

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES FOR NIGERIAN YOUTHS

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Abstract

Honestly speaking, Nigeria is blessed with abundant natural, human and material resources yet her citizens are suffering tremendously especially the youths. This is caused by bad leadership cum lackadaisical attitudes orchestrated by greedy and disgruntled politicians. The conspicuous immediate effect is that the poor are getting poorer while the rich are getting richer on daily basis. It is also obvious that there are problems already on ground in the country ranging from social problems (poverty, unemployment, unequal opportunity, racism, crime, cultism, terrorism, human trafficking, employment discrimination and malnutrition), religious bigotry, economic quagmire, political to environmental problems. These existing problems have done more harm than good, especially on the parts of our youths at present. Our youths have resorted to banditry, kidnapping, ritual killings, prostitution, terrorism, child trafficking, yahoo yahoo plus and other innumerable nefarious acts as a result alarming rate of unemployment in the country. This paper unequivocally x-rays the survival strategies for Nigerian youths amidst obstacles in Nigeria. Also, it exposes some of the barriers that could militate against survival strategies. This paper is purely conceptual in nature. The survival strategies include POS Business, Graphic Designs, Food Community Business, Home Lessons, Writing and Selling of E-Books, Home Cleaning Services, Affiliate Marketing e.t.c while the barriers include Negative Mindset, Pride (the killer of destiny), paucity of vision and faith, religious fraud. We concluded that Nigerian Youths need to desist from seeking white collar jobs to creating viable jobs for themselves and others via the entrepreneurial activities deliberated on so far. We, therefore, recommend and encourage youths to just positively do what they can with all they have, wherever they are and the sky will be their stepping stones.

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Key Words: Survival, Strategies, Youths and Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigerian youths are the engine house of the nation despite the exponential negligence, which they experience at present in terms of academic decadence and the spate of unemployment in the country. Youth unemployment is one of the most debilitating problems militating against sustained economic growth and development in Nigeria. But it is a pity that the spate of economic hardship and incessant strike orchestrated by lackadaisical attitude of the Nigerian Government towards lecturers has worsened the condition of Nigerian Youths. Statistical evidence proves that many youths are indulging in nefarious acts (internet fraud, kidnapping, ritual killings, armed robbery, political bigotry and prostitution) as a means of livelihood nowadays (Omejel, Jideofor, & Okike, 2020).

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It is categorically clear that every country growth and development relies heavily on the level of resourcefulness of her citizens most especially the youths (Olajide & Akojenu, 2017). This is because of the creative and innovative capacities embedded in them. It is expedient that Nigeria government under the auspices of her various agencies like non-governmental organizations

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(NGOs), World Bank and other good philanthropists have committed numerous resources to training and empowering youths. Government through the Central Bank of Nigeria has also initiated and supported Entrepreneurship Development Centres (EDCs), launched the Microfinance Policy, Regulatory and Supervisory Framework for Nigeria, introduced between 2006 and 2008 the NYSC sensitization, Venture Prize Competition, and NYSC Entrepreneurship Training Programmes, among others, to help empower the youths and diversify the economy (CBN, 2012). Government has also engaged in some programs such as Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN!), Youth Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture in Nigeria (YISA), Subsidy Reinvestment and Empowerment Program (SURE-P), Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS), Africa Youth Empowerment Nigeria (AYEN), Youth Entrepreneur Support Program (YES-P), and N-Power Empowerment Program.

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Despite the efforts of the government, the positive impact of the above programs is still very minimal as many youths are still hungry; clamouring for survival strategies. In view of the foregoing, the authors deem it fit to unravel some of the self-developed survival strategies that youths can adopt to survive without government intervention because of low cost or no cost involvement in setting up such businesses. Also, the obstacles to survival strategies are also dealt with in this discourse.

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NIGERIAN YOUTHS AND SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

Nigerian Youths encounter myriads of challenges that can only be curtailed if they deploy their creative and innovative abilities in all facets of life to attain success (Aja & Adali, 2013). Some of these survival strategies as proposed by Ndubuisi-Okolo and Obinna Onwuka (2022) include but not limited to the following:

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- 1. POS BUSINESS:** Nigerians are fast embracing the use of Point of Sale Machine for their transactions. Be it cash withdrawal, fund transfer, account opening and utility bill payment, these are easily executed through POS. Youth can easily start this business as start-up capital is low and it promises a good returns especially when the vendor is in a good location. You can also do this business in someone's shop base on agreement.
- 2. FOOD COMMODITY BUSINESS:** One of the fastest growing businesses is Agribusiness. Agribusiness is an industry concerned with the production and sale of farm products. Do you know why? Irrespective of how costly things are, households still need foods to survive. Youth should explore opportunities in commodity business—yam tubers, Garri, Rice, Beans, Condiments etc.
- 3. START FOOD BUSINESS:** Everyone must eat to survive. Youth can start a food business. If one does not have money to rent a store, he or she can sell by roadside. The main point is let your food be delicious. You will go home each day with good returns.
- 4. HOME LESSONS:** Some parents need tutors for their children, especially in subjects they find hard to learn in school. Can you provide them this service? If you can, you will make good money on weekly or Monthly basis.
- 5. WRITE AND SELL E-BOOK:** Youth with knowledge and experience in a particular area can put down their knowledge in a book and sell.

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6. **HOME CLEANING SERVICES:** There are people that are looking for those that will sweep and keep their home and compound clean. Youth can explore this opportunity. There are tenants that pay cleaners up to #10,000 a Month to sweep their yard 2 or 3 times in a week. Imagine if you have 10 or more places yoehatu render that services, that is #100,000 or more in a Month.

