

A Qualitative Analysis of the State of Apprenticeship Training in Abeokuta South Local Government

Suraj Adekunbi *¹, Muideen Adejare Isiaka & Rukayat Kikelomo Isiaka³

¹Abeokuta Business School, Crescent University, Abeokuta

²Department of Economics and Actuarial Sciences, Crescent University, Abeokuta

³Department of Sociology, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, Nigeria.

*Correspondence Email: dr.isiaka@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined the state of apprenticeship training in Abeokuta South Local Government. It examines the attitude of relevant stakeholders towards apprenticeship training; the level of apprenticeship training and factors that influence apprenticeship training in Abeokuta South Local Government. Conceptually, the paper briefly explained the overview of apprentice, factors influencing apprenticeship training and cognitive learning theory served as the basis of theoretical frame. The paper revealed that the attitude of the stakeholders especially the trainer and the trainee are positive however, need more commitment from the government, the trainer and the trainee. More so, the paper revealed that there was high level of apprenticeship decline in the society. Finally, majority of the respondents mentioned poverty, high learning fee, internet fraud, peer group's influence, etc as factors affecting apprenticeship training. However, this paper recommends that all the stakeholders should be deliberate and committed in their goals of ensuring a viable apprenticeship system for the teeming youth in the country.

Keywords: Apprenticeship, Training, Qualitative, Analysis, Trainer, Trainee

JEL Classification: J24

1. Introduction

One of the oldest forms of vocational training across the world is apprenticeship. It is a form of training which tends to help a society either directly or indirectly in reducing joblessness and bridging the gap that might have been created by formal education. It has been able to give room for individual especially young ones to learn a specific trade or skills in which they can use as a source of earning or part of their earnings to survive. It helps to build a viable productive system of a society at all levels. Besides, apprenticeship has a way of stimulating a country's economic growth through direct or indirect contribution to production of goods and rendering of services. According to Smith *et al.* (2021), apprenticeship has a long history as form of vocational learning, and the programme is just as important training as it was from inception. This implies that aside from formal education or training that could be earned in university, polytechnic, monotechnic, college of

education, etc, apprenticeship from in memorial has been seen as informal training which tends to ensure that interested individuals are trained in a particular trade or skills just as university graduates are trained in medicine, journalism, engineering, among others.

In Africa, especially Nigeria, apprenticeship is transferrable skills that are being learnt from the master to the apprentices which are mostly youths, bearing in mind the consent of the parents. It is a practice of culture because method of apprenticeship differs from one culture to another. However, the central focus or point of convergent is that there is a desire to learn a craft or skills such as farming, tailoring, painting, music, among others by the apprentice and there is a mutual agreement between the parties (apprentice and his master) with consent of apprentice parents or guardians. In case of developed countries like United Kingdom, there is a paradox about intermediate-level vocational training in British industry. Apprenticeship, the backbone of Britain's industry skills until the mid-1960s, has declined since then, giving rise to the strong impression that, compared with Britain's main trading partners, her workforce is relatively under-skilled and her employers are reluctant to train. This view has been reinforced by persistent reports from employers of skill shortages, and has been used to explain Britain's disappointing productivity performance (Daniel, Oshodi, Arif, Henjewe & Haywood, 2020; Pylvas, Nokelainen & Rintala, 2018; Kiriakos & Mougolias, 2022; Laczik & Emms, 2022).

In Nigeria, apprenticeship has been part and parcel of the historical development of the people aside from formal training methods through education. For instance, each tribes or ethnic group has a way by which apprenticeship is being practice and executed. For instance, the Igbos apprenticeship takes longer years bearing in mind other benefits attached for the meritorious service and commitment of the apprentice in question. In Nigeria, as other African countries, most people have traditionally acquired their skills, knowledge and attitudes from Institutions other than formal schools (Adeyeye, Falola, Waribo & Akinbode 2015; Udu, 2015; Kanu, 2019).

Interestingly, it is quite obvious that the rate of unemployment in Africa specifically in Nigeria has been alarming. Prior to this high rate of unemployment in the country, apprenticeship has been a force to be reckoned with in the country. This is because it serves as major sources of skill acquisitions to individual, especially teeming Nigerian youths in learning one trade or skills for those that could not afford to obtain formal education, and sometime for those that could afford formal training reducing expectations on white collar jobs that are rarely available in the country. According to Ejo-Orusa & Lloyd (2019), self-employment is still a viable option for Nigeria due to the country's extremely weak industrial sector, which offers little employment opportunities for unemployed graduates. As would be expected, policy makers and economic managers in Nigeria have strongly advocated for entrepreneurship as an objective. On the other hand, this study looks at the state of apprenticeship programs in Ogun State, Nigeria; focusing on Abeokuta South Local Government Area. This study examined the attitude of relevant stakeholders in Abeokuta South Local Government towards apprenticeship training, the trend of apprenticeship training in Abeokuta South Local Government, and the factors influencing apprenticeship training in Abeokuta South Local Government?

