

# **IMPACT OF ETHNICITY ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A GLOBAL REVIEW AND LESSONS FOR NIGERIA**

*Kabiru Isa Dandago  
Yusha 'u Ibrahim Ango*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Like most social science concepts, ethnicity is viewed by scholars from varied perspectives. Studies on ethnicity have been more about the negative aspects: ethnic conflicts, ethnic violence, ethnic riots, and so on. Ethnicity, however, is a concept that is much wider than its narrow conflict-related interpretation suggests. Just like ethnicity, entrepreneurship has equally proven to be an elusive concept for scholars (Iyer and Schoar, 2008). Entrepreneurship is an ancient concept that is both simple and complex at the same time. Conceptualization, definition, and understanding of the phenomenon, have eluded scholars and practitioners for a very long time. While we struggle to try and capture it, as we seem to get closer to a satisfactory resolution, we find that the concept continues to evolve.

Despite these difficulties and sometimes, misconceptualization of these concepts, it is still a matter of interest to researchers to understand what determines why some people go into entrepreneurship and what predicts the success or specific approach to entrepreneurship. Researchers have equally been interested in carrying out studies on why certain nations, regions within nations, or even ethnic groups within a country, differ in their entrepreneurship

orientation and attitude (see Bonacich, 1972, Light, 1973; Waldinger et al. 1986 Light and Gold, 1988, Hofstede, 1980, 1991).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) also carries out annual surveys to determine levels of entrepreneurship across member countries with the aim of ranking the countries. The GEM (2002) report for instance, found that entrepreneurial activities in Japan, Russia, or Belgium in 2002 were almost six times lower than those of India and Thailand (3% compared to 18%). Dana et al. (2005) as well as Todorovic and McNaughton (2007), while agreeing that entrepreneurial activity promotes knowledge, beliefs and practices that aid economic development, insist that there are significant differences between cultures and societies in their inclinations to entrepreneurship and new venture development.

Even within the same nations, studies have shown major differences in entrepreneurial attitudes between regions and zones. One example is in the difference between West and East Germany. Bergmann (2009) confirms this difference citing various studies that revealed that even more than 15 years after German unification, the business foundation related attitudes in East Germany are somewhat more cautious than in West Germany. This was further confirmed by the most recent country report of the GEM on Germany. It clearly points to these differences: eastern Germans tend to assess their start-up environment more pessimistically than western Germans do. Further, there is a great significant difference in relation to the question as to whether or not the fear of failure is an obstacle to business foundation.

Differences in cultural traits are usually given as explanation for disparities in entrepreneurship orientation of nations, regions or ethnicity. Hence, many cultural entrepreneurship studies that seek to determine the influence of ethnicity, religion, race, etc., on entrepreneurship attitude of different people, have been undertaken (Hofstede, 1991, Light, 1972, 2000; Bruce, 2003). Some of those studies tried to compare entrepreneurial attributes of ethnic groups within the same country, although most are done in the American or European context (Jung and Kau, 2004). Most ethnic entrepreneurship studies in the United State of America compared entrepreneurship attitude of blacks and migrants like Koreans, Indians, Chinese, Cubans, etc., against white Americans (Light, 1972; Light and Bonacich, 1988; Portes and Rumbaut, 1990; Waldinger and Bozorgmehr, 1996; Yoo, 1998; 2000; Light and Gold, 2000). In Europe and particularly in the United Kingdom, such studies compared migrants, particularly Asians, and Black-Caribbeans with White Caucasians (Ram, 1991; 1994; Phizacklea and Ram, 1995; Ram, Abbas, Songhera and Hillin, 2000; Fadahunsi, Smallbone and Supri, 2000).

An example of such studies conducted outside the west was the one undertaken by Iyer and Schoar (2008). It found that the Marwaris were considered the most entrepreneurial community in India. There was also the study by Mungai and Ogot (2009) on ethnicity, culture and entrepreneurship in Kenya. This latter study had limited scope as it studied four of the Kenyan ethnic groups and was limited to the city of Nairobi. Even then, such studies are rare in developing countries and sub-Saharan African countries, in particular. This might be because interest on impact of culture on entrepreneurship, even in Europe and the West, generally were heightened only from the 1980s.

