

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES
INTENTION AMONG TRAINEES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study examines the extent to which vocational training stimulate small business enterprises intention among trainees in Lagos State Vocational centres. A survey design was adopted; primary data were gathered with the aid of a structured questionnaire. 592 copies of questionnaire were found usable. Spearman rho correlation statistical tool was used to test the relevant hypotheses raised in the study. The findings revealed a significant relationship between skills acquisition and intention to start a small business and also a significant relationship is found between perceived intention to start a small business and parents' ownership of a small business. The study concludes that skills acquisition and family ownership of business are a strong motivation to start a small business.

Keywords: Vocational Education, small business ownership intention

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Vocational Education (VE) has its origin from the apprenticeship scheme, where an individual receives training on any trade of choice which can include but not limited to the following: blacksmiths, carpentry, mechanics, tailoring, trading cake making, bead making. The apprenticeship scheme has been a method of passing down to other generation-specific technical trades. VE, as it is understood today, can be traced back to the early twentieth century, during which its benefits were first recognised by the western world (Wikipedia, 2012). The advantage of having a skillful workforce encouraged the diversion of funds to institutions that specialized in the training of highly specialized skills particularly in areas such as automobile mechanic, welder etc. During its initial development, VE was associated with the activities related to the lower social classes; hence it was stigmatized, and it was seen as being inferior to

standard post-secondary education (Smith and Miner, 1983). Despite the initial challenges in the development of VE, as the labour market became more specialized and the demand for highly specialized skills are required, government and private operators began to invest heavily in VE through publicly funded training organizations and subsidized apprenticeship scheme. It receives further impetus towards the end of the twentieth century it moved away from been restricted to vocational or technical schools to being part of community colleges curriculum accompany with granting a certificate and associate degrees in specialized fields in selected developed economy (Wikipedia, 2012). The development of Vocational-Technical Education (VTE) in Nigeria according to Ihekwoaba (2005) can be divided into four phases namely: the primitive era; the colonial era and the independence and post-independence era. The primitive era is a period where each clan within the community has a specialized vocation for which they are recognized such as blacksmith, drumming, tribe marks specialist. Members of the clan are trained first and foremost in the trade of its immediate family. Uwameiye and Iyamu (2002) noted that every male born into a family was expected to learn his patrilineal craft, and it was easy to identify a young male child as a member of a lineage found to be proficient in the lineage craft. Colonial era was associated with a period of official neglect of vocational education where the colonial administration was only interested in liberal studies that will engage young Africans as clerks and interpreters. According to Ihekwoaba (2005), in 1945 Yaba High College was converted to the technical institution so also Yaba Trade Centre was established in 1948 to offer training courses in selected trades, and similar institutions were established in other locations in Nigeria. Independence and post-independence witnessed slow growth of VE. The high rate of unemployment has brought about the rapid development of VE both at the Federal and State levels.

The study provides answers to the following questions: Does perceived skill acquisition influence trainees intention of starting a small business? Does ownership of the business by relation or parent influence trainee's intention of owning a business?

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

According to New World Encyclopedia (2012) describes Vocational Education VE (or Vocational Education and Training (VET) also called Career and Technical Education (CTE) as prepares learners for careers in manual or practical activities. Traditionally, it is non-academic and only related to a specific trade, occupation, or 'vocation'. It is a form of apprenticeships, in which young people learned from master the skills necessary for a particular trade. Thus, it was associated with the lower social classes as compared to the classical education that was received by gentlemen. Following the Industrialization of the 19th century, however, vocational education began to be introduced into the school education system. VE has diversified over the 20th century and now exists in industries as wide-ranging as retail, tourism, information technology, funeral services, and cosmetics, as well as in the traditional crafts and cottage industries. It thus forms an integral part of the educational system as a whole, providing for a large proportion of members of modern society and supporting the more

academic, scholarly educational programmes offered in traditional liberal arts colleges and research universities.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria National Policy on Education adopted the UNESCO/ILO (2002) definition of Technical and Vocational Education as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life. Technical and Vocational Education is further understood to be: an integral part of general education; a means of preparing for occupational fields and for active participation in the world of work; an aspect of lifelong learning and a preparation for responsible citizenship; an instrument for National Training and Small Business promoting environmentally sound sustainable development; and a method of alleviating poverty. Furthermore, the national policy on education identified the following as the goals of Technical and vocational education; Provides trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels; Provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and give training and impart the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-reliant economically.

