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EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME GENERATION THROUGH APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING: A CASE STUDY OF CARPENTRY TRADE IN MINNA METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

Although apprenticeship has been practiced for centuries, it is just recently that it has become a focal area of study by researchers. This increased attention has been attributed to its roles in promoting economic growth through employment and income generation. This paper is to examine the role of apprenticeship training in income and employment generation in Minna, using carpentry trade as a case study. Data from questionnaire that were administered to fifty (50) randomly selected carpentry traders in Minna were analyzed using chi-square (X^2) statistical technique. The proposed hypotheses were tested and the result showed a positive relationship between apprenticeship training and income generation on one hand, and apprenticeship training and employment provision on the other hand. Based on the findings, the study recommends that strategies such as apprentices saving money while on training and government assistance should be encouraged to enable them generate start-up capital on completion of the program.

Keywords: Apprenticeship, On-The-Job training, Craftsman, Skills.

INTRODUCTION

Apprenticeship although age long practice, has only recently attracted further attention, because of its potentials in solving employment crises. In Nigeria, like many other African countries, apprenticeship scheme is used in the training of young people in trades and crafts, agriculture, tailoring, carpentry, car repairs, and catering, etc. since the pre-colonial days. It facilitates the disseminating of knowledge and skills from instructors to learners in order to ensure continuity of traditional crafts and trades.

Sponsorship of apprenticeship can be from various sources depending on the nature of the economy. In developed economies where most of the programs are registered, sponsorship is jointly by unions and employers or employers alone (Bilginsoy, 2007). However, in developing economies sponsorship is usually by employers and apprentices with sometimes little government intervention (Breyer, 2007).

So much attention has been paid to the formal education system which is considered as a modern and perhaps only way of imparting skills and knowledge to the youth. Unfortunately, this has been associated with rising unemployment, perhaps because it is not affordable by all and its curriculum laid much emphasis on theory rather than practical. The informal apprenticeship training system has bridged this gap, by providing a means for acquisition of skills to our youths. Not only is this mode cheaper, it also guarantees a self employed person jobs in the both informal and formal sector organizations.

In this paper we focus exclusively on the role of apprenticeship training in income and employment in Minna, using carpentry as a case study.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significance relationship between apprenticeship training and employment generation.

H₀₂ There is no significance relationship between apprenticeship training and income generation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section is concern with an in-dept review of existing literature relating to the concept of apprenticeship and its role in generating income and employment.

Concept of Apprenticeship

The International Labour Organization (ILO) describes apprenticeship in its Apprenticeship Recommendation (R60, 1939) as:

Any system by which an employer undertakes by contract to employ a young person and to train him (or her) or have him (or her) trained systematically for a trade for a period the duration of which has been fixed in advance and in the course of which the apprentice is bound to work in the employer's service (Steedman, 2012:2).

The key characteristics from the ILO description, apprenticeship is based in the work place and supervised by an employer, intended for young people, enhances learning and skill acquisition, 'systematic' (i.e. follow a predefined plan) and governed by a contract between apprentice and employer.

The above description was reformulated in the Vocational Training Recommendation (R117, 1962), as:

Systematic long-term training for a recognized occupation taking place substantially within an undertaking or under an independent craftsman should be governed by a written contract of apprenticeship and be subject to established standards.

This later definition added new features to those already identified above, namely, training is to establish standards for a recognized economy, long-term training. It is to be noted that while the 1939 ILO definition makes reference to young people that of 1962 definition does not. Based upon this, a more encompassing description has been given as:

Apprenticeship' is taking to denote training programs that combine vocational education with work-based learning for an intermediate occupational skill (i.e. more than routinised job training), and that are subject to externally imposed training standards, particularly for their work place component (Steedman, 2012:3).