Nigeria, a country of 150 millions and the largest African/black nation is, arguably, one of the world's most diverse countries (Ukiwo, 2005). Agreeing with that assertion, Kohnert (2010) stresses that Nigerians form approximately half of the total population of West Africa. In addition, the country is made up of over 250 ethnic groups. McClelland (1961) posits that members of each ethnic group within a modern nation state do have their unique customs, behavior and a common world view, and hence, do share certain cultural particularities compared to other groups within those nations.

Given such reality and the fact that the country faces challenges of economic development in a fast phased global economy, Nigeria has no alternative but to learn to be increasingly entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurship, in general, and ethnic entrepreneurship, in particular, should thus be of interest to Nigerians. Nigeria would need to learn from some of the best practices globally with a view to possibly domesticating those practices among the diverse ethnic groups in the country. Here, the argument put forward by Valdez (2002), that it is important to understand the relationship between ethnicity and enterprise, can never be more apt. It is for this reason that this study aims at reviewing and synthesizing global entrepreneurship studies that are related to ethnicity and thereby identifying lessons for Nigeria and Nigerians.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### ***Conceptual Framework***

Weber (1905) sees ethnic groups as artificial social constructs because they are based on a subjective belief in shared community. A second justification is the fact that this belief in shared

community did not create the group, rather the group created the belief. He is also of the belief that group formation resulted from the drive to monopolize power and status. This position is contrary to the widely held belief at Weber's time and even now, that socio-cultural and behavioral differences between peoples stemmed from inherited traits and tendencies, derived from common descent.

A seminal volume on ethnicity - *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, by Barth (1969), goes further than Weber, in stressing the constructed nature of ethnicity. He sees ethnicity as a phenomenon that is perpetually negotiated and renegotiated by both external ascription and internal self-identification. His thesis is, therefore, a focus on the interconnectedness of ethnic identities. Sharing similar sentiment, Cohen (1978), an anthropologist, claims that the label "ethnic groups" is rather inaccurately used by social scientists. This is because in the main, it is imposed and may not conform to indigenous realities. This is because, as he pointed out, when an ethnic group's identification is by outsiders, e.g., anthropologists, it may not coincide with the self-identification of the members of that group. He also described that in the first decade of usage, the term "ethnicity" had often been used in lieu of older terms such as "cultural" or "tribal" when referring to smaller groups with shared cultural systems and shared heritage, but that "ethnicity" had the added value of being able to describe the commonalities between systems of group identity in both tribal and modern societies. Cohen (1971) also suggests that claims concerning "ethnic" identity (like earlier claims concerning "tribal" identity) are often colonialist practices and effects of the relations between colonized peoples and nation-states.

These views about ethnicity are substantially Eurocentric. For a multicultural nation like Nigeria, ethnicity is more than an artificial social construct, as noted by Weber (1905). Even though it was used especially during colonialism and neo-colonial era to emphasize divisions among the people, Nigerians do not regard 'ethnicity and ethnic identity' as a subjective belief in shared community, contrary to Cohen (1978).

Ukiwo (2005), who was defining ethnicity from the context of conflict, defines ethnicity as "the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in situation of competition, conflict or cooperation". Ukiwo (2005), finds this definition preferable because it identifies two issues that are central to discussions on ethnicity. The first is that ethnicity is neither natural nor accidental, but is the product of a conscious effort by social actors. The second is that ethnicity is not only manifest in conflictive or competitive relations, but also in the contexts of cooperation. He alludes to the fact that ethnic conflict manifests itself in various forms; some of which (like in the case of voting or community service) need not always have negative consequences. Ethnic groups are groups with ascribed membership, usually but not always based on claims or myths of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory.

