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APPRENTICESHIP PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN NIGERIA (A STUDY OF SELECTED AUTOMOBILE MECHANIC, WORKSHOPS IN LAGOS STATE)

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ABSTRACT

The essence of this study 'apprenticeship practices and sustainable economic growth in Nigeria is to unveil the opportunities for economic growth in Nigeria through apprenticeship practices. The problem statement led to the formulation of the specific objectives of the study which include to investigate the employment generation capacities of apprenticeship practices of SMEs and to ascertain whether apprentice practices contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria through SMEs. Two research questions were drawn from these objectives. The study revolves around conceptual definition of the dependent variables of economic growth: unemployment and poverty which were used to conceptually review this work. The study anchors on theoretical frame work of cognitive apprenticeship theory. Out of the seventy registered automobile mechanics in Mushin Mechanics union, fifty copies of the questionnaire were distributed to selected members from different automobile mechanics, 37 of them were retrieved and found valid for the study. A total of 6 questions were structured and distributed randomly to selected masters of the apprentices. The achievement of the stated objectives employed the use of Chi-square statistical test to an a use the data. The findings indicate that apprenticeships practices do create employment in Nigeria and also contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that Government should strengthen its National Youth Development Policies to focus on empowering the youths at the grassroots level by providing entrepreneurship education through Vocational Education Training.

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, people have been transferring skills from one generation to another in some form of apprenticeship training and the contribution of apprenticeship to job creation and skills acquisition has long been appreciated by countries eager to promote their economic growth. Apprenticeship practices were traced to have started in ancient Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome, as well as in modern Europe and extent to United States of America (Achugo and Chigbo, 2014) In Nigeria, apprenticeship practices existed during the pre-colonial era, clans and families jealously guarded their lineal skills through customs, family lineage and rituals. Skills were passed on within the family by training young people on family trades, crafts and skills.

Apprenticeship involves the exchange of labour and sometimes money for training given on the job. Apprenticeship still remains the vehicle for skills training. There are different enterprises that engage in apprenticeship practices, which include; welding, mechanics, auto-mechanics, auto-electricians, tailoring, generator repairing, mobile phone repairing, carpentry, furniture making, catering, manicure/pedicure, and plumbing. These trades are recognized as a means of absorbing and training unemployed youths through manpower development and economic empowerment (Ariyo, 2001). The Nigerian economic environment is, yearning for entrepreneurs who would through apprenticeship practices exhibit creative and innovative abilities laced with the willingness to create enterprises that the unemployed will be willing to offer their services since, the demand for white collar jobs has increased more than the possible available job opportunities (NBS, 2012) and this has created unexpected unemployment and hence, poverty. This resulted to the adoption of the economic reform program in Nigeria, (Structural Adjustment Program; SAP) in 1986, which brought

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about a decisive shift of emphasis from the magnificent, capital intensive, large-scale enterprises to SMEs with apprenticeship training as a means of transferring skills and knowledge to vulnerable younger generation (Chigunta, 2000). Apprenticeship training is the basis for successful entrepreneurship: entrepreneurship is the application of skills and knowledge acquired through apprenticeship training in allocating and seizing an opportunity in the environment. Apprenticeship therefore is the preparation to meet opportunity. World Bank (2009) notes that lack of necessary skills is often cited as contributing to high unemployment. Job training programs, and in particular apprenticeship training with private-sector informal firms, could expand the Nigeria labour market opportunities for young people by providing them with relevant on-the-job experience and market-ready skills.

Statement of the Problem

Unemployment is a great determinant of a country's economic growth and youth unemployment is an acute problem in low-income countries and should be taken seriously as large concentration of unemployed youths trained and untrained, educated and uneducated are visibly 'idle' because they either lack saleable skills that could make them attractive to employers of labour or be self-employed. Unemployment increased by 6.6 million between 2008 and 2009 (ILO, 2011) and Africa Development Forum (2014) notes that young people account for 60 percent of the unemployed in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Nigeria, is among those countries rated with high percentage of youth unemployment in the world despite the yearly turn out of graduates which is approximately four million (Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity Report, 2008). The Labour market could scarcely employ ten (10) percent of these graduates yearly (National Manpower Board, 2009). Providing decent jobs arguably therefore, is the most pressing policy objective around the developing world, and crucial for poverty reduction. To tackle unemployment, Nigeria needs to leverage on the employment skills generating potential through apprenticeship practices as a way of transferring skills and acquiring saleable knowledge for the younger generation.

