

Apprenticeship Scheme and Small-Scale Business: A Study of Selected Apprentices and Their Masters in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria

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Abstract: Considering the prevailing socio-economic situations and increasing unemployment in Nigeria, the demand for apprenticeship scheme and small-scale business would rise. Thus the thrust of this study is apprenticeship scheme and small-scale business in Nigeria using Lagos state as study area. The study was situated within the ambit of Marxist Labour Surplus Theory and Weber's Social Action. A multi-stage method involving stratified and simple random sampling techniques was adopted and data were sourced through questionnaire and in-depth interviews administered to 96 Apprentices and 24 Masters in Badagry and Lagos Island areas of Lagos State. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The findings showed that both the Apprentices and their masters varied in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics. Further the findings showed that the amount of capital available to start a business would be a determinant of apprenticeship willingness to create self-employment and that an alternative avenue for employment and income would not be preferred to apprenticeship in a trade that holds economic promise. Moreover, the data showed that the survival of small-scale business in Nigeria would depend on apprenticeship skills and available facilities. Consequently, the study recommended that Nigeria's immediate steps should centre on not only making funds available, accessible and affordable, but also putting the necessary infrastructure on ground and creating an enabling environment for the operation of small-scale businesses.

Key words: Apprenticeship scheme, small scale, business, employment

INTRODUCTION

No nation ever develops socially or economically without creating the enabling environment for its small-scale businesses to operate. Perhaps, large business organisations and multi nationals grew from small to large scale. Nigeria's potential to achieve sustainable economic growth and development has never been in doubt, especially given her rich and diversified resource base but the country's journey towards achieving her full economic potentials has been prolonged due to decades of uninspiring leadership (each bringing with it a fresh ray of hope), political instability, inconsistent and restrictive government policies. Arising from the above are increasing problems of unemployment, poverty and high crimes. There can be no doubt that in the future more and more adolescents both male and female will become apprentices and the more their aspirations and experiences are known the better the policies to be formulated in order to regulate the trades in which they are involved^[1,2].

Apprenticeship scheme has been in existence from time immemorial and it has contributed to the survival of many societies across the globe. In the Middle Ages for instance, the guild system provided the apprentices and labour for masters in small-scale industries in predominantly agrarian society where work was the major preoccupation of man. Medieval guilds recognized the need for association, learning of skills, participation in work etc. However, industrial revolution ushered in changing values through the factory system, urbanisation, industrialization and scientific revolution^[3-5].

In Nigeria and all over Africa, apprenticeship has been an age-long method used in training young people in trades, crafts, agriculture, business and catering. During the pre-colonial days, apprenticeship was the mode of training. It was a common feature of the traditional setting to see people engage in a vocation such as farming, fishing, hunting, carving, carpentry, sculpting, painting, building, decorating, smiting, catering, boat-making, mat-making, dyeing and so on. Customs, lineage and rituals jealously guard the

apprenticeship system as an institution. 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. In recent times in the third world countries, apprentices have been training with old equipment due to poor technological acquisition and lack of government supports. Thus, the majority of Nigerian apprentices do not always have new knowledge and modified training to face the emerging needs of Small Scale Enterprises^[5].

The problem: The failure and problems of large-scale enterprises in achieving the desired industrialization for Nigeria despite the protection they have enjoyed over the years have further boosted the need to encourage and support the Small Scale Enterprises, which are assumed to be in better positions to boost employment in the country. By the end of 1999, Small Scale Enterprises accounted for 80% of all employment in informal sector of the economy^[6]. Incidentally, Small Scale Enterprises have been facing a myriad of problems such as financial constraints and low skill development that limit their positive contributions to the economy^[5,7-9].