Bacik (2002), on the other hand, sees ethnic nationalism from the perspective of lineage. He sees it as the attributes that members of an ethnically defined national grouping share, including physical characteristics, culture, religion, language, and a common ancestry. In essence, individuals of a different ethnicity, even if they reside in and are citizens of the nation state in

question, do not become part of the national grouping. Even the Wikipedia asserts that ethnic groups are a group of people whose members identify with each other, through a common heritage, often consisting of a common language, a common culture (often including a shared religion) and an ideology that stresses common ancestry or endogamy.

Schildkrout (1978) defines ethnicity as "...a set of conscious or unconscious beliefs or assumption about one's own or another's identity, as derived from membership in a particular type of group or category". Horowitz (1985) sees ethnicity as an umbrella concept that embraces groups differentiated by color, language, and religion. According to him, the definition could be extended to cover "tribes", "nationalities" and "castes". To Chandra (2006), ethnic identities are a subset of identity categories, in which eligibility for membership is determined by attributes associated with, or believed to be associated with, descent.

This paper therefore aligns more with Schildkrout (1978), Horowitz (1985) and Bacik (2002). Their views appear to be closer to the accepted reality that the ethnic groups in Nigeria share some physical characteristics, a common language and culture, and in some cases, even religion. It also agrees with Ukiwo (2005), even though that is not the subject of this effort, who opines ethnic groups try to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or cooperation.

Cantillon (1680 - 1734) is attributed to be the earliest scientist who paid considerable attention to the field of entrepreneurship. The 'entrepreneur' is said to have first been acknowledged in Cantillon (1755) work titled 'Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en Général'. Since then, entrepreneurs have been seen as the heart of economic activity and growth. For example, in

Smith's (1776), *Wealth of Nations*, the impression one gets is that the most important function of the businessman is to supply capital as an entrepreneur - one of the factors of production. In addition, as Iyer and Schoar (2008) confirm, economic theorists from Schumpeter to Baumol have highlighted entrepreneurship as the driving force for change and innovation in a capitalist system.

Despite this belief, the real roles of entrepreneurs remain a contentious issue. For example, Kirzner (1973), Bygrane (1997), Shane and Venkataraman (2000) as well as Robbins and Coulter (1999), see entrepreneurship from the lens of opportunity recognition while Schumpeter (1934) views the entrepreneur as an innovator or a creative personality.

To some of the opportunity school scholars, entrepreneurship is the study of "how, by whom and with what consequences, opportunities to produce future goods and services are discovered, evaluated and exploited" (Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Bygrane (1997) sees an entrepreneur as someone who perceives opportunity and creates organization to pursue it. According to Kirzner (1973), the entrepreneur is a decision maker whose entire role arises out of his alertness to unnoticed opportunities; therefore, entrepreneurship is the ability to perceive new opportunities. This recognition and seizing of the opportunity will tend to "correct" the market and bring it back towards equilibrium.



### ***Ethnic Entrepreneurship***

Mitchell et al. (2002), in an attempt to empirically determine whether entrepreneurship cognitions are common across cultures, undertook an exploratory study of 990 respondents in eleven countries. They found that entrepreneurs have cognitions distinct from those of other business people. They also observed differences on eight out of ten proposed cognition constructs and that the pattern of country representation within an empirically developed set of entrepreneurial archetypes, does indeed differ among countries. However, in the opinion of Shariff and Saud (2009), few studies have tried to understand what determines why some people go into entrepreneurship and what predicts the success or specific approach to entrepreneurship. In essence, studies that use personality/character, demographic and attitudinal approaches to determine potential to create aspiring entrepreneurs in various fields of endeavor, appear to be few. Even fewer studies appear to have been made on the influence of culture on entrepreneurship attitude of ethnic groups. An attempt was made by Lindsay (2005) to design a model of entrepreneurship attitude by combining both Hofstede's (1980) dimensions and the EAO model. Even then, he did not attempt to empirically test the model.

