

# Entrepreneurship Development Model for the Backward Economies: Nigeria in Focus. A Hypothetico-Deductive Approach

Muhammad Baffa Sani

Department of Business Management, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, E-mail: mbsani.bus@buk.edu.ng

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## Abstract

Economic backwardness relates to poor entrepreneurship development (ED). Thus, this study develops model framework for ED specifically, to economically backward nations, like Nigeria. The study adopts hypothetico-deductive approach. It is found out that ED is never accidental and for attainment, it requires distinct composite efforts of government institution and individual citizens. Weakness of one renders the quest for ED futile. The government effort necessary for ED involves uncompromising security adequacy, infrastructural development, equitable opportunity distribution and impartial legal system. On the part of individual citizens, knowledge and character are inevitable. Therefore, the study recommends government at all costs to provide adequate security for people's lives and properties; revive the KEY infrastructural sector like education, transport systems and electricity, through proper budget and monitoring; foster distributive justice by enhancement of opportunity sets, reduction of barriers to equalities via the redesign of redistribution mechanisms for increased opportunity equality, like the promotion of inclusive policy and impartial legal system. On the part of the individual citizens, they should aspire to develop the competencies and attitudes essential for ED, through knowledge acquisition and character building, respectively. Knowledge can be acquired and character built through constant readings, observations, listening, asking and sharing (ROLAS).

**Keywords:** Backwardness, Entrepreneurship Development, Hypothetico-Deductive, Model.

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**Corresponding Author:** Muhammad Baffa Sani, Department of Business Management, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, E-mail: mbsani.bus@buk.edu.ng

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## Introduction

Backward economies are the struggling nations circumstantially, subsumed by socioeconomic crises. They crises relate not only to economic and

financial difficulties, but psychosocial as well (Doza et al, 2020; Sani, 2025; Amaechi t al, 2021). It is a state of devastated socio-politico variables (Impalure & Dore, 2020; Sani, 2019<sup>a</sup>). For this, disastrous widespread of humanitarian calamities

surface, via high rates of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Hence, described as the indicators of economic backwardness (Impalure & Dore, 2020).

Therefore, changing from economic backwardness requires decisive actions on poverty, unemployment and inequality (Zielinska-Szczepkowska et al, 2021). Presently, entrepreneurship is the ultimate tool for the decisiveness (Toma et al, 2014; Sani, 2019<sup>3</sup>; Gamede & Uleanya, 2020). It is on this premise that entrepreneurship and economic development mutually reinforce each other. To the extent, at every developmental stage-factor, efficiency and innovation-entrepreneurship is indispensable (Acs et al, 2008). Thus, entrepreneurship development (ED) is analogous to economic development. ED is often understood as economic norm whereby, citizens highly engage in search of opportunities, allocation of resources and creation of values, in domestic boundaries and beyond (Imafidon, 2014).

However, countries like Nigeria suffer from poor ED despite successive efforts. For example, there are various policies including the mandated entrepreneurship learning across the Nigerian tertiary institutions, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP); and number of established agencies like Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), National Board for Technology Incubation (NBTI), meant for ED. But ED is weak, in spite of abundant-human and natural-resources (Tende, 2014; Salami et al, 2023; Ubogu, 2023; Nkwo & Eneiga, 2024). Consequently, the economy continuously symbolises worse indices of poor ED.

The country's misery index ranking certifies the above argument. For instance, 63% of Nigeria's population is multidimensionally poor, with the dimensional poverty rising to as high as 91% in part

of the country (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2022). The same with unemployment. It has risen from 30.9% in 2023Q3 to 36.9%, 2024Q1, with notable figure among higher education learners (Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), 2024). Furthermore, the Gini Index of income inequality reveals increase from 40% to 43% in 2003 and 2009, respectively (George-Anokwuru & Inimino, 2024). The most disturbing is that the misery index is persistently deteriorating in multifaceted dimensions (Bot et al, 2024).

This is clearly a system's gap. There is disagreement between government's efforts for ED and citizens' receptiveness. Policies are in place, at the same time indicators of poor ED are upright without significant improvement.

