

Influence of Transferable Military Skills on Entrepreneurial Success among Military Retirees in Lagos State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the transferability of military-acquired skills to entrepreneurial success among military retirees in Lagos State, Nigeria, addressing a gap in empirical research on how specific military competencies translate into post-retirement business outcomes. Using a descriptive research design, the study surveyed 101 retired military personnel who had completed the Pre-Retirement/Pre-Discharge Entrepreneurship Training programme at the Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre (NAFRC) and were subsequently engaged in entrepreneurial ventures. Data were collected with a structured, validated questionnaire (Cronbach's alpha = 0.831) and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings showed that strategic planning, leadership, problem-solving and decision-making, discipline, resilience under pressure, and teamwork were the military-acquired competencies most strongly perceived as transferable to entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial training programmes were rated as effective in building business-startup knowledge, financial management skills, and market planning capabilities, though they were less effective in easing the transition from a structured military environment to the dynamics of civilian business. Leadership, discipline, access to financial resources, entrepreneurial training, and supportive networks emerged as the strongest enablers of successful skill transfer, while government policy and institutional support were rated comparatively lower. Key challenges included limited access to finance, difficulty adapting to the competitive civilian business environment, weak professional networks, and inadequate business management knowledge. The study concludes that while military-acquired skills provide a strong foundation for entrepreneurship, their full potential is constrained by financial, structural, and institutional gaps. It recommends strengthened and tailored resettlement training, improved financial inclusion mechanisms, and structured mentorship and networking platforms to enhance entrepreneurial outcomes among military retirees.

Keywords: military retirees, transferable skills, entrepreneurship, resettlement training, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Retirement represents a major life transition, serving both as a process of self-renewal and a period of disorientation and reorientation that marks a critical stage in personal development (Sohier et al., 2021). For military personnel, the transition from military service to civilian life is particularly significant because the demands, structure, and culture of military service differ considerably from those of civil service. While some retirees choose to live within the limits of their pension benefits and accept their post-service circumstances, others actively seek new employment opportunities to supplement their income and support their families (Krigbaum et al., 2020; Fakokunde & Fakokunde, 2022). This tendency is common among individuals who, after spending most of their lives in full-time employment, attempt to re-enter the labour market following retirement (Ruwan et al., 2020 & Chidebe, et al., 2023).

However, securing employment after retirement can be challenging, particularly for military retirees. Dii (2022) noted that employers often prefer younger candidates whom they perceive as more energetic and ambitious. In addition, statutory labour requirements and age-related employment barriers further limit opportunities for older individuals. As a result, many retired military personnel increasingly view entrepreneurship as an alternative means of livelihood. This situation is especially relevant in developing countries such as Nigeria, where

economic survival and financial self-sufficiency are pressing concerns for many households (Orhero & Okolie, 2023).

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in economic development through job creation, wealth generation, and innovation. Yusuf and Minai (2016) argued that individuals who can identify and exploit market opportunities are more likely to create productive economic activities that generate employment and wealth. Retirement does not necessarily diminish military retirees' capacity to contribute productively to the economy. Many retirees remain physically capable, motivated, and willing to engage in economic activities that enhance both their livelihoods and overall well-being (Abdulkadir, Rasaq, & Isikaka, 2018). Nevertheless, difficulties in obtaining paid employment or establishing sustainable businesses can expose retirees to significant psychological, social, and economic challenges, including unemployment, social exclusion, financial hardship, and stigmatization (Adeniji et al., 2017).

Recognizing these challenges, the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) has instituted programmes to facilitate a smooth transition from military service to civilian life. According to Olawuyi and Chukwuma (2022), one of the most important initiatives available to military personnel is pre-retirement entrepreneurship training designed to promote self-reliance and entrepreneurial success after retirement. Although the AFN has made considerable efforts to provide entrepreneurship education and training opportunities, gaps remain in the availability of adequate resources, mentorship, and support systems needed to ensure a successful transition into civilian entrepreneurship (Olawuyi & Nwude, 2023).

A key institution in this regard is the Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre (NAFRC), which provides vocational and entrepreneurial training to military personnel approaching retirement. Jim-Suleiman, Ibiamke, and Fenan (2021) observed that NAFRC equips service members with vocational and entrepreneurial competencies that can improve their post-retirement quality of life. Similarly, Olawuyi and Chukwuma (2022) reported that NAFRC offers training in areas such as mechanized agriculture, poultry production, welding, furniture making, and soap production, thereby providing practical skills for self-employment and business ownership. Beyond formal vocational training, military personnel often acquire valuable professional knowledge, leadership abilities, technical expertise, and organizational competencies throughout their years of service, all of which may contribute to entrepreneurial success after retirement (Olawuyi & Nwude, 2023).

