

Indigenous Man-Power Training and Apprenticeship as a Strategy for Youth Empowerment in Oyo State, South West, Nigeria

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DOI : <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.806160>

Received: 01 May 2024; Revised: 18 May 2024; Accepted: 15 June 2024; Published: 15 July 2024

ABSTRACT

Apprenticeship, an acceptable man-power training method meant to impact quality training needs to address the problems of economic development seems to have been neglected in Nigeria. This study was therefore designed to examine the relevance of indigenous man-power training (MPT) and apprenticeship to development, factors responsible for decline in indigenous MPT and career opportunities for youth engaging in apprenticeship in Nigeria. This study was guided by human capital theory and conducted through qualitative techniques. Forty-four (44) In-depth interviews were used to elicit narratives from individuals, masters and apprentices of different trades in Oyo state. Two sessions of focus group discussion was also used to elicit information from citizens, community leaders and stakeholders. Purposive sampling technique was used for the selection of four local governments and individuals while snowball sampling technique was used for the selection of masters and apprentices. The data was content analyzed. The narratives indicated that indigenous MPT and apprenticeship provides source of income, employment opportunities, it develops the economy the economy and reduces dependency ratio. The factors responsible for decline in indigenous MPT among the youth are lack of sponsorship, inadequate fund, corruption and lack of government policies. Poor treatment of apprentice, low incentives and unattractiveness of apprenticeship on the part of the masters and laziness and inability to combine formal education with apprenticeship training on the part of apprentice are all responsible for the decline. It was discovered that indigenous MPT will lead to advancement in career quickly, youths who acquire numerous skills can turn it to wealth creation and they can become employers of labour too. Emerging from pragmatic and policy implementation of the result, it is evident that apprenticeship is a sustainable technique for youth employment which if appropriately executed can be a guide to youth empowerment programme of the government in Nigeria.

Word count: 299

Keywords: Apprenticeship, Empowerment, Economy, Indigenous, Man-power training

INTRODUCTION

A system of teaching someone a set of fundamental skills or an organized competency is called apprenticeship (Udu, 2015). Apprenticeship is an important tool and is one of the main requirements an individual most possess for employment generation (Fajobi, Olatujoye, Amusa and Adedoyin, 2017). Apprenticeship as a teaching approach or a legitimate means of helping someone comprehend a task, figure out an issue, and handle challenging situations (Ezenwakwelu, Egbosionu and Okwo, 2019). The concept of apprenticeship has received positive attention from research, indicating that many players in nation-building are concerned about finding a solution to unemployment. However, the idea of apprenticeship has changed over time to encompass a variety of training and skill-acquisition approaches. It is envisioned as a way to learn the nuances of a specific trade in order to fill labor shortages in today's industry (Eneh, Enuoh, Hamed, Anyadighibe, Pepple&Etuk, 2022). Apprenticeship is an appropriate technique to help someone comprehend a task, solve an issue, and handle complicated situations. Through apprenticeship, people can receive training for a job that aligns with their values and prepares them to engage in any occupation that will help them grow their skills,

work habits, attitude, and other attributes that will increase their productivity (Ezenwakwelu et al., 2019; Ejo-orusa&Mpi, 2019).

Having adequate man-power training will lead to reduction in poverty as well as improving the standard of living of the citizens. Indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship has not been adequately harnessed in tackling the youth unemployment in Nigeria. This accounted for redundancy among the youths who are meant to spur growth and reasonable development in Nigeria. Nevertheless, indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship which is supposed to be an alternative empowerment schemes to activate the role of youths in nation building seems to have been neglected conspicuously. Skills acquisitions and training under the scope of apprenticeship would amount to a source of income and empowerment relevant along the line of a particular profession, such as fashion designing, hair dressing, furniture making and other related trades (Fajobi et al, 2017).