The fall of GDP growth in 2008 was due to the global economic crisis which resulted in a decline of demand for Nigeria's crude oil abroad. This hinders the flow of credit into the country, prompting a crash in the stock market as well as a decline in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and has created greater challenges for youths. The interest rate of (20.2 %) is still high and could hinder investment of small scale investors. The resultant effects of these problems are that the public sector and the large enterprises have failed to fascinate the growing number of job seekers in Nigeria, hence, about 72 percent of young people who represent a large portion of the country's population live below the \$2 internationally approved poverty line (World Bank, 1996 and Africa Development Forum, 2014). It is in the light of these that the concern of poverty and its alleviation strategies have now become a universal issue especially among the developing countries.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine apprenticeship practices and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Other specific objectives include:

- To investigate the employment generation capacities of apprenticeship practices in Nigeria.
- To ascertain whether apprenticeship practices contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria

Research Questions

- What is the employment generation capacity of apprenticeship practices in Nigeria?
- Does apprentice practice contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: Apprenticeship practices do not create employment in Nigeria.

H₀₂: Apprenticeship practices do not contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Scope of the study

Ladipo market is the biggest market for auto spare parts in Lagos, situated in Mushin local government area of Lagos state. There are over 2000 traders in the market. The market aside from providing auto spare parts, is also well known for automobile repairers or service technicians that inspect, diagnose, repair, convert, upgrade and provide general services for automobiles, trucks and buses of all kinds from any parts of the countries of the world. The automobile mechanic site is a portion in the market and comprises of different automobile apprentices ranging from automobile engine mechanic apprentices, automobile electrical apprentices, automobile air condition repairer apprentices, automobile painter apprentices, automobile rewire apprentices, automobile panel beater apprentices, automobile vulcanize apprentices, etc.

Significance of the Study

This research would serve as a useful guide to private industries on the dictates of apprenticeship practice and to recommend better ways of getting apprenticeship in an organization, whether formally or otherwise. The management and apprentices will also benefit from it as it will reveal to them the effectiveness of the present apprenticeship procedure at SMEs organisations. It will enlighten the public on the procedures for accepting their family members as apprentices. It also could as well be used as a secondary research sources for further studies on apprenticeship. Furthermore, the result of this study will expose the need for government and its relevant agencies to formulate policies that will encourage the indigenous entrepreneurs to advance their businesses in order to benefit the country.

Literature Review

Conceptual Definition

Apprenticeship is defined by Hamilton and Hamilton (1992), as the process of involving someone under the guidance and teaching of an expert, in order to best learn an art, skill, or trade through practical experience. This is known as the traditional business-learning school (Olawajaju, 1999). ILO (2012) defines apprenticeship as a period when an apprentice learns the techniques, terminologies and strategies as well as tools and equipment used for a particular business. Traditional apprenticeship refers to well-organized transfer of skills within families and social groups based on socio-cultural conventions. Apprenticeship involves the exchange of labour and sometimes money for training given on the job. Apprenticeship training is a period of gathering all the necessary skills, knowledge and techniques of a particular job that will help one to be established and get involved in the creation of wealth. Apprenticeship practices during the colonial age involved mostly males while the female children were usually trained in the kitchen on how to cook by their mother, recently, women also engage in apprenticeship in whatever vocation they desire.

Apprentices are normally between the ages of 8 and 12, and the practice lasts for 5 to 10 years. Some apprentices normally possess primary education, before undertaking their industrial venture. The final apprenticeship contract between the master and apprentice's family is normally preceded by a trial or probationary period of about three months; a period during which the apprentices' suitability for the job or other role is being tested. The terms and conditions of business apprenticeship of a ward that leaves with the master/mistress usually include stating in the contract terms the number of expected years of stewardship and the master is obligated to settle the servant who might have helped him both in the business and at domestic work.