The nature of military retirement in Nigeria further reinforces the need for entrepreneurial engagement among military retirees. Ruwan et al. (2020) noted that military personnel are often required to retire earlier than many of their civilian counterparts, typically after 35 years of service or upon reaching prescribed age limits. This relatively early retirement provides retirees with the opportunity and time to pursue alternative career paths, with entrepreneurship emerging as one of the most attractive options. However, success in entrepreneurial ventures largely depends on the extent to which retirees are able to transfer and apply competencies acquired during military service to the business environment. Osam (2022) argued that military-acquired skills can be effectively utilized in entrepreneurial activities when appropriately adapted to civilian contexts.

The transferability of military skills to entrepreneurship has received growing scholarly attention in recent years. Wang, et al. (2025) emphasized that competencies developed through military service constitute valuable assets in entrepreneurial ventures. Such competencies include leadership, discipline, strategic thinking, teamwork, resilience, adaptability, decision-making under pressure, and effective resource management, all of which are critical determinants of entrepreneurial success (Fiiwe, 2020). In the Nigerian context, where many retired military personnel transition into self-employment, these skills can provide a strong foundation for identifying opportunities, managing risks, mobilizing resources, and leading business operations effectively (Adebisi, 2016; Yeboah & Jayne, 2021). Consequently, understanding how military skills can be transferred to entrepreneurial activities is essential for improving the success of military retirees in business.

Despite these opportunities, significant challenges remain. Many military personnel retire before attaining 55 years of age or completing 35 years of service due to compulsory retirement regulations tied to rank-specific age limits and years of service. While some retirees rely primarily on pension benefits, many seek additional income through employment or entrepreneurship. However, labour market discrimination, age-related biases, and limited employment opportunities in Nigeria's highly competitive labour market often make traditional

employment difficult to secure (Oyewole, 2021; Aka et al., 2024). Consequently, entrepreneurship has become an increasingly important career alternative for military retirees.

Although NAFRC and other military institutions provide entrepreneurship and vocational training programmes, not all retiring personnel receive adequate preparation or successfully translate their military-acquired skills into profitable business ventures. Olawuyi and Nwude (2023) observed that many veteran entrepreneurs struggle to sustain their businesses after retirement, resulting in financial difficulties and social isolation. Similarly, studies by Ojo (2023) and Ruwan et al. (2020) revealed a gap between entrepreneurship training and practical business outcomes. For example, Ruwan et al. (2020) reported that although approximately 80 percent of military retirees considered their military experience valuable, only about 30 percent believed they had effectively utilized those skills in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, the challenging business environment in Nigeria continues to pose additional obstacles to entrepreneurial success.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the growing recognition of entrepreneurship as a viable post-retirement pathway for military personnel, empirical studies examining the transferability of military skills to entrepreneurial success remain limited in Nigeria. Existing research has largely focused on military resettlement programmes and entrepreneurship training, with relatively little attention given to how specific military-acquired competencies influence entrepreneurial outcomes. This gap in knowledge limits the development of evidence-based policies and support mechanisms for veteran entrepreneurs. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by examining the transferability of military skills and their contribution to entrepreneurial success among military retirees in Nigeria.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to

- i. identify skills acquired during active military service that are potentially transferable to the post-retirement entrepreneurial context;
- ii. investigate how in-service entrepreneurial training programmes prepare military retirees for successful post-retirement entrepreneurship; and
- iii. determine the factors that influence effective transfer of military skills to post-retirement entrepreneurial success among military retirees.

Research Questions

- i. What are the skills acquired during active military service that are potentially transferable to the post-retirement entrepreneurial context?
- ii. How do in-service entrepreneurial training programmes prepare military retirees for successful post-retirement entrepreneurship?
- iii. What factors influence effective transfer of military skills to post-retirement entrepreneurial success among military retirees?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design to examine the transferability of military skills and their influence on entrepreneurial success among military retirees. The descriptive research design was considered appropriate because it facilitates the systematic collection and analysis of data for describing the characteristics, experiences, and perceptions of a target population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, it allows researchers to obtain detailed information about military retirees' acquired skills and entrepreneurial experiences in their natural context without manipulating the study variables (Saunders et al., 2019).

The study area was Lagos State, Nigeria, because of its economic importance and population diversity, which included a significant number of retired military personnel. Lagos is a commercial centre of entrepreneurship in

Nigeria. Its dynamic business environment provided the researchers with useful information about the opportunities and challenges encountered by retirees who ventured into entrepreneurship.