From the foregoing, the majority of existing industries in Nigeria are now operating below their installed capacities due to financial constraints, outdated managerial skills, inadequate government supports, dysfunctional public services (telecommunication, power and water supply), lack of public acceptability of locally produced goods and poor apprenticeship training. However, what constitutes a small-scale business depends upon the level of industrialization and development in a particular country because what could be termed a small business in the developed nations can be a big or large business in the developing worlds. In the Nigerian context, small-scale industries are those industries employing less than 10 people with investment on machinery and equipment not exceeding N600, 000.00^[10].

Constraining factors such as inadequate capital, poor management, low productivity etc, hinder some small-scale businesses and serve as disincentives to apprentices. With high rate of rural urban migration the majority of migrants entering the informal sectors are underemployed. If the bulk of entrepreneurs in small-scale business are underemployed and therefore do not get enough income, the question is; why should a young school leaver spend 3 or 4 years in the same trade?

Unlike their counterparts in the formal sector, entrepreneurs in small-scale business do not enjoy social

security (pension benefits, compensations for occupational hazards, incentives, promotion etc) and this creates disillusionment for both the masters and apprentices, who may be afraid of future unemployment due to the following problems: non-availability of institutional credit facilities; poor management of small-scale businesses; poor work and training facilities; difficulties in procuring tools and materials; poor maintenance of tools and machinery; failure of successive government policies; lack of government supports; poverty; illiteracy; low saving, etc. Equally of importance are other Small Scale Enterprises problems, which include poor ownership structure, absence of interpersonal skills, lack of modern financial management skills, lack of adequate accounting, lack of business plan/budget, poor inventory management, use of obsolete materials and poor marketing orientations^[11,12,5].

Most Small Scale Enterprises have high trend of sticking to old or traditional products such that they have limited ability to improve on their income level and they cannot realise the advantages of full utilization of the productive capacities. Moreso, most of the decisions of small-scale business in Nigeria are still guided by harmful traditional beliefs and cultural practices. For instance, the patriarchal structure of the Nigerian society gives rise to gender segregation in apprenticeship scheme, as more girls become apprentices than boys due primarily to: parental inability to continue to pay school fees, inability to cope with school work and unwanted pregnancy.

Masters subject more girls than boys in apprentices to abuse and exploitation. Thus, it is not surprising to find more female apprentices used and abused as domestic staff and exploited as sexual objects^[5]. Against this background this study attempts to address the following research questions; what are the socio-demographic characteristics of apprenticeship and their masters in small-scale businesses?; what are the necessary requirements for starting off a small scale business?; how adequate from the point of view of the apprentices are facilities necessary to start a small scale business in Lagos and what their masters think about the behaviour and future prospects of these apprentices and what problems are facing apprenticeship and small scale business in the study. The general objective of this study is to examine the impact of apprenticeship scheme on small-scale business in Nigeria with a view to identifying skills gaps that needs to be filled in order to upgrade operational techniques and promote employment generation in the informal sector. Specifically the study seeks to:

- Examine the socio-demographic characteristics of apprentices and their masters in small-scale businesses.
- assess the necessary requirements needed to establish small scale businesses.
- To examine the views of the apprentices regarding the state of facilities necessary to start small scale business.
- Examine the views of their masters regarding the behaviour and future prospect of these apprentices.
- Identify problems facing apprenticeship scheme and small scale businesses in the study area and how they could be tackled.

Brief review of literature: Apprenticeship scheme has been in existence in Europe since the Middle Ages and has been an integral part of work [traditional crafts] training in traditional African societies. However, the scheme has changed since the middle ages when, as a paternalistic relationship between the craftsmen and the trainee, it forms the integral part of the guild system, which permits a master to take only one apprentice in addition to his own sons and in addition to teaching the apprentice his trade he supplies him with board, lodging, clothing and discipline^[13,14,1].

The scheme has however been affected by forces of westernisation and modernisation as Desai^[15] observed that apprenticeship training, as organised in Nigeria, involves elements of both general and specific skills; and that wages are not directly paid to workers rather both the employers and the trainees share training costs. Employers' costs often include provision of board, food and allowances to apprentices, who often pay training or apprenticeship fees and may provide their own upkeep.