Apprenticeship practices are classified into three: traditional apprenticeship, informal apprenticeship and modern apprenticeship (ILO, 2008). Traditional apprenticeship normally involves transferring of skills within the family members or relations. It is based on socio-cultural contracts. Culture has a great role here. The informal apprenticeship is similar to traditional apprenticeship training but involves non-relations also. Informal apprenticeship training is common in the more "modern" informal activities of craftspeople that shifted their focus from productive activities to training as their main activity. "Modern Apprenticeship" is taken to denote training program that combines vocational education with work-based learning for an intermediate occupational skill that is subject to externally imposed training standards, particularly for their workplace component. It has procedures and regulations of accepting and settling an apprentice. It stipulates more clearly the length of the training period, the training format, the number of working/training hours, the payment of minimum wage, and the apprentices need not leave with the master/mistress. Presently in Nigeria, this is becoming more rampant especially in the vocational jobs. Most apprentices here combine apprentices training with their education.

The modern apprenticeship is more organized and covers areas such as agricultural equipment technician, appliance service technician, automotive painter, automotive service technician, baker, boilermaker, bricklayer, cabinet maker, carpenter concrete finisher, construction electrician, cook, electric motor system technician, electronics technician(consumer products), floor covering installer, glazier, hairstylist, heavy duty equipment technician, industrial electrician, industrial instrument mechanic, industrial mechanic (millwright), insulator (heat and frost), ironworker (generalist), lather (interior systems mechanic), machinist, metal fabricator (fitter), mobile crane operator, motor vehicle body repairer (metal and paint), motorcycle mechanic, oil burner mechanic, painter and decorator, plumber, powerline technician, recreation vehicles service technician, refrigeration and air conditioning mechanic, roofer, sheet metal worker, sprinkler system installer, steam fitter/pipe fitter, tile setter, tool and die maker, transport trailer technician, truck and transport mechanic and welder.

One can be an apprentice of vocational skill without living with his/her master/mistress; and most mentors do charge money for mentorship in the modern apprenticeship, moreover, an apprentice of vocational skill does not require the master to settle the apprentice unless otherwise agreed from the beginning. There are four major ways of transferring traditional apprenticeship skills: modeling, scaffolding, fading, and coaching, (Collins, Brown, and Newman 1989). Modeling entails the apprentice learning by watching the master/mistress demonstrating how to do different parts of the task although, Lave and Wenger (1991) argued that in traditional apprenticeship, much of the learning occurs as apprentices watch others at work. Scaffolding involves apprentice engaging in a task with a great support or directive of the master/mistress in order to complete the job. The master/mistress gradually instructs the apprentice on the procedures of the job while inspecting the work.

Hargreaves (2004) has argued that the model of apprenticeship stress on mentoring and coaching could help schools rethink the teacher-student relationship. Cognitive apprenticeship is a theory of the process where a master of a skill teaches that skill to an apprentice. In fading, the master/mistress gradually withdraws the strong support expecting the apprentice to handle the work and more of such responsibility. Coaching runs through the entire apprenticeship experience, it starts from the beginning of apprenticeship till the apprentice is free. It involves all the processes from novice to expert in a specific occupational field. It is the overall essence of apprenticeship.

Achugo and Chigbo (2014) notes that it involves the master/mistress choosing tasks, providing hints and scaffolding, evaluating the activities of apprentices and diagnosing the kinds of problems they are having, challenging them and offering encouragement, giving feedback, structuring the ways to do things, working on particular weaknesses. A young apprentice learns by way of observation and imitation from an experienced master, acquires the skills of the trade and is inducted into the culture and networks of the business. The Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) and ILO (2014) comments on equipping youths with the necessary skills needed in the

labour market through quality apprenticeships which can serve as an effective way of improving employment opportunities for youths. To acquire this basic skills and knowledge, classroom learning has been supported with internship coaching for all disciplines. Knowledge is no longer based on classroom anymore hence; researchers establish that graduates with classroom certificate have thirty (30) percent opportunity of being employed in the formal sector while graduates with classroom and thorough formal apprenticeship certificates have fifty-three (53) percent opportunity of formal sector employment (Fares and Puerto, 2009) in (ILO (2011)).