The target population for this study consisted of 163 military veterans who completed the mandatory six-month training programme in 2024. The study has a sample size of 116. The Calculation of the sample size for this study was based on the Taro Yamani technique. It can be determined by the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{[1 + N(e)^2]}$$

where:

n= sample size

N=Population of the study

e= the margin of error

$$n = \frac{163}{[1 + 163(5\%)^2]}$$

$$n = \frac{163}{[1 + 163(0.05)^2]}$$

$$n = \frac{163}{[1 + 163(0.0025)]}$$

$$n = \frac{163}{1 + 0.4075}$$

$$n = \frac{163}{1.4075}$$

$$n = 115.808$$

$$n = 116$$

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select 116 respondents from the target population. This sampling technique was deemed appropriate because it enabled the researcher to intentionally identify and recruit participants who had the knowledge, experience, and characteristics required to provide meaningful information on the phenomenon under investigation. Specifically, the selected respondents were military retirees who had completed the six-month Pre-Retirement/Pre-Discharge Programme (Pre-Retirement Entrepreneurship Training) at the Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre (NAFRC) and had subsequently engaged in post-training entrepreneurial activities. The use of purposive sampling ensured that data were obtained from participants with firsthand experience of the training programme, thereby enhancing the relevance, depth, and authenticity of the information gathered.

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire administered to retired military personnel in Lagos State. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A collected respondents' socio-demographic information, while Section B contained items designed to address the study objectives. Specifically, the questions focused on identifying military-acquired skills that are transferable to entrepreneurship, examining the role of entrepreneurship training programmes in facilitating post-retirement economic opportunities, determining the factors that influence the successful transfer of military skills to entrepreneurial activities, and exploring the challenges military retirees encounter when applying these skills in entrepreneurial ventures.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert Scale consisting of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The Likert scale was adopted because it provides a standardized and systematic approach to measuring participants' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences. Its ability to quantify subjective opinions

makes it particularly suitable for studies investigating behavioural and social phenomena. The use of this scale enabled the collection of consistent and reliable data, thereby facilitating a comprehensive analysis of the experiences, opportunities, and challenges faced by military retirees engaged in entrepreneurial activities.

The validity of the questionnaire was established through face and content validation by experts in the relevant field. The experts reviewed the instrument to assess the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items in relation to the study objectives. Based on their observations and recommendations, ambiguous and unclear items were revised to improve the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness of the instrument.

The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess the internal consistency of the measurement items. A pilot study was conducted involving 10 retired police officers who shared characteristics similar to those of the study population but were not included in the main study. Ten copies of the questionnaire were administered to the participants, and their responses were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha. Following the pilot test, minor modifications were made to eliminate ambiguities and improve the clarity of some items. The revised questionnaire was subsequently subjected to a reliability test, which yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.831. This value exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating a high level of internal consistency and confirming the reliability of the instrument for data collection.

The questionnaire was developed in a structured format and administered primarily through Google Forms to retired military personnel in Lagos State. A total of 116 questionnaires were distributed, of which 101 were fully completed and returned, representing the responses used for the analysis. This method was adopted due to its ability to facilitate efficient access to respondents, minimize logistical challenges, and allow participants to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. The digital platform also reduced data entry errors, as responses were automatically recorded and securely stored, thereby enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. In addition, Google Forms enabled real-time monitoring of responses and provided opportunities for prompt follow-up communication where clarification was required. Consequently, this approach contributed to a satisfactory response rate and ensured that data were collected in a secure, organized, and non-intrusive manner, thereby encouraging respondents to provide honest and well-considered responses.

The data obtained from the 101 respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while measures of central tendency, including means, medians, and modes, were computed to assess respondents' levels of agreement with the Likert-scale items relating to transferable military skills, the effectiveness of entrepreneurial training programmes, factors influencing entrepreneurial engagement, and challenges associated with leveraging military-acquired skills for entrepreneurial activities. These statistical measures provided valuable insights into respondents' perceptions and facilitated a clear and meaningful interpretation of the research questions.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section presents the results and analysis of the data. The analysis and the discussion of findings are organised according to the four research questions and objectives. During data collection, a total of 116 questionnaires were administered. However, upon retrieval, only 101 questionnaires were duly completed and returned, representing an effective response rate of 87.07%. This response rate was considered adequate for the analysis and generalisation of findings.

Results

Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents were analysed using frequency distribution and percentages, covering variables such as gender, age group, years of military service, and current business sector.