Most of the literatures on the informal sector have placed considerable emphasis on the role of the sector's apprenticeship training in the transmission of skills required to work in the repair and manufacture segment of the sector. Some of the entrepreneurs in the informal sector acquire their skills from the sector itself and they have remained in the sector to practice their skills and engage apprentices to whom they also transmit the skills^[14].

In spite of the above, there has been very little written in any detailed way on the operation, problems and potential of informal sector apprenticeship scheme. The pioneering work of Lloyd, Callaway and Nafziger in Nigeria, Pail in Ghana and recently King in Kenya provided some descriptive analysis of the operation of the

apprenticeship system but lack in-depth examination of the process of skill acquisition^[16].

Recent study^[5] made it clear that the majority of apprentices in the informal sector lack regular capacity building programmes such as new knowledge or fresh ideas, new methods, business management skills, innovative production skills, marketing skills and entrepreneurship skills. Thus, it is obvious that many apprentices [usually with poor access to training] operate in an enclosed system thereby reproducing themselves as they lack modified training to face the emerging challenges of globalisation.

Once such apprenticeship supplemented by theoretical training is established, it would transmit a broad range of skills in production and service sectors, technical and administrative fields and traditional and modern occupations to all levels of school leavers. An example of a training system that combines traditional on-the-job apprenticeship training with formal theoretical training is the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme in Nigeria. Launched by Nigeria's Directorate of Employment, the scheme, in its first year of operation (1987-88), successfully persuaded public enterprises and private sector employers, including informal sector workshops, to take on apprentices. The directorate provides financial and logistic support at 50 naira a month for each trainee and 150 naira a year to the trainer for each trainee. Details of training received and the resulting performance are logged and checked by monitors at least once every two weeks, thus ensuring quality. Better use of formal training institutions could further lower unit costs, thus allowing more apprentices to supplement practical training and ameliorate the present scarcity of qualified trainers. Training institutions and trainers benefit from the contact with and feedback from enterprises^[17,18].

A total of 680,522 unemployed youths who hitherto lacked marketable skills have been trained in over 86 different trades while 37,575 are currently being trained under the scheme. Though 374,576 unemployed graduates and school leavers have so far benefited from the business training programme unemployment problems remain unabated. In order to strengthen the effectiveness of its training programmes, the Directorate assists some beneficiaries to set up their own businesses. In this direction, the NDE has created a total of 35,547 enterprises through its various programmes between 1987 and 1999. At present, however, 80% of African labour force work in the informal sector economy where for most people there appears to be little guarantee that they make it Onwumere^[19-21].

Akinbinu^[10] clearly posited that informal sector has greater use of apprentices, which result to increase in

income generation by small-scale enterprises through training or apprenticeship fees. In Banjul for instance, apprentices constitute 54% of the labour force while those in Kumasi are 86% and those in Nouakchott are 32%.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Lagos State with an estimated population of about 16 million (National Population Commission^[22]). The 85% of the State's population occupies metropolitan Lagos, which constitutes 37% of the total land area of the State. Lagos state has 1,544 communities out of which 1,091 are rural areas. By virtue of its location, the State remains the nation's economic and commercial nerve centre, with more than 75% of all industries in Nigeria sited there Balogun^[23].

The study population comprised apprentices and masters (between ages 15 and 64 years) in about 794 small-scale manufacturing industries in Lagos State. The largest 52.5% the small-scale business are industries producing wearing apparels; followed by 18.1% printing, publishing and allied industries. Closely following this is the 13.0% furniture and fixture industries^[23].