## Literature Review

### *Entrepreneurship Development (ED)*

Development connotes significant level of attainment. It refers to wellness, vigour and prosperity. Hence, associated with performance and productivity (Hall, 2010). Thus, ED often suggests high prevalence of entrepreneurship practices (Frank, 2024). Greater portions of individuals deliberately engage in opportunity searches, resource commitment and value creation (Acs et al, 2008). Resultantly, number of new enterprises, renewal of existing businesses, increased wealth and disruptive changes crystallise (Timmons & Spinelli, 2004; Sarasvathy, 1999). Consequently, inciting entrepreneurial revolution (Sani, 2018).

Entrepreneurial revolution generates remarkable changes to entire socio-ecosystems; via trend shifts in socio-economic value propositions in wide diversified conditions (Sagagi et al, 2012; Vargas-Hernández et al., 2010).

Therefore, entrepreneurial revolution is a critical attribute of ED. It stirs up entrepreneurial activities (Sani, 2018). Unerringly, higher entrepreneurial activities stimulate the need for materials, manpower, machineries, management and other supplies. In effect, creating more exploitable opportunities and the urge for competitiveness enhanced (Kuran, 2008).

In a nutshell, ED is a state of higher entrepreneurial activities. When poorly achieved, the resultant repercussion is the economic, financial and psychosocial calamities. A specificity verily marked by high level of poverty, unemployment and inequality (Impalure & Dore, 2020; Doza et al, 2020; Sani, 2025; Amaechi et al, 2021).

### *Backward Economy*

More often than not, backward suggests underdevelopment. In the economic context, backward economy is related to feebleness, void of vigour and prosperity (Hall, 2010). It symbolises delicacy, inherently, weak to complement efforts of economic development (Bawazeer, 2023; Brussow, 2013). Thence, by nature of backward economy, it promotes inequity thereby, citizens are barricaded from free choice among economic alternatives (Sani, 2019<sup>b</sup>). Consequently, opportunity pursuits are by far, not determined by individual choices and abilities (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013). Pushing significant size of the population to life predicaments (Impalure & Dore, 2020).

Backward economy is highly catastrophic when left unattended. Particularly, to touch the lower socioeconomic group need of the society (Gurria, 2019). Income improvement in the 20% bottom of society enhances GDP (Dabla-Norris et al, 2015). And, enhanced GDP redirects the larger economy to the developmental path (Amadeo, 2019; Blowers & Leroy, 2003). Resulting to boosting

living standards by series of substitutes (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013). In contrast, poor living standard infers economic backwardness (Gurria, 2019; Messmore, 2011).

Therefore, when economic backwardness is squarely addressed, vigour, progress and prosperity synthesise. Thereby, upward social mobility, general living standard, inclusivity, environmental and social sustainability get improved (Gurria, 2019; Barsby, 1969). As the end-result, virtuous circle for wellbeing is realised (Gurria, 2019).

### **Research Gap**

Much study on poor ED particularly in Nigeria focuses on institutional-government-lapses. While 80% of all success is individual (Tracy & Tracy, 2014). Thus, presumably, individual attributes play a role to the menace as well. Based on this, this study argues that poor ED in Nigeria is not mainly institutional but, also individual. Hence, the study seeks to concurrently examine the institutional factors and individual attributes that demean ED efforts in Nigeria. This is in attempt to determine the essential factors and attributes, needed to work together for ED prevails.

The study is underpinned by the Theory of synergy. Theory of synergy suggests that effect of combined efforts, produced by two or more different entities or systems, is greater and more impactful than a sum of separate effects put together. The theory emphasises joint and harmonious actions among seemingly independent bodies, systems or ideologies in the pursuit of a common goal.

### **Research Objective**

The objective of this study is to develop model framework, to address ED challenge particularly, for Nigeria.

**Research Methodology**

This study is hypothetico-deductive. It is built on careful observations, analytics, reasoning,

predictions and reviews, regarding what constitutes the problem of poor ED in Nigeria. Below is the model framework of the study.