Two reasons could be adduced for the fewer studies done with regards to influence of culture on entrepreneurship attitude of ethnic groups. The first is the fact that much entrepreneurship research was undertaken by western scholars who appear to associate ethnicity with backward cultures (see Waldinger 1986, Light and Bonacich 1988; and Waldinger et al., 1990). Where such researches are undertaken in the west, it tends to examine the entrepreneurship attitudes of immigrants compared to the local population.

In another study, Aruwa (2005) finds that ethnic background was a major influence in explaining entrepreneurial patterns and motivations in Kaduna, followed by finance, environmental influence, and personal experience and motivations. The study also found that some ethnic groups in Kaduna dominated certain entrepreneurship ventures. While the study's objective was not to examine the impact of culture on entrepreneurship attitudes, it has indirectly demonstrated that entrepreneurship attitudes are influenced by cultural factors.

In addition to all of the above, studies have been undertaken in some countries and regions that empirically suggest that differences in entrepreneurial attitude exist between countries and regions. Bosma et al. (2009), for example, finds that inhabitants of Southern Europe, the United Kingdom and Ireland show relatively high self-employment preferences among the European Union (EU) countries, thus confirming that considerable variation exists within the EU.

These studies are proof that differences do exist in the entrepreneurship attitudes among communities and nations and that this is largely because of the respective cultures associated with each group or community, ethnic or otherwise.

### ***Immigrant Ethnic Entrepreneurship***

A greater proportion of studies comparing ethnic groups' level of entrepreneurship have focused on immigrants who are more often seen as the 'ethnics', especially in the USA and Europe. In the USA, for example, studies have been undertaken to compare levels of entrepreneurship of

ethnic groups, such as the Chinese, Indians, Koreans, Cubans or blacks, with white Caucasians (see for example, Waldinger 1986, Light and Bonacich 1988, Light 1972, and Morris and Schindehutte 2005). Similar studies were conducted in the United Kingdom, that compare Asians, Black-Caribbeans and Whites (Ram, 1991; 1994; Ram, Abbas, Songhera and Hillin, 2000; Fadahunsi, Smallbone and Supri, 2000;). This, despite the fact that more often than not, as Deon et al. (1999) posit, the mistake is always made whereby, for example, Moroccans, Indonesians, Indians or Turkish ethnic groups residing in Europe or America are considered as one ethnic group although in their countries of origin, they belong to different cultural backgrounds.

In a study that explores the phenomenon of ethnic entrepreneurship and migration in developing countries, Deon et al. (1999) find that migrants are motivated to go into entrepreneurial activities because of cultural hostility they face, the degree of competition, market accessibility, capital accessibility, their ability for niche concentration, as well as existence of support network, among other factors. With regards to job prospects, for example, Light (1995) argues that migrants and the local-born workers encounter different challenges on jobs prospects. Job selection criteria, in an ideal sense, is based largely on education, merit, and transparent rules, but in practice, there are also a hidden rules, where ethnicity and nativity are included in labor recruitment, which eliminates migrants' opportunities to be accepted in the formal sectors.

Waldinger et al. (1986; 1996) identified four main possibilities to explain why some ethnic groups are more entrepreneurial than others. These possibilities have to do with: culture,

structure, the ethnic enclave, and the situation. The cultural approach focuses on the cultural resources or predispositions that may lead to business success. A good example of these cultural resources could perhaps be seen in the findings of studies undertaken by Morris and Schindehutte (2005) in the state of Hawaii which involved administering questionnaires to some first generation Japanese, Filipinos, Koreans, Chinese, and Vietnamese, in addition to native Hawaiians. The study found each ethnic group associating itself with certain core values generally associated with their particular ethnic backgrounds, such as frugality for the Koreans, risk aversion for the Japanese, or hospitality for the Hawaiians. Also, citing earlier studies like Bonacich (1973); Ward (1983); Werbner, (1990); Waldinger et al. (1990), he opines that immigrant entrepreneurship has impacted significantly on entrepreneurship in their host communities by emphasizing the importance of values like thrift, close family and religiosities and trust, which enable some immigrant groups to compete successfully in business.