Table 5.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-Demographics	Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	43	42.6
	Female	58	57.4
	Total	101	100.0%
Age Group	40–50 years	48	47.5
	51–60 years	37	36.6
	Above 60 years	16	15.8
	Total	101	100.0%
Years of Military Service	10–15 years	51	50.5
	16–20 years	30	29.7
	Above 20 years	20	19.8
	Total	101	100.0
Current Business Sector	Agriculture	31	30.7
	Manufacturing	18	17.8
	Retail	31	30.7
	Services	15	14.9
	Others	6	5.9
Total		101	100.0
Have you received any entrepreneurial training?	Yes	69	68.3
	No	32	31.7
Total		101	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents provide valuable insights into the composition of the study sample. Regarding gender distribution, female respondents constituted the majority (57.4%), while male respondents accounted for 42.6%. This indicates a higher representation of women in the study and may suggest relatively greater female involvement in entrepreneurial or post-military economic activities within the sampled population.

With respect to age distribution, the largest proportion of respondents (47.5%) were between 40 and 50 years old, followed by 36.6% who were between 51 and 60 years. A smaller proportion (15.8%) were above 60 years of age. This finding suggests that the study population was predominantly composed of middle-aged individuals who are likely to be in the transition phase from military service to entrepreneurial engagement.

Concerning the length of military service, the majority of respondents (50.5%) had served between 10 and 15 years. This was followed by 29.7% who had served between 16 and 20 years, while 19.8% had served for more than 20 years. The distribution indicates that individuals with moderate lengths of military service constituted the largest group of respondents involved in post-service entrepreneurial activities.

In terms of current industry participation, agriculture and retail/trading recorded the highest proportions of respondents, each accounting for 30.7% of the sample. Manufacturing represented 17.8%, while the service sector accounted for 14.9%. A further 5.9% of respondents were engaged in other unspecified industries. This

pattern suggests that most respondents ventured into agriculture and trading, sectors that are often characterized by relatively low entry barriers, lower capital requirements, and greater accessibility for new entrepreneurs.

Finally, the findings on entrepreneurial training revealed that a majority of respondents (68.3%) had received some form of entrepreneurial training, while 31.7% had not. This indicates a relatively high level of exposure to entrepreneurial knowledge and skills among the respondents, which may enhance their capacity to establish, manage, and sustain successful business ventures.

Research Question One: What are the skills acquired during military service that are potentially transferable to entrepreneurial context?

Research question one covers the identification of skills developed during military service such as leadership, discipline, strategic planning, teamwork, and problem-solving that are relevant and applicable to entrepreneurial activities and business management in a post-retirement context.

Table 5.2: Descriptive Statistics on Skills Acquired during Military Service that are potentially transferable to Entrepreneurial Context

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The leadership skills I developed during military service have positively influenced my ability to manage and lead an entrepreneurial venture.	101	4.24	.862
My problem-solving and decision-making skills from military training have been valuable in handling business challenges effectively.	101	4.23	.799
The discipline and time management skills I gained in the military have contributed significantly to my entrepreneurial success.	101	4.23	.859
The ability to work under pressure has enhanced my ability to navigate the uncertainties of running a business.	101	4.21	.791
My experience in strategic planning and operations during military service has helped me in business decision-making.	101	4.27	.786
The teamwork and communication skills I developed in the military have been crucial in building and managing business relationships.	101	4.21	.887

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The descriptive statistics on the transferable skills acquired during military service indicate that respondents generally held positive perceptions regarding the applicability of these skills to entrepreneurial activities. The highest mean score (Mean = 4.27) was recorded for the statement that strategic planning and operational experience gained during military service assist in making effective business decisions. This finding reflects respondents' strong confidence in the relevance of military-acquired strategic competencies to entrepreneurial practice.

Similarly, leadership skills developed through military service received a high rating (Mean = 4.24), suggesting that respondents consider these skills essential for managing and directing business ventures effectively. Problem-solving and decision-making skills, as well as discipline and time-management abilities, each recorded a mean score of 4.23, indicating that respondents regard these competencies as critical for overcoming business challenges and achieving entrepreneurial success.

Furthermore, the ability to perform effectively under pressure, together with teamwork and communication skills, received a mean score of 4.21. These findings suggest that such competencies are valuable for navigating business uncertainties, fostering productive relationships, and sustaining organizational performance. Overall, the results demonstrate that military-acquired skills, particularly those related to strategic planning, leadership,

problem-solving, discipline, teamwork, and communication, are widely perceived as valuable assets that contribute significantly to entrepreneurial effectiveness and business success.