Lagos Island has the largest number, 31.5% of all the small-scale industries in Lagos State while Mushin, Lagos Mainland and Somolu recorded 26.8, 16.4 and 11.1%, respectively. However, Epe had the lowest number, 0.5% while Ikorodu and Badagry had 1.1 and 4.5%, respectively. In terms of ownership, sole proprietorship predominates with 716 90.2% entrepreneurs as against 8.9% under partnership and 0.8% under limited liability. Unpaid apprentices numbering 1,169 31.6% dominate the employment in the industries, followed by wage earners numbering 1,113 30.1%. There are 826 22.3% working proprietors and 589 15.9% paid apprentices. The average number of persons in an industry is about 5 persons (4.7% exactly)^[23].

The researchers adopted multi-stage random sampling techniques involving stratified and simple random sampling techniques. First, the researchers compiled the sampling frame of existing small-scale enterprises in Lagos State through the 20 Local Government Areas using 1997 political map of the state. Second, the researcher stratified the State into urban and rural using Metropolitan Lagos, Non-Metropolitan Lagos and classified the small-scale enterprises into strata on the basis of type of industry and occupation to ensure that each stratum was homogeneous. Third, the researchers selected one Local Government each from urban and rural using balloting method. Fourth, the researchers listed the existing small-scale industries in the selected urban (Lagos Island) and rural (Badagry) areas and selected three major types of small-scale industries (Tailoring,

Furniture and Printing/Publishing). Fifth, the researchers selected one-tenth of small-scale industries in Lagos Island on the one hand and Badagry on the other hand to ensure that the size of sub sample is proportional to the size of the corresponding stratum. Thus, one-tenth of the selected (209) small-scale industries in Lagos Island were 20.9 (approximately 21) while on the other hand one-tenth of the selected (29) small-scale industries in Badagry were 2.9 (approximately 3). Finally, the researchers selected 1 master and 4 apprentices from each of the (24) selected small-scale industries using balloting method. Thus 120 respondents (24 masters and 96 apprentices) were the sample size of the study.

All the 24 masters interviewed responded and content analytical approach was employed to analyse their responses, which were recorded through notebook and electronic tape. Although 96 questionnaires were administered, after 'data cleaning' only 92 were found useful for analysis. The principle of parsimony guided the analysis of data collected from 92 apprentices and 24 masters in selected (Furniture, Printing/Publishing and Wearing Apparel) small-scale businesses in Badagry and Lagos Island Local Government Areas of Lagos State. Therefore the analysis of data was the combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-demographic characteristics of the apprentices:

Data on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that they varied in their sex, age, marital status, area of residence, religious affiliation, educational background and ethnic background.

As regards their sex the data showed that more male apprentices than female apprentices. This finding corroborates Isiugo-Abanihe's^[24] assertion that Nigerian male enjoys enormous occupational and economic advantages over female so they wield power and influence in the home and society at large. With respect to their age the data showed that the majority of apprentices are young adults and this could have implications for entry into labour force. As regards their area of residence, it could be observed that the majority of the respondents were from Lagos Island, which has the highest number of small-scale industries and apprentices in Lagos State^[23].

The findings showed that none of the respondents was divorced, separated or widowed while 92.4% were single and only insignificant 7.6% were married. The reason for this finding is not far fetched because most of the respondents were still young and under their parental/guardian care. With respect to religion the data showed most of the respondents were Muslims 55.4%

while 42.4% were Christians The sociological significance of this finding is that religion influences human behaviour, hence the relevance of the protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism where Weber noted that Protestantism has an important role in producing a contemporary work ethics. Similarly, some apprentices usually pray before they choose a particular trade and they usually work hard thinking that they are doing what God has ordained for them.

With regard to educational background the data showed that most of the respondents had secondary school educational qualifications, which might not be adequate to secure gainful employment, hence their decision to opt for apprenticeship. This appear to support Oni's^[2] assertion that as the qualification of entry into labour force changes more and more people are jobless due to inadequate educational qualifications which predispose school certificates holders to turn to informal sectors for a source of livelihood.