Both formal and informal apprenticeship programs, which provide laborers in an economy with useful skills, have frequently made sustainable skill teaching possible (Okadi et al., 2020). The formal apprenticeship is a purposefully designed training program that alternates between classroom and workplace instruction. It allows for simultaneous learning and working, assisting the learner in acquiring skills for a trade or craft from an expert craftsman. Formal apprenticeships are available to students in both secondary and post-secondary school, giving them the chance to participate in supervised working experience across all industries (Mieschbuehler & Hodey, 2016). However, the informal apprenticeship program is a structure that has facilitated the transfer of skills within the economy and provided private sector training. A frequent strategy for transferring knowledge, capacity building, and informal training is apprenticeship (Ainley & Rsinbird, 2014). This demonstrated that informal apprenticeship is a useful instrument for fostering apprenticeship in all stages of a business's life cycle and for sharing business secrets, skills, and empowerment with trainees. In an informal apprenticeship, a master craftsman enlists an apprentice who undergoes education in a particular profession, receives skill instruction for a predetermined amount of time, and is then permitted to launch their own business after completing their training. Although the conventional and informal apprenticeship lacks a systematic curriculum or procedure for skill acquisition, it is distinguished by a lengthier training period, lower compensation, and a lack of certification (Eneh et al., 2022).

According to Adams, Silva and Razmara (2013), indigenous man-power training is regarded as a more efficient mode of training than formal training and vocational system of education. In Nigeria, the age range for apprentices in the informal sector is from 11 to 60 years. The reason for acceptance of young adolescents is to enable young people secure employment outside the formal system. A lot of children between the ages of 10-14 work as apprentices and 49% of the school children are part of the indigenous apprenticeship system (Okorochoa, 2014). This figure is a very substantial one and if the government can empower those in the informal system of apprenticeship, poverty will be reduced, youth will be empowered and they would not be seen as liabilities to the economy of the nation. These children may end up hawking in the streets if they are not allowed to engage in the apprenticeship training. Most parents enroll their children for apprenticeship training so as to serve as an alternative to formal education because they could not afford secondary or higher education (Fajobi et al, 2017). People perceive those in apprenticeship training as poor or less privileged and so the supposed average or well to do ones don't engage in apprenticeship. This accounts for a severe problem to empowerment of youth in the country. Everyone is supposed to acquire one skill or the other so that poverty rate can reduce.

The factors responsible for decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship according to Adekola (2013) can be traced to socio-cultural patterns in the society. These socio-cultural patterns make it problematic for masters of trades and apprentice to practice under a comfortable environment. A major problem of indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship is the notion that it is meant for people who are lagging behind in formal education or those whose parents could not sponsor them in formal education (Adekola, 2013). Inappropriate choice of career also accounts for the decline in apprenticeship mode of training. Parents or guardians choose trades for the apprentices. They are not allowed to choose on their own (Adekola, 2013). This makes the system unattractive to young people. Anyadike, Emelu and Ukah (2012) suggested that inadequate funding is also a problem of apprenticeship in developing countries. Both masters of trades and

parents of apprentices are affected by problem of funding. Parents are not able to pay for the agreed period of learning and masters could not purchase the required machines and equipment required for learning.

Obsolete government policies and lack of regulatory bodies to monitor the activities also contributes to the reason for decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship (Fajobi et al, 2017). This cluttered nature makes it unattractive for youths and graduates to engage in apprenticeship. Corruption which has become a cog in the wheel of development in Nigeria is also responsible for the decline in apprenticeship. Funds meant for the growth and development of the nation has been siphoned to private purses thus destroying the economy, stimulating and aggravating unemployment which generates abject poverty, hunger and frustration, spoiling the enthusiasm of youths and their desire for apprenticeship training (Fajobi et al, 2017). Teal (2016) postulated that Nigeria is regarded as the largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of population and economic size. Due to this, the employment opportunities of the youths are a crucial topic in policy discussions in the country. It is believed that apprenticeship is a vital career prospect for young people in Nigeria. According to Okorochoa (2014), Nigerian graduates will be self-employed and they will have a means of livelihood if they possess adequate apprenticeship skills and practical experience in different vocations. Despite the significance of using apprenticeships to foster economic development, the existence of a dysfunctional system has not encouraged young people to engage in learning, improve their talents, and retain those skills, which are valuable in the workforce (Eneh, Enuoh and Hammed et al, 2022).

