

TECHNOLOGY RELATED WORK FOR SMALL SCALE RURAL ENTREPRENEURS IN ZIMBABWE: INCOME GENERATION VERSUS EMPLOYMENT CREATION

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of technology related work for small scale rural entrepreneurs on income generation and employment creation. The depended variables were income generation and job creation whereas the independent variables were technology related work and entrepreneurship empowerment. The questionnaire approach was used to collect data from small scale rural entrepreneurs in the Makonde District of Mashonaland West Province. A total of 150 small scale rural entrepreneurs, women, the youth and men, participated in the study. The purposive sampling method was adopted in order to select respondents who were already engaged in some income generation activities. To that end two hypotheses were generated and tested. The first hypotheses examined the relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and unemployment reduction, whereas the second hypotheses examined the relationship between work related technology and income generation activities. Data was analysed using Pearson's Correlation Matrix. The findings showed that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and unemployment reduction. Furthermore, the findings revealed that technology related work for small scale rural entrepreneurs correlates positively with income generation activities. Therefore the government is encouraged to fund small scale rural entrepreneurs in order to reduce unemployment in the rural areas of Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Technology related work; appropriate technology; developing country; income generation; employment creation; rural entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

The issue of unemployment in Zimbabwe has created political, social and economic problems that need to be addressed immediately. Unemployment in Zimbabwe has been the main cause of extreme poverty, disease and hunger. Despite the widely publicized stories about the Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe there is still food insecurity, extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition at households level particularly in the rural areas (Mhazo 2002). Zimbabwe requires an economy that can meet the needs of all new economic citizens, all people and their enterprises in a sustainable manner. This would only be possible if the economy builds on the full potential of all persons and communities across the length and breath of Zimbabwe. No economy can grow by excluding any part of its people and an economy that is not growing cannot integrate all of its citizens in a meaningful way. Thus the only solution to the economic woes facing rural entrepreneurs is the application of appropriate technologies and chain empowerment to generate the required level of employment and income in the rural areas.

To assist rural based entrepreneurs engaged in small scale economic activities, the use of appropriate technology as an instrument for employment creation and income generation should have a business approach. Characteristics of products potential for sale on external markets should be identified and these should influence the choice of technology. Product quality and type should match demand of consumers on external markets, such as urban and foreign markets. Hence the need to marry appropriate technology to chain employment. Appropriate technology in agriculture, forestry and women's processing activities in rural areas can be labour saving. Appropriate or work-related technologies lead to greater productivity compared to traditional technologies and to less labour displacement than the more capital intensive technologies.

OBJECTIVES

The broad aim of this study is to investigate the effect of technology related work for small scale rural entrepreneurs on income generation and unemployment reduction. Therefore this study examines:

1. The extent of relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and unemployment reduction in Zimbabwe rural areas.
2. The extent of relationship between work-related technology and income generation activities in rural Zimbabwe.
3. To describe small scale entrepreneurship activities that generate employment and income for the rural entrepreneurs.

HYPOTHESES

H1: There is a significant relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and unemployment reduction in Zimbabwe rural areas.

H2: There is a significant relationship between work-related technology and income generation activities in rural Zimbabwe.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Zimbabwe is facing a huge problem of unemployment among the youth, women and the rural population (Luebker, 2008). At independence in 1980, the unemployment rate among the Blacks stood at 10% (Ncube, 2000). The government of Zimbabwe argues that unemployment statistics range from 15%-17% and these figures are highly disputed by economic experts who believe that the statistics could be higher than that. According to International Labour Organization (2006) and Luebker (2008) unemployment in Zimbabwe stands at 85%, while youth unemployment stands at 70%. The term unemployment refers to “the population age 15 years and above who during the seven day reference period, did not work and had no job or business to go back to, but who were available for work” (CSO, 2006:27). Zimbabwe is endowed with abundant human, and natural resources and yet it is one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and has the highest rate of unemployment in Africa. The rural areas in Zimbabwe are the most affected in terms of unemployment. Economic experts believe that the rural areas are neglected when it comes to the allocation of both social and economic opportunities. The rapid population growth means that the demand for jobs exceeds the supply for jobs. Economic experts believe that about 3.7 million Zimbabweans work in the informal sector and women constitute the majority (55%). Therefore unemployment in Zimbabwe has forced people to engage in any activity that generates income for them (Luebker, 2008). One option that remains for the unemployed people in Zimbabwe is to join the informal sector, and to engage in small scale economic activities, that use appropriate technology as an instrument for employment creation and income generation (Luebker, 2008). To assist rural based entrepreneurs engaged in small scale economic activities, the use of appropriate technology as an instrument for employment creation and income generation should have not only a business approach but also the government support.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EMPOWERMENT