One other feature worthy of review with regards to 'ethnic'/migrant entrepreneurs is the role of the ethnic networks. This has to do with the existence of 'diasporas' - ethno-national communities scattered around the globe that nonetheless remain in continuous, long-term contact with one another as well as with their real or putative homeland (Cohen 1997; 185). According to Light and Gold (2000), their real or putative homeland constituted the hub of ethnic diasporas, while the colonies scattered abroad represented the spokes. Light (2010) stresses that trading diasporas were involved in shipping commodities around the diasporas' network, sometimes to distant continents and that in each diaspora site, co-ethnic merchants sold imported goods to

locals and purchased goods from them for export. The middleman's minority specialization in international trade gave him many advantages.

Firstly, thanks to their hub and spoke structure, diasporas linked distant continents in such a way that ethnic minorities resident in any one place had strong social and cultural ties with co-ethnics in many others. Through such networks, it became easy for co-ethnics to dominate certain businesses, especially where they have better knowledge of the market with regards to sourcing of inputs or finding markets for particular products. Ethnic diasporas were commercially important, but they were not numerous. Diasporas were uncommon because most immigrants just assimilated into host societies within three generations (Bonacich 1973, Light and Gold 2000). As a result, unless renewed by new immigration, the spokes ceased to communicate with one another and with the hub.

Entrepreneurial ethnic communities that operated around diaspora structure earned the sobriquet "middleman minorities" in the literature of social science (Bonacich, 1973; Kieval, 1997; Light and Gold, 2000: 6-8). Middleman minorities were non-assimilating ethnic minorities, noteworthy for their abundant and persistent entrepreneurship, wherever they lived. Bonacich (1973), and Light and Gold (2000) highlight their characteristics to include, among others, the fact that they resist assimilation. In non-middleman minority groups, grandchildren are assimilated and unable to speak their grandparents' language. However, middleman minorities, realizing that when immigrants or ethnic minorities assimilate, they lose their commercial advantages, successfully resisted assimilation for centuries. They become bi-cultural in mono-cultural civilizations (Light,

1995). Speaking their ethnic languages as well as the vernacular of their countries of residence, middleman minorities could communicate across linguistic barriers, thus giving them advantages.

Secondly, the international social networks produced an international system of enforceable trust that subjected sanctions on anyone who violated the presumption of honesty. Thirdly, middleman minorities acquired advanced business skills and passed them along to younger generations, even when there were no famous business schools then! While acknowledging the existence of others, Light and Gold (2000) mentioned among the prominent middleman minority communities were: the Jews of Europe, the Hausa of Nigeria, the Sikhs of East Africa, the Chinese of South East Asia, the Armenians of Near East and the Parsees of India.

According to Light (2010), another phase in the evolution of immigrant entrepreneurship that followed the ‘middleman - minority’ phase is what Schiller et al. (1992) refer to as transnationalism. This, they explained, is a process through which immigrants (who virtually live in two countries - their country of birth and a country of settlement), build social fields that link together these two countries. Schiller et al. refers to these immigrants as “transmigrants” as they are resident in at least two societies between which they shuttle frequently enough to remain active participants in both, but are not fully encapsulated mono-cultural participants in either. Light (2010) argues that transnationalism started after 1965; the period when globalization commenced. The transmigrants, like the middleman-minorities, do not assimilate with their host communities; they however acculturate - by understanding the language of host societies. Light

(2010) observes that the transmigrants resemble middleman minorities in some ways. For instance, transnationals have diasporas just like middleman minorities. Gold (1997) asserts that transnationalism gave ethno-racial groups that were never middleman minorities in the past, an opportunity to have diasporas. He gave the examples of Brazilians or Filipinos, who now maintain diasporas, a benefit enjoyed only by middleman minorities like the Chinese, Armenians, or Jews. This, he argues is because in an era of globalization, diasporas are logistically easier to maintain.

