

IMPROVING MANPOWER AND SKILL ACQUISITION CHALLENGES OF YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN TEXTILE AND CLOTHING ESTABLISHMENTS

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Abstract

The study identified: manpower and skill acquisition challenges of young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments, strategies for meeting these challenges, manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs who took courses in business and entrepreneurship compared to those that did not acquire such trainings, manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs whose parents are textile and clothing entrepreneurs compared to those whose parents are not. A survey research design was used for the study. The population for the study was 598 while the sample was 239 entrepreneurs. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analysed using the mean. Major findings include that young entrepreneurs have problems with hiring experienced managers who are able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship involves recognising a business opportunity, mobilizing resources and persisting to exploit that opportunity. According to Ombugadu, (2007), entrepreneurship helps to develop a pool of potential entrepreneurs who are well equipped with skills and technical know-how to manage small medium scale industries. An entrepreneur, according to Samson and Little (1998), is a person who organizes and manages a business undertaking, assumes the risk of failure or gains the benefit of success in the business. This means that an entrepreneur is one who is able to begin, sustain, and when necessary, effectively and efficiently dissolve a business entity.

Bolton and Thompson (2003) explained that an entrepreneur is an ordinary person with a particular set of talents and temperament to match, and Lavania (2004) added that the ability to be an entrepreneur is inherited and is displayed by a minority in any population. An entrepreneur sees an opportunity, makes a plan, starts the business, manages the business, and receives the profits. They identify changes and opportunities within the economic system, devise means to capture the opportunities and implement changes to boost the economy from those opportunities by carrying out new combinations of ideas.

When an entrepreneur lacks the skills to achieve these in an establishment, it becomes a big challenge to the entrepreneur. The situation is also made worse when there is total lack of manpower in the establishment who can help the young entrepreneur to manage such changes. That was why Lavania (2004)

pointed out the fact that there is need for the availability of knowledgeable partners who can run a successful entrepreneurship after its initial stage. Of course Samson and Little (1998) stressed that locating and hiring the most qualified personnel available is a very real problem to an entrepreneur, especially to young textile and clothing entrepreneurs.

The age in which a person is considered a "youth", and thus eligible for special treatment under the law in different societies varies around the world (Wikipedia, 2009). For the purpose of this research, the youth are males and females, educated or not and their family backgrounds notwithstanding, they are those individuals who are thirty-five years and below. In Nigeria, many textile and clothing establishments can be initiated by these young people. This is because they are the people who are still strong enough to execute some difficult tasks; they still have the zest and the zeal to earn their living in life as long as there are no impediments and challenges on their way.

If these groups of individuals can be trained to develop both their business management and vocational skills, it will go along way helping them in their entrepreneurship endeavours and thereby help in the improvement of the national economy. That is why it is important for the results of this study to be utilized since that will be highly beneficial to the Nigerian educational system. This is because the identified strategies can be inculcated in the teaching-learning situations in schools which will help to equip more young entrepreneurs with skills that can help to encourage them to go into entrepreneurships. It will also equip them with the knowledge on how to face different manpower and skill acquisition challenges that can arise as they establish their own businesses in order to thrive in such establishments.

Statement of the Problem

Successful entrepreneurships hinge upon the possession of a set of skills, and Lavania (2004) added that entrepreneurship is a skill that not everyone possesses. These skills can be in the identification of the specific wants of the people and the possession of knowledge of how to satisfy those wants. In a country like Nigeria, lack of academic preparation, specific job skills, and employment or self-employment prospects remain a barrier for significant proportions of the population of young entrepreneurs. Jameel (2009) explained that when certain young people have the desire to start a business, that they often lack the training and experience to put their ideas into practice. This was why the main problems facing young entrepreneurs compared with small businesses in general include inadequate business management and vocational skills. Inadequate vocational skill remains a big problem facing young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments.