The human capital theory is crucial in discovering and creating man-power training and entrepreneurial opportunity (Marvel, Davis and Sproul, 2016). The human capital theory suggests that skills development improves a person's supply of human capital and thus increases that individual's creative possibilities. It is therefore best to look at the concept of human capital which entered the mainstream academic inquiry in the early 1960s through the work of Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker (Becker 1993; Schultz 1963). As an economist Schultz invented the term to reflect the value of our human capacities. He believed human capital was like any other type of capital; it could be invested in through education, training, apprenticeship, skills development and enhanced benefits that will lead to an improvement in the quality and level of production. Man- power training and apprenticeship will lead to generation of employment. Human capital can be regarded as an accumulated knowledge by a group or individual, their day to day activities, personal attributes and social habits. This accumulated knowledge can be through apprenticeship training. This will now be converted to economic value. Human capital includes creativity that can be usefully applied to an economic purpose. Attributes that you possess which can lead to wealth creation.

Objectives of the Study

The Study was guided by the following research objectives:

1. To examine the relevance of indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship to development.
2. To determine the factors responsible for decline in indigenous manpower training and apprenticeship.
3. To identify career opportunities for youths engaging in apprenticeship in Nigeria.
4. To examine the challenges

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Oyo state, South Western Nigeria with a land mass of 28,454 square kilometers. Four local governments were purposively selected, Ibadan North and Ogbomoso south due to size and large population of youths and while Saki West and Iseyin local government because due to history of large enrollment in apprenticeship training. Data were collected through in-depth interviews from 44 respondents consisting of 20 masters of different trades, 16 neutral individuals who are neither apprentice nor master of trade but have understanding about the practice of apprenticeship in the society and 8 apprentices. The number of masters, individuals and apprentices was divided into four each so as to represent the four local governments used as study location i.e. Five(5) masters each from each local government, four (4) individuals each from each local government and two (2) apprentices each from each local government. Snowball

sampling method was also used in selection of masters of trade. Simple random sampling was used in selection of individuals giving everyone equal chance of participation. The interviews cut across masters of various trades such as mechanics, electricians, panel beaters, carpentry, furniture, bricklayers, shoe makers, hair dressers, tailors and barbers. These were the common vocations in the study location. Each interview lasted between 40-60 minutes. The principle of anonymity, confidentiality, voluntariness, non-maleficence and informed consent was strictly adhered to. Apprentices were not interviewed in the presence of their masters to allow free expression. All participants were, however, informed of their right to participate or decline at any stage of the interview process. Some interviews were conducted in English language and tape-recorded with the permission of all interviewees while strict interviewing protocols were observed. Other interviews were conducted in Yoruba language based on the desire of the interviewees, it was recorded and later transcribed in Yoruba language and later translated to English language. The researcher ensured that precautions were taken to ensure that notes were taken extensively, and quotations were captured verbatim. After transcription, the researcher cautiously returned to the beginning of the recording to ensure that the transcribed version of the interviews exactly matched the recorded version. Two sessions of focus group discussions was conducted. One, in Ibadan North local government to represent the urban area while the other was in Saki West local government to represent the peri-urban area. It consisted of executive members of unions, stake holders involved in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship and masters of various trades. Both in-depth interview and focus group discussion were conducted through the use of structured interview guide prepared in line with the objectives of the study. The data gathered were content analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section focuses on the results of findings and discussions. The first section gives the result of participants' socio-demographic characteristics with explanation. The subsequent sections focus on the specific objectives of the study.

Socio Demographic Characteristics

Majority of the masters are between the ages of 25 to 36. The implication of this is that masters are in their youthful age. They are vibrant and energetic and by extension they should be able to impart adequate skills and knowledge to the apprentices under their tutelage. Results on the educational attainment of the masters indicated that a little below average had no formal education. A reasonable number of the respondents had no formal education and this could account for the reason why the masters will be unable to train apprentice in a formal way. On the socio-demographic characteristics of apprentices, a significant number of the participants were between the ages of 11 to 16. No participant was above 22 years of age. This implied that majority of the apprentices were adolescents and teenagers who are still very tender. Many older people find it difficult to learn a trade or to bow under the leadership of a person who is regarded as the master. On the educational attainment, majority of them had primary education.

