

# Examining the role of public administration in promoting sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria 1999–2018

**Author:**Chinyeaka J. Igbokwe-Ibeto<sup>1</sup> **Affiliation:**<sup>1</sup>School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa**Corresponding author:**Chinyeaka Igbokwe-Ibeto,  
cibeto@uj.ac.za**Dates:**

Received: 28 Jan. 2019

Accepted: 15 Apr. 2019

Published: 15 Aug. 2019

**How to cite this article:**Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J., 2019, 'Examining the role of public administration in promoting sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria 1999–2018', *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 7(1), a262. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v7i1.262>**Copyright:**© 2019. The Authors.  
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

**Background:** Nigeria has been described as among the leading economies in Africa, yet it has experienced cycles of economic boom and recession. Commercial capitalism has left the industrial sectors relatively underdeveloped. As is the practice elsewhere, sustainable entrepreneurship development is the foundation of industrial development. However, in Nigeria, this imperative need is faced with numerous challenges.

**Aim:** Within the framework of development theory, this article examines the role of public administration in promoting sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria, as well as challenges confronting public administrator's role in this regard.

**Setting:** This study was carried out using the qualitative desktop method in deriving data for answering the question. About 45 literature sources were consulted and analysed in order to explore the interface between public administration and sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

**Methods:** This article adopts a qualitative approach and is descriptive in nature, with the researcher setting out to illustrate the association that exists between the dependent and independent variables.

**Results:** This article argues that the undeveloped state of the industrial sectors in Nigeria can be attributed to poor entrepreneurship development that could have served as the basis for rapid industrialisation in the country and the attendant effect of making the country one of the developed countries of the world. The poor state of entrepreneurship development in the country is traceable to factors such as irrelevant policy options and directions, poor funding of entrepreneurship development programmes, an ineffective education system, lack of reliable power supply, and the rentier nature of the economy.

**Conclusion:** It concludes that public administration in Nigeria should ensure policy consistency in terms of continuity and stability, the development of an indigenous sustainable development paradigm, the prevention and punishment of corruption, improved funding of entrepreneurship development programmes and the provision of reliable electricity.

**Keywords:** Commerce; entrepreneurship; industrialisation; public administration; profitability.

## Introduction

Nigeria is richly endowed with human and material resources that are yet to be fully explored by the country's public sector managers in the interest of the development of the country. Failure to harness its resources has led to recurring cases of economic recession, social crisis, political instability and general discontent in society. The country therefore epitomises the phenomenon of poverty in the midst of plenty. For instance, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation report revealed that by 2050, more than 40% of extremely poor people in the world will be living in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Vanguard 2018:3). While several efforts have been made by successive governments to launch the country on the path of economic development and industrialisation, poor policy options, the wrong development paradigm, overreliance on foreign precepts and techniques of management, and the indiscipline of the political and economic elite are some of the challenges facing the quest for economic development and the improved living standard of the people.

Prior to the British colonial rule in the country, the various nationalities in the present day Nigeria had reached advanced stages in evolving indigenous technology that could support their arts and

**Read online:**

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

crafts industries (Akhakpe & Igbokwe-Ibeto 2012:240). The Nok culture had advanced to an enviable level, and the Benin and Ife bronze art works were found to be attractive to the European traders and missionaries who transported some of these artefacts to their respective countries' museums and private homes (Chiaha & Agu 2013). Among the Yorubas, cloth weaving was thriving and was an important component of the trans-Atlantic trade (Akhakpe & Igbokwe-Ibeto 2012:240).

However, things began to change after the scramble and partitioning of Africa after the 1884–1885 Berlin conference. With the inauguration of full-blown commercial economy in British colonial territories in West Africa, Nigeria became a source of raw materials for British companies in Europe and a market for finished goods from the same area. No deliberate efforts were made by the British colonial administration to develop the industrial base of the country. The best they could do was to develop light industries to process agricultural produce for export. This, it would seem, laid the foundation for the struggle the country has had with breaking through in the area of industrial growth and development.

In effect, commercial capitalism would seem to have been embedded in the country's economic system to the extent that it finds it convenient to practise distributive economy rather than a productive one (Osaghae 2011:122). The effect of this trend on the country's economy has been catastrophic for the whole enterprise of development. The country remains a monoculture economy with over 95% reliance on oil rent (Igbokwe-Ibeto, Ewuim & Agbodike 2015:190), the economy is internally unstable, unemployment is on the increase and food shortages are common in the country (Akhakpe 2012:84; Chibuzo 2016:106).