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7. **SELL YOUR KNOWLEDGE ONLINE:** There are people who need what you know now and are ready to pay for it. This is an avenue to earn. Can you create an online course? Can you hold a seminar online through Zoom, You Tube or [Whatsaap]? If you are good at what you do, people will participate in your seminar. You can teach skills, Mathematics, English Language and people will pay to participate.

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8. **SALES AGENT:** This can be offline or online. Get people that need a particular product. Get orders and money from them. Purchase those products and deliver to them and earn your commission. This is an easy business to start without money. For example, there are lots of shops that need POS Machine now. You can go around and get orders from them and meet dealers, to supply POS to them, and they will pay you your commission. Likewise, you can get orders from households that need some commodities like yam. Add a commission on each tuber. Tell the price you are willing to sell, get their orders. Meet the vendor or producers. Buy at cheaper rate and deliver to the households.

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9. **GRAPHIC DESIGNING:** This is a skill that is in hot demand at present! Carve a niche in graphic designing. There are even free Apps to download and start making graphics for people. APP like Canva. You can invest small money and master the act of creating graphics. You can make money in two ways from this skill- creating designs and by teaching others how to create graphics.

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10. **TEACH DIGITAL SKILLS:** The world is going digital and very many people are coming online. Position yourself in the digital economy. Learn high paying skills and teach it to others. Skills like Email Marketing, Facebook Ads, [Whatsaap] Marketing, SEO, Copywriting, etc.

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11. **AFFILIATE MARKETING:** Can you help others to sell their goods and services? That is what affiliate marketing is all about. You can be affiliate to over ten vendors. Any of their products you sell, you make commission. All you need to ask vendors, especially online ones, is whether they run affiliate programme. Often you will see a menu saying "Become our affiliate". Go in and check the requirements and commission.

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12. **LEARN THE PRACTICAL ASPECT OF ANY COURSE YOU ARE STUDYING IN THE UNIVERSITY WHILE STILL IN SCHOOL:** Generally speaking, learn skills irrespective of the course you study in the university. Many big organizations are interested in what you are capable of doing. A good certificate blended with practical experience yields more positive results.

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13. **SEEK SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY:** Nelson Mandela says, "Education is the powerful weapon which you can

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use to change the world. Do not think that scholarship is not possible! **It is very possible!** My bosom friends: Prof. Rita Oluchi Orji and Dr Jide Nwajiobi went to Canada and United States of America on scholarships. Go to the internet and search for schools that give scholarship opportunities. Stop limiting yourself! You can do all things through God who strengthens you (Phil.4:13). You are limitless by God's grace!

14. GET A GOOD MENTOR: No man is a compendium of knowledge. You need someone to help you climb the ladder of success. You need people to succeed in this life. We all have our diverse gifts; you can tap from your mentor. Typical examples, Jesus and His disciples (Jesus opened the eyes of His disciples by teaching them the *nitty-gritty* of Christian faith in *Mathew* Chapter 5); Elisha was mentored by Elijah.

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15. ADOPT A NEW STRATEGY: Everything is about strategy. The word "strategy" depicts the means of achieving something. *But* in a management perspective, it is an integrated plan through which an organization accomplishes its objectives. Learn to strategize! Be very creative and innovative! Come up with novel ideas on daily basis. That is one of the secrets of success in this age of technology. If these strategies are seriously looked into by Nigerian youths instead of counting on government and white collar job, they will enhance youth development and step up their entrepreneurial endowments; making them to become positive agents of change in their families in particular and the entire society at large (Ledford & Lucas, 2013).

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BARRIERS TO SURVIVAL STRATEGIES

1. NEGATIVE MINDSET: The state of your mind determines the height you will attain in life. If you think negatively, everything will end up in the negative, but *if* otherwise, you will perceive positive results all *round*. Do well to believe in your ability and what you can do as a person.

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2. PRIDE: Pride is a killer or destroyer of destiny. Expunge traces of pride in you and see that you can move mountains. I am a graduate and then? You must condescend yourself to achieve your purpose in life. Are you a class-conscious youth? Be very careful! You look down on other youths who do genuine businesses to survive! You prefer to indulge in internet frauds, kidnapping, lesbianism, armed robbery, drug trafficking, prostitution, terrorism, political thuggery, ritual killings rather than engaging in useful activities to earn your livelihood (Okoye, Iloanya, & Udunze, 2014).

3. LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORD OF GOD (HOSEA 4:6): The word opens your eyes to the realities of life. God's promises *are* embedded in the scripture (Jer.29:11; Isaiah 54:13). Endeavour to know your mission on earth and you can do *exploits!* Knowledge applied is power and that knowledge is capable of escalating you to an unimaginable height.

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4. LACK OF FAITH AND VISION: How can you succeed when you are visionless? You have no purpose or direction in life. You adopt 'anything goes syndrome' in a perverse and wicked generation.

5. **RELIGIOUS FRAUD:** *The greatest fraud in life is religion without character. Dishonesty reduces a man to a state of perpetual infancy. Be honest so that people can trust you with their projects.*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Nigerian youths are obliged to acquire and practice a combination of very diverse activities for their well-being. This vision can be actualized by turning from seeking white collar jobs into creating jobs for themselves and others. We, therefore, recommend and encourage youths to just do what they can with all they have, wherever they are and the sky will be their stepping stones. Also, entrepreneurship, as we have x-rayed its diverse strategies need to be incorporated as they serve as keys to survival and sustainability.

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Comment [cme41]: Olajide & Akojenu, 2017

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