such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm.

The depth and scope of economic development impact of artisan enterprises is often not fully appreciated. They generate income, create jobs, foster economic communities, sustain ancient techniques, and preserve culture and meaning that is an essential component of healthy and sustainable development (development that is grounded in the

uniqueness of people and place). Thus, it is expected that in conflict regions, economic community through artisan work can promote reconciliation, healing, and empowerment.

The Concept of artisanship

With the continuing liberalization and deregulation of the world trading system freeing the flow of goods and services, the international business environment is becoming increasingly competitive for creators and providers of all kinds of craft and visual arts products. Consumers now have tremendous choice. Artisans (craft entrepreneurs) and all the intermediaries in the supply chain must constantly strive to improve the quality of their products and services, the production processes, their brand identity and the effectiveness of their marketing strategies, if they wish to improve their business performance, productivity and competitiveness; and win the hearts and minds of customers.

Apprenticeships are often perceived as physically demanding, unsafe, dirty and poorly paid. Apprentices are often viewed as being from a lower socio-economic background, without the capabilities to enter university. McDowell, Oliver, Persson, Fairbrother, Wetzlar, Buchanan and Shipstone (2011) acknowledge that apprenticeships directly contribute to the quality of our skilled trades' workforce and therefore, our ability to compete successfully in a global marketplace is of utmost importance. They further asserted that, there are various areas in the apprenticeship system requiring urgent attention, including 'retention, completion outcomes and its impact on productivity and innovation'; emphasizing the need for all stakeholders to share the responsibility for providing apprentices with transferable skills, explaining that the benefit would be an improvement in the quality of apprenticeship' training. The report predicts that the flow-on effect from these changes will assist in ameliorating skills shortages and improving apprenticeship completion rate which can be said to be very insignificant in Bayelsa state.

An artisan is a person who has been trained in any field of art or trade. The particular skill necessary in the work is acquired by attending a technical college, serving an apprenticeship, or by working as a handyman or helper and learning the trade informally. Artisans include bricklayers, block-layers, cable installers, carpentry, electricians, roofers, siders, painters, plasterers, paper-hangers, tapers, joiners, plumbers, steam-fitters welders, shoe makers etc.

For instance, shoe makers, dress makers and cosmetics producers in Aba and Onitsha, dying of fabrics in Borno, weaving in Akwete in Abia state, goldsmiths in Benin, silk weavers in Thailand, embroiderers in Afghanistan all struggle for work that is real, that is used, that keeps ancient traditions and meaning alive, and; thus further provides needed income for families which in turn circulates in the economy. A few of these artisan enterprises have achieved scales and become viable and sustained industries, but they are the exception, not the rule; most artisan enterprises remain small, undercapitalized, and "niche" in market reach and economic development impact.

Artisanship, technical skills and services are critical for socio-economic development of nations. According to Akosile, (2007), skills acquisition is the key to grassroots empowerment. These skills include adaptive skills development which in turn includes the personality and manipulative skills capability of youth development (Abassa, 2003; Unoarumi, 2009). These skills rescue street youth, ghetto youth and the destitute from gangsterism, drug abuse, crime/violence and other vicious involvements (Umar, 2008) that mar the social, cultural and economic development of countries. Adaptive skills

development addresses unemployment by providing youth with self-sustaining job skills (API Smart Brief, 2007).

According to UNDP, UNCTAD survey (2010) artisan activities have a critical macroeconomic impact in developing countries that is often underappreciated by governments. The global market for artisan crafts is significant and continues to expand. The survey concluded that; between 2002 to 2008, world exports of artisan products rose from a value of \$17.5 billion in 2002 to \$32 billion in 2008, an increase of 8.3 percent. Developing countries have a comparative advantage in this sector due to their diverse cultural traditions, distinct indigenous designs and products, local materials and resources. Accordingly, developing economies have come to dominate the export market for handicrafts, accounting for 65 percent of world exports in this sector in 2008 (an increase from 53 percent in 2002) (UNCTAD 2009).