Considering the respondents' income/ allowance per month the data showed that most apprentices are only learning and not working for payment, hence their low income/ allowance depends on their masters' occasional generosity. Finally as regards their ethnic origin the data showed that most of the apprentices were Yorubas due to the study site, which is a Yoruba dominated area.

Socio-demographic characteristics of the masters: As regards the socio-demographic characteristics of the masters, the data showed that in terms of the cohabitation of the respondents, the data showed that most apprentices were still under the care of their parents as 54.3% lived with their parents. Also the data showed that some of the respondents 57.6% combined apprenticeship scheme with working in their masters' house. This could be attributed to the informal nature of small-scale business in which many masters rely on their apprentices for either free or cheap labour. Concerning the nature of the masters' business, this research work found three different types of small-scale business with those wearing apparel predominated 40.2%. Finally the data showed most of the masters 80.4% were from the Yoruba ethnic group as the study was conducted in the area.

Substantive data : Table 1 shows data on employment and apprenticeship scheme. The data showed that most respondents 62.0% started the training without searching for job while some did so but were unable to secure gainful employment may be due to their low educational qualifications. Also the data showed a low level of awareness 17.4% about the National Open

Table 1: Distribution of respondents views on employment and apprenticeship scheme

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ever looked for job before apprenticeship training?		
Yes	35	38.0
No	57	62.0
Total	92	100.0
Awareness about national open apprenticeship scheme?		
Yes	16	17.4
No	76	82.6
Total	92	100.0
Benefits from national poverty alleviation programme?		
Yes	2	2.2
No	90	97.8
Total	92	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of respondents views on the requirements for small scale business operations

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employment prospects		
Good	76	82.6
Fair	12	13.0
Poor	4	4.3
Total	92	100.0
Level of training		
Poor	2	2.2
Fair	20	21.7
Good	70	76.1
Total	92	100.0
Master's craftsmanship		
Poor	1	1.1
Fair	36	39.1
Good	55	59.8
Total	92	100.0
Materials/equipment		
Poor	1	1.1
Fair	51	55.4
Good	40	43.5
Total	92	100.0
Counselling/orientation		
Poor	11	12.0
Fair	48	52.2
Good	33	35.9
Total	92	100.0

Apprenticeship Scheme among most respondents in the study area. In addition to this one can infer that the National Poverty Alleviation Programme may not have touched positively the lives of most of the respondents as at the time of this study as only insignificant 2.2% said they had benefited from the scheme.

Table 2 presents broadly data on respondents' views on the requirements for small scale business operations. The data showed that most of the respondents 82.6% believed that they would have a bright future. As regards their level of training most of them 76.1% rated that good while 21.75 and 2.2% rated that fair and poor respectively. Moreover on their master's craftsmanship 59.8% rated that good, while 39.1 and 1.1% rated that fair and poor respectively. The fact that the equipment used by most apprentice may not be up to required standard is shown in the Table 4 as 55.4% rated material/ equipment they use

Table 3: Distribution of respondents views on the necessary facilities for small scale business operations

Necessary facilities for small scale business operation		
Location		
Inadequate	6	6.5
Adequate 86	93.5	
Total	92	100
Business idea/plan		
Inadequate	39	42.4
Adequate 53	57.6	
Total	92	100
Government support		
No	69	75.0
Yes	23	25.0
Total	92	100
Attitude of other apprentices		
Negative	36	39.1
Positive	56	60.9
Total	92	100
Local source of raw material		
Inadequate	53	57.6
Adequate 39	42.4	
Total	92	100.0
New method of training		
No	65	70.7
Yes	27	29.3
Total	92	100.0
Relevance of apprentice skills		
Very relevant	81	88.0
Fairly relevant	8	8.7
Not relevant	3	3.3
Total	92	100.0

fair, 43.5% rated that good while 1.1% rated that poor. Furthermore on the counselling and orientation they were getting from their masters most respondents 52.2% rated that fair, while 35.9 and 12.0% rated that good and poor, respectively.