The findings further reveal that military retirees consider several core competencies acquired during service to be highly transferable to entrepreneurship. Strategic planning and operational skills (Mean = 4.27) were identified as the most transferable, reflecting their importance in business decision-making and organizational management. Leadership skills (Mean = 4.24) were also highly rated due to their relevance in guiding and managing business ventures. In addition, problem-solving and decision-making abilities (Mean = 4.23) were viewed as essential for addressing business uncertainties and challenges, while teamwork and communication skills (Mean = 4.21) were recognized for their role in building effective business relationships and facilitating collaboration. These findings underscore the significant contribution of military-acquired competencies to entrepreneurial development and performance.

Research Question Two: How do entrepreneurial training programmes prepare military retirees for successful post-retirement entrepreneurship?

Research Question 2 covers how entrepreneurial training programmes equip military retirees with relevant business knowledge, skills, and competencies required for a successful transition into entrepreneurship after retirement.

Table 5.3: Descriptive Statistics on how entrepreneurial training programmes prepare military retirees for successful post-retirement entrepreneurship.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The entrepreneurial training programmes I attended provided me with the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully start a business venture.	101	4.24	.802
The training programmes effectively introduced me to financial management and budgeting techniques	101	4.21	.725
Entrepreneurial training helped me understand market research and business planning	101	4.22	.795
The mentorship and networking opportunities offered in the training programmes have been instrumental in my business growth and expansion	101	4.15	.899
The training programmes provided me with hands-on experience and practical business simulations that enhanced my confidence in entrepreneurship	101	4.16	.833
The skills and strategies I learned in the entrepreneurial training programmes have helped me transit smoothly from military service to business ownership.	101	4.12	.864

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The quantitative findings of this study indicate that entrepreneurial training programmes are effective in preparing military retirees for the transition from military service to the private sector. Overall, respondents expressed positive perceptions regarding the value and effectiveness of these programmes. The highest mean scores were recorded for the programme's ability to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to start a business (Mean = 4.24), impart market research and business planning skills (Mean = 4.22), and offer training in financial management and budgeting techniques (Mean = 4.21). Respondents also rated highly the provision of practical experiences and business simulations that enhance entrepreneurial confidence (Mean = 4.16), as well as the programme's role in facilitating the transition from military service to business ownership (Mean = 4.12).

These findings suggest that entrepreneurial training programmes are particularly valued for equipping military retirees with essential competencies in business start-up, financial management, and strategic business planning. The results further indicate that such programmes contribute meaningfully to enhancing entrepreneurial readiness and confidence among retirees. However, the comparatively lower mean score for facilitating the transition process suggests that additional targeted support mechanisms may be required to address the unique challenges associated with moving from military service to entrepreneurial careers.

Consistent with the survey findings, military retirees perceived several military-acquired competencies as highly transferable to entrepreneurship. These include strategic planning, leadership, problem-solving and decision-making, discipline, the ability to perform effectively under pressure, and teamwork skills. Respondents indicated that these competencies enhance business decision-making, venture management, adaptability in challenging situations, and the development of productive business relationships. This underscores the significant role of military-acquired skills in supporting entrepreneurial success and sustainable business performance.

Research Question Three: What factors influence effective transfer of military skills to entrepreneurial success?

Research Question three covers the examination of personal, institutional, and environmental factors that facilitate or hinder the effective application of military-acquired skills to achieving entrepreneurial success.

Table 5.4: Descriptive Statistics on Factors that Influence Effective Transfer of Military Skills to Entrepreneurial Success

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The leadership and discipline acquired during military service positively influence my ability to manage and grow my business."	101	4.26	.820
My ability to take calculated risks has contributed to my success in entrepreneurship.	101	4.20	.813
Access to financial resources and capital is a significant factor in effectively applying military-acquired skills to business ventures.	101	4.22	.832
The presence of a supportive network, including mentors and fellow military retirees, has helped in the successful transfer of my military skills to entrepreneurship.	101	4.14	.849
Entrepreneurial training and continuous learning enhance the successful application of military skills in business operations.	101	4.17	.775
Government policies and institutional support significantly influence how military retirees can leverage their skills for entrepreneurial success.	101	4.08	.821

Source: Field Survey (2025)

The survey findings identified several factors that influence the effective transfer of military-acquired skills to entrepreneurial activities, with respondents expressing strong agreement regarding their importance. The pattern of mean ratings revealed that leadership and discipline developed through military service make significant contributions to business management and growth (Mean = 4.26). Access to financial resources and capital was also highly rated (Mean = 4.22), indicating its critical role in enabling entrepreneurial ventures and facilitating the practical application of acquired skills. Similarly, the ability to take calculated risks was perceived as an important determinant of entrepreneurial success (Mean = 4.20).