The term entrepreneur comes from the French verb *entreprendre*, meaning to undertake. The entrepreneur is regarded as the creator of wealth, or the developer of an idea. According to Esomonu (1998), entrepreneurship refers to the capacity of an individual to visualize business opportunities and to manage income generating ventures successfully. Entrepreneurship is the effective management of human intelligence to create and apply innovation to business activities (Esomonu, 1998). Entrepreneurship is the process of generating more and more business ventures. Entrepreneurship empowerment is the process of building up entrepreneurial skills through appropriate training and institutional building programmes. Small scale rural entrepreneurs need training in order to identify and adopt technology related work that result in income generation and unemployment reduction.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Table 1: Entrepreneurship Development and job creation

Researcher	Study process	Findings
Taiwo(2014)	The researcher carried out a study to investigate the effect of entrepreneurship development on job creation, in Sub-Saharan Africa.	The findings showed that job creation is the function of entrepreneurship empowerment.
Anyadike et al(2012)	The researchers used secondary data to investigate the importance of entrepreneurship development in African economies.	The findings revealed that African economies can create more jobs through entrepreneurship empowerment initiatives.
Eme(2014)	The research study explored the effect of income generating projects on unemployment reduction, especially in the rural areas	The findings show that income generating projects and relevant technologies can reduce unemployment in the rural areas by 24%.
Bandal(2010)	The researcher investigated the relationship between the use of appropriate technologies by rural entrepreneurs and job creation.	The findings showed that the use of appropriate technologies by rural entrepreneurs positively correlates with job creation and income generating activities.

Source: created by the author

APPROPRIATE OR WORK-RELATED TECHNOLOGY

Work-related technologies are small-scale, more intensive than capital intensive, culturally relevant and sustainable technologies appropriate for particular environmental conditions, social context and economic situations. It also includes the recognition that technologies can embody cultural biases and sometimes have political and distribution effects that go far beyond a strictly economic evaluation. Thus, appropriate technologies are not appropriate for all situations, but are more about local people using local knowledge and resources to meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same. So it involves a search for technologies that have, for example, beneficial effects on income distribution, human development, environmental quality and the distribution of political power in the context of particular communities and nations (Hall, 1980). The issue of not compromising future generations as an indicator of sustainable development is embedded in appropriate technology.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACTIVITIES

The food processing industry in Sub-Saharan Africa contributes considerably to national economies. Food processing accounts for 40 percent of the value added by all manufacturing industries. These activities which are mostly characterized by small or informal enterprises are a major source of rural employment. They create jobs and income for about 60 percent of the Sub-Saharan Africa labour force (Undah, 2000).

In Zimbabwe agriculture is **mainly** a seasonal activity. Local processing of fruits, fish and vegetables oils at village level offers employment to many as an important off farm income generating activity in rural Zimbabwe. Vegetables oil processing activities are predominantly managed by women (undah, 2000).

A number of studies have shown that such women have little or no education at all. **(reference)**Despite all that, there exists a wealth of indigenous knowledge of the crops, fishery and livestock products that they handle and the technologies they use to process these raw materials. Such technologies are carefully selected on the basis of the set of conditions under which they operate, namely the social economic, political, technological and ecological environment. Markets for indigenous products are usually in the local areas where processing is usually done. However products with longer shelf-life such as vegetables oil and rice find their way to local urban and export market through itinerant marketing agents (Undah 2000).

FISH SMOKER

In Zimbabwe fish constitutes 40 percent of total protein intake. The higher moisture content of fish makes it highly perishable especially in the high temperatures of the tropics where spoilage is estimated to set in within 12-20 hours of harvesting depending on the species and the method of catch. Traditional methods that are used in processing and preserving fish include, among others, smoking, drying, salting, frying and fermentation (Okraku-Offei, 1970, Nerguage-tetten, 1989). To overcome the shortcomings associated with the traditional methods of smoking, different models of improved ovens were developed in various parts of Africa (Anon, 1971, Maembe, 1982 and Wood and Tarique, 1990).