The Table 3 above shows respondents responses on necessary facilities for small scale business operation. It showed most respondents 93.5% considered the location of their master's businesses as adequate while the insignificant 6.5% considered that inadequate.

On the business idea/plan of their masters, 57.6% considered that to be adequate while 42.4% considered inadequate. Moreover, on the government support being received, 75.0% said they were not receiving any kind of support from the government, while 25.0% claimed they were receiving some support from the government.

On the attitude of other apprentices regarding what they were learning, the data showed that most respondents described that as positive 60.9% while 39.1% described such attitude as negative. This is very significant in the sense that sometime the influence of the peer group can be overwhelming on individual. Further when asked to rate the local sourcing of raw material relating to their training most respondents rated that that to be inadequate 57.6% while 42.4% rated that adequate. This too is significant because most apprentices would be concerned about the steady supply of raw material in their chosen vocation.

On whether their vocation offered to them new method of training, most respondents said 'no' 70.7% while 29.3% said 'yes'. This shows that most respondents were being trained under old method. Finally when asked to rate the relevance of the skills they were presently receiving, 88.0% rated that very relevant, while 8.7% and 3.3% rated that fairly relevant and not relevant, respectively. The implication of this is that most of the apprentices are expected to put in their best since they evaluated the skill they receiving as very relevant.

Content analysis of the in-depth interviews with the masters: From the responses of three Masters in Badagry and twenty-one masters in Lagos Island different opinions were expressed as regards issues related small-scale business. Virtually all the masters said that it was a rule that they must know the parents or guardian of the would-be apprentice before registration or agreement could be entered into. The oral interview revealed that apprentices would be required to pay to the master some amount of money ranging between N2, 000 and N5, 000 depending on the age of apprentices and the nature of apprenticeship scheme. Also most of the Masters interviewed said usually put new apprentices on probation by studying their behaviour for few weeks before formal agreement could be entered into with apprentice in company of their parents or guardians. At the beginning of registration almost all masters said they questioned the new apprentices to ascertain their interest or reasons for coming for apprentice scheme. As one of the respondent said:

You don't just accept anybody brought to you. You must ask some questions to know the motive of the new apprentice and his or her parents. This is important for two reasons. First, to ensure that the new apprentice is a person who has real interest in the vocation he or she wants to learn, otherwise it will amount o forcing him or her to start learning vocation he or she has not interest at all thereby making things difficult for his or her master or mistress. Second, to ensure that the person of proper age and related to the person that brought him or her otherwise one will be accused of perpetrating child labour. And this is a serious offence in this country now...

Moreover the interview showed sixteen masters said they never kept official records about performance of apprentices while eight masters did so. Further

twenty-two masters said that they observed their apprentices on regular basis while two masters did not believe in observation but relied on initiatives of their apprentices.

On how serious the apprentices were with their training, twenty-one masters complained about unseriousness of some of their apprentices. One of the masters noted:

Some apprentices are not serious with their vocational training. But as a master you don't just leave that person alone. You suppose to train him or her and sometimes this may involve punishing the apprentice so as to him or her to learn. Granted, that person may not understand or appreciate what you are doing for her at that moment, but years later he or she may understand and even come to thank you. Moreover, sometimes the lazy ones usually run away without completing their training.

All the masters in small-scale business under study said had not found it easy to survive in small-scale business especially in economic climate such as that of Nigeria. About seventeen of them said started off as journeymen (working for other people for daily pay) before setting up their own businesses. In addition all the masters interviewed noted that a great deal of patience and self-discipline would be required to succeed as an apprentice and also in small-scale business in Nigeria.

On the role of their apprentices in their businesses, most of the masters nineteen expressed that they could not do without apprentices in order to complement the work. In relation to this, fourteen masters claimed that at one point or the other they had left their businesses for qualified apprentices in study of emergencies or to attend urgent personal matters. Moreover, some thirteen masters said they were able to open other workshops and put their apprentices in charge of managing the new workshops. The implication here is that a master who does not have apprentice(s) may find it difficult to make head-way in small-scale business.