In addition, respondents acknowledged the value of continuous learning through entrepreneurial training programmes (Mean = 4.17) and the support provided by mentors and fellow retirees in facilitating skill transfer and business development (Mean = 4.14). Government policies and institutional support were also recognized

as influential factors, although they received the lowest mean rating among the identified variables (Mean = 4.08). This suggests that while external support mechanisms are considered important, respondents place greater emphasis on personal competencies, access to resources, and social support networks.

Overall, the findings indicate that leadership, discipline, financial accessibility, entrepreneurial training, and supportive networks are key drivers of the successful transfer of military-acquired skills to entrepreneurship. Furthermore, personal attributes such as a willingness to take calculated risks, combined with the availability of resources and support systems, serve as important enablers of entrepreneurial success among military retirees.

The survey further confirmed that military retirees regard strategic planning, leadership, problem-solving and decision-making, discipline, resilience under pressure, and teamwork as highly transferable competencies. These skills are perceived as valuable assets that enhance entrepreneurial effectiveness, strengthen business management capabilities, and contribute to the sustainability and growth of entrepreneurial ventures.

Research Question Four: What are the challenges faced by retired military personnel in leveraging their military-acquired skills for entrepreneurial ventures?

Research Question four identified key constraints and difficulties encountered by retired military personnel in applying their military-acquired skills to establish and sustain entrepreneurial ventures.

Table 5.5: Descriptive Statistics on Challenges faced by Retired Military Personnel in leveraging their Military-Acquired Skills for entrepreneurial ventures

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of access to financial support and capital is a major barrier to using military-acquired skills for entrepreneurship.	101	4.23	.859
The transition from a structured military environment to the dynamic nature of business poses significant challenges for retired military personnel.	101	4.11	.859
Limited knowledge of business management and market dynamics hinders the ability of military retirees to succeed in entrepreneurship.	101	4.00	1.020
The absence of tailored entrepreneurial training programmes for military retirees makes it difficult to apply their skills in business.	101	3.99	.889
Military retirees often face difficulties in building business networks and gaining market acceptance.	101	4.14	.788

Source: Field Survey Result (2025)

The findings further revealed that military retirees encountered several significant challenges in transferring their military-acquired skills to entrepreneurial activities. The most prominent barrier identified was limited access to financial support and capital (Mean = 4.23), indicating that inadequate funding remains a major constraint to the effective utilization of acquired skills in business ventures. Other notable challenges included difficulties in transitioning from the structured environment of military service to the more dynamic and uncertain nature of the business environment (Mean = 4.11), as well as challenges associated with building business networks and gaining market acceptance (Mean = 4.14).

Respondents also identified insufficient knowledge of business management and market dynamics as a barrier to entrepreneurial success (Mean = 4.00). In addition, the perceived inadequacy of entrepreneurial training programmes (Mean = 3.99) suggests that existing training opportunities may not fully address the practical needs of military retirees seeking to establish and manage businesses. Collectively, these findings indicate that financial constraints, adjustment difficulties, limited networking opportunities, knowledge gaps, and inadequate training support are key obstacles that hinder the successful application of military-acquired skills in entrepreneurial settings.

The results further demonstrate that several factors play a critical role in facilitating the successful transfer of military-acquired skills into entrepreneurial success among retirees. Survey data highlight leadership and discipline, calculated risk-taking ability, access to financial resources, supportive networks, entrepreneurial training, and government policies as important enabling factors. Among these, leadership and discipline, financial resource accessibility, entrepreneurial training, and supportive networks emerged as the most influential determinants. These factors not only enhance the transferability of military-acquired competencies but also strengthen retirees' capacity to establish, manage, and sustain successful business ventures.

Discussion of Findings

The first research question sought to identify the skills developed during military service that are relevant and applicable to entrepreneurial activities and business management in a post-retirement context. The findings revealed a generally positive perception of the transferability of military-acquired skills to entrepreneurship. Strategic planning and operational experience received the highest ratings, followed closely by leadership skills, problem-solving and decision-making abilities, discipline, and time management. Teamwork, communication, and the ability to perform effectively under pressure were also highly valued by respondents. These findings are consistent with existing literature. Polin and Ehrman (2020); Tihic, et al. (2025a) emphasized that military leadership and decision-making under pressure translate directly into effective venture management in uncertain business environments. Similarly, Davidson and Thompson (2019); Wang, et al. (2025) attributed higher first-year business survival rates among veterans to their strong strategic planning capabilities. Bartone et al. (2013) highlighted resilience and adaptability, reflected in the high ratings for working under pressure, as critical attributes for overcoming entrepreneurial challenges. Furthermore, Jim-Suleiman et al. (2021) and Ahmed and Ibiamke (2023) found that discipline, teamwork, and problem-solving skills contribute significantly to business sustainability among Nigerian veterans. Collectively, these transferable competencies provide a strong foundation for entrepreneurial success after military retirement.