Vocational skill, according to Clayton (2000) is an ability that comes from training and practice. Mahinda (2004) reported that because of inadequate vocational trainings of young people they had never imagined themselves as

entrepreneurs. This issue is worsened in Nigeria where students are trained just to pass examinations, that is why Mahinda (2004) emphasized that there is a need for life skills training to be inculcated in the education curriculum. This is because education, according to Onu (2006), is essential in bringing up an entrepreneur, and in Nigeria, education is yet to be used in bringing up young entrepreneurs that can possess enough skills to manage their textile and clothing establishments in the present economic situation of the nation.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to identify the manpower and skill acquisition challenges of young entrepreneurs. Specifically, the study identified:

1. manpower and skill acquisition challenges of young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments
2. strategies for meeting these manpower and skill acquisition challenges

Research Questions

The study sort answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments in Lagos State?
2. What are the strategies for meeting the manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments in Lagos State?

Hypotheses

The research was guided by the following hypotheses which were tested at 0.05 levels of significance

- There is no significant difference between the manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs who took courses in business and entrepreneurship and those that did not acquire such trainings.
- There is no significant difference between the manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs whose parents are textile and clothing entrepreneurs and those whose parents are not.

Methodology

Design of the Study: A survey research design was used in this study to identify the manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments in Lagos State. A survey research design was used because data was collected from a representative of the entire population.

Area of Study: The study was conducted in Lagos State. Lagos is divided into five *Administrative Divisions*, which are further divided into thirty-seven *Local*

Government Areas. This study was conducted specifically in three Local Government Administrative Divisions of Lagos state; these are the Lagos Division, Ikeja Division and Badagry Division. These areas were chosen because they contained the major cities of Lagos state and they also contain a good population of textile and clothing entrepreneurs in their establishments.

Population of the Study: The population for this study is five hundred and ninety-eight (598). These are the total number of textile and clothing entrepreneurs that were taken note of by the Local Government Administrative Divisions of Lagos State. These individuals were chosen because they are in a better position to explain the situations of young entrepreneurs in textiles and clothing establishments.

Sample and Sampling Technique: A simple random sampling technique was used to select 239 entrepreneurs from Lagos, Ikeja and Badagry Local Government Administrative Divisions of Lagos state.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. It was developed based on the purpose of the study and intensive review of literature. It contained eighteen questions and was validated by five experts in Vocational Teacher Education Department of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Test-retest reliability was used to test the reliability of the instrument on ten textile and clothing entrepreneurs in Nsukka. Two weeks interval was given between the two tests. The coefficient of reliability was calculated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. A high correlation of +.90 was obtained for the two sets of scores.

Method of Data Collection: The instrument was administered with the help of three field assistants. The mode of administration of the questionnaire was face to face or on the spot. The questionnaires were completed and returned on the spot. Proper guidance was given to textile and clothing entrepreneurs where there was need for that.

Method of Data Analysis: Data was organised using frequency distribution and the mean was used for data analysis. The mean scores were used to determine the perceived importance level expressed on a 4-point Likert scale for each of the items. A mean rating of 2.50 was used for decision making. This means that a mean score of 2.50 and above for any item was considered to be accepted by the respondents and if otherwise the item was considered to be rejected.

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Data Presentations

Information gathered from the study was shown in tables 1 to 4.

Table 1: Mean Responses of Respondents on Manpower and Skill Acquisition Challenges of Young Entrepreneurs in Textile and Clothing Establishments in Lagos State (N=239)

S/N	Manpower and skill acquisition challenges	X ⁻	Remark
1	Young people, who desire to start a business, lack the training and experience to put their ideas into practice.	2.40	Rejected
2	Lack of managerial skills	3.72	Accepted
3	Inability to locate and hire the most qualified textiles and clothing personnel	4.78	Accepted
4	Inability to hire experienced managers who are able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria	4.02	Accepted
5	Ineffective communication with the workers	3.43	Accepted
6	Lack of leadership skills	2.50	Accepted
7	Inadequate human relations skills	3.66	Accepted
8	Inadequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment	2.55	Accepted
9	Absence of life skills training to be inculcated in the education curriculum	3.51	Accepted

Information in table 1 shows that young entrepreneurs lack managerial and leadership skills. There are inadequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment and young entrepreneurs are unable to hire qualified textile and clothing personals. They are also not able to hire experienced managers in their establishments and they are ineffective in communicating with their workers. They lack adequate human relations skills and there is a total absence of life skills trainings in the education curriculum.

