

Apprenticeship Practice and Development of Adire Business in Abeokuta Metropolis

¹AGBI Babatunde, ²SURAJU Adekunbi & ³ADENUBI Samuel O.

¹Department of Business Administration,

KolaDaisi University Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

²Abeokuta Business School, Crescent University, Abeokuta

³Gateway (ICT) Polytechnic Saapade, Ode-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

*For correspondence, email: babatunde.agbi@koladaisiuniversity.edu.ng

Abstract

Apprentice practice such as Adire practice is popular known with Abeokuta (Egba) people. It is a long aging practice in Ogun State, Nigeria. Due to this, this paper examined the level of adire apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis and identified the factors that can influence adire apprenticeship in the trade. The paper adopted survey design using purposive sampling technique to select respondents and administered 300 copies of questionnaire of which 280 were duly completed and retrieved through Kemta Adire Association members within Abeokuta metropolis. The data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Data were analysed using simple frequency tables and descriptive statistics. The finding revealed that 63.2% (M=3.59 and SD=1.516) of the respondents believed that there was high decline level of adire apprenticeship participation among youth in Abeokuta metropolis. Similarly, the study showed that factors such as length of apprenticeship duration 67.2% (Mean=2.23 and SD=1.400), entrepreneurial spirit 74.8% (M=2.09, and SD=1.351) and 66.4% culture (M=2.28 and 1.478) were critical factors in adire apprenticeship practice. The paper recommends that length of adire apprenticeship practice and provision of relevant incentives by the government should be given prompt attention.

Keywords: Apprenticeship Practice, Entrepreneurship, Stakeholders, Small Business, Training.

INTRODUCTION

Apprenticeship is one of the oldest forms of formal vocational learning, dating back to the old days where trainers who were gifted in craft works train others to acquire similar skills. It provides opportunity for individuals especially the young ones to acquire specialised skills that will enable them engage in an economic activity. It involves on the job training, hands-on engagement which provides a platform for skill acquisition and development. The delivery method of this practice has been transformed over the years due to advancement in technology globally, (Lawes, 2020).

In Africa especially Nigeria, apprenticeship is a transferrable skill that are being learnt from the master by apprentices bearing in mind the consent of the parents by mostly youth (Adoga & Uchechi, 2021), It is a practice of culture because method of apprenticeship differs from one culture to another. However, the central focus or point of convergent is that there is a desire to learn a craft or skills such as tailoring, painting, music, among others by the apprentice and there is a mutual agreement between the parties (apprentice and his master) with consent of apprentice parents or guardians, (Akande, 2018).

In Nigeria, apprenticeship has been part and parcel of the historical development of the people aside from formal training methods through education. For instance, each tribe has a way by which apprenticeship is being practice and executed. For instance, the Igbos apprenticeship takes longer years bearing in mind other benefits attached for the meritorious service and commitment of the apprentice in question. In the south west, Yoruba zone and northern part largely populated by the Hausas it is relatively shorter compare to the Igbos. However, the duration depends on the nature, of the skill to be acquired. However, it is believed that in Nigeria, as other African countries, most people have traditionally acquired their skills, knowledge and attitudes from institutions other than formal schools (Haan, 2006; ILO, 2008) cited in (Adeyeye, Falola, Waribo & Akinbode 2015). One of such apprentice practices is adire practice which is known with Egbas ethnic group, in Ogun state, South West Nigeria. The tie-dye generically called *Adire* is the practice where indigo dye cloths are produced. 'Adi', means 'to tie' and 're' which means to dye'; these are Yoruba words used in towns where dyeing techniques is popular (Areo, 2013). Adire patterns are made by pleating of cloth, as affirmed by Hodge (1982), who also states that patterns are made by pleating of the cloth so that the colour is kept from inside of the folds by knotting, and dyeing it or stitching with raffia fiber from banana leaves or thread, (Modibbo & Abubakar, 2015).

