

Strategic Orientation and self-Employment of Informal Apprenticeship Graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study examined strategic orientation and self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria. It specifically focused on the influence of entrepreneurial and market orientation on self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates. A descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised 202 auto mobile mechanical craftsperson in the 5 Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District. From the total population of the study 132 auto mobile mechanical craftsperson were sampled. Data for the study was collected with the means of a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. Data collected was analysed with mean and standard deviation. Analysis of the data collected revealed that both entrepreneurial and market orientation to a very large extent have positive influence on self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates. Consequently, it was concluded that strategic orientation plays significant role in self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates. Based on the findings, it was recommended that: master craftsperson should create opportunities for apprentice to acquire the knowledge of entrepreneurial and market orientation towards the end of their apprenticeship programme; and government should make the acquisition of the knowledge of strategic orientation on of the requirements of issuing trade test certificate in Nigeria.

Keywords: Strategic orientation, Self-employment, Apprenticeship Graduates, Entrepreneurial Orientation, and Market Orientation

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important pillars that have major implications for an organization's activities and performance is strategy. Having a strategy helps organizations find solutions to problems, create new capabilities, and improve business performance by allowing organizations and the managers to gather specific resources, recognize opportunities for providing valued products and services, and to convey those products and services for higher profits. Strategic orientation is an indication of the direction in which a business wants to or should go in the future, and how well it is set up to do so. It is how a company operates and uses its resources, decision-making style, and approach. Subin and Heiman (2016), see strategic orientation as a potential element for the management to acquire knowledge about new product development with determination to improve abilities of new product development teams to launch an efficient new product. In other words, it refers to the pattern of responses that an organization makes to its operating environment to enhance performance and gain competitive advantage. Company adopts a strategic orientation to achieve high performance based on the response and reshaping of the real environment. Seet et al (2021) divides strategic orientation into entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation.

Entrepreneurial orientation is a form of strategic orientation that is concerned with the entrepreneurial aspects of a firm's strategy. It determines a firm's willingness to stay ahead of its competitors and to take advantage of new opportunities to engage in innovation in an

uncertain environment. According to Zehir, Can and Karaboga (2015), entrepreneurial orientation is an organization's willingness to find and accept new opportunities and implementing change as a result. It is the processes, practices, and decision-making styles of organizations that act entrepreneurially. Entrepreneurial orientation is a key concept when executives are crafting strategies in the hopes of doing something new and exploiting opportunities that other organizations cannot exploit. The core elements of entrepreneurial orientation are innovativeness, risk-taking, and foresight. According to Mishra (2017), the key for entrepreneurial firms to gain a competitive advantage lies in uniquely and continuously innovating, even though risks accompany. Entrepreneurial orientation allows firms to compete in the industry by taking risks, choosing innovation, and making changes for competitive advantages. According to D'angelo and Presutti (2019), organizations that implement entrepreneurial orientation in a dynamic competitive environment can better alter their way of business than those that do not.

Market orientation is an approach to business that prioritizes identifying the needs and desires of consumers and creating products and services that satisfy them. Shapiro (2018) defined market orientation as a managerial decision-making practice with a commitment shared within the organization. Market orientation is a crucial strategy that helps organizations stay competitive in today's uncertain business environment. Market orientation is both a marketing concept and a management strategy. According to various scholars, practitioners, and researchers, market orientation assists in developing marketing knowledge, superior performance, and competitive advantage. Narver et al (2014) provide an in-depth analysis of the connotation of market orientation, divided into two dimensions: reactive market orientation and pre-emptive market orientation. Reactive market orientation focuses on the existing market structure and the current needs of consumers. It discourages the proactive search for other opportunities to meet customers' unperceived needs. In contrast, pre-emptive market orientation seeks to meet customers' potential needs and emphasizes that firms should innovate their products by exploring the potential needs of consumers (Andreou et al., 2020).

