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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM IN DEVELOPING SELF-LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME) LEADERS IN NIGERIA: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SME SELF-LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Self-leadership has the potential for more efficient and productive individuals and organization accomplishments however, the ideal training practices to impart self-leadership skills among individuals have been a controversial issue lately as there is no universally accepted training model in this regard. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the importance of the apprenticeship system in the training and development of self-leadership strategies for SME leaders in Nigeria, as a process of acquiring self-leadership skills and implementing them for effectiveness and growth of their businesses. The researchers carried out this study through exploratory qualitative research. A total of 16 SME leaders were sampled and data was collected and analyzed from in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis which were transcribed and analyzed using Nvivo software. The interview sessions were divided into two sessions and lasted over 20 hours in total. The findings indicated that the apprenticeship system could be a training method through which the strategies of self-leadership could be imparted, going by the positive feelings and greater confidence expressed by the SME leaders concerning the training they received and its effectiveness in improving their individual and organizational performance. Consequently, the government and other stakeholders are therefore encouraged to develop an acceptable model of training that incorporates self-leadership and the apprenticeship system into a uniform standard for training business leaders across the country.

KEYWORDS: Self-leadership, Apprenticeship system, SME Leaders, Nigeria, Training, leadership process, learning

INTRODUCTION

SME leadership style has been a topical issue in recent years. This is because SMEs in Nigeria is faced with numerous leadership problems among others, leading various stakeholders to advocate all types of leadership theories and styles such as charismatic, autocratic, and traditional leadership styles



(Mesu et al., 2013; Abdulazeez et al., 2014) to curb the challenges of ineffective leadership in the organization. Given the role and importance of these enterprises in the Nigerian economy. SMEs are often seen as the source of entrepreneur skills, trade, and investment opportunities. and thus, as a potential basis for economic growth and development (Agba, Ogaboh & Ebong, 2015; Uchehara 2017). Therefore, it is vital for governments at all levels to recognize the importance of training in developing the leadership skills and talents of SME leaders. However, the kind of training that will lead to the acquisition of effective leadership skills and knowledge has remained contagious among SME scholars (Garavan, Watson, Carbery, & O'Brien, 2015). Learning and adopting self-leadership strategies as a process of skill acquisition provides access to potential leadership skills that are related to knowledge in the leadership development process (Ross, 2015).

Self-leadership training programs are intended to generate knowledge on how individuals can influence themselves to a higher level of effectiveness. Self-leadership education has evolved and grown, and this growth has led to calls for the development of curriculums in the higher institution for self-leadership training to link theory and practice (Knight, Peesker, and Mich, 2022). However (Goldsby et al., 2021) observed that publication in self-leadership training programs accounts for only 2.5 % of the total publications reviewed within the past thirty years. Several authors have had a significant impact on developing self-leadership training programs (Goldsby, Michael, Elizabeth, Goldsby, Neck, Neck, and Rob Mathews. 2021). And since the introduction of self-leadership in the corporate world, corporations such as Gallup have incorporated the Meta-Performance Model (MPM) designed by (Goldsby et al., 2021) to enhance professional development by introducing self-leadership as a critical component to the successful application of the learnings from these programs. However, the authors observed that most of the people who completed these programs do not continue practicing what they learn after they go back to their jobs, leaving an apparent gap in maintaining and developing those skills, outside of the training arena. To close the skills gap between academia and practice it is therefore critical that experiences similar to what individuals are likely to encounter in their day-to-day activities be incorporated into any self-leadership training program to create an enduring impact.

The lack of experience in the self-leadership training program has rendered most of these training programs, a mere intellectual exercise. Therefore, it becomes pertinent to ask whether these self-leadership training programs are capable of generating knowledge on how individuals can influence themselves to perform effectively in the organization. (Sidwell & Perry, 2019; Stewart, Carson & Cardy, 1996). Thus, it is necessary to develop a training program that involves experiential learning that is capable of transforming experiences from the field into creative thinking and practical application of those learning exercises in their work to enhance individual effectiveness and contribute to organizational performance. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore the importance of the apprenticeship system in the development of the self-leadership strategies for SME leaders in



Nigeria as a process of learning the self-leadership skills and implementing them for their effectiveness and the growth of their enterprises.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-leadership and Apprenticeship

Self-leadership has generated so much research in the field of management in the last thirty years (Goldsby et al., 2021). Self-leadership focuses on the process of self-influence through which individuals control their behavior by influencing and leading themselves to achieve the self-direction and self-motivation necessary to perform. (Neck et al. 2017; Neck and Houghton