However, the practice of adire is perceived to be an integral culture of the Egba (Abeokuta) people in Abeokuta South in Ogun state, South West Nigeria. Madukoma and Ibrahim (2022) noted that observing the cultural routine in a typical family to ensure the passage of the family business to the upcoming children for posterity serves to promote cultural sustainability. In Nigeria there is a worsening unemployment which successive governments in the past decades have designed policies and programmes, through the establishment of various apprenticeship and skill acquisition programmes to support the development of small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs). In spite of all the efforts, poverty and unemployment soars and remained one of the highest in the world. More alarming is the reported 16.36% of youths' unemployment in Ogun state according to (www.statista.com). Several studies on apprenticeship practice in Nigeria have been published. A good number of these studies focused on apprenticeship practice in south east Nigeria while others looked at apprenticeship in generic term and failed to target a specific trade or craft. For instance, Ifeanyi, Onwuchekwa and Dimgba, (2020) looked at the re-engineering of apprenticeship scheme in south east Nigeria while Orogbu, Onyeizugbe and Onuzulike-Chukwuemeka (2021) studied Apprenticeship as tool for entrepreneurial development among Igbo traders. Similarly, Okadi, Onah, Ekenta and Ezhim (2020) investigated the promotion of Apprenticeship as a Panacea for sustainable skill acquisition in Nigeria. This indicates that very little attention has been paid to

apprenticeship practice in other zones including south west including south west, Nigeria and Adire apprenticeship in particular. The study selected Abeokuta, one of the major commercial towns in south west and Adire fabric for which Abeokuta is renowned as it represents a cultural wear for the Yorubas of the south west region. The current study bridges the existing gap in knowledge by articulating the following research objectives: to examine the level of youth participation in Adire Apprenticeship development in Abeokuta metropolis. To investigate the factors influencing Adire Apprenticeship development in Abeokuta metropolis

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of youth participation in apprenticeship practice

Apprenticeship can be described as a way of transmitting values and skills from generation to generation. It involves various forms of skills acquisition, ranging from the traditional craftsperson – apprentice training to modern day designs that integrate education/training institutions and work place training (Okadi et al., 2020). The International Labour Organisation (2012) defines apprenticeship as unique form of technical and vocational training that combines on-the-job skill development with off-the-job learning to become better at particular occupation. It identifies three topologies. This includes traditional, informal and formal apprenticeship training system. Traditional apprenticeship between a master craftsperson and an apprentice are common for skill development. ILO (2012), believes traditional apprenticeship represents the system of skills transmission from a father or mother to a child, including close family members. Informal apprenticeship appears to be more open than traditional apprenticeship and apprentices come from outside the family or kinship group. However, a master craftsman training informal apprentices might also train their own child as traditional apprentices. Adekola (2013) defines informal apprenticeship as a process of learning/skill acquisition through enlistment with a master craftsman. It is a principal form of education for entry into any occupation or profession whereby a young person is apprenticed to a master craftsman who taught him the skills of a vocation and after putting in some years of learning he is allowed to start his own workshop or business. Traditional and informal apprenticeship training possess features which distinguish them from any other forms of education/training. According to Sonnenberg (2012), the system is self – regulating and self – financing, with no established curriculum or formal procedure for the acquisition of skills, with the apprentice learning predominantly on – the – job through observation, imitation and trial, and error method. It is characterized by long duration, low pay, and lacks certification, with its success or failure depending largely on the level of skills and knowledge of the master craftsperson. These characteristic features gave birth to a third typology of apprenticeship – the formal apprenticeship training system. It is a kind of training system where one is trained to learn a skill or trade from an expert in a designated period of time. Traditional apprenticeships were associated with skilled trades like carpentry, electrical work, or plumbing. However, modern apprenticeships can be found in almost all industries, including technology, healthcare, automobile, textile businesses etcetera. Apprenticeship in these areas of endeavours have helped youths acquired skills to become self-employed and creating their own businesses. The key characteristics of an apprenticeship include: on the job training, mentorship or supervision,

learning by doing, combination of practical and theoretical instruction and a focus on developing specific skills or competencies.

Several scholars including Ifeanyi, Onwuchekwa, and Dimgba, (2020); Okadi, et al., (2020) have highlighted the immense benefits in apprenticeship practice especially in contributing to employment generation, poverty reduction, and economic development. Notwithstanding these benefits, it will seem that there is a general decline in apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta Metropolis as it relates to adire making considering the tendency amongst youths to go after engagements such as motor-cycle riding popularly refer to as (okada) and the decline in the number of adire tie and dye practitioners. In recent times Ifeanyi et al., (2020) says there is an unfortunate trend of a decline in apprenticeship practice due to lack of zeal on the part of youths, resulting in unemployment and shortage of manpower. This situation is further reinforced by the inclination among youth for easy money which in their estimation is preferable to engaging in apprenticeship that will take several years. This mindset has affected apprenticeship practice in the adire tie and dye which has resulted in fewer youths in Abeokuta signing up for the apprenticeship practice.