According to Barber & Krivoshlykova (2006), USAID market assessment for handicrafts in many regions of the world, artisans comprise the second largest sector of rural employment after agriculture, often functioning as a default occupation for those who have limited options for employment. The report further notes that artisanship has inherent advantages for its participants, such as the possibility of working from home according to a flexible schedule and opportunities for seasonal employment and small production runs. Additionally, artisan production demands very little start-up capital, while at the same time allowing for a high degree of autonomy in operating and managing a business. Several converging trends indicate that demand in the artisan sector will continue to expand, including consumer and company interest in sourcing locally produced artisan goods, greater international and domestic tourism, increased global interest in home decorating, and increased willingness to pay a premium for *distinctive* (as opposed to mass-produced) goods (Fabio, Lal, & Stefano, 2013).

Artisan production therefore, holds great potential for developing countries that seek to expand their exports in a dynamic sector of the world economy. According to Richard (2007), "the production and international trade of art crafts are vectors for job creation and export earnings, and therefore are feasible tools for poverty alleviation, the promotion of cultural diversity, and the transfer of community-based skills." A well-integrated artisanship into global commerce would increase the incomes and standard of living of many individuals and their families in the developing world, yielding micro-economic benefits that, when properly scaled, could collectively transform the economic landscape of a nations. A UNESCO pilot project, "Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the poorest youth and women," achieved impressive poverty reduction results by using small handicraft enterprise development to drive income generation and employment in a wide variety of cultural contexts (Fabio, Lal & Stefano 2013).

Vocational and technical skills enhance the relevance and functionality of individuals in the society promotes their economic survival and vibrancy; and thereby, plays a vital and indispensable role in the development of the society (Uwaifo, 2009). Skills acquisition boost labour market by empowering unskilled, poor and unemployable youth for sound social living, thereby, curbing youth restiveness, crime and poverty (Aminu, 2009), while Ogbodo (2009), opined that skill acquisition is an antidote for idleness and makes for self-reliance.

Technical apprenticeship training is an age-long indigenous approach to manpower development, which has implications for schooling and out-of-school programmes (Obidi, 1995). In recognition of the importance of job for all, the Nigerian governments have always had both policy and structure for the creation of a pool of artisans and entrepreneurs from among the unemployed through skills acquisition (Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2009). By establishing secondary school laboratories, Trade Centres, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, Vocational Education departments and Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), Nigerian governments also provided for the integration of skills into school programmes for the creation of middle technical manpower. Nigerian governments whilst encouraging workers to undergo various in-service training and trade test for skills acquisition also had self-improvement training for out-of-school skills acquisition programmes to address unemployment and bring about better socio-economic development.

Economic Development and Artisanship

Economic development refers to economic growth accompanied by changes in output distribution and economic structure. These changes may include an improvement in the material well-being of the poor of the population of a country; a decline in agriculture's share of GNP and a corresponding increase in the GNP share of industry and services; an increase in the education and skills of the labour force; and substantial technical advances originating within the country.

According to Olajide (2004) Economic development is the process whereby the real per capita income increases over a long period of time. Also, Dudley Seers (1982) cited in Olajide, (2004) x-rayed development from its effect to poverty, unemployment and inequality over time. Where there is reduction in the three variables in an economy from high level, then the country could be said to be experiencing development (Olajide, 2004). According to William, James, & Michael, (2005), the consideration of economic development points to sources of growth. Economic development generally refers to the sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific area. Economic development can also be referred to as the quantitative and qualitative changes in the economy. The actions can involve development of human capital, critical infrastructure, regional competitiveness, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, health, safety, literacy and other initiatives.