The above challenges emanated from the neglect of entrepreneurship development by public sector management that could have engaged the increasing population in entrepreneurial ventures and laid the basis for industrial revolution in the country in particular and Africa in general. According to Anannagoon, Akudo and Emetarom (2008 in Igbokwe-Ibeto, Agbodike & Osakede 2018:3), entrepreneurship education as an instrument of sustainable entrepreneurship development is recent in Nigeria. It would appear that only a few tertiary institutions in the country have introduced it as a compulsory course because of the lack of a policy framework, and where it exists, implementation, monitoring and evaluation are a problem. Over the years, public administrators' emphasis in Nigeria has been on how to achieve efficient and effective service delivery (Akhakpe 2016:100; Dibia 2014:203). With the present economic crisis, unemployment, hunger and starvation in a country that has had recurring cases of economic growth and decline, it is not clear how this could be resolved given the country's antecedence and its present economic structure and political system. It seems, however, that little has been documented on how public administration could galvanise sustainable entrepreneurship development in a developing country

like Nigeria. It is this gap in the existing knowledge that this article seeks to address. Therefore, this article seeks to interrogate the role of public administration in promoting sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria, in order to avoid economic dependence and thereby placing the country on the path of sustainable development as well as the challenges confronting public administrators' role in this regard.

To address the issues raised, the article is divided into five parts. The first part explores the conceptual and theoretical framework. The second examines the nature of the state and entrepreneurship development. The third provides an overview of the efforts of the Nigerian government to promote entrepreneurship development, while the fourth analyses challenges facing the government in promoting entrepreneurship development as an incubator for the industrialisation of the country. The fifth makes prescriptions for resolving the identified problems and policy advocacy for the industrialisation of the country.

## Methodology

This article adopted a qualitative research design in order to gain insight into the nature and character of public administration and sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. The researcher used descriptive analysis to examine the role of public administration in sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. This article, which is theoretical in nature, drew its arguments mostly from secondary data, which included journal publications, textbooks and Internet sources. To ensure the reliability and validity of the article, multiple secondary sources were used to minimise the risk of error.

## Conceptual and theoretical framework

Public administration is a phase in the public policy-making cycle. According to Starling (2013:106), public administration is the process by which resources are marshalled and then used to cope with the problems of the political community. This is why Dye (2011:98) argues that public policy never ends. Starling's (2013:106) definition suggests that public administration is a feature of all nations practised at central, intermediate and local levels. Indeed, whether the chief executive of a government is a president, prime minister, emperor, king, duke, governor or mayor, that government functions within the context of public administration (Igbokwe-Ibeto 2015:183).

For Shafritz, Russell and Borick (2011), public administration has three different core features common to traditional processions, which include: (1) a system of control over the professional practice that regulates the education of new members and maintains both the code of ethics and appropriate sanctions, (2) a body of academics and knowledge that is applied to the service of society and (3) a standard of success that is theoretically measured by serving the needs

of society rather than purely seeking gain. The philosophical angle to these three core features of public administration is that it attempts to describe what constitutes an ideal state.

From these views on public administration, what stands out is that public administration is different from organisations in civil society because of its possession of coercive force with which it enforces compulsory jurisdiction. For example, these include to maintain law and order and to distribute goods and services within its area of jurisdiction. Two schools of thought exist on how the use of state power should be exercised. These are the minimalist and maximalist schools of thought. The minimalist demands that public administration should restrict its role to that of providing rules and regulations that guide market behaviour. The maximalist requires that public administration plays important roles beyond providing rules and regulations, to own and supervise economic enterprises and closely oversee the economy. Either way, public administration should be able to promote sustainable entrepreneurship development as a launch pad for industrialisation and economic development.

Entrepreneurs are those who own and run businesses ranging from small through medium to large-scale enterprises. Schumpeter (1985 in Lawal et al. 2007:25) defines entrepreneurship as 'creative destruction' by the innovator. Similarly, Glueck (1984 in Lawal et al. 2007:22) defines an entrepreneur as 'an individual who creates a new firm and continues to manage it until it is successful'. These activities are aimed at development in society. Fadahunsi (1997 in Lawal et al. 2007:21; Enikanschi & Oyende 2009:45) describes entrepreneurship development as following a cycle of stimulating, supporting and sustaining. Stimulating activities involve making people aware of what it takes to engage in an enterprise, particularly with regard to expanding a business, risk taking, the initiative needed for a business to succeed, etc. Supporting involves the provision of infrastructural facilities, resources, information technology, and the abilities and skills needed for a business to succeed. The sustaining aspects involve devising ways to ensure the growth and continuity of the enterprise through modernisation, expansion of the business, embracing new technology, diversification of product lines and the provision of a conducive environment for the survival of the business. Here lies the imperative of sustainability.