Factors Influencing Adire Apprenticeship Practice in Abeokuta Metropolis

A decline in the number of youths embracing adire apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta Metropolis has been observed. This is similar to the report of Osuizugbo, Kukoyi and Abisuga (2022) who reported the general decline in the number of people registering for craft practices in several countries. However, the study identified some factors that could influence youth participation in adire apprenticeship practice. These include, spirit of entrepreneurship which is the desire to be self-employed. This could serve as influence for youths to embrace Adire Apprenticeship practice. The increase in unemployment rate amongst youths in Nigeria is traceable to poor entrepreneurial spirit (Agbi & Adeniyi, 2023). Another factor is availability of role model (e.g. parents, family members, friends among others) that could serve as both mentor and coach. Role model has been defined as a person who is perceived by others as worthy of imitation and who may or may not have personal contact with the people who perceive him/her as a role model (Hurd, Wittrup, & Zimmerman, 2011). Incentive is another factor that influences Adire Apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis. This could include anything put in place to stimulate someone to perform better or to be more devoted to his or her task faithfully. Incentives such as stipends or a promise to provide seed funding at the completion of the apprenticeship could serve as a stimulus to become an apprentice. This is a common practice in the Igbo apprenticeship practice popularly known as “Igba Boi”, “Imu-Ahia”, or “Imu-Oru” in Igbo language (Eze, 2023). Duration is also a factor in influencing Adire Apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis. The period required to learn a skill in apprenticeship training is depended on whether one will choose to be an apprentice or not. An unnecessarily long apprenticeship period of say 8 – 10 years may likely lead to weariness, frustration and possible abandonment. However, a reasonably moderate period of 2 – 3 years could encourage youths to sign up. In the Adire Apprenticeship practice, a period of not more than 2 years could be appropriate. Age, plays a role in influencing Apprenticeship practice. This is so because Apprenticeship which is training exercise is no respecter of age. A prospective Apprentice maybe reluctant to sign up for Apprenticeship practice if he or she

perceives that the trainer is junior in age. This is relevant especially in cultural society such as Abeokuta where age is accorded respect. Some elderly people or even youths may believe that they are above the age of Apprenticeship for fear of being treated with disrespect or may not be able to learn fast.

Theoretical framework

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

The study adopted the social learning theory in the understanding of the Adire Apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis. The social learning theory, proposed by Bandura (1977) in Alberta, Canada, presents a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals acquire knowledge and skills through observation, imitation, and modelling. This theory bridges behaviourist and cognitive learning theories, incorporating attention, memory, and motivation as crucial factors in the learning process (Bergh & Theron, 2006). In relation to this study, the social learning theory helps to explain the Adire Apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis, where individuals learn the trade by closely observing and imitating their masters. This process of learning by doing is highly valuable, as it enables apprentices to gain practical experience and refine their skills under the guidance of skilled practitioners. By keenly observing the actions and techniques of their masters, apprentices can acquire valuable insights and techniques that contribute to their growth and development. While the master's teaching approach may not align with modern instructive principles, the apprenticeship program facilitates the training process. The SLT core components of observation, imitation and modelling resonates very well with the structured environment of the Adire Apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis. The apprentices learn from their masters, ask questions, seek clarifications, and engage in discussions to deepen their understanding. This dynamic interaction between the apprentice and the master fosters an immersive learning experience beyond passive observation. Bandura's social learning theory encompasses four fundamental components: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Attention refers to the apprentice's focused observation of the master's actions, paying close attention to the details and intricacies of the Adire making. Retention involves retaining the observed behaviours and techniques in memory for future application during production of Adire. The reproduction component entails applying the acquired knowledge and skills in practical situations and engaging in the Adire making with increasing competence. Motivation is critical in sustaining the apprentices' commitment to learning and drive to excel, providing the impetus for continuous improvement and growth (Kings, 2005). The SLT, as proposed by Bandura, present a valued understanding of the Adire Apprenticeship system despite some apparent shortcomings. It highlights the importance of observational learning, where apprentices acquire knowledge and skills by observing and imitating their masters. Bandura's theory recognizes the integration of cognitive and behavioural factors, highlighting the cognitive processes and decision-making involved in the apprenticeship process. Moreover, the theory's emphasis on motivation to sheds light on the commitment and dedication displayed by apprentices, driven by the desire for mastery and entrepreneurial success. Many sociologists have critiqued social learning theory for failing to account for individual differences in learning and behaviour adequately. Critics argue that the theory overlooks the role of innate traits, personality factors,