Thirdly, contemporary transnationals are bicultural just as are members of the classic middleman minorities. As a result, transnationals enjoy some of the same advantages for international trade that middleman minorities enjoyed in the past. The spokes of the transnationals' diaspora communicate with one another and with the diaspora's hub in the mother tongue while selling locally in the local vernacular. Another similarity highlighted by Light (2010) is that, like middleman minorities, contemporary transnationals have international social capital via trade network with appropriate mechanisms to enforce compliance with trade terms.

There are, however, differences between middleman minorities and transnationalists. For example, Mahler (1998) argues that while middleman minorities originate from 'below', transnationalism originates from 'above' and 'below' as well. Mahler gave the example of countries like Canada, USA, and Australia that issue entrepreneur visas. There is also the method in which special visas are issued to skilled foreigners temporarily to access the labor market in the destination country. Such cases are referred to as coming from 'above'. Light (2010) gives, as an example in this category, Jerry Yang, co-founder of Yahoo. But in the cases when routine,

non-elite immigrants opt for a transnational lifestyle, it amounts to coming from 'below' just as was the case with middleman minorities. It is the opinion of Light (2010) that transnationalism from 'above' introduces immigrants who arrive well-equipped with human and financial capital, as well as of course, with ethnic, social and cultural capital; as against transnationalism from 'below' which gives rise to entrepreneurs who have only average or even below average human, social and financial capital, and who tend to open routine business firms, many of which serve only their own co-ethnic community. Regardless of how transnationalism originates (from 'above' or from 'below'), Saxenian ((2002; 2006) is of the view that transnational entrepreneurs enhance the economic growth of both their homelands and adopted countries.

The most recent interesting development that is impacting migrant entrepreneurship is the global acceptance of English language as the language of commerce. Like transnationalism, the dominance of English language as the language of commerce is also seen as part of the effect of globalization (Fishman, 1998-1999). Gould (1990, 1994) seeks to establish this empirically when he undertook some studies in the 1980s with regards to the effect of the use of English on immigration and foreign trade in Canada and the USA. He found that the volume and skill levels of immigrants increased the dollar volume of both American and Canadian exports to the immigrants' home countries, without increasing imports from them. This was in cases where the immigrants were from non-English speaking nations. This finding is contrary to earlier held beliefs that immigrants should import more from their homelands than they export to them. Light (2001) and Light et al. (2002) replicated Gould's study using a different American data set



and confirm the same findings as Gould that immigrants to the USA increased American exports to their home countries without increasing American imports from their home countries.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study is a literature survey type. It seeks to identify, from literature globally, those attitudes in various cultures that bring out the best in each ethnic group's entrepreneurship. Such positive cultural attitudes from all ethnic groups would be worthy of emulation by the other ethnic groups for best practices in entrepreneurship.

## **LESSONS FOR NIGERIA**

As stated above, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with more than 150 million inhabitants (Kohnert, 2010). Considering the fact that the country is also the sixth largest oil producing nation globally, we can say that it is well endowed in both human and natural resources. However, given the high level of poverty in the country, there is a need to give entrepreneurship development all the attention it deserves. This becomes even more critical, if the country's vision to be among the top 20 biggest economies globally, by the year 2020, is to be realized. While these lessons are obviously inexhaustible, a few of them are itemized below:

### ***Comparative Studies***

As studies by Mitchel et al. (2002), Bosma et al. (2009) and the various GEM annual country reports, among several other studies show, entrepreneurship cognitions between countries, regions or ethnic groups within countries, differ. However, comparative studies on the

entrepreneurship attitudes of the Nigerian ethnic groups are rare. Stakeholders (public or private), would, therefore, need to consciously sponsor studies that would seek to investigate the entrepreneurship drive of Nigeria's many ethnic groups. In this way, it would be possible to understand which ethnic cultures encourage entrepreneurship more as well as the cultures that retard entrepreneurship, if any. The factors responsible for either stance can then be publicized for the benefit of all Nigerians. Since ethnic conflicts sometimes manifest in competition between ethnic groups; publicizing the outcome may encourage others to improve their entrepreneurship attitude.