The sustainable entrepreneurship approach views human beings as both the means and end of development. Central to the issue of sustainable entrepreneurship development is the concept of human capacity building and capabilities, capabilities in the form of what people can do, as well as capabilities that can be formed, learned and applied in the pursuit of a meaningful life. Where there is no balance between the scales of human capacity and capability, considerable human frustration is likely to occur (Cruz 2007 in Thakrar & Minkley 2015:131). Here lies the role of public administration as state managers to design and implement

policies that could strike a balance between the two sides. However, it would appear that the proponents of the capabilities approach failed to take cognisance of the concept of consciousness, because sustainable entrepreneurship development is subject to humanistic traits such as imagination, judgement and will, in terms of social and political action (Thakrar & Minkley 2015:133).

Theories are guides to empirical research as they provide roadmaps for navigating the undulating terrain of social phenomena. The development theory is one of several theories that seek to explain development and underdevelopment in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. Development in contemporary times is seen as an all-encompassing concept that seeks to reduce power and inequality; expand the real freedom that people enjoy; accelerate economic growth; and review social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions (Ayee 2008:34). Given the numerous challenges that confront the African continent, several policies have been put forward, such as Westernisation, import substitution, indigenisation of the economy and privatisation, without much success. In recent times, the basic need and development administration perspectives have become popular.

## Significance of sustainable entrepreneurship development

An entrepreneur combines all the factors of production into productive use. Factors of production in themselves cannot bring any change to their existence except when combined by an entrepreneur to create economic value. Entrepreneurs gather other factors of production; organise them; and take the risk to invest their resources, time and energy to manage and control their businesses (Igbokwe-Ibeto, Agbodiye & Osakede 2018:8). Entrepreneurship refers to the ability of an entrepreneur to initiate changes in production. Such innovation helps to expand existing business ventures and to create new ones with the laid-down structure of the organisation. The ability to develop cutting-edge technology and new product lines not only expands an organisation but keeps it in business (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al. 2018:8).

In a developing country like Nigeria, entrepreneurship development is very much needed to expand economic opportunities in the country. According to Ejiofor (1991:42), entrepreneurship is the first step towards a self-reliant economy that can generate internal self-sustaining economic growth and development. In the same vein, Bruck (2006 in Igbokwe-Ibeto et al. 2018:5) states that entrepreneurs occupy a central position in a market economy and there are never enough of them. A society is judged prosperous only to the degree to which it rewards and encourages entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurial activities are the critical determinants of the level of success, prosperity, growth and opportunity in any country (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al. 2018:3). The significance of sustainable entrepreneurship development cannot be overemphasised.

Some of its relevance to the economy and society in Nigeria can be briefly listed as follows:

- Micro small- and medium-scale enterprises help to raise the entrepreneurial spirit and managerial skills in people as they embrace its values and virtues.
- In a country like Nigeria where the population is increasing in geometric progression, the labour-intensive nature of small-scale enterprises helps to expand employment opportunities and income distribution in society.
- With small-scale enterprises, opportunities of exploring and exploiting the vast resources in the country are enhanced. Without entrepreneurship development, the rich resources of the country may remain untapped.
- Small-scale enterprises lay the basis for industrial take-off in the country. From a small beginning, expansion is ensured with persistence and patience. The industrial revolution in Europe did not just begin overnight. It started small.
- Entrepreneurship development, particularly at the grassroots, could encourage those in these areas to remain in their communities and grow their businesses rather than migrating to the cities in search of elusive white-collar jobs.
- Entrepreneurship development helps to curtail the import of general merchandise and capital goods and services that drain the country's foreign exchange and in turn promotes the export of indigenous goods and services. In other words, it moves the country from an import-dependent to an export-orientated country.
- It helps to diversify the economy from an oil-dependent economy to an industrial-goods-exporting country. Small- and medium-scale enterprises have the potential of launching the country into an industrialised nation state.

The significance of entrepreneurship development highlighted above remains largely in the realm of generalisation. In the specific case of Nigeria, only incisive analysis can reveal the role entrepreneurship is playing in the drive towards industrialisation and economic development. The section that follows examines the interface between public administration and entrepreneurship development.