Apprenticeship Practices as a Means of Sustainable Economic Development

The importance of apprenticeship practice cannot be over emphasized as it has become very popular in Nigeria today as a source of livelihood, a means of facilitating and controlling migration from rural to urban area and a means of facilitating the flow of labour from agriculture into manufacturing and services. Apprenticeship has been providing the traditional solution for developing and financing vocational skills of young people in poor societies. It serves as a means of being employed and a way to actively engage in economically worthwhile ventures. The rapid change in technology has been traced back with craft training supplied through apprenticeship in pre-modern Europe (De Munck and Soly, 2007; Epstein, 1998 and Humphries, 2003). Lane, (1996) notes that apprenticeship ensures stability with a secured future for the youth, apart from the job guarantee and limited competition. ILO (2011) notes that in several developed countries, formal apprenticeship and on-the-job training schemes have been strengthened. Incentives are being offered to employers to take apprentices and retain them.

Youth Unemployment

Unemployment is defined as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment (Fajana, 2000). Unemployed person is seen as someone who is actively seeking a job of certain specification and would be willing to accept such a job if it were offered at the prevailing market wage (Casson, 1979). Many of these youths are without hope of securing occupation even at minimal level needed to survive or to be self-sustained economically. This has long-term negative consequences, both on individuals' quality of life and on broader socio-economic development outcomes. Nigeria, definitely not exempted from this statistic is faced with the problems of unemployment and underemployment which has also impacted on economic performance of the country which is very poor and has also resulted in inflation, rising cost of living and low standard of living.

Youth unemployment makes Nigerian youths depend on their parents, friends and relatives for food, clothing and shelter, resulting to general poverty: those who wish to be independent end up in street trading, hawking, or juvenile delinquencies and other antisocial activities such as kidnapping, street gang, political-hype, car snatching, drug trafficking, advance fee fraud, 419, corruption, prostitution, hired assassination, armed robbery and area boys (Miller, 2005 and Chigunta, 2000).

Many of the youths in quest to be employed involve in menial jobs for long hours, on short-term and/or informal contracts, with low pay and little or no social protection. The social and economic costs of youth unemployment and underemployment include loss of output, erosion of skills, reduced levels of activity and increased social divisions ILO (2011). Apprenticeship contributions are evidenced towards economic growth, employment creation, poverty reduction and development of an industrial base. Through the apprenticeship practices, the SME sector is fast growing, through transferring skills, knowledge and technical know-how to younger ones. MSE Baseline Survey (1999), note that the number of enterprises in the sector has grown from 910,000 in 1993 to about 1.3 million in 1999. Out of the 1.3 million enterprises in 1999, about 66% were located in the rural areas while women owned accounted for 48% of the enterprises. According to the Survey, 64.3% of the MSEs in trade, 14.8% in services, 13.4% are in manufacturing while 7.7% are involved in other activities.

Table one below reveals the times series of the various variables of the total employment created by SMES for the period under study is the total of fifty eight thousand one hundred and sixty four (58,164) of Nigeria total employments generation. This is high compare to five hundred and thirty one generated by large scale industries.

Poverty Reduction

Poverty reduction on the other hand is a phrase that explained encouragement of economic growth that will permanently raise as many people as possible over a poverty line. World Bank (1990) defined poverty as the inability of individual or section of a society to attain a specified minimum standard of living. Poverty is the state of human beings living with little or no material means of surviving: little or no food, poor access to clean water and sanitation, poor access to energy, shelter, clothes, healthcare, education, security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life and other physical means of living that improves one's life (Elumilade, Asaolu and Adereti, 2006). Poverty is the state of human beings living with little or no material means of surviving: little or no food, water shelter, energy, clothes, healthcare, education, and other physical means of living that improves one's life (Elumilade, Asaolu and Adereti, 2006). Poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being, and comprises many dimensions; low incomes and the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity (Oseni and Ehikioya, 2011).