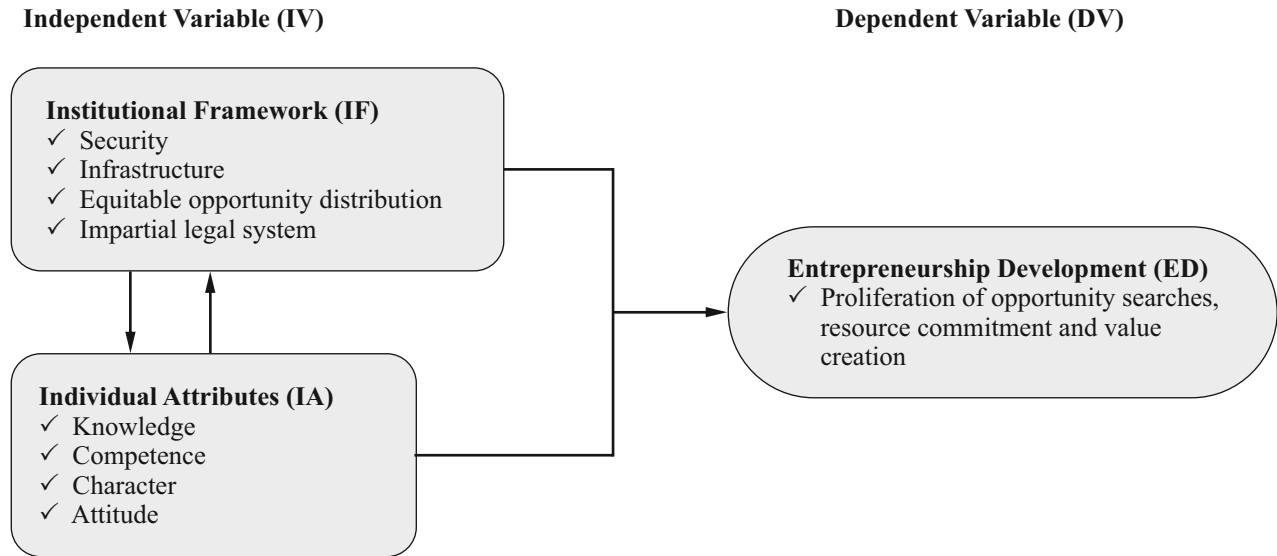


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

**Analysis & Discussion**

While no nation features zero entrepreneurship (Desai, 2007), ED centers on opportunity not necessity entrepreneurship (Sendra-Pons et al, 2022). Opportunity entrepreneurship is growth-oriented, and is seriously factor-driven phenomenon (O'Donnell et al, 2023; Fairlie & Fossen, 2018).

Based on the conceptual model framework of the study (Figure 1), ED is a function of:

- Institutional framework (IF) and
- Individual attributes (IA).

Thus,  $ED = f(IF, IA)$ .

Therefore, weak relationship renders ED efforts bleak.

*The Institutional Framework*

ED much often recognised by the prevalence of opportunity searches, resource commitment and value creation (Imafidon, 2014; Timmons & Spinelli, 2004; Sarasvathy, 1999), is not in vacuum of institutional influences, formal and informal (Miao et al, 2022). However, not all institutional effects are similar (Chowdhury et al, 2018). Government institution is the foundational. It is the 'mother' institution that vastly shapes other institutions through laws and structure provisions (Sendra-Pons et al, 2022). On this account, institution relates to government.

Therefore, standardised institutional framework is indispensable to ED. It stabilises the entire entrepreneurial ecosystems (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013; Sani, 2025; Frank, 2024). It is what sets the rules of the game for entrepreneurship preponderance (Kurtulmus, 2019), by assuring certainty and protection, and reduction of ambiguity in inherent risk taking (Sendra-Pons et

al, 2022).

The institutional role is exercised via the provision of security, infrastructural facilities, equitable opportunity distribution and impartial legal system (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013).