and genetic predispositions in shaping human behaviour (Bergh & Theron, 2006). Additionally, the theory tends to oversimplify complex behaviours by attributing them solely to observational learning, neglecting other influential factors such as biological, cultural, and contextual elements (Wang & Shi, 2020). However, it is essential to acknowledge that social learning theory still offers valuable insights, particularly in the context of observational learning and skill acquisition for the Adire Apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Abeokuta, south west Nigeria. The population of the study comprises of the 710 registered Adire sellers/apprentice in Abeokuta metropolis (Kemta Adire Association, 2023). A multi-staged sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of the study. This was carried out in three stages. According to Chukwuemeka (2002), multi-stage sampling is somewhat the combination of the other sampling techniques. The first stage was the selection of sellers and apprentice using purposive or judgmental sampling. Judgmental sampling is a non-probability sampling that makes use of typical cases among the population to be studied which the researcher believes will provide him or her with the necessary data needed (Michael, Des-Oparaku, & Oparaku, 2012). The second stage was a sub-sampling also called a two-stage sampling. This involved a random selection of Adire sellers and Apprentice. In the third stage otherwise called the three-stage sampling, the simple random sampling technique was also used to select three hundred sellers and Apprentice. In the final analysis, a total of three hundred (300) were selected. Out of the 300 only 280 completed and return the questionnaire.

The study explored mainly the primary data, which were obtained from the respondents using structured questionnaire. Secondary sources of literature for the study were obtained from existing literature in the field of study which were available to the researcher; they are: journals, books and internet materials.

The data collection instrument was the questionnaire which was designed and administered to the Adire sellers and Apprentice. The questionnaire was title: Apprenticeship Practice and Development of Adire Business in Abeokuta Metropolis

The questionnaire has two sections. Section A and Section B. Section A sought information on demographic profile of the respondents. Section B was made up of items designed to elicit information relating to apprenticeship practice and development of Adire business in Abeokuta metropolis. Using a close ended question and a five (5) point Likert summative scale question of Strongly Agree (SD) 5 points; Agree (A); 4 points; Neutral (N) 3 points; Disagree (D) 2 points; and Strongly Disagree 1 point.

The questions asked were to elicit responses that will address the research objectives. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation). The demographic profiles were processed using descriptive statistics. All the analyses were done using SPSS version 26.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The paper analysis is categorised into demographic, participation and factor analysis. Here, the study presents and analyses each of the research question raised in earlier using some of the vital data gathered from the respondents of the paper.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Constructs		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	100	35.7
	Female	180	64.3
	Total	280	100.0
Age	18-25	58	20.7
	26-34	50	17.9
	35-44	91	32.5
	45-54	31	11.1
	55-Above	50	17.9
	Total	280	100.0
Education	Primary	55	19.6
	SSCE	95	33.9
	ND	47	16.8
	HND/BSc	76	27.1
	None	7	2.5
	Total	280	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 indicates that 35.7% (100) were male and 64.3% (180) were female based on the respondents' gender. For age, the table shows that 25.2% (38) are from age bracket 18-25, 20.7% (58), age bracket 26-34, 17.9% (50) age bracket 35-44, 32.5% (91) age bracket 45-54 11.1% (31) and age bracket 51 – above, 17.9% (50). For education, Primary 19.6% (55), SSCE 33.9% (95), ND 16.8% (47), HND/B.Sc 27.1% (76) and none 2.7% (7) based on education cadre of the respondents. Finally, on demographic variable, 33.9% (95) practice Christianity, 56.4% (158) practice Islam, and 9.6% (27) practice traditional religion.