## The nexus between public administration and sustainable entrepreneurship development

Public service in Nigeria is the major means of production and distribution of goods and services in society. However, the modern state 'is the product of the struggle for dominance among classes in the society, and at the same time an instrument in the struggle' (Nnoli 2003:68). Therefore, no two states are the same even if they have the same political system. Perhaps, this explains why foreign precepts and paradigms of development that succeeded in Europe have not recorded similar success in Africa. Policies like modernisation, privatisation and globalisation have not fared well in Africa. Indeed, Africa's development

has been influenced by International Monetary Fund (IMF) ideology of neo-liberalism (Osaghae 1988).

Prior to colonial rule, Africans had evolved their own means of survival using arts and crafts complemented by subsistence agriculture. Surplus production was exchanged for other goods from the coastal towns where the white people pitched their trading posts (Akhakpe & Igbokwe-Ibeto 2012:242). The trans-Sahara trade was also a major source of goods from the Arabian countries and Europe. At this point, Africans started improving their craft work, carving and weaving. The Nok culture was at a level of civilisation that had started commanding respect in other parts of the world. However, all this changed because of a new system of administration based on the manipulation of the people in a carrot-and-stick manner coupled with the discovery of oil in the Nigerian Niger Delta region (Uzoka 2006:101). The net effects were denunciation, destruction or modification of the systems and ethos of governance that prevailed during the pre-colonial period and the attendant loss of confidence of Nigerians in these structures (indigenous pattern of commerce and industry). According to *The Political Bureau Report* (Federal Government of Nigeria [FGN] 2007:27), the new structures and philosophy of governance implanted during this period have shaped the attitudes, behaviours and conduct of the Nigerian power elite to the present day.

Nigerians have abandoned many indigenous approaches to the country's developmental challenges, particularly in the area of producing for itself and the foreign market. In essence, the pre-capitalist mode of production has been effectively destroyed by European capitalism. Thus, it could be said that metropolitan capitalism precludes the development of indigenous capitalism (Soteolu 2015:47; Williams 1980:21). Be that as it may, entrepreneurship development could create the much-needed industrial breakthrough in the country.

State power is used to ensure that indigenous forces of production are promoted to stimulate the development of the economy and the social well-being of the people. Public goals and values should define the public policies of the government (Akhakpe 2016:103; Williams 1980:23). However, as Afolabi (2017) has argued:

[T]he Nigerian public administration has not been able to build an appreciable degree of confidence among Nigerians, manage the economy in the interest of the people or construct the much-needed platform of social welfare for the mass of the people. (p. 48).

This may not be unconnected to the spate of policy inconsistency and poor policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation in the country (Akhakpe 2014:90).

The government has, however, not been unmindful of the need to promote business enterprises and industrialised the economy. It was in recognition of this imperative need that the Federal Military Government in 1972 and 1977 carried out the indigenisation of the economy with various



schedules indicating the degree of indigenous and/or foreign ownership of public enterprises (FGN 2007:34). The idea behind the programme was, among others, to raise the entrepreneurial spirit among Nigerians and to promote the production of intermediate and capital goods in the economy (Maduabum 2014:7). Similarly, the privatisation of public enterprises that started in 1988 in the country was aimed at raising the entrepreneurial spirit of the emergent indigenous capitalist class as they moved to fill the gap created by the divestiture of government shares in state-owned enterprises (Ani 2014:1). However, neither exercise has been able to dilute the dominance of foreign capital in the manufacturing and industrial sectors of the economy.

In the context of dwindling economic fortunes, the present administration has continued funding, through short- and long-term loans, micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprises in the country, particularly through the Bank of Industry (BOI). The BOI 'manages 19.8-billion naira micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Also, the BOI provides development fund in about 15 states through Banks Cooperative lending scheme'. Another such scheme is the 90-million-naira Business Development Fund for Women (BUDFOW), on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, which provides soft loans to women entrepreneurs (Blas & Williams 2014:1). Similarly, 'the launch of the 5 billion naira Dangote small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) fund in partnership with Bank of Industry is a step in unlocking the credit market' (Blas & Williams 2014:1). Expected to increase to 20 billion naira:

[T]he fund ...would impact directly on 13,000 registered groups in the entire country. Each group shall have an average of 20 entrepreneurs, thus, impacting on the lives of some 250,500 micro-entrepreneurs (Blas & Williams 2014:1).