Poverty also encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, poor access to energy, inadequate physical and food security, lack of voice, and insufficient capacity and opportunity to better one's life. Poverty may be due to national, sector-specific, community, household or individual characteristics. Other important regional and national characteristics that affect poverty include good governance, a sound environmental policy, economic, political and market stability, mass participation, global and regional security, intellectual expression and a fair, functional, and effective judiciary. Changes in income are the most common but not the only way of measuring poverty over time.

This basic fact means that the level of employment, the quality of jobs, and the access which the poor have to decent earnings opportunities will be crucial determinants of poverty reduction. The intuition that jobs matter for development has not been lost on the governments of low income countries and the vast majority of national development strategies look to employment generation as a major channel for poverty reduction.

Theoretical Framework

Social Learning Theory (SLT): Social learning theory is a general theory of human behavior. Bandura (1963) theorizes that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context. According to the theory, three ways in which apprentices learn are purely through observation or direct instruction or through the observation of rewards and punishments, a process known as vicarious reinforcement. Scaffolding, modeling, mentoring, and coaching are all methods of teaching and learning that draw on social constructivist learning theory. Bandura (SLT) shows that children naturally imitate the behavior of their modelling without needing or receiving a direct reward for the new behavior. Bandura's major premise is that a servant can learn by observing his/her masters/mistress who serves as a model. He claims that modeling can have as much impact as direct experience. Bandura (1997) posits that in order for modeling to be successful, the learner must be attentive, must have access to and retain the information presented, must be motivated to learn, and must be able to accurately reproduce the desired skill. Social Learning Theory has several assumptions and principles:

- Humans are social beings who learn by observing the behaviour of others and the outcomes (reinforcements and punishments) associated with that behaviour.
- Observed behaviours which are rewarded will be repeated (imitation)
- The person whose behaviour is being imitated is called the role model and the process of imitation is called modelling.
- Learning can sometimes occur without a change in behaviour. This behaviour may occur at a later time, or may never occur.
- Cognitive processes play an important role in learning. Some of these cognitive processes include attention, memory, rehearsal, motivation and expectations of reinforcement or punishment.

Criticism of the Social Learning Theory: The social learning theory shows why an apprentice may want to even go as far as contributing positively to corporate profit although not being paid a dime for work done, nevertheless, it shares the problem of almost all reinforcement theories as it does not predict what the learner will regard as positive.

Cognitive Apprenticeship Theory: Cognitive apprenticeship is an instructional design model that emerged from situated learning theory and was developed by Collins, Brown, and Newman (1989). Cognitive apprenticeship is a theory of the process where a master of a skill teaches that skill to an apprentice. A cognitive apprenticeship is much like a trade apprenticeship, with learning that occurs as experts and

novices interact socially while focused on completing a task, the focus, as implied in the name, is on developing cognitive skills through participating in authentic learning experiences. Cognitive apprenticeship assumption indicates that learning occur using processes such as modeling and coaching, and it also supports the three stages of skill acquisition of: the cognitive stage, the associative stage, and the autonomous stage (Anderson, 1983). In the cognitive stage, learners develop declarative understanding of the skill. In the associative stage, mistakes and misinterpretations learned in the cognitive stage are detected and eliminated while associations between the critical elements involved in the skill are strengthened. Essentially, the apprentices are learning about both the overall process of the larger task and profession and criteria for evaluating performance through the completion of small tasks. As they gain experience, they are offered larger, more central tasks to complete. Their understanding of how these tasks affect the end product in a holistic manner supports their performance, as does their knowledge of the criteria that will be used to assess the end product.

Critique of Cognitive Apprenticeship Theory: the cognitive apprenticeship theory has its gap in the fact that some masters may not be the central point of learning, and the apprentice may subscribe to environmental imports.