Oni (2007) defined vocational education as that aspect of education which provides the recipients with the necessary knowledge and practical skills needed for entry into the world of work as employees or as self-employed. Vocational education nurtures skills that are necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development and thus builds a self-reliant nation. In effect, vocational education is the education that is focused on building a self-reliant society. Despite the laudable goals of Vocational education as enunciated in the educational policy of the nation, Oni (2007) notes that the nation still lacks quality vocation-technical education programmes in technical institutions.

Nwagwu (2004) sees vocational education as the organized and purposeful experiences essential to the career development in trade, industrial or technical occupation; it enables an individual's to learn, explore and prepare for a trade. VE in Nigeria is bedevilled with many problems, and such problems revolve around the human and material resources required for vocational training, specialist teachers are generally in short supply especially in areas like woodwork, auto-mechanics, metalwork and the likes'. She also pointed out that most of the technical workshops, especially in the rural schools, are lying waste, abandoned and rusting away in the bush. In some communities, they have been vandalized, where they are intact, there is no electricity to operate them, and the required manpower to handle the equipment is nowhere to be found (Nwagwu, 2004).

2.2 Vocational Artisan versus Opportunistic Entrepreneurs

Since entrepreneurs display heterogeneity of differences in their attitude, behaviour, managerial ability and professional training. Smith & Miner (1983) identified two behavioural patterns demonstrated by artisan (or craftsman) entrepreneurs and opportunistic entrepreneurs. Moore Petty, Palich, and Longenecker (2008) described artisan entrepreneur as a person with primarily technical skills and little business knowledge, while an opportunistic entrepreneur is a person with both sophisticated managerial skills and technical knowledge. According to Smith and Miner (1983), the education of the artisan entrepreneur is limited to technical training, such entrepreneurs have technical job experience, but they typically lack excellent communication skills and managerial training. The study of Olayiwola (2007) found that a low level of education exists among the apprentices and indeed, most things are done in the secrecy since knowledge is not shared among traders. Artisan approach to business decision making is often characterized by the following features according to Smith and Miner (1983): they are paternalistic - they guide their businesses much as they might guide their own families; they are reluctant to delegate authority; they are few (usually only one or two) capital sources to create their firms; they define marketing strategy in terms of the traditional components of the price, quality and company reputation; their sales efforts are primarily personal; and their time orientation is short, with little planning for future growth. Opportunistic entrepreneurs, on the other hand, combined both the technical know-how and managerial skills to run their ventures. Equipped with the managerial skills, the entrepreneurs delegate authority and aspire to ensure the growth and development of the venture. The artisan and opportunistic entrepreneurs are at both sides of a continuum. Hypothesis one is hereby proposed

Hypothesis 1.H / There is a positive and significant relationship between perceived skill acquisition and trainees' intention of starting a small business.

2.3 Entrepreneurial activity and attitude

Entrepreneurial attitudes influence entrepreneurial activity, while entrepreneurial activity also influences entrepreneurial attitude. For example, the legitimacy of entrepreneurship in society, as expressed in positive entrepreneurial attitudes, can be influenced by whether people know anyone who has started a business recently (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003). This can be a function of both levels of entrepreneurial activity and social networking activity in the society. Individuals who know other individuals who recently started a business may, through familiarity with the process, be more likely to see it as legitimate. Those whose parents have been involved in one business or the other and have recorded a moderate or substantial success may likely be encouraged to also go into business. (Bosma, Acs, Autio, Coduras and Levie 2009) Entrepreneurial attitudes are necessary because they express the general feeling of the population toward entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. Moreover, if national attitudes toward entrepreneurship are definite, this will generate social support, help financial resources, and networking benefits to those who are already entrepreneurs or want to

start a business (Bosma et al., 2009) . By this conclusion, we propose the second hypothesis thus

Hypothesis 2 H_1 There is a positive and significant relationship between Parent ownership of business and trainee's intention to own a business.

3.METHODOLOGY

A survey research design was adopted for this study. Primary data were collected with a structured questionnaire from 591 vocational trainees in vocational centres in Lagos State Nigeria. Questionnaire items were subjected to reliability test, Cronbach alpha test provide support for the reliability of the measures as each of the variables were slightly above 0.70, hence were significant because they exceed the acceptable limit of 0.70 (Leech, Barrett and Morgan 2008). Content validity was done by selected owners of small business, vocational trainees and four lecturers who are not below the rank of Senior Lecturers. The suggestions were incorporated into the final copy administered. Spearman rho correlation was employed to test relevant hypotheses raised in the study. A convenient sampling method was used to administer copies of the questionnaire to trainees that were in the centres on the particular day the researcher visited. Some of the questionnaire items seek to elicit information on specific issues such as why the trainees opted for vocational training, rate the perceived skill acquired, intentions of trainees after completion and whether their parents, friends and relations own businesses of their own, duration of training, cost of training, highest level of education and age bracket.