Despite the efforts of the government to promote entrepreneurship, the contributions of the manufacturing and industrial sectors to the gross domestic product (GDP) remain low. According to Sanusi (2010:5), the Nigerian manufacturing sub-sector is made up of large-, medium- and small-scale enterprises, as well as cottage and hand craft units. Despite spirited efforts made to boost manufacturing output and various policy regimes, manufacturing has not made any significant contribution to the growth of the economy. Industry as a whole contributed only 11.3% to the GDP in 1960–1970, owing largely to the crude petroleum and gas production during the decade. The contribution contracted to 38.6% in the 1980s and to 29.4% during 2001 to 2009 (Sanusi 2010:5). These numbers in fact belie the poor contribution of the manufacturing sub-sector to aggregate output in Nigeria compared with its peers in Asia and Latin America.

In the post-Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) era, this sub-sector capitulated to the manufacture of exports like textiles, bottled water, soap, detergents and iron rods, among others. The manufacture of capital goods remains almost non-existent. This clearly shows that not much has been done to promote sustainable entrepreneurship development

as a basis for industrialisation and economic development. What, therefore, are the things left undone by stakeholders in entrepreneurship development? This is the focus of the next section.

## Challenges facing public administration in sustainable entrepreneurship development

The Nigerian public administration is still a contested terrain among the hegemonic classes in society. This has made it difficult for it to promote the general interest. Its inability to mediate class interest has compromised its position as an unbiased umpire. For it to promote the economic growth, development and social welfare of the people, it should be relatively autonomous of the dominant classes in the society. However, this appears to be a tall order judging by the different groups jostling for dominance in the public service.

In the Nigerian society of today, there is a lack of incentive to invest and take risk because the government is splashing money and distributing goods and services rather than producing the same (Akhakpe 2014:169). The kleptocratic and prebendal use of public offices for personal and group interest has made it unattractive for Nigerians to engage in businesses with long gestation periods. Rather than engage in manufacturing and industrial ventures, most Nigerians prefer to buy and sell consumables.

Corruption has contributed immensely to the slow pace of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. Since independence, the administrative, political and economic elites have been soaked in a vortex of corruption that has carted away money that could have been used to lay a solid foundation for the industrial development of the country (Igbokwe-Ibeto & Okoye 2014:51). Other countries like Singapore, Malaysia and India that started with an agrarian economy have since then left Nigeria grappling with a monoculture and agrarian economy. Corruption has arrested national development in the country more than half a century after independence (Akhakpe 2014:70).

Poor policy implementation has been the bane of well-formulated entrepreneurship development policies and programmes. Mention has been made of the indigenisation policy and SAP and privatisation programmes in the country that failed or are failing to achieve their goals. Apart from the usual policy implementation challenges, government policies are hardly sustained. They change with every government that comes to power as if the government is a stop-gap system. In these circumstances, planned programmes and policies hardly come to fruition (Eneanya 2014:28; Ikelegbe 2007:69). The high causality ratio of public policies makes national planning in terms of entrepreneurship development difficult (FGN 2004:44).

Poor funding of entrepreneurial schemes by the government makes the industrial sector slow to react to policy stimulus. With oil revenue tendentiously unstable, efforts at industrial

development in general appear weak. Yet the government continues to rely on oil rent to promote economic development. In recent times, oil prices have fallen freely, which makes it difficult for the government to fulfil its programme on industrial development. Efforts by the BOI and other banks to promote entrepreneurship development are not sufficiently far-reaching. (Igbokwe-Ibeto et al. 2018:5).

The Nigerian economy is import dependent. This makes it a dumping ground for goods from other parts of the world. Sanusi (2010) states graphically that:

[E]qually important is the indication that since 1999, Nigeria has become a trading outpost for goods produced elsewhere with little domestic transformation of output of primary sectors by the secondary sector. This is particularly so since the Nigerian agriculture is really peasantry and the high contributions of tertiary sector to output suggests that the sector is not really servicing the Nigerian economy but indeed, the economies of her trading partners. (p. 6)

These disarticulations in the economy have made it difficult for the manufacturing sub-sector to grow and develop.

The crisis in the power sector has over the years also hindered the growth and sustenance of entrepreneurship development in the country. While successive governments have committed enormous resources to its revitalisation, the generation and distribution of electric power have never reached 5000 megawatts. The usual complaint is that there is a shortage of gas, pipeline vandalism and obsolete equipment. Meanwhile, 'artisans, technicians and entrepreneurs have been forced to shut down their businesses due to government's inability to provide electricity, thereby adding to the increasing list of the unemployed' (Punch 2015).