Objective 1: The Relevance of Indigenous Man-power Training and Apprenticeship to Youth Empowerment in Nigeria

The relevance of indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship is reduction of poverty to the barest minimum. Not everyone will be employed in the formal sector. Empowering people through apprenticeship will improve the economy. A master who specializes in furniture making has this to say when asked about the relevance of Indigenous Man-power Training and Apprenticeship to Youth Empowerment:

It is very important for individuals and even the government to take indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship important. The relevance of this training cannot be over-emphasized as everyone will benefit from it.

We all complain of unemployment always whereas the solution is right at our doorstep. Youth unemployment will reduce if the government can encourage every youth to register for apprenticeship. There is no way you will be trained here and you will not be able to start your own business and start making money.

We train for at least three years as supposed to the limited time they use in training them for entrepreneurship in schools. This is where the difference lies and that is the reason why I will encourage indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship rather than the entrepreneurship training in schools. **(IDI\37 Years\Male\Saki West\2023)**

An individual who is neither a master nor an apprentice has this to say on the relevance Indigenous Man-power Training and Apprenticeship to Youth Empowerment:

Apprenticeship training is very important. Anyone that possesses any skill in apprenticeship will be able to be self- employed. We should not deceive ourselves that everybody will secure a white collar job. Our economy has not gotten to that level.

Adequate apprenticeship training will bring about a steady source of income for our youths and unemployment will be reduced **(IDI\28 Years\Female\Ogbomoso South\2023)**

This is the opinion of an apprentice learning fashion designing on the relevance of Indigenous Man-power Training and Apprenticeship to youth empowerment:

This training is very important for me because I will not be dependent on anyone. My parents used to advise me every day that I should take it serious so that I will not become a liability to my husband in the future. I will also take care of my parents too. So apprenticeship training is not a waste of time. You will make money from it sooner or later **(IDI\15 Years\Female\Iseyin\2023)**

The narratives indicated the relevance of acquiring a skill through indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship. The relevance is that individuals that pass through the training for the required number of years will be able to start their own business, apprenticeship training will make people independent and they will not become liability to others. It will also reduce unemployment by creating job opportunities for people. Apprenticeship also reduces dependency ratio. The involvement in man-power training and apprenticeship will provide a steady source of income for the people. These claims can also be supported by excerpts from focus group discussion:

The relevance of Artisans and craftsmen cannot be over emphasized. There is no way the services of the artisans will not be required. Due to this, anyone who ventures into any vocation or trades as a result of the training he or she has acquired will definitely succeed in the path he has chosen. All these small scale businesses are what we need to develop the economy **(FGD\52 Years\Male\Ibadan North\2023)**

A young businesswoman has this to say on the importance of indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship:

Indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship makes it easier for an individual to have hands-on experience that will give you an opportunity to practice and acquire self- confidence in the working environment. You will have the chance of learning all the rudiments of your choice of vocation other than learning theory alone. By doing this, you will be an expert in your field, more people will patronize you and you will make more money **(FGD\28 Years\Female\Saki West\2023)**.

From the narratives above, it is important to acquire apprenticeship training because of its usefulness in the society. Apprenticeship gives room to adequate skills acquisition which will make an individual to excel in their desired vocation. This will be a source of provision of wealth for such individual.