### *Security Situation in Nigeria*

One of the greatest hurdles in Nigeria today is security. Accordingly, in the study of Mbaegbu and Duntoye (2023), 61% of Nigerians are obsessed of neighbourhood insecurity, 84% fear abduction or kidnapping and 79% consider efforts of successive governments in handling atrocities extremely unproductive. The study corroborates the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) that placed Nigeria the 3<sup>rd</sup> most terrorised nation, globally (Asaju & Yohanna, 2022). In separate supporting findings, in just a year, over 600,000 Nigerians were reportedly killed, over 2,000,000 kidnapped and ransom of ₦2,231,772,563,507 (\$1,438,040,707.01) paid across the country (Adeniyi, 2024).

ED and insecurity are highly inverses. Part of its effect, insecurity reduces certainty and increases ambiguity (Sendra-Pons et al, 2022), which inescapably lessen entrepreneurial activities. On this account, insecurity is takes 36% responsibility for hindering business investments, and reduces entrepreneurship activities by 30% to 53% in the country (Maisaje et al, 2025; Ekoja et al, 2022; Ujah & Eboh, 2018).

### *Infrastructure in Nigeria*

Infrastructure pertains the enablers of smoothed socioeconomic activities. It positively influences growth, income distribution and global competitiveness (Palei, 2015; Calderon & Serven, 2004). It is both tangible and intangible. Tangible infrastructure involves the physical enabling factors including transportation systems, utilities, communication facilities and the likes. While the intangibles are immaterial but, whose impact is also vital; including education, healthcare, financial institutions and suchlike (Denomme &

Garland, 2023). Without each, ED cannot be achieved.

Infrastructure in Nigeria is vehemently undermined. In between 2000 and 2020, government infrastructural expenditure was below 5% of the nation's GDP. Quite far below China's and India's 25% and 15% respectively, during the race for fast development (Igwe, UD).

Globally, transportation is a crucial infrastructural variable. It endows free movements of goods and people. In Nigeria, road transport occupies over 90% of all movements (Onokala & Olajide, 2020; Igwe, UD). However, 87% of the road is in bad condition (Proshare, 2022). Resultantly, transportation covers 30% to 50% of goods value (Igwe, UD). Quite souring competitive efficiencies and factor costs.

Another vital infrastructural factor for ED is electricity. Due to epileptic electricity supply, firms spend as much as 20-30% of initial investment on electricity alternative (Adenikinju, 2003). In effect, embitters the cost of doing business in the country, negatively affecting national competitiveness, and as well contrasting growth potentials by at least 2% yearly (Sani, 2022; Bakare, 2015).

### *Opportunity Distribution in Nigeria*

Opportunity distribution concerns fairness and equity in resource sharing and accessibility to socioeconomic and political advantages to nationals. It assures the provision of policies that allows equal chances of growing and succeeding (Frank, 2024; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013). Thus, growth and success are not determined by one's background, gender or race rather, by one's efforts and determinations. Based on this, the distributive justice is measured in terms of availability of opportunity sets, degree of inequality presence in opportunity distribution system and the design of redistribution mechanisms for increasing opportunity equality (Peragine, 1999).

However, distributive justice is grossly violated in

Nigeria. Citizens are unequal to opportunity sets. The distributive system is furiously based on preferences, and the mechanisms to bridge the menace are virtually inexistent. This contributes to persistent deteriorated Human Development Index (HDI). The Nigeria's HDI is 163<sup>rd</sup> out of 177<sup>th</sup> countries; a sharp drop from 151<sup>st</sup> rank in 2002 (Abu, 2024).

The inequitable distributive system engulfs every sector in Nigeria. For example, accessibility to education is not at all equitable. This happens in spite of the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act of 2004. On this account, Nigeria occupies 20% of all-out-of-school-children of the globe (UNICEF, 2013). Consequently, gender-based disparities and socio-economic class continue to aggravate the situation; making inclusive education almost impossible in the country (Edinoh et al, 2025; Batagarawa & Bagiwa, 2025).