This new description reveals two further characteristics of apprenticeship as off-the-job education and training and external regulation of training standards both in and outside the work place. In Nigeria's context, apprenticeship is defined by Adeniji (nd) as a system of learning a skill through doing, such as mechanics, tailors, carpenters, and so on. Also, Igun (2006) described it as a system that produces people with limited practical skills and no theoretical knowledge. Thus, apprenticeship is a system through which trainees learn practical skills about a craft or trade while working with master trainers under an indentureship agreement which may be written or unwritten.

A normal apprenticeship program is structured in different phases that articulate the role of the learner and teacher during the process of the program. These include:

Phase I: Modeling – in this phase, the learner will be exposed to all that is expected of him or her to learn in the trade, but the smaller parts that make the whole are not yet examine in details.

Phase II: Approximation – at this stage, the learner begins to imitate the action of the master trainer. This phase allow the trainee to perform a task and compare it with that of the trainer with a close guidance of the trainer.

Phase III: Fading – the learner starts operating in a more detail based on the knowledge acquired so far with minimal expert assistance.

Phase IV: Self directed learning – at this phase, the learner gets to the peak of the learning process and capable of performing the actual task and only seek for assistance when needed from the expert.

Phase V: Generalizing – the learner generalizes what has been learned through applying them to many situations and continuing to be more expert in the trade. Here the discussion method is applied by the master trainer or expert to relate what the trainee has learned to other relevant situation. (Wikipedia, 2013).

Apprenticeship Program Financing

The training of apprenticeship program is sponsored under three schemes in the United States: jointly by a union and the employer's signatory to the collective bargaining agreement, unilaterally by multiple employers, or unilaterally by a single employer (Bilginsoy, 2007; Berik, Bilginsoy and Williams, 2011). The sponsor determines the duration of the apprenticeship, apprenticeship-journey-worker ratio, and the schedule of the wage rate, work processes, work experience and related instruction (Bilginsoy, 2007).

In Africa, the financial agreement of apprenticeship varies from individual to individual, sector to sector and country to country. Most often, the payment takes different combinations of it being in cash and kind (Breyer, 2007). He further states that the major practices is for the apprentices or their family to make payment to the master

craftsperson which may be in form of a fee, or materials things like tobacco, drinks, sheep or goat, and at same time sponsor the celebration of the program at the beginning and end. The apprentices may be paid by his master, wages, allowances for food, cloths and transportation and provision of shelter at the work place or master's house. The practice in Ghana is that the apprentice or his/her family pays a fee to the master trainer either in cash, or in kind usually at the beginning or by the end of the training program (Breyer, 2007). There may be variation in the fee which may be attributed to the type of trade, the dignity of the master or cost involved in production process.

Nubler (2008) submits that in the apprenticeship agreement, the master craftsperson agrees to the responsibility of financing part of the training and paying modest stipends to the apprentice. The apprentice promises to share the training cost through providing the labour service to the trainer, and also may promise to pay a fee. Continuing training increases the apprentice productivity and promised to share the returns with the trainer by accepting a wage below the productivity level. These allow master craftsperson to recover the training cost. Similarly, Breyer (2007) affirms that part of the training cost are bore by the apprentices through working for training wages, they equally pay for tools, tuition, and books either from their pocket or through a scholarship loan agreement.

Entrepreneurship Development Institutes and Apprenticeship Training

In 1960s, the educational system operated in Nigeria emphasized liberal education rather than acquisition of skills, but anecdotal evidences suggest that this failed to improve the employability of the youths. This led to the institution of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in November 1986, with the mandate of self-employment and self-reliance in preference to paid employment. Through policy planning, programmes such as Rural Employment Promotion (REP), Vocational Skills Development Programme (VSD), Special Public Work Programme (SPW), and Small Scale Enterprises (SSE) Programme came on board across the nation with the sole aim of combating unemployment crises in the nation (Adebisi and Oni, 2012).