Table 2: Mean Responses of Respondents on Strategies for Meeting the Manpower and Skill Acquisition Challenges of Young Entrepreneurs (N=239)

S/N	Strategies	X ⁻	Remark
1	Entrepreneurship development programmes for young entrepreneurs should be initiated by religious organisations	3.77	Accepted
2	Young entrepreneurs should acquire adequate management and administrative skills	2.86	Accepted
3	Schools should provide suitable vocational training for prospective clothing and textile entrepreneurs	4.68	Accepted
4	Inculcating life skills training in the education curriculum	3.51	Accepted
5	Provision of adequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment	4.56	Accepted
6	Schools should host seminars and workshops to provide young entrepreneurs with adequate leadership trainings	3.88	Accepted
7	Young entrepreneurs should improve communication with their workers	3.00	Accepted
8	Schools should organise schools-based enterprise competitions	3.48	Accepted
9	Experienced entrepreneurs should provide assistance to young entrepreneurs in order to hire experienced managers who will be able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria	4.23	Accepted

Table 2 shows nine strategies that could be used in meeting the manpower and skill acquisition challenges of these young entrepreneurs. The first strategy is that entrepreneurship development programmes for young entrepreneurs should be initiated by religious organisations. Schools should also provide suitable vocational trainings and organise schools-based enterprise competitions for prospective clothing and textile entrepreneurs. Another strategy is that life skills trainings should be inculcated in the education curriculum and adequate vocational training centres provided to equip youths in particular for self-employments. Young entrepreneurs should improve communication with

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their workers and schools should also host seminars and workshops to provide young entrepreneurs with adequate leadership trainings. Experienced entrepreneurs should provide assistance to young entrepreneurs in order for them to hire experienced managers who will be able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Manpower and Skill Acquisition Challenges faced by Young Entrepreneurs Who Took Courses in Business and Entrepreneurships and Those That Did Not Acquire Such Trainings

S/ N	Manpower and skill acquisition challenges	\bar{X}_1	S ₁	\bar{X}_2	S ₂	t-cal	Remark
1	Young people, who desire to start a business, lack the training and experience to put their ideas into practice.	2.48	1.54	2.20	1.55	0.55	N.S
2	Lack of managerial skills	3.18	1.64	3.7	1.49	-1.04	N.S
3	Inability to locate and hire the most qualified textiles and clothing personnel	3.71	1.50	4.10	1.45	-0.81	N.S
4	Inability to hire experienced managers who are able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria	3.53	1.54	3.50	1.58	0.06	N.S
5	Ineffective communication with the workers	2.41	1.49	2.60	1.35	-0.42	N.S
6	Lack of leadership skills	2.43	1.61	2.70	1.42	-0.57	N.S
7	Inadequate human relations skills	2.98	1.62	2.40	1.43	1.21	N.S
8	Inadequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment	2.46	1.58	3.60	1.43	-2.38	S
9	Absence of life skills training to be inculcated in the education curriculum	3.64	1.61	2.20	1.40	3.06	S

Analysis in table 3 shows that young entrepreneurs who took courses in business and entrepreneurship and those that did not acquire such trainings have similar experiences in items 1 to 7. Their experiences differ in items 8 and 9.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Manpower and Skill Acquisition Challenges faced by Young Entrepreneurs Whose Parents are Textile and Clothing Entrepreneurs and Those Whose Parents are Not

S/N	Manpower and skill acquisition challenges	\bar{X}_1	S_1	\bar{X}_2	S_2	t-cal	Remark
1	Young people, who desire to start a business, lack the training and experience to put their ideas into practice.	1.85	1.30	3.31	1.62	-5.62	S
2	Lack of managerial skills	3.74	1.49	3.71	1.50	0.11	N.S
3	Inability to locate and hire the most qualified textiles and clothing personnel	3.90	1.53	3.36	1.70	1.80	N.S
4	Inability to hire experienced managers who are able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria	3.40	1.63	2.60	1.61	2.67	S
5	Ineffective communication with the workers	2.58	1.52	3.12	1.57	-1.93	N.S
6	Lack of leadership skills	2.94	1.64	3.33	1.59	-1.30	N.S
7	Inadequate human relations skills	3.56	1.46	2.81	1.59	2.68	S
8	Inadequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment	2.06	1.38	3.29	1.60	-4.73	S
9	Absence of life skills training to be inculcated in the education curriculum	3.74	1.51	2.91	1.67	2.96	S

In table 4 above, it was shown that young entrepreneurs whose parents are textile and clothing entrepreneurs and those whose parents are not share similar experiences in items 2, 3, 5, and 6. They have different experiences in items 1, 4, 7, 8, and 9.