The second research question examined the extent to which entrepreneurial training programmes equip military retirees with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for a successful transition into entrepreneurship. The findings indicate that respondents generally perceived entrepreneurial training programmes as effective in enhancing entrepreneurial readiness. The programmes were particularly valued for providing essential business start-up knowledge, financial management and budgeting skills, market research and business planning competencies, as well as practical learning experiences that build entrepreneurial confidence. These findings support the argument that entrepreneurial training serves as an important mechanism for transforming military-acquired competencies into business-relevant capabilities. Polin and Ehrman (2020) noted that leadership and decision-making skills acquired through military service can be effectively applied to entrepreneurial management when complemented by appropriate training. Likewise, Davidson and Thompson (2019) observed that veterans' strategic planning abilities contribute to business survival and growth. Bartone et al. (2013) further emphasized the importance of resilience and adaptability in responding to economic uncertainties. However, Ojo (2023); Zhao, et al. (2025) argued that the structured nature of military training may present adjustment challenges in the more flexible and dynamic civilian business environment, thereby necessitating targeted entrepreneurial training and support. This finding is consistent with Olawuyi and Amakom (2023), who emphasized the need for context-specific training interventions to maximize the entrepreneurial potential of retired military personnel.

The third research question investigated the factors that facilitate the effective application of military-acquired skills to entrepreneurial success. The findings revealed that leadership and discipline, access to financial resources, entrepreneurial training, supportive networks, and the ability to take calculated risks were perceived as the most important enabling factors. Respondents also identified strategic planning, problem-solving, resilience under pressure, and teamwork as valuable competencies that enhance entrepreneurial performance. These findings align with the work of Polin and Ehrman (2020), who emphasized the relevance of military leadership and decision-making skills in venture management. Davidson and Thompson (2019) similarly reported that veterans' strategic planning capabilities contribute significantly to business survival and growth. Bartone et al. (2013) highlighted resilience as a critical factor in navigating periods of uncertainty and economic disruption. In addition, the importance of financial resources, entrepreneurial training, and supportive networks

underscores the role of both personal competencies and external support systems in facilitating successful entrepreneurship. While military-acquired skills provide a strong competitive advantage, Ojo (2023) observed that effective adaptation to civilian business environments often requires additional training and mentoring support. This observation reinforces the recommendations of Olawuyi and Amakom (2023), who advocated for enhanced entrepreneurial support programmes to strengthen the transition process for military retirees.

The fourth research question examined the challenges faced by retired military personnel in leveraging their military-acquired skills for entrepreneurial ventures. The findings identified several significant barriers, including inadequate access to financial resources and capital, difficulties in transitioning from the structured military environment to the dynamic nature of business operations, challenges in building business networks and gaining market acceptance, limited knowledge of business management and market dynamics, and inadequate entrepreneurial training opportunities. These findings are consistent with previous studies. Ojo (2023) acknowledged that although military personnel possess valuable leadership and organizational competencies, aligning these skills with civilian business requirements can be challenging without adequate support systems. Similarly, Olawuyi and Amakom (2023); Tihic, et al. (2025b); Philips & Skimmyhorn (2025) identified inadequate funding and insufficient entrepreneurial training as major constraints to entrepreneurial success among retired military personnel. The findings also highlight the importance of social and professional networks in facilitating business development and market integration (Jim-Suleiman et al. (2023); Naim, et al. (2024)). While Nnaji et al. (2022) emphasized the value of military leadership in managing diverse teams and supporting business growth, the present study demonstrates that the effective utilization of these competencies is often constrained by structural and resource-related challenges. Consequently, addressing financial barriers, strengthening entrepreneurial training programmes, expanding access to mentorship and business networks, and improving institutional support mechanisms are essential for enhancing the entrepreneurial outcomes of retired military personnel.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that core military-acquired competencies, including strategic planning, leadership, problem-solving, discipline, teamwork, and the ability to perform effectively under pressure, are highly transferable to entrepreneurial settings. These competencies contribute significantly to business decision-making, venture management, and overall entrepreneurial effectiveness. Furthermore, entrepreneurial training programmes were found to equip retirees with essential knowledge and skills in financial management, business development, and networking. However, the findings suggest that additional transition-focused support is necessary to enable military retirees to adapt more effectively to the demands of the civilian business environment.