The education system in the country is not orientated and directed towards entrepreneurship development that could lead to an industrial breakthrough. At this stage of the country's development, peasant agriculture and export of primary products cannot help its quest for industrial transformation. The continued presence of grammar schools and universities that produce only literate graduates cannot create industrial development. Many school leavers do not know more than to read and write English or French. While jobs for these categories of graduates are shrinking, Nigerians with technical skills are in short supply in various sectors of the economy and society. No country becomes an industrial giant by ignoring entrepreneurial, vocational and technical (knowledge) education.

## Ethical consideration

All ethical considerations needed in a research of this nature were duly complied with.

## Recommendation

The preceding section discussed the challenges that face sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. This

last section focuses on how to harvest opportunities available to the government, either existing or potential, to promote sustainable entrepreneurship development with a view to achieve industrial transformation in the country. This is because civil service is the greatest asset of the state in its quest for socio-economic development.

Over the years, the government has been found to be inefficient and ineffective in service delivery (Fatile & Igbokwe-Ibeto 2012:16; Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osakede & Anazodo 2015:81). This partly explains why it has embraced deregulation. It will enable private sector investors to take hold of the country's economy for optimum utilisation of resources. The deregulation of the power sector could be the solution to the endemic energy crisis in the country, but investors in the sector should be patriotic and follow honest business ethics rather than just swindle Nigerians at the slightest opportunity. The Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) should step up its regulatory role in order to ensure that those in charge of electricity generation and distribution justify the money they collect from their clients. This will enable MSMEs to thrive.

Educational institutions at all levels should be encouraged to run vocational and entrepreneurship courses from the beginning to graduation. This will enable all Nigerians to have some type of vocational training that they can fall back on at any point in time, to support themselves and the nation's pursuit of rapid industrialisation. All grammar schools could be turned into technical colleges and tertiary institutions into technical institutions.

Luckily the funding gap of MSMEs is being narrowed with the commendable activities of the BOI and other funding agencies that have done a great deal to promote the manufacturing and industrial sectors of the economy. While these efforts are commendable, it is recommended that more funds should be made available to young entrepreneurs to kick-start the process of industrialising the economy. As the former BOI head noted, 'we are now properly and intensely focused on our core mandate, which is to support the industrial sectors, small, medium and large' (quoted by Olatunde 2017:1). The present tempo of funding SMEs should be maintained in order to sustain much-needed industrial transformation.

The present slough of neo-liberal policies should be curtailed. While we live in a globalised system, the precepts and techniques from Europe and North America should be cautiously embraced, because in most cases these received paradigms have turned out to be the nemeses of developing countries. As a commentator rightly argued:

[W]hile Western economic powers continue to pursue pro-growth and pro-investment economic policies, they always mobilize neo-liberal prudent economies for developing countries who insist that developing countries should not also pursue the same stimulus economic development policies. (Usman 2014:2).

Against the backdrop of the onslaught of neo-liberalism on developing countries that has failed to bring about inclusive growth and development, 'there is need therefore for Nigeria to implement indigenously innovated patriotic development strategies that utilize international economies to its own desired benefit' (Punch 2017:1).

Government resources should be channelled into entrepreneurship developmental purposes rather than used for superficial enterprises such as building legislative quarters; buying exotic cars for government officials; vacations abroad for governors; salaries and emoluments for governors, their wives, and cronies; unnecessary 'medical tourism'; and purchase of private jets (Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto & Nkah 2015:46). These monies can be conserved and used to lay the solid foundation for rapid industrialisation through entrepreneurship development programmes.

Apart from the huge amounts spent on importation, dumping of imported goods, particularly textile materials and spare parts, kills infant industries and increases the appetite for foreign goods among Nigerians (Asu 2018:1; Punch 2017:1). Additionally, the jobs SMEs would have created in Nigeria go to the countries where these goods come from. By being inward looking, young entrepreneurs can be encouraged to grow and become bigger investors in indigenous technology.

The government should step up its regulatory and control functions in order to ensure a business-friendly environment that will attract domestic and foreign investors into the country. Nigeria as the second biggest economy in Africa needs better micro- and macro-economic frameworks that are investor friendly. This also demands that public policy should be stable and coherent to encourage investor confidence in the system (Eneanya 2014:24).