The chorkov smoker which was developed in Ghana, appears to be the ideal technology for smoking fish (Anon, 1971). The oven has a combustion chamber where heat and smoke are generated using fuel wood and a smoking unit made up of a set of 5-15 trays each with wire mesh at the bottom and a wooden frame. Construction material originally selected for the combustion chamber is mud which is readily available in Africa (Anon, 1971, Maembe, 1982 and Wood and Tarique, 1990)

BEE-KEEPING IN ZIMBABWE

A poor rural family can start a life changing bee-keeping venture with a little help from the government, for as little as \$50, 00. Bee-keeping has traditionally been one of the few ways that poor farming families in Zimbabwe could earn themselves extra money. It is the money they desperately need to buy medicines when their children fall sick, or to give their children education and a chance of better life in the future. The erratic rainfall patterns in some parts of Zimbabwe, coupled with poor farming methods in some resettlement farms, bee-keeping should be considered an option for generating employment and income. In the rural areas, a number of men are making their way to towns in the hope of finding reliable employment to support their families, but with unemployment levels running to 70 percent in Zimbabwe, **(reference)** such migration can only contribute to more problem around.

Table 1: Break Down of the Cost of Village Bee-Keeping Venture

TOTAL COST	DISTRIBUTION
\$16, 00	Could help to buy 6 beehives
\$13, 00	Could help to pay for training courses in bee husbandry
\$700	Could help to buy a solar wax smelter to melt the wax off the combustion chamber
\$3, 00	Could help to buy smoker to pacify the bees while working with them
\$19, 00	Could help to buy protective clothing, hat, veil, boots, gloves, headwear and honey containers

Source: ata@zol.co.zw

Thus the immediate need of feeding and clothing a family takes precedence.

PEANUT-BUTTER MAKING

Starting a business in Zimbabwe is not that easy. Access to equipment, finance, training, business advice and reliable markets are difficult to come by (Mhazo etal, 2002). Rural entrepreneurs can improve the quality of life for their families by making peanut butter. A sum of \$400 is needed to start the business. The money is used to buy a manual or electric grinding mill in areas where rural electrification has already been implemented. The new technology of crushing peanuts is better than grind roasted nuts twice by hand between two big flattened stones, in the traditional way (Mhazo etal, 2002). Peanut butter making is a profitable enterprise which has the capacity to provide savings and assets that make small-scale rural entrepreneurs credit-worth.

CEREALS

the hammer mill has become an important technology for processing cereal into flour in rural areas. the technology works well when it is combined with dehuller to produce pearl flour preferred by rural entrepreneurs. the introduction of dehullers helped to

eliminate the drudgery women undergo when processing small grains using the traditional pestle and mortar to remove the bran followed by grinding on a stone mill to produce the flour (Chakwera, 1996, Acquah and Masanzu, 1997).

OIL-SEED PROCESSING

The demand for vegetable oil in Zimbabwe is relatively high. The stock that is available for consumption is too expensive for the average Zimbabwe family. Oil expression has mainly been from sunflower seed using manual ram presses at the lowest level, or motorized systems at the medium scale level. Sunflower is a drought tolerant, low management crop, which is widely grown by many rural household to supply rural entrepreneurs. One entrepreneur can own several ram presses operated by people specifically employed to press the seed and who are paid as per quantity of oil produced. In this way, employment is generated and income is created. Another seed whose production is expanding is soya bean. The crop has high protein content and can be processed into numerous products. These products can significantly improve the livelihood of rural people. Some examples of soya-bean products are soya-mince meat, oil, soya- milk, soya-yoghurt, baby feeds, and stock feeds. However, for the extraction process of oil, chemical methods are more efficient and need to be introduced in rural small-scale enterprises.

ROOT AND TUBERS CROPS

Sweet potatoes are widely produced in the country by small holder farmers. The flour from sweet potatoes has the potential to substitute wheat flour (Nyakudya et al, 2004).The latter is a post harvest technology that needs marketing to the rural folk in Zimbabwe. This can help cut down on the wheat component which makes bread expensive. (Van Hal 2000) Vitamin A deficiency is widespread in rural areas. Certain varieties of sweet potatoes contain Vitamin A .The introduction of sweet potatoes flour introduces the rural poor to cheap bread, as wheat-based bread is relatively expensive (Van Had, 2000). Commercial processing of wheat potato flour has the effect of stimulating production of the crop, increase incomes, improve food and nutritional security, and creating employment opportunities, thereby alleviating poverty in rural areas.