Lack of inclusive education hampers upward mobility. Obviously, when upward mobility is hampered, anti-ED factors are promoted (Impalure & Dore, 2020).

#### *Legal System in Nigeria*

Legal system constitutes rules and enforcement agencies that provide procedure for governance. Therefore, the role of legal system is all-encompassing including the preservation of order and justices, maintaining rights and obligations, contractual enforcement for business and investment safety and fairness resolution mechanisms, for creating equitable atmospheric condition (Blad, 2023).

However, equitable atmospheric condition is far from reality in Nigeria. Legal practices are highly partial, full of impunities and unequal accesses to justices (Amnesty International, 2020). The inevitable result is the intense poverty, inequitable distribution of resources, poor healthcare and discriminations that the nation witnesses (Idemudia, 2024).

Biased legal system and ED are asymmetric. Dysfunctional legal system fuels insecurity, dishonesty and lack of trust. Thereby, distorts the incentives to invest thus, lowering investment rates and business dynamisms, which are vital for ED (Bitria & Mora-Sanguinetti, 2020).

#### *Individual Attributes for Opportunity Searches*

ED is a result of individual activities. The activities primarily relate to pursuits of opportunity identification, resource allocation and value creation (Imafidon, 2014). It is a trend significantly influenced by knowledge and character.

#### **Knowledge**

Knowledge implies acquisition of factual information. It is minimally a state with propositional content, and people operate within the context of knowledge (Rescher, 2003). Proposition, acquaintance and how-to are the three most significant elements of knowledge (Lemos, 2007). Propositional knowledge is a justified true belief of facts; acquaintance knowledge permeates familiarity; while how-to knowledge denotes technique to carry out (Lemos, 2007; Rescher, 2003).

Knowledge influences business decisions and actions (Sani, 2022). As such, entrepreneurial knowledge is significant to the goal of ED. Entrepreneurial knowledge posits the knowhow of gap identification and fillage. It is a dual process involving skills of determining deficient need satisfaction and creating 'perceived' near to efficient need satisfaction value. Entrepreneurially, deficient need satisfaction is an opportunity used as a driver in the creation, communicating and delivery of value.

Stimulating entrepreneurial knowledge is the *raison d'etre* of the mandatory entrepreneurship education across the Nigeria's higher level of learning. So that, graduates with job creation

tendencies could be produced (Sagagi et al, 2012). However, unemployment is most prevalent among

higher education learners (NESG, 2024).

**Table 1: Unemployment Rate Based on Level of Education in Nigeria**

Education Status	Unemployment Rate (Percent)
Post-Secondary Education	9.0
Secondary Education	6.9
Primary Education	4.0
No Education	2.7

Source: NESG, 2024

Table 1 clearly indicates aim defeat. The supposed-to-be champions of entrepreneurship have fallen short of expectation. Though, entrepreneurial knowledge is multi-rooted notwithstanding, educational system is pivotal in giving direction towards ED (Edinoh et al, 2025; Batagarawa & Bagiwa, 2025; Impalure & Dore, 2020). Therefore, ineffective educational system generates inept entrepreneurial knowledge, which obviously weakens ED efforts.

### *Character*

As shown in the conceptual model of the study, character is another essential attribute for ED. Character is a distinct person's characteristics. It is beyond appearance. Rather, constitutes the psychological and behavioural based dimensions that enable task execution (Wright & Lauer, 2013). In 21<sup>st</sup> century, self-efficacy, conscientiousness, locus of control, need for achievement and innovativeness are the dominant entrepreneurial characters that guarantee ED (Yangailo & Qutieshat, 2022). They help resist and overcome the 'I can't-do attitude', caused mostly by comfort zone, learned helplessness and path of least resistance (Tracy & Chee, 2013).

When entrepreneurial characters are absent, individuals resort to irresponsibleness. Irresponsibleness signifies inability to shoulder responsibility for achievement. While 80% of

achievements is personally responsible (Tracy & Tracy, 2014), irresponsibleness roots excuses and blame games. Each inhibits ED. However, on the average, Nigerians do not consider themselves responsible to their situation (Frank, 2024).