The oral in-depth interview finally revealed that most nineteen masters said they were faced a myriad of problems in the process of establishing small-scale businesses. The major problems they identified included; inadequate capital, lack of patronage/ customers, lack of good location, high rent and shortage of raw material.

On the whole all the twenty-four masters had trained a lot of apprentices some of whom have also trained several apprentices. Eighteen masters said they use open

system in their training. And by this they meant reproducing themselves in apprentices by using old methods of training but encouraging them to be innovate and becoming receipts of new ideas. Twelve masters said they had trained apprentices ranging between 16 and 300 who either have established their own business or in the process of starting their own businesses. A theory is a logical deductive-inductive system of concepts, definitions and propositions that states a relationship between two or more variables. The research findings of this study can be anchored on two theories namely; Marxist Labour Theory of Value and Social Action Theory. These theories differ but they complement each other in content and emphasis.

To Marx^[25] work (the production of goods and services) held the key to human happiness and fulfilment. Work is the most important, the primary human activity, which can provide the means either to fulfil peoples potential or to distort and prevent their nature and their relationship with others. This assertion explains the impact of apprenticeship scheme on small-scale business given the centrality of work ethics to both the former and the latter. However, alienation (lack of satisfaction) originates from barter system in which labour becomes commodity especially with the introduction of money. From this developed the idea and practice of private property as well as the individual ownership of the means of production. Marx regarded the infrastructure (economic system) as the foundation of society, which ultimately shaped all other aspects of social life and he divides infrastructure into two- means of production [e.g. land, raw materials, machine, etc] and relation of production [e.g. ownership, non-ownership] Ritzer^[26]. This brings to fore the relevance of apprentices (non-ownership) and small-scale entrepreneurs (ownership) in the development of Nigerian economy and the attendant constraints [poverty, unemployment, etc] facing workers and apprentices in the Small Scale Enterprises.

Marx once observed that the advance-industrialised country present to the under-developed countries a picture of the latter's future. An important element of fact in this observation is the association of industrialisation with an advanced economic status, an association that has received general empirical support in the works of Desai^[15] and Eugene and Morse^[16]. For Nigeria and other developing countries where poverty is pervasive, industrialisation strategy can mostly be by way of small-scale industrial approach. The CBN^[27] and Akinbinu^[20] identified the Small Scale Enterprises as

catalysts for promoting economic growth in developing countries is widely recognised.

In light of the foregoing, capitalists require workers who can be hired during booms and fired during slumps. Marx's concept of the 'reserve army of labour' explains this better. Thus, the unemployed are the victims of the cyclical way in which the capitalist economy works. Improvement in productivity can increase surplus value produced by each worker and to maintain profit each worker has to be exploited. To Marx, this situation cannot continue indefinitely. Workers will eventually realise they are being exploited, develop class-consciousness and overthrow the capitalist system. However, this prediction has not come true. Indeed, the economic systems of some former communist countries of Eastern Europe come closer to collapse under communism than have the economies of most advanced capitalist countries^[26].

Social action on the other hand according to Weber^[28] 'includes all human behaviour when and insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning attached to it by the individual. It takes account of the behaviour of others and thereby oriented in its course.' Based on this assertion, individuals act in accordance with their own definition of the situation^[29]. This includes, willingness or otherwise to act and active or passive acquiescence and may be oriented to the past, present or expected future behaviour of others Coser and Rosenberg^[30]. From this one can argue that the desire of the apprentices to enter into the trade is a purpose action which they hope will pay off later in life when they had concluded the training and establish their own shops.