Objective 2: Factors Responsible for the Decline in Indigenous Man-power Training and Apprenticeship in Nigeria

Indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship is a means of empowering youth but it has not been

properly monitored. It looks unattractive and this is due to its mode of operation in the country. When asked about the factors responsible for the decline in Indigenous Man-power training and apprenticeships, a fashion designer claimed that:

This mode of training is very effective in boosting the economy but it is unfortunate that youths no longer have the zeal to acquire all these skills. They are looking for short cut. In our days, we serve our masters and we are also ready to learn but nowadays apprentices just want to learn skill without making themselves useful for their masters. Laziness is also one of the reasons why apprentices are not doing well in their vocations. Some of the apprentices who are zealous don't have anyone to sponsor them for the training. **(IDI\42 Years\Female\Iseyin\2023)**

A civil servant in Saki West stated the following when asked about the factors that led to decline in apprenticeships:

Personally, I want to advise that there should be a change in method used in indigenous training and apprenticeship. It should be more attractive. Most educated people don't want to learn a vocation through apprenticeship because of the way they treat apprentices. Secondary school graduates that are awaiting admission find it difficult because apprentices use most of their time to run errands for the masters. For secondary school leavers to be discouraged, what will now become of university undergraduates or graduates? They do not want to learn under the umbrella of apprenticeship. They believe it is for the illiterates. Government should make it more appealing. **(IDI\28 Years\Male\Saki West\2023)**

An apprentice said this about the factors that led to decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeships:

Although we are trying our best to be serious in acquiring these skills but there are some certain things that are hindering our performance. For instance, I go school in the morning and I'm expected to come and learn in the workshop in the evening. I would have been tired and so I will not be able to give in my best. Our masters do not encourage us. They don't only give us small amount of money out of the proceeds **(IDI\21 Years\Male\Ibadan North \2023)**

The above quotations reflect the factors responsible for the decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship. It could be deduced that laziness on the part of the apprentices, lack of sponsorship, treatment of apprentices, unappealing nature of apprenticeship, inability to combine schooling with apprenticeship training and low incentives are factors responsible for the decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship. Youth empowerment would be improved if all the aforementioned can be tackled. Apprenticeship is supposed to be an effective means of man-power training but the reverse is the case. Youths are no more zealous to learn a trade, those who are zealous find apprenticeship unattractive and unappealing because of the mode of training, the way apprentices are treated and lack of motivation from masters. Some also find it difficult to combine it with schooling. In all, if the government can look for a way of integrating apprenticeship mode of training in formal education, it would go a long way in solving the problems of apprenticeship. The claims of two individuals from the focus group discussions will also buttress the aforementioned factors that led to decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeships. A community leader asserted that:

The government is responsible for the decline in apprenticeship training. What can the citizens do? Corruption and embezzlement of funds has become the order of the day. In empowering youths, if the government can allocate a certain amount to the development of apprenticeship, it will go a long way in improving the training. Loans with small interest rate or startup capital can also be given to apprenticeship who have completed their periods of training **(FGD\52 Years\Male\Saki West\2023)**

A secondary school teacher declared the following as factors that led to decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeships:

The reason for decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship is inadequate government policies. There is no policy that governs the activities of people in this sector. No policy for self-employment. They just carry out their activities the way they desire. Also, some apprentices are forced against their will. They are not allowed to choose the vocation they want. These kinds of people will not be able to perform well **(FGD\38 Years\Female\Ibadan North\2023)**

From the narratives above, inadequate funds, corruption, embezzlement of funds, inadequate government policies are also responsible for the decline in man-power training and apprenticeship. The implication is that the problem of decline in apprenticeship training is not traced to the masses, but the government has a germane role to play in restoring the youths.

Objective 3: Career Opportunities for Youths engaged in Indigenous Man-power Training Apprenticeship in Nigeria

Although, youths perceive apprenticeship as unattractive, there are unlimited career opportunities attached to it if they can be serious with it. Individuals will be self-employed if they have a skill or the other. A bricklayer in Ibadan North mentioned the career prospects for youths engaged in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeships:

I use to encourage my apprentices every time that this vocation is lucrative. Any individual that is serious and knows what he is doing will definitely excel. We don't wait till the end of the month before we spend money. We make money every blessed day. Apart from bricklaying, any craftwork will always succeed and there are so many prospects in this occupation. People will always patronize us **(IDI\46 Years\Male\Ibadan North\2023)**