Appropriate processing technologies at small scale level have not fully developed. There are various options of washing, peeling, slicing, drying and grinding the sweet potato chips. Mutungamiriri et al, (2000) argues that sweet potato can be produced into jam (Van Hal 2000).This alternative is not common in Zimbabwe at all.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLES DRYING

Fruit and vegetables provide the body with important vitamins and minerals which when deficient can cause malnutrition (Utete and Tembo, 1996). Fresh vegetables are available in large quantities in the dry season while fruits are available in the wet season. When production exceeds the family consumption needs and demands levels of the local markets, producers face huge problem in trying to access urban markets. Preservation relies on the removal of moisture by drying. Dried products come from apple, mango, guava, banana, paw-paw, tomatoes, onions, cabbages, rape, cowpeas, leaves, pumpkin leaves, mustard leaves, and okra. Processing is a traditional activity adopted to enhance household food security during the agricultural off-season when access to fresh produce is limited. Some surplus is sold locally to generate income. There is however, potential to create viable business ventures in fruit and vegetable processing as long as appropriate processing equipment, processing skills, packaging materials and marketing information are made available (Hall, 1980, Harper, 1982).

THE FRAME WORK FOR DEVELOPING WORK RELATED TECHNOLOGIES

The use of locally available raw materials, coupled with local skills for the design and fabrication of equipment and machinery have proved to be essential for sustainability (Undah and Shoemaker, 1994). Capacities of technologies should match the resources base. Experience in Africa and other developing countries in which there has been a mismatch of limited resources and excess capacities of technologies have resulted in low capacity utilization and poor returns on investment. A capacity which can be managed effectively in terms of appropriateness of inputs requirements is desirable. For micro-scale rural operations, preference is for simple, affordable technologies that are easy to handle repair and maintain locally. (Olorunpia, 1993).

VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Value chain development is an important approach in the reduction of rural poverty in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. Value chains, assist rural entrepreneurs to access new markets as well as to add value to their products. (Laven, 2009). The problem with value chains is that small-scale rural entrepreneurs are often excluded and those who are included rarely benefit due to the unequal distribution of power, and the inability of markets and governments to influence the process (Gibbon and Ponte, 2005).

A plethora of opportunities exist for small rural entrepreneurs to take part in the global value chains, although there are bottlenecks. One method involves improving knowledge and information flows to help them to upgrade their business (Laven, 2009).The latter is an issue that this paper calls for strongly since it is a neglected area in developing countries like Zimbabwe. However, real empowerment means much more: rural entrepreneurs should take part in the management of value chains (Laven, 2009).

Small scale rural entrepreneurs can also organize themselves into cooperatives although this method has its own limitation (Laven, 2009). Business researchers the world over, are concerned about the poor participation of small rural entrepreneurs into the global value chains. Small entrepreneurs find it difficult to meet the complicated scale and quality requirements put in place by those who control the chains (Gibbon and Ponte, 2005). In the potato sector for example, there is a likelihood that only a few larger and innovative farmers will continue to produce potatoes for the world market in the future in Zimbabwe. Smaller non competitive producers are being forced to seek alternatives sources of income (Laven, 2009). This trend reinforces inequalities and pro-poor development (Gibbon and Ponte, 2005). To lift small scale entrepreneurs out of this quagmire, research is required into the distribution of power, both within the value chain and locally (Laven, 2009, Gibbon and Ponte, 2005).

CHAIN GOVERNANCE

Issues concerning the governance of value chains are important. Authority and power relations among buyers, processors and producers determine how incomes are distributed (Laven, 2009). The power relations determine issues of quality and ultimately link producers to markets (Peppelenbos and Mundy, 2008). Small scale entrepreneurs need to make their own decisions concerning the work and their livelihood (Gibbon and Ponte, 2005). True chain empowerment is all about small-scale entrepreneurs managing the chain, controlling the terms of payment, defining grades and standards, and managing innovation (Gibbon and Ponte, 2005).

LESSONS FOR ZIMBABWE

Studies by Mhazo et al (2002) unearthed a number of problems that small scale rural entrepreneurs face when marketing their products. The marketing of processed fruits and vegetables is largely informal. Enterprises located in rural areas rely on demand from local informal markets which are small and unreliable. The demand for products is erratic and seasonal. The research also established that small scale rural entrepreneurs lack marketing skills and information to participate in global value chains. Processors have knowledge of their customers’ preferences, concerning product range, taste and packaging for instance small scale rural entrepreneurs lack skills to promote the products. Lack of reliable transport is a hindrance to entrepreneurs who wish to go out and market their business.