### **Research Findings**

From the discussions above, both institutional factors and individual attributes are grossly hampered in Nigeria. Each contributes significantly to the poor ED in the country, as per below:

On security people are highly panic, and more worrisome they lack confidence in government's effort to overcome the challenge. In view of this, it hinders business investments by 36% and reduces entrepreneurship activities between 30% to 53% in the country (Maisaje et al, 2025; Ekoja et al, 2022; Ujah & Eboh, 2018).

Likewise, infrastructure. Road transport occupies over 90%, but 87% of it is dilapidated (Proshare, 2022). In addition, is epileptic electricity. The duos aggravate the cost of doing business in the country, negatively affecting competitiveness, and reduce growth potentials by at least 2% yearly (Sani, 2022; Bakare, 2015).

More so, equitable distributive system. For example, inclusive education that often serves as

foundational to equity is absent. And, obviously, lack of inclusive education promotes anti-ED factors (Impalure & Dore, 2020).

The legal system is as well biased. Consequently, lowers investment rates and dynamisms, which are vital for ED (Bitria & Mora-Sanguinetti, 2020).

On part of individuals, both knowledge and character needed for ED remain a challenge. Hence, unemployment is most observed among higher education learners (NESG, 2024). And, averagely, feel not responsible for the situation (Frank, 2024).

Therefore, the findings of the study above, indicate the weakness of ED in Nigeria is a result of weaknesses in both institutional and individual variables. Not any amongst the duos is positive towards the ED. In situation like this, ED remains merely a *WISH*.

### Conclusion

ED requires synergistic functions of two independent variables: institutional factors that incorporates security, infrastructure, equitable distribution of socioeconomic opportunities and impartial legal system; and individual attributes consisting knowledge and character. ED cannot flourish in an economy, unless both signals positivity towards the ED, concurrently. Weakness in one renders the whole process ineffective; therefore, poor ED as is the case in Nigeria.

### Recommendations

For Nigeria to attain the goal of ED, it needs to imbibe the following recommendations:

- i. At all costs, security adequacy should never be compromised. Failure of that demotivates particularly, opportunity entrepreneurship, that

is always associated with socioeconomic growth and developmental potentials.

- ii. As the study shows, infrastructure is highly critical in the efforts for ED but, seriously dilapidated in Nigeria. Therefore, as a matter of urgency, KEY infrastructural sector revives like education, transportation systems and electricity are highly recommended through proper budget allocations, monitoring and implementation.
- iii. Again, as shown in the study, inequities all over the world slow ED. In consideration of this, fostering distributive justice needs to be present in all the socioeconomic endeavours. To make it happen, opportunity sets must be enhanced and barriers to equities reduced, via the promotion of inclusivity and the adoption of impartial legal system.
- iv. From the study, ED is not accidental, achieved only through collective efforts. In this regard, Nigerians should aspire to deliberately acquire entrepreneurial knowledge to develop the right characters, for the essential ED competencies and attitudes, respectively.
- v. To acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and character, this study recommends incessant readings of related texts to entrepreneurship; observing the activities of 'perceived' successful entrepreneurs and copying; listening to the 'words of wisdom' and adopt the best thereof; asking questions on the obscured particularly, on entrepreneurship matters; and sharing the acquired knowledge with others.

### Scope for Future Research

This study is hypothetico-deductive. Therefore, empirical research can be undertaken to primarily examine the composite reliability, convergent and divergent validity of the constructs, to determine

relative influence of each on the poor ED particularly, in Nigeria. In addition, empirical study can also be initiated to investigate the factors behind poor entrepreneurship practices among higher education learners, despite mandatory entrepreneurship education across all the Nigeria's tertiary institutions.

### Limitations

The study relies majorly on observations, analytics, reasoning, predictions and reviews. Therefore, the data was neither subjected to rigorous analysis, nor to validity or reliability tests.

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