2. Literature Review

The concept of apprenticeship refers to the mutual agreement between an apprentice (i.e the trainee) who desired to learn a trade or skills from the trainer (i.e the master) within a required period with the consent from the trainee's parents or guardians. Buttressing, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) explains that apprenticeships as a form of "systematic long-term training for a recognised occupation that takes place substantially. Apprenticeships are programmes that usually result in a formal certification or placements usually depending on the country's context. As noted by the G20, there is no single standardize model of apprenticeships, but rather multiple and varied social protection coverage. The case studies depict employment may differ in terms of their specific legal nature and requirements (OECD/ILO, 2017). Furthermore, Fortwengel, Gospel & Toner, (2021) defined apprenticeship in terms of core and extra components. The first aspects entail a set of reciprocal duties and rights between an employer and a trainee, and are regarded from the perspective of concurrent employment with on-the-job and off-the-job training. The second set of requirements is seen from the perspective of a legal contract with a young person, which can be registered with a third party, usually an intermediary government agency. These qualifications are often the foundation for licensure in numerous professions. Interestingly, apprenticeship can be analysed from micro-economic perspective, such that when the transaction is between the apprentice and the master, and sometimes his family (Mokyr, 2019). Since apprentices and journeymen were a type of urproletariat before to the Industrial Revolution, other micro-economic themes of relevance are closely related to how the industry is organized, how apprenticeship is used as a barrier to admission, and how pre-modern urban labor markets are structured.

Factors influencing apprenticeship in Nigeria include incentive, duration, recognition, age and poverty. Incentive is a key factor in encouraging or motivating apprenticeship training in a society. When there is a lack of certain token given to apprentice especially for those apprentices that are not financially buoyant in terms of family, it would be quite difficult for such apprentice to continue or complete his or her training at when due. No wonder some countries tend to encourage payment of wages to the apprentice in their own system. The longer the length of apprenticeship training, the more discouraged the apprentice will be, especially if the apprentice shoulder the cost of training and other extra responsibilities (Udu, 2015; Kanu, 2019). When government and private organisations policies do not recognise individuals who might have acquired some apprenticeship training on the claim that the certificate tendered is not recognized. It has a way of influencing prospective and some existing apprentices in disengaging from acquiring a trade or skills through apprenticeship especially in this part of the world that we are. Some elderly people or even some youth believe that they are above apprenticeship due to disrespect, inability not to learn fast, etc. When poverty is present in a society that affects the trainer, the trainee and the society at large. In a situation whereby the trainer's standard of living is very low, it would be difficult for trainer to concern giving incentives to trainees or apprenticeship. While when apprentice happens to be indigent person, he or she would want to settle for menial jobs where he or she would be paid instantly against acquiring skills or a trade (Udu, 2015; Kanu, 2019).

Rather than emphasizing a tangible craft or trade like traditional apprenticeships do, cognitive apprenticeships focus on learning-through-guided-experience on cognitive and meta cognitive skills and processes (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989). Furthermore, the cognitive processes involved in learning as well as the teaching method for handling complicated tasks are the two main points of emphasis for the cognitive apprenticeship hypothesis. The goal of a cognitive apprenticeship is to expose pupils to the process of cognition so they can watch and learn from it. The cognitive apprenticeship paradigm places a strong emphasis on information that has practical applications (Miyachi, Jimenez, Yoshikawa, Furuhashi & Kanoh, 2020; Rucker, Kolpek & Cain, 2021). The following are some of the guiding principles of cognitive apprenticeship theory: it promotes introspection on the distinctions between the performance of novices and experts; it fosters the growth of the self-monitoring and correction skills needed for the problem solver to switch between various cognitive activities; it undertakes tasks that may reflect the evolving demands of learning, such as increasing complexity, increasing diversity; and it assists apprentices in learning from a variety of professionals or trainers around the world. Cognitive apprenticeship theory also involve: modeling, which entails having a trainer perform a job while the apprentice watches and develops a conceptual model of the processes needed to complete the task; mentoring that include seeing an apprentice perform and providing guidance, support, criticism, modeling, prompts, and new assignments; scaffolding that the instructor provides to an apprentice articulation that helps trainees express their understanding, logic, or methods for addressing problems in a particular field (Miyachi, et al, 2020; Rucker, et al, 2021).

3. Methodology

The study made use of purposive sampling technique in order to select respondents. The study made use of survey design in Abeokuta South Local Government. This study sampled eight (8) respondents who are business owners within Abeokuta South Local Government in order to assess their perception about the state of apprenticeship training using interview guide. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique and data were transcribed and analysed by the researcher.

4. Findings

What is the attitude of relevant stakeholders in Abeokuta South Local Government towards apprenticeship training?

To provide response to the attitude of stakeholders towards apprenticeship training, various responses were obtained from trainers and trainees through online platform. It was revealed that the attitude of stakeholders varies when it comes to apprenticeship training at Abeokuta South Local Government. According to Ogbonna (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) stated that “due to apprenticeship being one of the ways to lift people out of poverty, I feel the government should do more to encourage this system.” Again, Olatayo (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) opined that he gives great support to apprenticeship training. “I throw my weight towards apprenticeship greatly. I believe such training would give the apprentice the opportunity to learn a trade or skill from an experienced master. With that, it will minimize the error rate of the apprentice on the job when independent”.