For Weber^[28] all human behaviour does not amount to action, neither is every human action social. Behaviour should be deliberate to qualify as action. Action in turn must be interpreted in terms of its subjectively intended meaning to the actor including the effect the actor wants the action to have on others. This makes it amount to social action^[31,32].

The idea here is that for a sociologist interested in studying human behaviour in any setting, this demands not only that the typical social action of typical actors be determined but also the meaning that actors typically attribute to their actions i.e. an examination of socially distributed subjective motivation is regarded as an essential part of any analysis of patterned conduct, for instance.

Parsons^[33] and Cohen^[34] have identified some features of social action to include;

- The actor has some set of goals to achieve and his action is geared towards achieving these goals;
- Action involves selection of various means towards the achievement of goals;

- The actor always makes some assumptions concerning the nature of his goals and the possibility of achieving them and
- The pursuit of goals and the selection of the means occur within the situation which influence the course of action.

However from the above properties of social action, it is possible to argue that for an individual, action has an end or goals and is rational though from the perspective of an observer such action might seem irrational. What this implies is that the observer or social scientist involved in a different social situation from his or her own must try to understand the action of those people being observed or studied from their perspective, from their subjective interpretation of the situation. In this regard it can be argued those working mothers' coping strategies both within and outside their homes are based on purely rational action.

According to Parsons^[33] action takes place in situation he divided into two: those situations over which the actor has no control, cannot alter or prevent from being altered to fall in line with the sought end; and those situations over which the actor has no control. Those conditions that could not be controlled Parsons^[33] termed 'the condition' of action and those that could be controlled, the 'means'. The existence of a choice of alternative means to an end creates room for normative orientation of action. Thus, the means that the actor chooses (within the area of control) is not chosen at random nor is it dependent exclusively on the conditions of action. Rather, this choice is a function of an independent determinant selective factor in making a choice.

Consequently, what social action perspective suggests is that any instance of action (or unit of act) stems from the ends that the actor is concerned to attain, the definition of the situation. These include that range of alternative actions that are perceived to be available and the choice of means that are likely to be effective bearing in mind what the action will achieve as well as reactions of others. The meaning on which the actor grounds the interpretation and definitions of the situation derived from experience in the wider society. This perspective is chosen because it takes into consideration external factors in addition to internal factors in explaining the behaviour of the apprentices.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the relevance of self-employment and private initiatives in national growth and development efforts were made to investigate apprenticeship scheme

and small-scale business. Apprentices usually enter into written agreement with their master for record purposes. Thus they require 2 to 3 years before they can get their freedom. Masters are the trainers and providers of apprentice-training programmes. Apprentices contribute highly to the success of small-scale business. The necessary facilities needed for small-scale business include location, business idea/plan local source of raw material and apprentices. Many apprentices were seen to be facing problems such as inadequate capital (pocket money), poor feeding, illness, stress and family problems in the process of their vocational programme. However many apprentices disclosed that they would have a very good chance to be self-employed after their training programme.

Many apprentices rely on various sources of funds to start up their small-scale business. Government monetary assistance and machines would be preferred to family contribution in setting of a small-scale business.

To ensure gradual socio-economic development Nigeria's immediate steps should centre on not only making funds available, accessible and affordable, but also putting the necessary infrastructure on ground and creating an enabling environment for the operation of small-scale business. There is need for small-scale business to embark on continuous training of their apprentices to ensure that high quality manpower that can manage the industries is maintained. Apart from creating an enabling environment, the future of small-scale business depends on improved quality of human resources management. It needs to be stressed, however that the success of small-scale business depends ultimately on the apprentices and entrepreneurs themselves who are cautious of facilities to small-scale business mainly because of their high-risk profile. It is the primary duty of small-scale business owners to make the sector rewarding enough by keeping records, improving the management quality of their operations and exercising financial control and management. Government support will still be needed in the development of small-scale industry. This will be in the form of providing opportunities and facilities, as subsidised costs, for upgrading the technical quality and management expertise available to operators of small-scale business.

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