When asked about the career prospects for youths engaged in apprenticeship, an individual asserted that:

Apprenticeship training allows young persons to be engaged in a vocation earlier and this will bring a lot of potential for individual to advance in their career quickly. The individual will start making money at a very early stage of their life. This will be a positive for the economy. When young persons don't have to depend on the limited job opportunities available **(IDI\35 Years\Female\ Iseyin\2023)**

An apprentice stated the following about career prospects for youths engaged in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship:

Apprenticeship training will make us to be independent. We don't need to look for job after acquiring these skills. The most important thing is to be serious with the learning so that we can apply it when doing our work and we will be able to afford ourselves of a source of income **(IDI\14 Years\Female\OgbomosoSouth\2023)**

It can be deduced from the above that apprenticeship training provide job opportunities, enables individuals to be self-employed and independent. It also enable individuals to acquire numerous skills which will lead to wealth creation. All these will be accomplished and the society will benefit from it if the government can fund apprenticeship training so as to empower the youth. IT will serve as alternative to the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. The narratives from the focus group discussion gave a contrary opinion. The first respondents from Ibadan north agreed that there are career opportunities in apprenticeship while the other person disagreed. A civil servant stated the following as career prospects available for youths engaged in indigenous man-power training:

It is very essential to acquire a skill because the job opportunities available cannot be sufficient. When you have a skill, you will be comfortable and you will have a source of income. The incidence of armed robbery and social vices will reduce if youths are empowered through apprenticeship **(FGD\45 Years\Female\Ibadan North\2023)**

A young man from Saki west declared the following as career prospects for youths engaged in indigenous

man-power training and apprenticeship:

I don't think there is a career prospects for youths engaged in apprenticeship in Nigeria. The government has not catered for the needs of those with formal education. They have not been able to empower them. How will they empower those engaged in apprenticeship? We don't need to deceive ourselves, we have not gotten to that stage in this country. (FGD\28 Years\Male\Saki west\2023)

In conclusion, it can be inferred from the above that there are career opportunities in apprenticeship training if the government can monitor the sector. This can be done through funding, more implementable government policies that will give room for the empowerment of the youths through apprenticeship.

DISCUSSION

The first objective was to determine the relevance of indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship on youth empowerment in Nigeria. The results indicated that man-power skills acquisition provides a source of income, it provides employment opportunities, it allows youths to be self-employed. This is in line with the findings of Fajobi et al, (2017) which stated that skills acquisitions and training under the scope of apprenticeship would amount to a source of income and empowerment relevant along the line of a particular profession, such as fashion designing, hair dressing, furniture making and other related trades. The result is also concurrent with the human capital theory. The human capital theory is crucial in discovering and creating man-power training and entrepreneurial opportunity (Marvel et al, 2016). These entrepreneurial opportunities are converted to source of income and employment as portrayed by the results. Moreover, the results of the study is in line with the findings of Ojomu, Okwo, Ibekwe, Okoruwa, Fidelia and Ojo(2023) that demonstrated the overall benefits of skill acquisition programs and the strong relationship between employability and vocational training. They affirmed that the youth who participate in the skills acquisition program become self-employed and, thus, self-reliant, improve their socioeconomic standing, develop their creativity, become less prone to certain social vices. This suggests that apprenticeship can equip students with desirable and practical abilities that will increase their employability (Ojomu et al, 2023).