METHODOLOGY

There are many mechanic workshops at Ladipo market, three of such were used for the study. Three mechanic sites at Fatai-AtereLadipo market were selected for the study. From the union list, there are about seventy registered members of the automobile mechanic who have unlimited number of apprentices they are mentoring in the market. Some of these mechanics do not have specific shops of their own but they do rent spaces on daily basis whenever they have serious vehicles to repair, they can also go out of the market to work with their apprentices. The researcher therefore used the sample population of seventyregistered automobile mechanics members. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the sample size of fifty that were selected from the different automobile mechanics, 37 of them were retrieved and used for the study. A total of 6 copies of the questionnaire were structured and distributed to the randomly selected masters of the apprentices.

The choice of the master/mistress is based on the fact that they have passed through the apprenticeship practices to have been able to decide its effect on their economy and in Nigeria as a whole. The questions in the questionnaire were designed to be precise and concise to reduce boredom and to ensure that the questions are correctly understood so that the right responses were given. The reliability of the instrument was determined through pilot study. Each item of the questionnaire was based on two Options; Yes or No. Meanwhile, data generated from respondents responses were analyzed through Chi-square using statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) version 20 since the study seek to determine the extent of relationship between variables. We looked at the profile of the respondents in terms of Age, marital status, education and experience and also the business profile in terms of business size.

Table 1. Comparing Employment Generation of SMES and Large Firms in Nigeria

ACTIVITY GROUP	SMES 0 – 300	LARGE SCALE 301 – 1000+	TOTAL	PERCENTAGES
Agric and Forestry	1475	38	1513	2.58
Mining and Quarrying	176	7	183	0.31
Manufacturing	16,261	281	16,542	28.18
Elect., Gas and Water	180	14	194	0.33
Building and Const.	710	51	781	1.29
Wholesale and Retail	10,352	22	10,374	17.67
Hotel and Restaurant	4,618	15	4,633	7.89
Land Transport	733	9	742	1.26
Other Transport	40	7	411	0.70
Prof. Services.	7,793	30	7,823	13.33
Other Services	15,462	57	15,519	26.44
Total	58,164	531	58,695	100.00

Source: Federal Office of Statistics: Statistical Bulletin 2012

Table 2.

Total Working Population by Economic Activity	2006	2007	2010
Total Working Population	52,326,923	54,030,000	
Agricultural	30,682,234	31,277,967	14,837,693
Mining and Quarrying	72,962	81,045	
Manufacturing industries	959,990	821,256	5,337,000
Prod. and Dist. Of Electricity, and Water	451,132	329,583	
Building and Construction	288,723	329,583	
Comm. and Repairs of Auto and Domestic Art	109,808	140,478	
Hotels and Restaurants	101,901	129,672	
Transport, Storage and Communication	439,866	1,107,615	
Finance Intermediation (including insurance)	297,074	302,568	
Real Estate, Renting and Business Activities	63,636	81,045	
Public Admin and Defence, Compulsory Soc. Sec.	5,358,298	5,338,164	
Education	10,017,082	10,443,999	
Health & Social services	313,387	307,971	

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2012)

Table 3.

National Unemployment Rates	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
National (Composite)	12.3	12.7	14.9	19.7	21.4
Urban	10.0	10.0	10.0	19.2	22.8
Rural	15.1	12.6	12.6	19.7	21.1

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2012)

Table 4. Nigerian Poverty Rates

Nigerian Urban vs Rural poverty Rates (% of Population) 2009 -2014		
Per capita	2009 – 2012	2013 – 2014
Poverty rate	64.2	62.6
Urban Poverty	52.2	51.2
Rural Poverty	73.4	69
Adultequivalent		
Poverty rate	48.3	46.1
Urban Poverty	36.8	34.3
Rural Poverty	57.4	52.9

Source: World Bank Calculations on NBS figures (2013 NER) page 9.