Economic development differs from economic growth. Growth on a general term could be confined to increase in output (per unit of input) while development implies increase in output together with a change in technical and institutional arrangement involved in production. Growth can take place without development but, a nation cannot achieve economic development without having achieved economic growth. Thus, economic growth is a subset of economic development as economic development is not purely an economic phenomenon. According to Tejvan (2011), in economics, economic growth is an increase in real GDP which means an increase in the value of goods and services produced in an economy. The rate of economic growth measures the annual percentage increase in real GDP. In the long run, economic growth is determined by factors which influence the growth of Long Run Aggregate Supply (LRAS) (the PPF of the economy). If there is no increase in LRAS, then a rise in Aggregate Demand will just be inflationary (Tejvan, 2011). LRAS can be influenced by: Levels of infrastructure: Investment in roads, transport and communication

can help in reducing firms' costs and expand production. Without the needed infrastructure it may be difficult for firms' competitiveness in the international markets. The lack of infrastructure is mostly a factor holding back some developing countries like Nigeria. Thus, development draws attention to changes in capacities (such as physical coordination and learning ability, or the economy's ability to adapt to shifts in tastes and technology).

Cultural and Creativity

In this era of extraordinary change, recession and globalization, many acknowledge that creativity and innovation are now the driving force of the global economy. Organizations and even economic regions that embrace creativity/artisanship generate significantly higher revenue and provide greater stability into the future. Based on ideas rather than physical capital, the creative economy straddles economic, political, social, cultural and technological issues and is at the crossroads of the arts, business and technology. It is unique in that, it relies on an unlimited global resource: human creativity. Growth strategies in the creative economy therefore focus on harnessing the development potential of an unlimited resource and not on optimizing limited resources (as in traditional manufacturing industries).

Many stakeholders are involved in this process: the public sector which includes cultural institutions, e.g. museums, public service broadcasting organizations, etc.; the private sector which covers a wide range of commercial operations in all fields of cultural production and distribution; the non-profit sector including many theatre and dance organizations, festivals, orchestras, which may receive government subsidies; and non-governmental organizations such as advocacy agencies, actors and musicians' unions.

Culture and creative industries have been increasingly integrated into the policy agenda of developed and developing countries. In 2005, the United Kingdom's Commission for Africa reported that there was a 'real danger that a lack of attention to culture in policy making will overwhelm many of the collective mechanisms of survival which are part of Africa's cultures' (Commission for Africa 2005). In early May 2007, the European Commission (EC 2007) announced its decision to adopt a strategy on the contribution of culture to economic growth and intercultural dialogue.

Culture is increasingly finding a route to the market, which is leading to radical transformations in the way people create, consume and enjoy cultural products. For example in Aba, Nigeria, the shoes and hand bag industry, the furniture industry in Benin City has almost overtaken the entire business acumen, while, globalization and the convergence of multimedia and telecommunications technologies has transformed consumers from passive recipients of cultural messages into active co-creators of creative content.

METHODOLOGY

Population: The focus of this study is young people between the ages of 18 and 45. To effectively carry out this study, one hundred questionnaires each was distributed in each of the 8 local government areas in Bayelsa state bringing the total to (100 x 8 = 800) eight hundred. The youth leaders were the anchor persons. The reason for using the youth leaders was that they (youth leaders) have great influence in their environment. Again the youth leaders are always the mediator between the youths and any form of interest coming to the community.

Research Design: Research design constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. Thus, it is the conceptual structure within which research is conducted (Kothari 2004). Therefore, the design for this study is the cross sectional survey design given the investigations focus on artisanship entrepreneurial venture and socio-economic development, across a range of units and elements which share similar parameters and which are to be examined within their natural and non-contrived settings.

Instrument: The research instrument for this study is the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of three main sections: the first section addresses content related to the demographic distribution of the population of the study; the second section addresses content related to entrepreneurial venture; while the third section addressed content related to socio-economic development from the experience of the respondents or participants.

Reliability: The study assessed the reliability of the instrument using the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient with a benchmark of 0.70. The results from the assessment revealed substantial levels of reliability for the variables where entrepreneurial venture = 0.985 with 7 indicators and the reliability for socio-economic development = 0.978 with 7 indicators.