Table 2: Level of participation in adire apprenticeship in Abeokuta

Constructs	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
I believe there is high level of youth participation in the Adire apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis	43 15.4%	41 14.6%	19 6.8%	60 21.4	117 41.8%	3.5964	1.51622
I believe youths in Abeokuta metropolis are willing to sign up for Adire apprenticeship practice	45 16.1%	38 13.6%	32 11.4%	85 30.3%	80 28.6%	3.1575	1.2854

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 indicates that 30.0% (84) agree that there is high level of youth participation in adire apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis while 63.2% (177) disagree with the statement. Similarly, it shows that M=3.5964 while SD=1.51622 reflect the perception that there is a decline in youth participation in the adire apprenticeship practice

Table 3. Factors influencing adire apprenticeship training in Abeokuta

Constructs	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D
I believe that factor like length of duration and unwillingness to learn on the part of apprentices are always influencing apprenticeship training.	120 42.9%	68 24.3%	3 10.7%	29 10.4%	33 11.8%	2.2393	1.40016
Entrepreneurial spirit and relevance are a crucial factor in encouraging adire apprenticeship practice	132 47.1%	72 25.7%	23 8.2%	24 8.6%	29 10.4%	2.0929	1.35147
I believe that age and incentive influence apprenticeship practice	125 44.6%	61 21.8%	21 7.5%	34 12.1%	39 13.9%	2.2893	1.47812

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The Table 1. indicates that 67.2% (188) agree that duration and willingness to learn influence adire apprenticeship training in Abeokuta metropolis. Similarly, the findings show that entrepreneurial spirit and relevance positively influence adire apprentice practice by returning 72.8% (204) agreement while 19.0% disagree. This high percentage of agreement clearly show the importance of these factors in influencing adire apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis. In terms of mean and standard deviation, it revealed that length of duration and

unwillingness on the part of the apprentice was (M=2.2393, SD=1.40016), Entrepreneurial spirit and relevance (M=2.0929, SD=1.35147), while age and incentive have a score of (M=2.2893, SD=1.47812).

Discussion of Findings

The level of youth participation in adire apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis

The study revealed that majority of the respondents disagreed that there was high level of youth participation in adire apprenticeship practice among youth in Abeokuta Metropolis. The findings showed that 63.2% agree that there was a decline in youth participation in adire apprenticeship in the society. This outcome is in alignment with the study conducted by Fajobi et al., (2017). Therefore, the current declining rate in apprenticeship calls for urgent attention in other reverse the trend before it gets worse. On duration of apprenticeship, the study's finding is supported by African Business (2021) position that the length of apprenticeship training is taking much time and could lead to weariness and abandonment of the apprenticeship. On factors that influence adire apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta Metropolis

The study revealed that majority of the respondents at 67.2% agree that of duration of apprenticeship and willingness to learn influence adire apprenticeship training in Abeokuta. The analysis indicates a descriptive statistic of mean=2.23 and SD=1.400. The moderate standard deviation suggests that the outcome has some variability, but not excessively spread out.

Meanwhile, in the aspect of entrepreneurial spirit and relevance the study revealed that 72.8% believed that they influence adire apprenticeship practice in Abeokuta metropolis. Meanwhile, the descriptive statistics M=2.09, and SD=1.351 is consistent with the level of agreement.

However, from the perspective of culture and age, the finding revealed that 66.4% are in agreement that culture and age influence the desire to sign up for in adire apprentice practice. This buttressed Adeyeye, Falola, Waribo & Akinbode (2015) in cited in Haan (2006) and ILO (2008) that the success of the Igbos apprenticeship system cannot be divorced the Igbo culture. In another study Umameiye and Iyamu, (2002) reported that in some indigenous societies in Nigeria, there are cultural practices which encourage every male born into a family is 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.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the findings, it is clear that adire apprenticeship practice notwithstanding its numerous benefits such as creation of employment, promotion of indigenous product, creating opportunities, among other benefits is currently experiencing a decline in Abeokuta metropolis. The study concludes that adire making which presents an avenue to project the Yoruba culture should be encouraged for sustainability.

- That length of duration of apprenticeship need to be shorten between 2-3 years to enhance the interest of teeming youth to participate in adire apprenticeship practice.

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- The Government of Ogun state should show more than a passing interest in Adire apprentice practice as a way of creating employment for the youths and the development of small businesses. In this regard specific policy that will encourage youths to sign up for apprenticeship practice should be put in place
- On the part of trainers, there should be desire and willingness to wanting to learn without been forced to do so.
- Parents should encourage their children to embrace Adire apprenticeship practice as legitimate means of earning income. This preferable to allowing them to be roaming the streets or getting involved in nefarious activities.

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