Informal apprenticeship is an informal system of skills transfer from a master craftsman to a young apprentice who acquires skills by way of observation, imitation and repetition while

collaborating with the master craftsman. International Labour Organization (2021) sees informal apprenticeship as the system by which a young learner (the apprentice) acquires the skills for a trade or craft in a micro or small enterprise learning and working side by side with an experienced craftsman. Apprentice and master craftsman conclude a training agreement that is embedded in local norms and traditions of a society. Costs of training are shared between apprentice and master craftsman. The master craftsman agrees to invest time and resources to train the apprentice at his or her enterprise or workshop. The apprentice agrees to join the master craftsman's business, to contribute to the work for a certain period and accepts compensation below his or her productivity level.

Apprenticeship whether formal or informal play significant role in any society as it is designed to create job and entrepreneurship that will enhance personal income, national economic growth and development. Employment generation is the ability of the economic system to give job to persons who are willing and capable of working in a particular sector of the economy. An economy that generates more employment reduces the level of unemployment. Several factors generate employment, key among them is, technology, resource availability, infrastructure and manpower development, of which apprenticeship is a component. Obi and Agha (2016) maintained that apprenticeship contributions are evidenced towards economic growth, employment creation, poverty reduction and development of industrial base. Despite the meaningful contributions of apprenticeship to the economic growth and development of nations of the world, the scheme seems not to have been taken seriously in Nigeria context, as most Nigerian apprenticeship graduates do not work with the skills acquired in the apprenticeship programmes. Hence, this paper seeks to examine strategic orientation and self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Apprenticeship plays significant role in the growth and development of any nation as it is designed to create job and entrepreneurship that will enhance personal income, national economic growth, and development. Achugo and Chigbo (2014) noted that the Nigerian economic environment is yearning for entrepreneurs who would through apprenticeship practices exhibit creative and innovative abilities laced with the

willingness to create enterprises that the unemployed will be willing to offer their services since the demand for white collar jobs has increased more than the available job opportunities. The dream of having creative and innovative entrepreneurs through apprenticeship practices seems not to have been realised as most people who successfully completed apprenticeship programmes end up not using the skill they acquired, due to their inability to set up workshop as well as market their skills, instead, they give preference to making daily income through unskilled jobs like the use of bike for transportation popularly called ‘Okada’ and other unskilled jobs. These problems have increased the rate of unemployment which in turn has increase poverty rate in the country. It is against this backdrop the study seeks to examine strategic orientation and self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine strategic orientation and self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study include the following.

1. To examine the influence of entrepreneurial orientation on self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District.
2. To examine the influence of market orientation on self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study.

1. To what extent do entrepreneurial orientation influence self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do market orientation influence self-employment of informal apprenticeship

graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would be of significance to the government, and apprentice. The findings of the study would be of benefit to the government as it will encourage informal apprenticeship graduates to set up their shops which in turn would reduce the rate of unemployment in the country.

The findings of the study would also be of importance to the apprentice as the findings would encourage government to create the enabling environment for the apprentice to acquire the entrepreneurial and market orientation which in turn would facilitate the informal apprenticeship graduates’ ability to set up their shops without fear of failure.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study included: content scope, geographical scope and unit scope. The content scope is limited to the specific objectives of the study. The geographical scope is limited to Edo Central Senatorial District. The unit scope is limited to master crafts persons of auto-mechanic workshops in the study area.

Methodology

Design of the Study

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. According to Singh (2023), descriptive research is an exploratory research method that helps a researcher describe a population, circumstance, or phenomenon. The design is suitable for the study as the study explored the facts pertaining the influence of strategic orientation on self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates.

Population of the study

The population of the study is made up of 202 (two hundred and two) auto mobile mechanical crafts person in the 5 (five) Local Government Areas of Edo Central Senatorial District. The population distribution of respondents is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: Population Distribution of Respondent

Local Government Area	Population
Esan Central Local Government Area	32
Esan North/East Local Government Area	57
Esan South/East Local Government Area	36
Esan West Local Government Area	48
Igueben Local Government Area	29
Total	202

Source:Auto Mobile Mechanic Association of each Local Government Area

Sample and Sampling Technique

From the total population of the study 132 (one hundred and thirty-two) auto mobile mechanical craftsperson were sampled. The sample size was determined with Krejcie and Morgan table of sample size determination. The sample size was taken with stratified random sampling technique. It

was performed by proportionately dividing the sample size in line with the population in each local government area. Thereafter, convenience sampling technique was used to collect data from the respondents. The sample distribution of respondents is presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Sample Distribution of Respondents

Local Government Area	Population	Sample
Esan Central Local Government Area	32	21
Esan North/East Local Government Area	57	37
Esan South/East Local Government Area	36	24
Esan West Local Government Area	48	31
Igueben Local Government Area	29	19
Total	202	132

Source:Auto Mobile Mechanic Association of each Local Government Area, computed by the Researchers

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained a cover letter and two sections (A & B). The cover letter was used to appeal for the maximum cooperation of the respondents, section 'A' contained the personal data of the respondents, and section 'B' contained 8 (eight) structured items with response options of scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE).