DATA RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Results

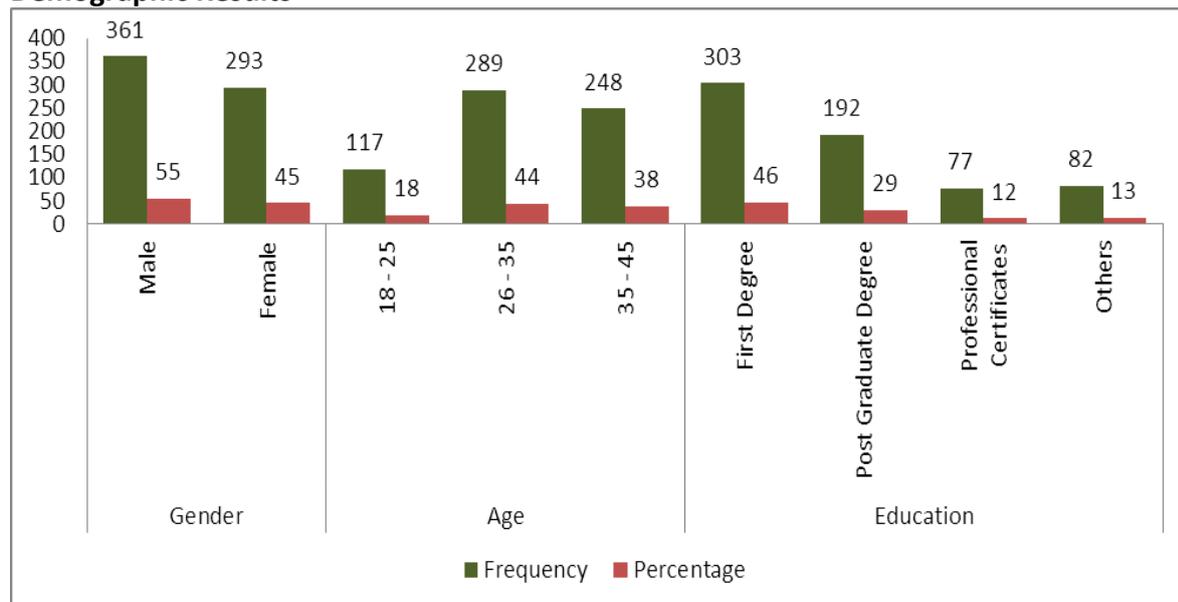


Figure 1.1 Demographic distributions for the study

The evidence from the above distribution indicates that for the distribution of the participants based on their gender, evidence shows that majority of the respondents are male and comprise of 55% of the total population for the study. The distribution suggests the possibility of a higher male populace compare to the female populace of the study. Furthermore, as regards the distribution of the respondents based on their age, the evidence suggests that most of the respondents are between the ages 26 – 35 years representing 44% of the population. The result suggests that the observed category accounts for a higher amount of distribution and populace within the examined area of the study. Finally, the distribution for the education of the population indicates that most of the

participants have obtained first degree certifications representing 46% of the total population, suggesting substantial levels of education across the population.

Univariate Analysis Results

Table 1 Distribution for the variables of the Study

			Statistic	Std. Error
Entrepreneurial Venture	Mean		2.8825	.01608
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.8509	
		Upper Bound	2.9140	
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.9643	
	Median		3.0000	
	Variance		.169	
	Std. Deviation		.41109	
	Minimum		1.14	
	Maximum		3.00	
	Range		1.86	
	Interquartile Range		.00	
	Skewness		-3.442	.096
	Kurtosis		10.439	.191
	Socio-economic Development	Mean		2.8908
95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Lower Bound	2.8615	
		Upper Bound	2.9201	
5% Trimmed Mean			2.9663	
Median			3.0000	
Variance			.146	
Std. Deviation			.38170	
Minimum			1.29	
Maximum			3.00	
Range			1.71	
Interquartile Range			.00	
Skewness			-3.407	.096
Kurtosis			10.049	.191