### ***Learning from others***

Closely related to the above, Nigerians have a lot to learn from some of the best global practices as enunciated above. For example, they need to learn the frugality of the Koreans, the risk aversion of the Japanese or the penchant for opportunity recognition of the Maoris, and so on. Luckily, some studies assert that the major ethnic groups possess high levels of entrepreneurship. For example, Kohnert (2010) acknowledges the fact that Nigerians, and in particular the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, have a dynamic emigration history, and that they have trans-regional networks of migrant entrepreneurs since pre-colonial times all over West Africa. Citing Mahdi (1990), Aliyu (2000) confirms that the Hausa were involved in pre-colonial migration motivated by trade (fatauci), itinerant Islamic scholarship (almajiranci) and seasonal migration (cirani). This explains the existence of the prevalence of voluntary settlements (Zango) along the trade routes. Aliyu (2000) also posits that the long-distance caravan trade route from Hausaland during the pre-colonial era extends to North Africa among other places. Also, Le Vine (1966), Harris

(1968), and Lovejoy (1971) identify the Igbo as a very enterprising ethnic group. McClelland (1961) gives credit to the Yoruba, and Dana (2007) and Light (2010) lists out the Hausa ethnic group as one of six ‘middleman-minority’ ethnic groups globally.

### ***Migration and Ethnic Networks***

Nigerian ethnic groups would need to consider expanding their businesses and networks beyond West Africa. While it is true that the Hausa, for example, were active players in the trans-Saharan trade routes to north and central Africa, and that the Yoruba and Igbo are increasingly becoming active transmigrants, a lot needs to be done to improve the situation. Nigerian ethnic groups would need to key-in to modern business practices. They cannot afford to stick to the past. The fate of the old Zangos (business hubs set up by Hausa merchants along trade routes) cannot be guaranteed under modern business realities. If the Nigerian ethnic entrepreneurs do not update trade practices, they will be easily edged out even at home by the rampaging Chinese entrepreneurs among other very aggressive ethnic entrepreneurs (Kohnert, 2010).

### ***Ethical Practices***

One major lesson for the Nigerian ethnic groups is that of imbibing and fully adopting globally accepted ethical standards in trade relations. With globalization, business practices and standards are expected to comply with global standards. Nigerians must, therefore, key into that and use their trading networks in the diasporas to enforce compliance.

## **The Use of English Language**

The increasing adoption of English language as the language of commerce has implications for Nigerian traders. English is officially the second and official language in Nigeria. The use of English as the language of commerce should provide opportunity to Nigerian international traders, most of whom can speak the language, in addition to their mother tongues. They can use their proficiency in the language to their advantage in the international trading arena.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study, which are based on a synthesis of the reviewed literature, confirm that there are differences in entrepreneurship attitudes globally. There are differences between nation states, between regions and ethnic groups within the same countries. These differences are conditioned substantially by the varied cultures (including ethnicity) of the people concerned.

It is also the finding of this study that Nigeria can benefit from global trade through encouraging entrepreneurship development. The country's ethnic groups could partake as middleman minorities (the Hausa are among the sixth globally accepted middleman minority groups), transnationalism and taking advantage of the usage of English language as the global language of commerce. There is need for Nigerian entrepreneurs to pursue a global vision and not limit themselves to domestic or West African markets.

This paper, therefore, recommends that the government should sponsor studies that would seek to determine the cultural attitude of Nigerian ethnic groups to entrepreneurship. The studies

would provide opportunity to identify the best practices and publicize them. They will also be able to identify poor entrepreneurship attitudes with some groups and thus use the opportunity to re-orient such communities.

Closely related to the above, this paper also believes that it is especially important to ensure that steps are taken to introduce entrepreneurship orientation and coaching, right from the beginning of a child's education. There is need to move beyond current policy of teaching entrepreneurship only at tertiary levels of education in Nigeria and many other countries of the world.

Nigerian entrepreneurs should be exposed to modern business processes and approaches of doing business. They need support from stakeholders for them to be exposed to production and marketing standards that would meet global standards. There is also the need to ensure that compliance with global ethical standards is encouraged, among entrepreneurs, by the government.

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