From Table 2 below, 49% of the respondents were between the ages of 36-45 while other respondents are above 46 years (24%) respectively. The rest of the younger respondents are between 25-35 with (27%). 95% of the respondents are men while women are not so common on this area with just 5%. 49% of the respondents are married while 27% are not yet married, 16% are divorced while 8% are widower. 46% are hold primary school certificate, the illiterate among them are 27% while secondary school dropout are 11%. Only 8% hold OND certificate while 5% hold HND/BSc and only 3% hold MSc/Others. 38% have been in the business for more than 10 years, 32% have 6-10 years experiences while 30% have 1-5 years experiences. 68% of our respondents are micro business,

27% are small business while only 5% are medium enterprises based on the number of employees they have. In question 1, the result showed that mechanic job requires one to get a previous knowledge through apprenticeship as the entire respondents passed through apprenticeship training before starting their own business. In question 2, it is clear that 37 respondents said yes that the apprenticeship training helped them to be self-employed. In question 3, it is clear that the training helped them to master the use of tools and equipment. In question 4, the training helps them in customer networking. This includes having a personal contact with customers, knowing where to get different parts of the vehicles as well as their prices.

Table 5. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Classes	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Age	25-35	10	27
	36-45	18	49
	46-Above	09	24
Sex	Male	35	95
	Female	02	05
Marital status	Single	10	27
	Married	18	49
	Divorced	6	16
	Widow	3	08
Education	Non	10	27
	Primary	17	46
	Secondary	4	11
	OND	3	8
	HND/BSc	2	5
	MSc/Others	1	3
Experience	6-10 Years	12	32
	1-5 Years	11	30
	11-Above years	14	38
Company Size	Micro(1-10 Employees)	25	68
	Small (11—49 employees)	10	27
	medium (50+ Employees)	2	5

Employment generation and poverty reduction in Nigeria through apprenticeship

QUESTION	YES	NO
1. Did you passed through apprenticeship practices	37	nil
2. Did the training help you to be self employed	37	nil
3. Does the training help you to master the use of tools and equipment	37	nil
4. Does the training help you in customer net working	35	2
5. Does the apprentices training contributes to the growth of your business	32	5
6. Do you have other source of income	6	31

In question 5 the apprentice training contributes to the growth of your business success. Finally, in question 6, most of the respondents depend solely on mechanic job for the source of income and for the fact that most of them are married, it is assumed that they cater for their families through this job.

Testing the hypothesis

H₀: Apprenticeships' practices do not create employment in Nigeria

	Value	DF	Sig.level	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	69.35	2	0.05	5.97

Testing the hypothesis "Apprenticeships' practices do not create employment in Nigeria" at 2 degree of freedom and 0.05 significant level using the data above reveals that the calculated value of the chi-square is 69.35 while the critical value is 5.97. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value of the Chi-square, the null hypothesis H₀₁ is rejected while the alternative is accepted which implies that apprenticeships' practices do create employment in Nigeria

H₀₂. Apprenticeship practices do not contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria

	Value	DF	Sig.level	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Chi-Square	96.09	2	0.05	7.80

Further investigation of the null hypothesis H₀₂ using the above data shows the calculated Chi square value to be 96.09 while the critical value of the Chi-square at 2 degrees of freedom at the 0.05 level of significance is 7.80. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value of the Chi-square, the null hypothesis H₀₂ is rejected while the alternative is accepted which implies that apprenticeship practices do contribute to poverty reduction in Nigeria

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship through SMEs and apprenticeship practices create new businesses, and new businesses in turn create jobs, intensify competition, and increase productivity through technological change which contributes to poverty reduction and boost the national economy and enhanced development. This basic fact remains that the level of employment, the quality of jobs, and the access to which the poor have to decent earnings opportunities is very crucial determinants of economic growth. Skills developed in apprenticeship promote higher value-added economic activity associated with higher productivity, which provides higher tax for governments and this will go a long way in ameliorating the scourge of unemployment and poverty.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that apprenticeship practices will reduce the incidence of unemployment, poverty and shower the needed development

in Nigeria and other developing worlds and so, the researchers recommend that:

- Government should strengthen its National Youth Development Policies to focus on empowering the youths at the grassroots level by providing entrepreneurship education through Vocational Education Training.
- Encourage the young people to take entrepreneurial development courses in tertiary institutions, since it's the only education which gives its graduates the saleable skills to be self-reliant and be employer of labour.
- Both the learner and master/mistress should be encouraged to be sincere in transferring skills and knowledge in order to build trust and confidence. This would enhance dependable business relationship, network and team spirit.

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