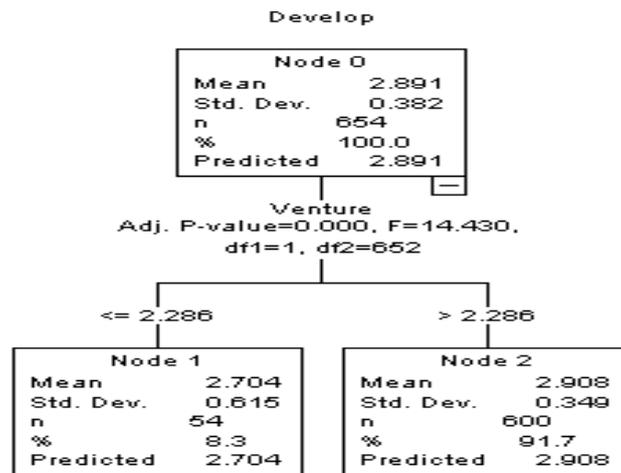


Figure 2: Decision Tree and Branch Statistics for the relationship between entrepreneurial venture and socio-economic development.

Presented in table 1 and figure 2 above is the result for the univariate analysis and distribution for the study variables: entrepreneurial venture and socio-economic development. The evidence from the distribution suggests that for both variables there exist significant levels of manifestations and central tendencies depicting respondent’s agreement to their engagement in entrepreneurial ventures (where $x = 2.8825$; and Std. deviation = .41109); and their experience of socio-economic development (where $x = 2.8908$; and Std. deviation = .38170).

The evidence as presented in figure 2 also suggests significant predictions of socio-economic development based on the node manifestations of entrepreneurial venture (where node 1 = 2.704 and node 2 = 2.908 and where $P = 0.000$). The decision tree allows for the analysis of prediction through the assessment of nodes which indicate alternative assumptions (through branches such as offered in figure 2 of the same predictor variable) and allows for the assessment of probable instances from a particular case or relationship.

The evidence suggests the substantiality and significance of the effect of entrepreneurial venture on socio-economic development as both nodes are observed to comprise 100% prediction of the criterion variable in the relationship (node 1 = 8% and node 2 = 92%). This suggests that the outcome or criterion variable (socio-economic development) is hinged on manifestations of entrepreneurial venture. Each node within the tree represents a possibility, a test or alternative effect from the same predictor and indicates the extent to which changes in the predictor variable (low or high) would yet still influence the criterion.

Bivariate Analysis Results

The result for the test for the relationship between entrepreneurial venture and socio-economic development is revealed in the table 2 below

Table 2: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Develop					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.

Corrected Model	22.136 ^a	6	3.689	32.697	.000
Intercept	249.597	1	249.597	2212.122	.000
Venture	22.136	6	3.689	32.697	.000
Error	73.002	647	.113		
Total	5560.367	654			
Corrected Total	95.137	653			

a. R Squared = .233 (Adjusted R Squared = .226)

The evidence from the analysis reveals that entrepreneurial venture has a substantial effect on the socio-economic development of the context of the study. The results reveal that at an R Square = .233 and a $P < 0.05$; entrepreneurial activities significantly impacts on the manifestations of socio-economic development. As such given the evidence from the analysis, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between the variables is therefore rejected.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Artisanship and entrepreneurial ideas certainly need to be expressed, communicated and achieved in order to contribute to advancement of society and display their talents in some ways. Every nation strives for development. Economic progress is an essential component that should encompass more than the material and financial side of people's lives, to expand human freedoms. Development should therefore be perceived as a multidimensional process involving the reorganization and reorientation of entire economic and social systems. In addition to improvements in incomes and output and reduce poverty at a reasonable extent in a society, artisanship should be encouraged at all levels as it boasts entrepreneurial venture. It typically involves radical changes in institutional, social, and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes and even customs and beliefs of a people. Although economic development is usually defined in a national context, its more widespread realisation may necessitate modification of the international economic and social system as well. This is as shown in the analysis which revealed that entrepreneurial activities significantly impacts on the manifestations of socio-economic development.

Based on the foregoing, we recommend that: (i) Bayelsa state government should encourage her indigenes to see entrepreneurship/artisanship as an alternative to wealth creation, (ii) the government should find ways of promoting young school leavers to go into handicraft, (iii) more technical colleges should be built across the state to encourage the youths, (iv) government should organise craft exhibition at least every year to encourage people and (v) tax incentives for craft-men, entrepreneurs and artisans is encouraged as this will be a kind of moral booster for would-be entrepreneurs.

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