Interestingly, Olugbenro, Shodunke, Abdulwahab & Olaleye (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) believed that the attitude of apprenticeship stakeholders has been encouraging and positive. However, it revealed that the stakeholders involved have a lot to do in order to bring about effectiveness and efficiency in apprenticeship system. Oyeyemi (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) opined that in the state and Nigeria, it can be better, if apprentice can be more dedicated and faithful and trainers should be more open and sincere to teach them what they need to know. Adding to the above, Ismail (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) stated that “ We would need to do so many things that would make the apprentice think of coming to workshop the next day by giving them incentive, let them have a good sense of belonging and make them relevant”. While Lebile (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) view the attitude of stakeholders as being rude, late, lazy, and discrimination.

What is the level of apprenticeship training in Abeokuta South Local Government?

In the aspect of level of apprenticeship training within the Local Government under study, revealed that the decline in apprenticeship training today is quite alarming. It was observed from the data gathered that the level at which individuals especially youth desire to learn a trade or skills is gradually eroding. It was revealed by Ismail that “the current declining rate in apprenticeship in this country is alarming and if not check we may resort in looking for labour in the future to come because there will be scarcity of those who will do some jobs” (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022). Similarly, it reduce the number of unemployed youth roaming around the street, it creates employment and contribute to the growth of the country, (Shodunkle, Abdulwahab & Lebile, Online Interpersonal Interview 2022).

Ogbonna stated that ignorance is one of the reasons why we are experiencing decline in apprenticeship training. “I feel the guardians are ignorant of the many advantages of apprenticeship, and that’s why they don’t send out their kids, they want them to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, and pilots. Ignoring the fact that there are many other legitimate ways of making ends meet (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022). Someone must paint a new house, someone must clean, someone must design posters, someone must decorate the house with furniture, and some one must sew my dress, and so on.” He further added that youths are now more fixated on short-term gratification. With the rise and prominence of computers and advanced technology, some youths would prefer to sit at a place and surf the internet for the long part and end up with nothing beneficial. So it leaves a few people interested in apprenticeship. Olaleye, Oyeyemi, Shodunke, Abdulwahab, Lebile & Olatayo (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) indentify training, duration, funding, get rich quickly syndrome, peer’s influence, unpenalized criminals or fraudsters, no power supply, patronage has reduced because of the poverty rate, government inability to provide employment opportunities, society worship the rich not minding how they make money, low esteemed, social media, family lack of funds, low or no capital.

However, Ismail (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) “it is a bad omen for the state and the nation in general and I think government need to work with d relevant stakeholders as far as d apprenticeship is concern to improve the lot of this subject matter”.

What are the factors influencing apprenticeship training in Abeokuta South Local Government?

This study went on further to reveal the likely factors influencing the attitude and level at which individuals tend to crave for apprenticeship training in Abeokuta South Local Government, and numerous factors were gathered as expressed by the respondents of this study. According to Oyeyemi (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) stated that poverty is another factor that is influencing apprenticeship training. "Apprenticeship is a period of work and not money making stage, but because of poverty, people expect an apprentice to start making money during training stage. There's fear instead of hope when thinking about the future for almost every Nigerian, this makes it difficult for an apprentice to concentrate on training and challenging the status quo of those that have learnt one skill or trade without any evidence to show for it. "Some of those who have trained successfully have nothing to show for it because of the challenges the state of the economy is posing etc."

Furthermore, Abdulwahab, Shodunke & Lebile (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) added that influence of western culture, poverty, youth attitude towards apprenticeship, lack of access to support and social media influence, yahoo yahoo (i.e internet fraud), laziness are factors that negatively influence apprenticeship training. Similarly, Ogbonna, Olugbenro, Olaleye, (Online Interpersonal Interview, 2022) stated that unemployment, lack of funds to sponsor education, unpreparedness to learn, high learning fee, heredity, increase in population, etc, serve as major factors contributing to these factors that could influence apprenticeship training.

5. Conclusion

It is crystal clear that apprenticeship is one of the areas through which a society can empower its people and withdraw them from abject poverty and enhance productivity in such society. It is extremely important in this dispensation and the reason is not far-fetched; a popular saying "idleness is the workshop of the devil," apprenticeship helps to keep one engaged in achieving something positive. It provides employment and entrepreneurship for individual. This is because it provides individual with a basic skill that can provide income for them. This is because vocational training will engage young people. The main finding of this study on the stakeholders' attitude is that, the attitude of apprenticeship stakeholders has been encouraging and positive. However, the stakeholders involved have a lot to do in order to bring about effective and efficiency in apprenticeship system. Concerning the level of apprenticeship in Abeokuta metropolis, the study finds that the current declining rate in apprenticeship is alarming and may lead to shortage of expert providers of some skills in the nearest future. The identified factors of declining include western culture, poverty, youth peer influence, lack of financial support and social media influence.

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