Based on the significance of NDE in unemployment reduction in Nigeria, Ogunlela (2012) submits that the directorate since inception has created more than 2 million jobs for the unemployed youth's nationwide through skills acquisition programmes. The youths, the poor, the vulnerable of the society, upon meeting the training requirements of the NDE, benefit from vocational/technical education irrespective of their socio-economic and academic background and prepare them for gainful employment and sustainable livelihoods (Adebisi and Oni, 2012).

NDE and Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) at Federal, State and Local government levels have helped in combating the employment crises in Nigeria. For example, NDE has been training youths on various skills such as welding, carpentry, electrical installations among other apprentices (Ibrahim, 2012). For example, the Katsina State in collaboration with SMEDAN established the Katsina Business Support Center to essentially impart skills on youths to make them self-reliance (Okojie, Abimaje, Abari, Elazeh, Uzoaru, Ibrahim, Akinadewo, Ofoma and Uwogu, 2012).

Employment and Income Generation through Apprenticeship Training

In an attempt to reduce the number of young job seekers in the Indian economy, Apprenticeship Act was promulgated in 1961 to make it compulsory for specified industrial employers (Nagarajan and Kaliyamooty, 2010). Basic and on-job or shop training were given priority based on the standard prescribed by the Indian Government. The scheme has trained a number of apprentices ranging from initial 1200 to 129,000 in 1991 and 150,000 during 1995-96.

In the United States, registered apprentice were given on-the-job training (OJT) and in-class related theoretical instruction (RTI) that provide them with general skills in an occupation. The apprenticeship program ranging from 2,000 to 10,000 hours of formal OJT, and 144 to 720 hours for RTI. The apprentices receives certification on a specified trade on completion of the program that is acceptable nationwide (Berik, Bilginsoy and Williams, 2011).

In creating employment and income to Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the Pakistanian Government and Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) provide training centers in some sector of the Afghan refugee village economy such as woodwork, metal work, turbans and plain cloth, leather processing and leather goods production, tailoring, blankets, carpet and gilim making, the weaving of shawls, embroidery, building construction trade, as well as services such as auto mechanics and tractor repairs, body repair and painting, motorcycle repairs, radio and electrical repairs. The establishment of these centers provides employment to the ex-trainees which enable them generate income to meet up with their basic needs (Sinclair, 1993).

Ogunrinola*(2011) opines that young school leavers who can not afford to continue in the formal educational system or cannot obtain job from the sector of the economy resort to informal sector apprentice training. This guarantee them to be self employed, pick up employment in the low-paid informal sector jobs or obtain job in the formal sector organization.

Apprenticeship training consists of training learning in hands-on rather than theoretical and it makes the apprentices as assistance and shadows to their employers. Thus, the system is both process of education and full time employment because the apprentices are earning while learning (Setiawati and Riyanto, 2011).

It has been observed by Steedman (2012) that there exist a positive relationship between apprenticeship and low youth unemployment. This apprenticeship is about skills required directly by companies or employers in a modern economy. Apprenticeship has long been appreciated for its contribution to jobs and skills by many countries in promoting gradual and careful change from full time education to work for young people. For example, between 16 – 24 year olds in France and England, 5 percent of them have been engaged in apprenticeship with much effort to increase the numbers (Steedman, 2012). Relatedly, ILO Newsroom (2012) states that a good apprenticeship provides young men and women with the necessary skills required of them in the supply of skilled labour market. This can absolutely reduce the alarming rate of unemployment and bring about economic growth simultaneously. Daniel (2004) also argues that the formal education training is to some extent out of reach of the poor, therefore informal sector stand out for the poor because of its opportunities and facilities for manpower training through access to apprenticeship at substantially lower cost, thus enhancing their employability.