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by two measurement and evaluation professionals. Their comments and corrections were considered in the final draft of the instrument to ensure its face, content and construct validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined with test re-test. It was performed by administering the instrument to 8 (eight) respondents on two different occasions within a space of two weeks. The results of the two tests were compared using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient formulae, and a coefficient of 0.96 was obtained which makes the instrument highly reliable.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the study was collected through physical contact with the respondents. 132 (one hundred and thirty-two) copies of questionnaire were distributed, and 108 (one hundred and eight) copies were returned.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected was analysed with mean and standard deviation. Decision was made by comparing calculated mean scores with the criteria mean obtained from the computation of average scores of the four scales of the research instrument used in the study. A mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted and a mean score less than 2.50 was rejected.

II. RESULTS

Analysis of Research Questions

Analysis of Research Question one

To what extent do entrepreneurial orientation influence self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria?

In response to the above research question, item 1 to 5 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents was analysed. The result of the analysis is presented in table three below.

Table 3: Mean Analysis of the Influence of Entrepreneurial Orientation on Self-employment of Informal Apprenticeship Graduates

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	The tendency to bring forth ideas see them through completion encourages self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates.	2.93	1.051	Accepted
2.	The tendency to intensely and directly challenge rivals encourage self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates.	2.96	1.097	Accepted
3.	The tendency to pursue novel ideas, creative process and experimentation encourage self-employment of apprenticeship graduates.	2.85	0.931	Accepted
4.	The tendency to anticipate and act on future opportunities encourage self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates.	2.92	0.924	Accepted
5.	The tendency to take bold actions encourage self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates.	2.98	0.991	Accepted
	Collective Mean	2.93	0.999	Accepted

Source: Field work 2024

The above table revealed a calculated collective mean of 2.93 which is above the mean benchmark of 2.50 ($2.93 > 2.50$). Since the calculated collective mean is greater than the mean benchmark, it is accepted that entrepreneurial orientation to a very high extent has positive influence on self-employment of informal apprenticeship.

Analysis of Research Question two

To what extent do market orientation influence self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria?

In response to the above research question, item 6 to 8 of the questionnaire administered to the respondents was analysed. The result of the analysis is presented in table four below.

Table 4: Mean Analysis of the Influence of Market Orientation on Self-employment of Informal Apprenticeship Graduates

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	Putting the needs of the customer over the need of the business encourages self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates.	2.91	0.977	Accepted
2.	The desire to beat others in same business even at the expense of profitability encourages self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates.	2.92	0.894	Accepted
3.	The tendency to collaborate with customers encourages self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates.	2.93	0.979	Accepted
	Collective Mean	2.92	0.950	Accepted

Source: Field work 2024

The above table revealed a calculated collective mean of 2.92 which is above the mean benchmark of 2.50 ($2.92 > 2.50$). Since the calculated collective mean is greater than the mean benchmark, it is accepted that market orientation to a very high extent has positive influence on self-employment of informal apprenticeship.

III. CONCLUSION

The study examined strategic orientation and self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria. It specifically focused on the influence of entrepreneurial and market orientation on self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates. A descriptive analysis of the data collected from the area of study revealed that both entrepreneurial and market orientation to a very high extent have positive influence on self-employment of informal apprenticeship graduates. Generally, it is concluded that strategic orientation plays significant role in self-employment of informal apprentice graduates.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Master craftsperson should create opportunities for apprentice to acquire the knowledge of entrepreneurial and market orientation towards the end of their apprenticeship programme.
2. Government should make the acquisition of the knowledge of strategic orientation on of the requirements of issuing trade test certificate in Nigeria.

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