4.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The bio-data of the respondents include 59%emale, 76%ingle, while 70% were within the age brackets of 18 and 25. These finding also showed that the majority of respondents are National Training, and Small Business within the range of young people who have just completed their Senior Secondary School (SSS) who either are unable to find a job, or were unable to secure admission to tertiary institutions, or their parents are not in the position to finance their education. The high cost of tertiary education coupled with inadequate space to give all prospective applicant admission has also become an impetus to the growth of vocational training, while other used vocational training as a gap filler between the waiting period for admission. This finding is supported by the study of Olayiwola & Alaneme (2010), where it was found that less than 20%f those who write Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE) on a yearly basis are admitted into the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This conclusion is also evident in that over 60% claimed SSCE and GCE O/L as their highest qualification.

4.1 Testing of hypothesis 1

Hypothesis one proposed that there is a positive and significant relationship between perceived skill acquisition and trainees' intention to start a small business. A spearman rho correlation test was conducted, and the test shows a positive significant relationship between perceived skill acquisition and trainees'intention to start a small

business Table 1 ($r = 307$, $p = .001$). We, therefore, accept the alternative hypothesis that perceived skill acquired would motivate trainees to start businesses of their own. Nkamnebe (2003) notes that the extended family system bestows responsibility on successful entrepreneurs to train younger members of the family and community. In addition, the study points out that apart from being obligatory to train members of the extended family, and the need to recruit insiders who are trustworthy compels owner managers to co-opt family members into the business chain. The study of Afolabi and Macheke (2012) also found that training enhances entrepreneurial business skills and lead to higher performance. The implication of the finding is that the more the perceived skill acquisition, the more business ventures are going to be created. This will, therefore, reduce unemployment and also lead to economic growth.

4.2 Testing of hypothesis 2

Hypothesis two proposed that there is a positive and significant relationship between Parent ownership of business and trainees' intention to own a business. A spearman rho correlation test was conducted, and the test shows a positive significant relationship between parent ownership of the business and trainees 'intention to own a business Table 1 ($r = 254$, $p = .001$). We accept the alternative hypothesis that parent ownership of a business have a positive and significant influence on trainees' intention to own a business.

This result supports the earlier study of Hisrich & Peters (1995) who noted that 'in terms of the occupation of the entrepreneurs 'parents, there is strong evidence that entrepreneurs tend to have self-employed or entrepreneurial fathers and having a father who is self-employed provides a strong inspiration for the entrepreneur. The study of Moy and Luk (2008) among the Chinese also showed that entrepreneurial parental role has a positive and significant effect on entrepreneurial career choice intent. While the study of Aldrich and Cliff (2003) found that transformations in the institution of the have implications for the emergence of new business opportunities, opportunity. Gyration, business start-up decisions, and the resource mobilization process. The researchers suggest that entrepreneurship scholars would benefit from a family embeddedness perspective on new venture creation. Table I shows the results of iron: resets" test

Table 1: Test of Hypotheses one and two

			1	2	3
Spearman's rho Coefficient (2-tailed)	Small Business The intention of	Correlation of the trainees	1.000		
		Sig.	591. 307(*)	1.000	
(2-tailed)	Perceived Skill	N Correlation Coefficient Sig.	.000 591 254(*)	591 .195(**) .000	1.000
	Parents ownership of Biz	N Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	.000 591	591	
N					591

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

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examines the extent to which vocational training stimulate small business intention among Lagos State Vocational Centre Trainees. The study established a positive significant relationship between perceived skill acquisition and small business intention by trainees. And also a positive significant relationship was established between parents ownership of a business and trainee station to own a business. The implications of these findings show that skills acquisition is significant in stimulating business ownership or entrepreneurial intention. There is a need for a review of the school curriculum that will make industrial training compulsory from Senior Secondary Schools to tertiary institutions. Some private tertiary institutions in Nigeria have made learning specific trade as part of graduation requirements. This will give those who have acquired skill the confidence for self-reliance. This also calls for collaboration between tertiary institutions and society (industries) so that institutions will produce skills that have something to contribute to society's needs. In addition, the study found high significance positive relationship between parent ownership of a business and business intention of trainees. There must be a way of involving successful business owners in the training of vocational trainees so as to inspire the trainees and motivate them to be creative and inspire them to pursue venture creation. This study recommends that the government need to do more i: creating opportunities in the vocational centres through the provision of start-up capital for those who distinguish themselves in their career choice. There is a need for business owners to involve their children in their business from the early stage of development while educating them on the importance of education. Finally, tertiary institutions need to create opportunity between successful business owners and student so that practical skill of running a business could be learnt along with theory. National Training and Small Business.

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