In Nigeria, the vocational/technical education and training practiced in the following institutions pre-vocational, vocational, technical colleges, colleges of education (technical), polytechnics and universities provide youths with both practical and theoretical skills in areas such as woodwork, metal work, building construction, tailoring and dress making, dyeing, plumbing, electrical installation, block laying and concreting, carpentry and joinery, etc. which prepare them for employment in both formal and informal organizations (Kennedy, 2011). Perhaps, a major aspect of the technical and vocational education programme is that it provides youths with entrepreneurial skills which make them better suited and equipped to compete in the market (Osolar, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The data used in analysis were mainly primary data. In obtaining primary data, the research questionnaire was designed and administered to 50 owners of carpentry workshops in Minna, Niger state. Simple random sampling is employed in selecting the respondents. This ensured that every carpentry workshop had an equal chance of being selected, thus improving the reliability of the outcome. The procedure is as follow, the names of all the carpentry workshops were written on slips which are folded and put in a container. After thorough mixing, the researcher dips is hand and picks a slip, the name on the slip is recorded. The procedure is repeated until a sample of fifty carpentry workshops for the study is obtained. The data analysis is both descriptive and inferential, these included tables, simple percentages and chi-square statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary information about the bio-data of the sample carpenters could be insightful. Also, information about the size of the furniture workshop could be useful.

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis which reads that there is no significance relationship between apprenticeship training and employment generation is tested using chi-square of goodness of-fit.

Table 1 below shows the relationship between apprenticeship training and employment. The result indicate that 45 (90%) of the carpentry traders stood for yes while 5 (10%) responded no.

Table 1: Relationship between Apprenticeship and Employment

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	90
No	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey, Jan. 2013

Table 2 shows the chi-square statistical analysis; it reveals that chi-square calculated is 32 which is greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 at 0.05 significance level with 1 degree of freedom. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result indicates that there is a positive relationship between apprenticeship training and employment generation. This result concord with such findings by Steedman (2012) who observes that apprenticeship training is a cure for high unemployment.

Table 2: Chi-square Statistical Computation

Responses	F _o	F _e	F _o - F _e	$\frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$
Yes	45	25	20	16
No	5	25	-20	16
Total	50	50	-	32

Source: Data analysis, 2013 (Deduced from Table 1)

Hypotheses Two

The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significance relationship between apprenticeship training and income generation is tested using chi-square of goodness of-fit.

Table 3 below reveals that 49 (98%) of the carpentry traders are of the view that there exist a relationship between apprenticeship and income generation. While 1 (2%) stood at no.

Table 3: Relationship between Apprenticeship Training and income Generation

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	98
No	1	2
Total	50	100

Source: Field survey, Jan. 2013

Table 4, it shows that the chi-square calculated is 46.08 and is greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 at 0.05 significance level with 1 degree of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which proposes no positive relationship between apprenticeship training and income generation is rejected. Thus, there exist a very strong positive relationship between apprenticeship training and income generation. This is in consonance with the earlier findings of Sinclair (1993) who states that apprentices are being paid modest stipends when on training, and also ex-trainees are able to generate income through establishment of their own workshops or engage in a wage employment.

Table 4: Chi-square Statistical Computation

Responses	F _o	F _e	F _o - F _e	$\frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$
Yes	49	25	24	23.04
No	1	25	-24	23.04
Total	50	50	-	46.08

Source: Data analysis, 2013 (Deduced from Table 3)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study appraised the role of apprenticeship training in income and employment generation in Minna metropolis using carpentry trade as a case study. The study revealed that the carpentry trade provides apprenticeship training opportunities to unemployed youths in Minna metropolis at near zero cost, thereby making them to be productive and contributing to the economic growth of Minna in particular and Nigeria in general. The study also revealed that there is positive relationship between apprenticeship training and generation of income and employment.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were found desirable for strengthening the positive relationship between apprenticeship training and income and employment generation in Nigeria:

- i. Making apprentices to save money while on training to serve as part of their start-up capital;
- ii. Government should contribute to their start-up capital to enable them commence operation after training; and
- iii. The apprentices should develop instincts for business prosperity.

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