Findings: Based on the analysis shown in the tables above, the following findings were made:

1. Manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments include lack of managerial skills, inability to locate and hire the most qualified textiles and clothing personnel, inability to hire experienced managers who are able to manage changes in the economic

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situations of Nigeria, ineffective communication with the workers, lack of leadership skills, inadequate human relations skills, inadequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment, and, absence of life skills training to be inculcated in the education curriculum.

2. Strategies for meeting these challenges include the following: entrepreneurship development programmes for young entrepreneurs should be initiated by religious organisations, young entrepreneurs should acquire adequate management and administrative skills, schools should provide suitable vocational trainings for prospective clothing and textile entrepreneurs, inculcating life skills training in the education curriculum, provision of adequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment, schools should host seminars and workshops to provide young entrepreneurs with adequate leadership trainings, young entrepreneurs should improve communication with their workers, schools should organise schools-based enterprise competitions, and, experienced entrepreneurs should provide assistance to young entrepreneurs in order to hire experienced managers who will be able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria.
3. The results in table three above showed that those two different groups of young entrepreneurs have the same kinds of experiences for items 1 to 7 and different experiences for items 8 and 9.
4. Experiences of young entrepreneurs whose parents are textile and clothing entrepreneurs and those whose parents are not were not significant in items 2, 3, 5, and 6 and were significant in items 1, 4, 7, 8, and 9.

Discussion of Findings

Entrepreneurs in Lagos state agreed that lack of managerial skills is one of the manpower and skill acquisition challenges of young textile and clothing entrepreneurs in Lagos state. This was in accordance with the words of Ikpe and Onwe (2007) which explained that it can easily be seen that lack of managerial and administrative skills constitutes a source of major disadvantage to small businesses owned by young entrepreneurs. This lack of managerial skills is even compounded for young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishment in Lagos state because according to the findings of this work they are unable to locate and hire the most qualified textiles and clothing personnel. This also supports the views of Samson and Little (1998) who stressed that locating and hiring the most qualified personnel available is a very real problem to an

entrepreneur. The fact that young textile and clothing entrepreneurs are also unable to hire experienced managers who are able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria shows that young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments in Lagos state lack the capabilities to employ helps. This can be caused by the young textile and clothing entrepreneurs' inadequate human relation skills which was discovered in the results of the study. Middlesex University (2009) emphasized that these problems are typical of those faced by small businesses in general, but added that young entrepreneurs are particularly disadvantaged in relation to limited experience in entrepreneurship ventures. This of course is one of the reasons why young textile and clothing entrepreneurs in Lagos state are not successful. Ikpe and Onwe (2007) explained that it is very easy to see that most successful entrepreneurs have good human relations skills, which includes communication skills, motivational skills, and leadership skills.

Entrepreneurs in Lagos state observed that there is a total need for life skills training to be inculcated in the education curriculum. This is because education, according to Onu (2006), is essential in bringing up an entrepreneur. This is why Ikpe and Onwe (2007) explained that core competence as a bundle of skills enables a business to provide goods and or services to its customers and this can only be achieved with adequate and relevant vocational skills given to young people and young entrepreneurs. Of course this can only be achieved using education. Again when certain young people have the desire to start a business, Jameel (2009) explained that they often lack the training and experience to put their ideas into practice. This is why provision of adequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment, and facilitate maintenance of community level projects is very important (Ogwumike 2009). Young people need entrepreneurship, technological, and self-employment skills, and when they do not have these skills it becomes a limitation, hindrance or a physical challenge on them which can affect them and their establishments.