2006). Self-leadership positively impacts personal effectiveness through a combination of the three basic strategies of behavioural strategies, natural reward strategies, and constructive thinking strategies. The behavioural strategy focuses on the use of self-awareness to create a clear and accurate understanding of the need to change, improve, and increase one's capabilities (O'Dwyer, 2014). Self-leadership behavioural strategies involve the elements of self-observation, self-goal setting, self-reward, self-discipline, and self-cueing in their strategy, (Ward and Eagle, 2018). Studies found that leaders who use self-observation, self-goal setting, and self-reward strengthen their personalities and lead to their effectiveness and organizational success (Aldighrir 2019; Kotzé, 2018; Neck & Manz, 2010; Politis 2006). In addition, the behavioural strategy of self-leadership provides specific approaches to change or eliminate ineffective or unproductive behaviors and replace the behavior with an effective one, leading to individual effectiveness and performance (Neck, Manz & Houghton, 2017).

Natural reward strategies are related to intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and focus on two principles the first is the inclusion of pleasant and enjoyable features in an activity to give it value and make it naturally rewarding. Secondly, it Influences the individual's perception by focusing on the rewarding aspects of the activity by shifting attention away from the unpleasant aspect of the task. For instance, an individual may decide to create an ambiance in his workplace to suit his emotional feeling or listen to his favourite song while working. Natural reward strategies create a feeling of competence, self-determination, purpose, and self-controlling (Neck & Manz 2010; Bouchard 2013; Bum & Lee 2018).

The cognitive aspect of the natural reward strategy is a way of identifying and enhancing rewards to make them more pleasurable. Manz (2015) explained that the natural reward strategy involves focusing thoughts on the pleasant aspect of a task and removing thoughts from the unpleasant aspect to make the task more pleasant. It is about identifying the pleasurable aspect of the task and focusing



the thoughts on it and then distinguishing between rewards that are built into the task and those that are separate from the work. This is not about avoiding unpleasant tasks, but about dealing with them constructively (Neck et al., 2017). A notable example is an academic who manages his demanding and stressful academic workload but prefers to focus on the enjoyable aspects of the work such as teaching and research, which makes the work more enjoyable and meaningful for most academics. The goal is to maintain motivation while performing a task for its value rather than for an external reward. (Manz, 2015). The difficult part of performing the task is finding natural rewards, incorporating them into the task, and making it enjoyable, which gives the individual a sense of competence, control, and meaningfulness. (Neck et al., 2017).

On the other hand, Constructive thought pattern strategies emphasize the positive influence of habitual thinking patterns and include recognizing and replacing dysfunctional beliefs, with positive mental images, and positive self-talk. (Kotzé, 2018) The constructive thought pattern strategies include three elements in their rank; first is improvement and self-analysis of belief systems, second is mental imagery of an efficient performance outcome, and third is positive self-talk. Dysfunctional beliefs can lead to habitually dysfunctional thought processes, which can lead to depression, unhappiness, and personal inefficiency. Constructive thought pattern strategies can enable individuals to examine their thinking patterns and replace dysfunctional thoughts as needed to initiate more rational and effective cognitive processes. (Aldighrir 2019 cited Burns, 1980; Ellis, 1977). Studies also found a relationship between constructive thought pattern strategies and entrepreneur innovative behavior, job satisfaction, and increase mental performance (Mat Rusok et al., 2011; Neck & Houghton, 2006).

Apprenticeship system

Ezenwakwelu et al., (2019) defined apprenticeship as a process where the apprentices build their careers by working for an employer who helps them learn the trade in return for their work over an agreed period, during which they should have acquired measurable skills. This definition implies that the apprentice and the master enter into an agreement, which may be written or unwritten, the master or trainer undertakes to train the apprentice in the relevant skills and the apprentice undertakes to contribute productively to the progress of the trade, profession, or company (Ademola, Gamade & Uleanya, 2021). They described an informal traditional system where training is integrated into the production process, and the apprentice learns by working with an experienced mentor or master craftsman. Werner and Desimone, (2006) defined apprenticeship as a system for training a new generation of professionals with a structured competence, and a set of basic skills.

The basic description is that apprenticeship is about learning new skills, under the tutelage of someone who is already a master in the field and requires initiative, perseverance, ambition, and the willingness to learn (Ezenwakwelu et al., 2019; Onwuegbuzie, 2017; Sani, Adamu, Adamu & Umar, 2022).



However, Schedlitzki, (2019) cautioned that apprenticeship should not be limited to training for the sole purpose of acquiring skills and competence but as a process to develop sustainable reflective practices through regular, planned reflective activities. Gessler (2019), towed a similar line when he stated that apprenticeship requires reflection in and on the practice of the craft, and through reflection (self and with others) metaknowledge can be developed through metacognitive learning. Metaknowledge includes knowledge and regulation of cognition which promotes strategic thinking and self-directed learning and is a prerequisite for expansive learning and innovation (Kuhn 2000; Hacker et al. 2009).