The second objective was to examine the factors responsible for the decline in indigenous man- power training and apprenticeship. The result revealed that treatment given to apprentices by their masters, lack of sponsorship, awareness and unattractiveness of apprenticeship accounted for the decline. This can be supported with the findings which states that there is an inadequate awareness on the career paths that apprenticeships provide within organizations and industries; it is possible that these pathways are not even explicitly stated within the industries, let alone the general public (Smith, 2023). Recent research has shown that those who advise young people about careers, in schools and elsewhere, are more disposed to advocate a university pathway, partly because they are unlikely to have experienced an apprenticeship themselves (Smith & Foley, 2021). Moreover, Adekola (2013) posits that the factors responsible for decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship can be traced to socio-cultural patterns in the society. These socio-cultural patterns make it problematic for masters of trades and apprentice to practice under a comfortable environment. Apprentices are sometimes sent on errand and some masters go to the extent of giving apprentices goods to sell for them. A major problem of indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship is the notion that it is meant for people who are lagging behind in formal education or those whose parents could not sponsor them in formal education (Adekola, 2013). These reasons do not make it attractive for youths to register for apprenticeship training. This can be buttressed with the work of Smith (2021) which emphasised that it is important, for employers who seek to employ apprentices, that applicants are of good quality, which will only occur if apprenticeship is seen as an attractive option. It was also discovered that inadequate funds, corruption, embezzlement of funds and lack of government policies in support of apprenticeship also accounted for the decline in indigenous man-power training in Nigeria. This can be corroborated with the discoveries of Anyadikeetal, (2012) which suggested that inadequate funding is also a problem of apprenticeship in developing countries. Both masters of trades and parents of apprentices are affected by problem of funding. Parents are not able to pay for the agreed period of learning and masters could not purchase the required machines and equipment required for learning. This can be supported with a study that concluded that absolute numbers of apprentices have been declining in the long term in many countries and this trend was occurring

even before COVID-19 affected numbers. Hence there is a concern that the model may be losing favour, making this particular apprenticeship problem more urgent (Deissinger, 2017). Likewise, obsolete government policies and lack of regulatory bodies to monitor the activities also contributes to the reason for decline in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship (Fajobi et al, 2017). Funds meant for the growth and development of the nation has been siphoned to private purses thus destroying the economy, stimulating and aggravating unemployment which generates abject poverty, hunger and frustration, spoiling the enthusiasm of youths and their desire for apprenticeship development (Fajobi et al, 2017).

The last objective was to determine the career opportunities available engaging in apprenticeship in Nigeria. It was discovered that youths who have acquired apprenticeship skills will have a quick advancement in career, they will acquire numerous skills that will lead to wealth creation, unemployment will be reduce, armed robbery and crime rate will be reduced as youths will be self- employed and they will become employers of labour. This can be supported with the findings of Smith (2023) which states that availability of additional job opportunities via apprenticeships due to these labour market-oriented measures, even in the short term, is likely to be positive for apprenticeship systems. According to Okorocho (2014), Nigerian graduates will be self-employed and they will have a means of livelihood if they possess adequate apprenticeship skills and practical experience in different vocations. Teal (2016) supported this by saying the employment opportunities of the youths is a crucial topic in policy discussions in the country. It is believed that apprenticeship is a vital career prospect for young people in Nigeria. Moreover, Moongaand Akakandelwa (2023) posited that the government has given apprenticeships a major boost and positioned them at the center of its Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs in order to meet the skills that the economy will require in the future as it changes quickly. Apprenticeships are necessary while choosing a career for healthy life. Through these trainings, young men and women might be persuaded to reject political thuggery, which is primarily supported by the political elite for their own personal gain, truancy, and waywardness in favor of worthwhile careers (Adamu, 2024).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The participation of youths in apprenticeship is very important as it is regarded as the core of skills acquisition which will lead to effective nation building. Young people are the main assets of any nation and so they should be involved in the processes and policy issues pertaining to their lives. Governments, non-governmental agencies and donor agencies should also provide funds or loans with reduced interest rate for apprentices who are through with their learning so as to establish their own businesses. They should also embark on campaigns to inform the youths to be gainfully involved in indigenous man-power training and apprenticeship and also to change their mindset about apprenticeship that it is not meant for those who cannot afford formal education alone but an alternative measure to tackle unemployment. Young people should be allowed to choose their own vocations. They should not be forced against their will. Mentors should also be assigned to everyone who has succeeded in learning so that they can coach and lead them to the right path.

The government should provide means of integrating vocational training and apprenticeship into formal education system. This should be done with adequate provision of funds, infrastructure and skilled personnel who are experienced in their specific vocations. By doing this, youths will be independent and there will be reduction in poverty and unemployment.

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