## Conclusion

The issue of public administration and sustainable entrepreneurship development as captured by scholars and social commentators has been espoused with an attempt at clarifying the intellectual 'cobweb' surrounding the issue of public administration and sustainable entrepreneurship development and how the former could promote the latter in Nigeria. In addition, a searchlight was also beamed on the theoretical framework for a better understanding of the concepts under interrogation. Thus, development theory has been examined as postulated by scholars. An attempt has also been made to establish the interface between public administration and sustainable entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

This article concludes that government remains the major driver of economic growth and development in Nigeria. Unfortunately, since independence, its policy options and directions have failed to stimulate sustainable socio-economic development. Unemployment and poverty have been on the increase since the 1960s with the country going in and out of

economic recession ever too often. This situation can be traced to poor entrepreneurship development. This article has shown that sustainable entrepreneurship development is the key to industrial development in the country. Unfortunately, it has over the years been poorly funded and acknowledged. It is submitted that any serious effort at innovating the economy should begin with indigenous entrepreneurship development as the cure for the twists and turns in the economy.

## Acknowledgements

The author acknowledges his amiable host Prof. Danielle Nel for her untiring support, care and concern towards his progress and indeed the entire staff and management of the School of Public Management, Governance and Public Policy, University of Johannesburg, for the opportunity given to him to carry out his Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. He is also grateful to his colleagues at the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, as well as Eastern Palm University, Ogboko, all in Nigeria. His eternal gratitude goes to members of his immediate family for their support and understanding throughout the period of his long absence from the house. He also thanks all authors whose works were consulted for this research which have been duly referenced.

## Competing interests

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.

## Author's contributions

I declare that I am the sole author of this research article.

## Funding

This study was funded by the University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

## Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

## References

- Afolabi, A., 2017, 'The state evolution of public sector management', in C. Maduabum & I. Akhakpe (eds.), *The dynamics of public sector management: A reader*, John Archers, Ibadan.
- Akhakpe, I. & Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J., 2012, 'Culture, democracy and governance in Nigeria', in I.O. Albert (ed.), *A history of social conflict and conflict management in Nigeria*, Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Ibadan, John Archers, Ibadan.
- Akhakpe, I.B., 2012, 'Oil-environmental degradation and human security in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria: Challenges and possibilities', *European Scientific Journal* 8(26), 77–92. <http://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2012.v8n26p%25p>