Small scale rural entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe are concerned with, production: they prepare the land, plant seeds, apply fertilizers, control pests and weeds, and harvest the crop when it is mature. Some of the entrepreneurs are involved in activities higher up the chain, such as, sorting, grading, processing or trading their produce (Laven, 2009), but small scale rural entrepreneurs need to go beyond processing and selling their products. They need to participate in the global value chains by using appropriate technologies and farming cooperative organizations (Laven, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of technology related work for small scale rural entrepreneurs on income generation and employment creation. The study adopted two research designs. These were the exploratory research design and the descriptive research design. The depended variables were income generation and job creation whereas the independent variables were technology related work and entrepreneurship empowerment. The questionnaire approach was used to collect data from small scale rural entrepreneurs in the Makonde District of Mashonaland West Province. A total of 150 small scale rural entrepreneurs, women, the youth and men, participated in the study. The purposive sampling method was adopted in order to select respondents who were already engaged in some income generation activities. To that end two hypotheses were generated and tested. The first hypotheses examined the relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and unemployment reduction, whereas the second hypotheses examined the relationship between work related technology and income generation activities. Data was analysed using Peason’s Correlation Matrix. The findings showed that there is a positive relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and unemployment reduction. Furthermore, the findings revealed that technology related work for small scale rural entrepreneurs correlates positively with income generation activities. Therefore the government is encouraged to fund small scale rural entrepreneurs in order to reduce unemployment in the rural areas of Zimbabwe.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Evaluation of the relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and unemployment reduction in Zimbabwe rural areas.

	ENTREPRENEURSHIP EMPOWERMENT	UNEMPLOYMENT REDUCTION
ENTREPRENEURSHIP EMPOWERMENT		0.644**
Pearson correlation	1	0.000
sig.(2 tailed)		136
N	136	
UNEMPLOYMENT REDUCTION	0.644**	1
Pearson correlation	0.000	
sig (2. tailed)	136	136
N		

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation test shows a strong relationship of 0.644 with a significant value of .000 indicating that the two variables are significantly related. Therefore, there is a relationship between entrepreneurship empowerment and unemployment reduction in Zimbabwe rural areas. These findings are also supported by Taiwo(2014). The researcher carried out a study to investigate the

effect of entrepreneurship empowerment on job creation, in Sub-Sahara Africa. The findings showed that job creation is the function of entrepreneurship empowerment. Anyadike et al (2012) used secondary data to investigate the importance of entrepreneurship empowerment in African economies. The findings revealed that African economies can create more jobs through entrepreneurship empowerment initiatives.

Table 2: Evaluation of the relationship between work-related technology and income generation activities in rural Zimbabwe.

	WORK-RELATED TECHNOLOGY	INCOME GENERATION ACTIVITIES
WORK-RELATED TECHNOLOGY Pearson correlation Sig.(2 tailed) N	1 136	0.544** 0.000 136
INCOME GENERATION ACTIVITIES Pearson correlation Sig (2. tailed) N	0.544** 0.000 137	1 137

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The study conducted revealed that Pearson correlation test shows a strong relationship of 0.544 with a significant value of 0.000 indicating that the two variables are significantly related. Therefore, there is a relationship between work-related technology and income generation activities in rural Zimbabwe. The research studies by Eme(2014) explored the effect of income generating projects on unemployment reduction, especially in the rural areas and the findings showed that income generating projects and relevant technologies can reduce unemployment in the rural areas by 24%. Bandal(2010) investigated the relationship between the use of appropriate technologies by rural entrepreneurs and job creation. The findings showed that the use of appropriate technologies by rural entrepreneurs positively correlates with job creation and income generating activities.

CONCLUSION

The rural areas in Zimbabwe are the most affected in terms of unemployment. Economic experts believe that the rural areas are neglected when it comes to the allocation of both social and economic opportunities. The rapid population growth means that the demand for jobs exceeds the supply for jobs. Economic experts believe that about 3.7 million Zimbabweans work in the informal sector and women constitute the majority (55%).Therefore unemployment in Zimbabwe has forced people to engage in any activity that generates income for them(Luebker,2008).One option that remains for the unemployed people in Zimbabwe is to join the informal sector, and to engage in small scale economic activities, that use appropriate technology as an instrument for employment creation and income generation (Luebker,2008). To assist rural based entrepreneurs engaged in small scale economic activities, the use of appropriate technology as an instrument for employment creation and income generation should have not only a business approach but also the government support.

There is need for African governments to formulate development policies and strategies to create an enabling environment that focuses in enhancing technology-led, market-oriented enterprise development of micro- and small scale entrepreneurs in the rural areas. Such policies should provide incentives which should include exemptions from payment of duty on imported equipment and machinery, low interest rates on loans through special savings and credit schemes and to strengthen support institutions to provide effective assistance to the marginalized rural sectors of the economy (Undah, 2008). The Science and Technology Policy in Zimbabwe should deliberately encourage and provide incentives for appropriate technology innovations.

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