Entrepreneurs in Lagos state accepted that a strategy for meeting the challenges of young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments is the inculcation of life skills training in the education curriculum in Nigeria. According to Mahinda (2004) the education systems lack the provision of knowledge in business management. Mahinda (2004) also added that there is need for suitability of education and vocational training for the labour market. That is why Okorie (2000) pointed out that skill development is important for harnessing a nation's natural resources and for promoting economic stability. Ikpe and Onwe (2007) pointed out that if these trainings are not provided in schools, many people go to business schools to acquire the tools to be able to take up business challenges in their environments. This is the major reason why entrepreneurs in Lagos state accepted that schools should provide suitable vocational training for prospective clothing and textile entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs in Lagos state also accepted that schools should host seminars and

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workshops to provide young entrepreneurs with adequate leadership trainings. The leadership programme, according to Mahinda (2004) is designed to train emerging leaders, to develop their leadership skills, discover themselves and build relationships, and, set goals and priorities in their lives among others. In this circumstance, the workshops will emphasize to the young textile and clothing entrepreneurs the need for them to read relevant materials to personally improve on themselves. That is why Njoku (2006) suggested that the entrepreneur should read relevant books, financial magazines and newspapers; listen to tapes, watch television programmes, listen to radio programmes, attend seminars and workshops among others, in order to acquire an up-to-date knowledge on financial and investment education.

Textile and clothing entrepreneurs in Lagos state were also of the view that there is need for provision of adequate vocational training centres to equip youths in particular for self-employment. Although Okorie (2000) pointed out that there is a Job Creation Loan Guarantee Scheme that was designed to encourage and aid unemployed Nigerians to set up and run their own businesses. According to Okorie (2000), courses in entrepreneurship were given to the individuals that applied for the programme before issuing loans to them. Nigerian government should invest more in this kind of programme so that its impact can be felt in the society.

Entrepreneurs in Lagos state also accepted that another strategy for meeting the challenges of young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments in the state is when experienced entrepreneurs provide assistance to young entrepreneurs in order to hire experienced managers who will be able to manage changes in the economic situations of Nigeria. Young entrepreneurs need help finding the right colleagues to manage their companies. Middlesex University (2009) noted that complying with administrative and regulatory requirements can present problems for young entrepreneurs particularly when they are first established. With this there is really need for experienced entrepreneurs to assist young entrepreneurs in the hiring of experienced individuals so that the establishment can become more successful.

The results in table three above showed that the hypothesis was not significant for items 1 to 7. It was also shown that the hypothesis was significant for items 8 and 9. This information shows that young entrepreneurs who took courses in business and entrepreneurship and those that did not acquire such trainings experience the same manpower and skill acquisition challenges in items 1 to 7. They also face different challenges when it comes to items 8 and 9.

Considering the data presented in table four, it was shown that the manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs whose parents are textile and clothing entrepreneurs and those whose parents are not, was not significant for items 2, 3, 5, and 6. Their experiences in items 1, 4, 7, 8, and 9 were significant. This shows that these groups of individuals have the same

experiences when it comes to items 2, 3, 5, and 6 while their experiences differ when it comes to the remaining items in the table.

Conclusion

Eight (8) manpower and skill acquisition challenges of young entrepreneurs in textile and clothing establishments in Lagos state were identified. Nine (9) strategies for meeting the manpower and skill acquisition challenges of young entrepreneurs in textiles and clothing establishments in Lagos state were also established. From the hypotheses it was established that seven (7) manpower and skill acquisition challenges of young entrepreneurs who took courses in business and entrepreneurship and those that did not acquire such trainings were not significant while two of such challenges were significant, and four (4) manpower and skill acquisition challenges faced by young entrepreneurs whose parents are textile and clothing entrepreneurs and those whose parents are not, were not significant while five (5) of such were significant. After identifying these various challenges, it becomes imperative that the various strategies for meeting them are applied in the society so that young textile and clothing entrepreneurs will continue to be equipped with more skills that can help them to improve the activities of their textile and clothing establishments in the Nigerian society.

Recommendations

Based on the study, the following recommendations were proffered-

1. It is important that schools should inculcate life skill trainings in their curriculum to equip more young people with entrepreneurship skills
2. Government should also establish more entrepreneurship development centres for youths in the Nigerian society

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