Leadership and discipline emerged as the most influential factors facilitating the successful transfer of military-acquired skills to entrepreneurship, while access to financial resources and entrepreneurial training further enhanced business performance and sustainability. In contrast, government policies and institutional support were perceived as less influential, suggesting the existence of structural gaps in existing resettlement programmes and support mechanisms for retired military personnel.

Despite the strengths associated with military-acquired competencies, retirees face several significant challenges in leveraging these skills for entrepreneurial success. Prominent among these are limited access to finance, difficulties in adapting to the dynamic and competitive nature of business environments, and challenges in establishing professional networks and gaining market acceptance. Additional barriers include insufficient knowledge of business management and market dynamics, as well as inadequate training specifically designed to facilitate the application of military-acquired skills in civilian entrepreneurial contexts. These challenges may reduce the effectiveness with which retirees are able to translate their competencies into successful business outcomes.

Overall, the study highlights that military-acquired competencies provide a strong foundation for entrepreneurial success among retired military personnel. However, the findings also underscore the importance of institutionalizing targeted entrepreneurial training, improving access to financial resources, and strengthening

support systems to facilitate successful transitions into entrepreneurship. These insights point to the need for policy reforms aimed at enhancing military resettlement programmes, strengthening entrepreneurial support structures, and maximizing the economic contributions of military veterans through sustainable business development.

CONCLUSIONS

The study examined the transferability of military-acquired skills and their contribution to entrepreneurial success among retired military personnel in Nigeria. The findings reveal that competencies developed during military service, including leadership, discipline, teamwork, problem-solving, strategic planning, and resilience under pressure, are highly applicable and valuable in enhancing entrepreneurial performance. These competencies were found to contribute significantly to effective decision-making, business management, and the overall success of entrepreneurial ventures.

The study further established that entrepreneurial training programmes play an important role in facilitating the transition of military retirees into entrepreneurship by providing essential knowledge in financial management, business development, and networking. However, the findings suggest that existing training programmes are not sufficiently comprehensive to address the unique transition and adaptation challenges faced by military retirees. Consequently, the full potential of military-acquired skills may not be effectively harnessed within the dynamic and competitive business environment.

Despite the advantages associated with military-acquired competencies, the study identified several significant barriers to entrepreneurial success among retirees. Limited access to finance emerged as a major challenge, alongside difficulties in adapting to the competitive nature of civilian markets and establishing effective business networks. Additional constraints include inadequate knowledge of business management and market dynamics, as well as insufficient entrepreneurial training tailored to the specific needs of retired military personnel. These challenges hinder the effective application of military-acquired skills and may limit the growth and sustainability of entrepreneurial ventures.

Overall, the findings suggest that while military-acquired skills provide a strong foundation for entrepreneurial success, greater institutional support is required to maximize their impact. Enhancing access to finance, strengthening entrepreneurial training programmes, expanding networking opportunities, and providing targeted transition support would significantly improve the capacity of military retirees to successfully establish and sustain business ventures in the civilian economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. The government and relevant agencies should strengthen and expand existing resettlement programmes, including those implemented by the Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre (NAFRC), to provide tailored entrepreneurial training that addresses the specific transition needs of retiring military personnel.
- ii. Entrepreneurial training programmes should extend beyond general business education to include mentorship opportunities, market adaptation strategies, digital entrepreneurship skills, and sector-specific competencies that reflect the evolving dynamics of Nigeria's business environment.
- iii. Policies should be developed to enhance the financial inclusion of military retirees through access to soft loans, grants, and specialized credit schemes. Such initiatives would reduce financial barriers to business start-up, growth, and sustainability.
- iv. Structured networking platforms and forums should be established to facilitate interactions between military retirees, successful entrepreneurs, business associations, investors, and industry stakeholders.

This would strengthen retirees' social and professional networks and enhance access to business opportunities and support systems.

- v. Capacity-building programmes and peer-learning initiatives should be introduced to assist military retirees in effectively translating key military-acquired competencies, such as leadership, discipline, strategic planning, and problem-solving, into entrepreneurial and business management contexts.
- vi. Government agencies, financial institutions, and entrepreneurship support organizations should collaborate to provide continuous post-retirement support, including business advisory services, mentorship, and monitoring programmes, to improve the long-term success and sustainability of retiree-owned enterprises.

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