- Akhakpe, I.P., 2014, *Bureaucracy, and good governance*, Pumark, Lagos.
- Akhakpe, I.B., 2016, 'Public policy and sustainable national development in Nigeria's fourth republic: Challenges and opportunities', *International Journal of Management Perspectives* 13(1), 98–107.
- Anazodo, R.O., Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J. & Nkah, B.C., 2015, 'Leadership, corruption and good governance in Africa: Issues and categorical imperatives', *African Research Review, An International Multidisciplinary Journal* 9(2), 41–58. <http://doi.org/10.4314/afrr.v9i2.4>
- Ani, E.A., 2014, 'The privatization is riddled with corruption', *The Economy*, 10 June, p. 3.
- Asu, F., 2018, 'Nigeria is capital deficient, needs inclusive growth – Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG)', *Punch*, 19 January, p. 20.
- Ayee, J.R., 2008, *Reforming the African public sector: Retrospect and prospects*, CODESRIA, Dakar.
- Blas, J. & Williams, W., 2014, 'Nigeria almost double GDP in recalculation', *Financial Times*, 07 April, p. 8.
- Chiaha, G.T.U. & Agu, R.A., 2013, 'Entrepreneurship education and graduate employability in Nigeria', paper presented at a conference on transforming African higher education for graduate's employability and socio-economic development organized association of African Universities Libreville Gabon held on 28th to 30th May 2013.
- Chibuzo, G.E., 2016, 'Global competitiveness SMEs survival and economic development in Nigeria', in A.O. Nkamnebe (ed.), *Resource management for sustainable development*, SCOA Heritage Nigeria, Awka.
- Dibie, R.A., 2014, *Public administration: Theory, analysis and application*, Babcock University Press, Ilishan-Remo.
- Dye, T., 2011, *Understanding public policy*, Longman Press, New York.
- Ejiofor, P.N., 1991, *Management in Nigeria: Theories and issues*, Africana Educational Publishers, Onitsha.
- Eneanya, A.N., 2014, *Policy research, analysis and public policy making*, University Press, Ibadan.
- Enikanschi, S.A. & Oyende, A.I., 2009, *Entrepreneurship development and management of small-scale enterprises*, Enykon Consult, Lagos.
- Fatile, O.J. & Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J., 2012, 'Nigerian public sector and the challenges of human capital development: The way forward', *Scottish Journal of Arts, Social Sciences and Scientific Study* 1(2):11–23.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), 2004, *National economic empowerment and development strategy (NEEDS)*, Central Bank of Nigeria, Abuja.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), 2007, *The Political bureau report*, Government Printer, Abuja.
- Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J., 2015, 'Reinventing Nigeria's public sector: A review of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration Control (NAFDAC)', *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 3(2), 183–211. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v3i2.85>
- Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J., Agbodike, F.C. & Osakede, K.O., 2018, 'Entrepreneurship curriculum in African universities: A panacea to graduate unemployment if...?', *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 6(1), 1–8.
- Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J., Ewuim, N.C. & Agbodike, F.C., 2015, 'Nigerian government and oil subsidy regime: A horn of dilemma', *International Journal of Development and Management Review* 8(2), 188–200.
- Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J. & Okoye, J.C., 2014, 'Anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria: More words than deeds', *International Journal of Public Policy and Administration Research* 1(2), 47–63.
- Igbokwe-Ibeto, C.J., Osakede, K.O. & Anazodo, R.O., 2015, 'The effect of manpower planning and development in Lagos state civil service performance', *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 3(4), 76–116. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v3i4.99>
- Ikelegbe, A., 2007, *Public policy analysis: Concepts, issues and cases*, Imprint Services, Lagos.
- Lawal, A.A., Kio, J.S., Sulaimon, A.A. & Adebayo, O.I., 2007, *Entrepreneurship development in small-scale business*, ADO-OLA Printing Press, Lagos.
- Maduabum, C.P., 2014, *What has public administration got to go with It?* Sixth Inaugural Lecture, Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Lagos, viewed 22 November 2018, from <http://nouedu.net/sites/default/files/2017-10/6th%20Inaugural%20Lecture%20-Prof.%20Chuks%20Maduabum.pdf>.
- Nnoli, O., 2003, *Introduction to politics*, Pan African Centre for Research on Peace and Conflict Resolution (PACREP), Enugu.
- Olatunde, O., 2017, 'Bank of industry targets 25 communities with N1bn solar energy fund', *Nigerian Tribune*, 25 January, p. 1.
- Osaghae, E., 1988, 'A survey of the Nigeria economy since independence', in G.O. Olusanya (ed.), *Economic development and foreign policy*, Nigeria Institute of International Affairs, Lagos.
- Osaghae, E., 2011, *The cripple giant: Nigeria, since independence*, Hurst Publishing, London.
- Punch, 2015, 'N260bn spent on vehicle part imports in one year', *Punch*, 21 May, p. 4.
- Punch, 2017, 'Power privatisation: DisCo owners must let go', *Punch*, 01 November, p. 1.
- Sanusi, S.L., 2010, *Growth prospects for the Nigerian economy*, Convocation Lecture Delivered by Lamido Sanusi, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria at the Igbinedion University, Eight Convocation Ceremony, Edo State, Okada, viewed 22 November 2018, from [https://www.cbn.gov.ng/OUT/SPEECHES/2010/GOV\\_CONVOCATION\\_Lecture-IGBINEDION-UNIVERSITY-OKADA\\_2010.PDF](https://www.cbn.gov.ng/OUT/SPEECHES/2010/GOV_CONVOCATION_Lecture-IGBINEDION-UNIVERSITY-OKADA_2010.PDF).
- Soteolu, D.A., 2015, 'The state subsidy question and social class struggle 1999–2012', in M.K. Salami, J.O. Fomokinwa & G. Fasiku (eds.), *Nationalism and economic justice in Nigeria*, Obafemi Awolowo University Press, Ile-Ife.
- Shafritz, J., Russell, E.W. & Borick, C., 2011, *Introducing public administration*, Longman Press, New York.
- Starling, G., 2013, *Managing the public sector*, Longman/Pearson Press, New York.
- Thakrar, J. & Minkley, G., 2015, 'Re-imagining the Eastern Cape Province: Sustainable human development from the perspective of the state, civil society and the university', *African Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 3(2), 127–148. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v3i2.83>
- Usman, T., 2014, 'SURE-P spends N280 billion in 2 years', *Premium Times*, 09 June, p. 10.
- Uzoka, F.A., 2006, 'Challenges in entrepreneurship in home economics education', *Nigeria Journal of Education* 4(2), 98–106.
- Vanguard, 2018, *Over 40% of world's poorest will live in Nigeria, Congo by 2050 – Report*, viewed 22 September 2018, from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/09/over-40-of-worlds-poorest-will-live-in-nigeria-congo-by-2050-report>.
- Williams, G., 1980, *State and society in Nigeria*, Afrografika Publishers, Idanre.