Apprenticeship is also linked to Vocational Education and Training (VET), in which basic or specialized vocational training is obtained as a competency-based qualification to develop into an entrepreneur (Ezenwakwelu et al., 2011). In 2016, the unemployment rate among young people, aged 15 to 24 in OECD countries with formal education was around 13%, more than double the average for the population as a whole, according to OECD statistics, (OECD 2018). However, in countries that combined VET with their formal education system, the unemployment rate among young people was significantly lower than that of the overall population, around 6 %, on average suggesting that VET promotes employment among young people in line with the labour market requirements (Schedlitzki, 2019). The apprenticeship system is also said to prevent a high rate of business failures among SMEs around the world, particularly in Nigeria where the system is rather popular (Okwuowulu, 2022).

In Nigeria, apprenticeship has been an ageless method in training entrepreneurs' start-ups to acquire skills and competencies that will enable them to start their businesses. The apprenticeship system is viewed as an informal traditional system that originated in South East Nigeria with a structure, that allows the master to support the apprentice build his new business with cash or with materials after he had learned the trade within 6-7 years of enrolment. The apprenticeship has been a success factor and as a method of bringing up young people, and training the unskilled has proved very useful among the Igbo ethnic group of South East Nigeria. Analysts have described the Igbo apprenticeship system, which guides the development of their entrepreneurship, as the largest platform for business creation, cultural development, and self-directed learning approach in Nigeria (Orogbu, Onyeizugbe & Onuzulike 2021; Okwuowulu, 2022)

This concept is now practiced around the country with little or no government attention, in contrast with the formal apprenticeship training system obtained in the western world with full government support (Liadi1 & Olutayo 2017; Sani et al., 2022). Onwuegbuzie (2017) observed that the entrepreneurs who emerged from this process had much higher success rates than today's start-ups. Similarly, Mpi (2019) noted that this has contributed and continues to contribute significantly to the promotion of entrepreneurship and the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises



(MSMEs), wealth and job creation, poverty reduction, and overall economic growth and development of the country.

Self-leadership and SME

Many scholars have considered the concept of self-leadership as best suited for entrepreneurs' leadership and lifestyle (D'Intino, Goldsby, Houghton, & Neck, 2007; Kör, 2016; Lima & Munigala, 2018) this is because they defined entrepreneurship within the context of the self- influencing and self-directing ability an individual has in creating, initiating, doing, achieving, and building expertise or organization rather than merely observing, analyzing, or describing it (Kirby 1990; Wickham 2006.). Entrepreneur's competencies and characteristics have largely defined the development of SMEs in areas such as technological innovation, leadership skills, management skills, and level of education (Gumel, 2019). Much of the literature on SMEs is centred on entrepreneurial innovation, motivation, attitudes, behaviours, and self-leadership (Ziyae & Heydari, 2016). Self-leadership is about taking initiative, setting goals, and acting appropriately to achieve required standards and goals. Although the predominant research on SME leadership focuses primarily on leadership development theories, organizations and individuals are now training people to become self-leaders who prioritize, problem-solving, and act with the ability to self-direct and self-influence (Browning, 2018).

There is evidence in the literature that the performance of SMEs largely depends on the leadership style of their owners (Spinelli, 2006; Long et al., 2016). Self-leadership is seen as an alternative leadership style and can improve entrepreneurial thought processes for high performance and satisfaction (Godwin, Neck & D'Intino, 2016). Self-leadership leads to self- mastery, which is reinforced by individual experiences garnered over time through mastery of thought processes and behavioural changes. Individuals who seize an entrepreneurial opportunity rely on their cognitive thought processes to generate ideas, innovation, motivation, and action in the face of multiple challenges (Godwin, Neck & D'Intino, 2016). Self-leadership also facilitates cognitive thought processes and behavioural efforts needed to manage, reduce or tolerate a troubled person-environmental relationship (D'Intino, Goldsby, Houghton, & Neck, 2007), through self-dialog, mental imagery, thought patterns, self-observation, self-goal setting, and self-reward Self-leadership can enhance entrepreneur thought process and behavioural change for high performance and satisfaction (Godwin et al, 2016)

This mastery of thought processes and behaviour can enable SME leaders to achieve higher performance Studies have found that self-leadership predicts work performance (Yu & Ko, 2016; Politis, 2015) psychological empowerment (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2015; O'Dwyer, 2014) emotional intelligence (Alabdulbaqi et al., 2019; Van et al., 2018) job satisfaction (Houghton & Jinkerson, 2007; Politis, 2006;), innovation/creativity (Curren & Marques- Quinteiro, 2009; DiLiello



& Houghton, 2006;), and self-efficacy (Konradt et al., 2009; Manz & Neck, 2004; Neck & Manz, 1996; Prussia et al., 1998). Self-efficacy is vital to self-leadership and has the potential to increase exponentially through self-leadership strategies and can enable SME leaders to achieve their career success and perform their development tasks effectively (Konradt et al., 2009).

One study in Indonesia on SME managers found that self-efficacy and self-leadership have a significant effect partially and simultaneously on the performance of SMEs, and proves that self-leadership has a dominant effect on SMEs' performance (Mujanah, 2017). Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to both set higher goals and perform better in pursuit of those goals than individuals with low self-efficacy (Brown et al., 1998; Singh et al., 2017; Zimmerman, 2000; Achenreiner et al., 2019). There is also evidence that self-efficacy could be imparted through training (Dixon and Schertzer, 2005; Dugan et al., 2019; Knight et al., 2014). Therefore, self-efficacy through self-leadership has a positive influence on SME performance.

Apprenticeship, and SME self-leadership development

How is Apprenticeship related to the development of SME self-leadership skills, and why is it an important construct to investigate? The apprenticeship system can be an important concept in training SMEs to acquire self-leadership skills because apprentices are involved in the production process under the guidance of a trainer and mentor, relying on their initiative and acquiring appropriate professional competence (Ademola, Gamedeb, & Uleanyac, 2021). The apprenticeship system will suit SME leaders just starting up, and it will help them to acquire competencies in their field of endeavour and also enable them to take advantage of their mentor's business network to support their own business once they are freed from apprenticeship and become their own masters. So many scholars have investigated the apprenticeship system and found that the concept has a strong and direct influence on entrepreneurs' leadership and development (Ezenwakwelu, Egbosionu, & Okwo, 2019; Johnson, & Ferej, 2000; Rowe, Perrin, and Wall, 2016; Schedlitzki, 2019) Apprenticeship trainees are exposed to the real world of business under the apprenticeship system and are made to face situations and challenges similar to what they will face once they start up their businesses.

Although literature related to apprenticeship and SME self-leadership is lacking. However, the apprenticeship system is regarded as a human resource development program that combines learning and training to prepare individuals to start, own, and manage independent businesses (Gessler, 2019; Iwueke, Halima & Oparaku, 2020) The apprenticeship system may also play a role in individual behavioural changes because the apprentices are required to live and learn from their masters where behavioural standard and moral discipline are inculcated in them with the capacity to internally regulate their behaviour and shape their constructive thinking process (Stewart, Courtright & Manz, 2011). As a result, individuals who undergo the apprenticeship system are likely to increase their self-



leadership skills when they acquire the self-awareness, self-discipline, positive thought pattern, flexibility, self-regulation, and decision-making skills needed to enhance their self-leadership strategies (Ute Tat & Natascha Zeitel-Bank, 2013). The concept of self-leadership has gained in popularity over the years but lacks an acceptable training model designed to impart self-leadership strategies. However hands-on learning and real-life training have been taunted as the most effective form of imparting knowledge of self-leadership (Iwueke, Halima & Oparaku, 2020). Hands-on learning on-the-job training and real-life learning or training are predicated on Experiential learning theory (ELT). According to Ute Tat & Natascha Zeitel-Bank, (2013), ELT not only involves physical training experience and awareness but an intellectual reflection through which some selected self-leadership competencies could be developed.

Experiential learning theory (ELT)

The Experiential learning theory focuses on learning, work, and personal development and stresses the relationships that can be developed between the learning and the individual's environment through experiential learning methods (Kolb, 1984). The theory is also described in terms of how entrepreneurs acquire their experiences in the entrepreneurial process and transform them into knowledge (Corbett, 2005). Experiential learning theory emphasizes that learning as a process focuses on how it affects individuals as they transform their experiences into skills acceptable behavioural standards and knowledge (Corbett, 2005; Kolb, 1984). Experiential learning theory focuses on the central role that experience plays in the learning process. With his experiential learning theory, Kolb proposes "a holistic, integrative perspective on learning that links experience, perception, cognition, and behaviour" (Ute Tat & Natascha Zeitel-Bank, 2013 cited.; Kolb, 1984).

Joy and Kolb (2009) stated that the experiential learning theory represents a cyclical model of learning consisting of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb (1984) goes on to state that individuals can obtain information either from direct experience or from a replica of experience. Kolb also explains that entrepreneurs can transform their experiences into knowledge either through intention, which is a reflection of their ideas and experiences or through extension, which is an implementation of their ideas and experiences in real life. The theory is based on the work of some major 20th-century scholars such as John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jean Piaget, William James, Carl Jung, Paulo Freire, Carl Rogers, and others who placed a high value on experience in their work to develop a holistic model of the experiential learning process and a multilinear model of adult development (Kolb, 1984). Figure 1, represents the cycle of experiential learning theory by Joy & Kolb (2009).

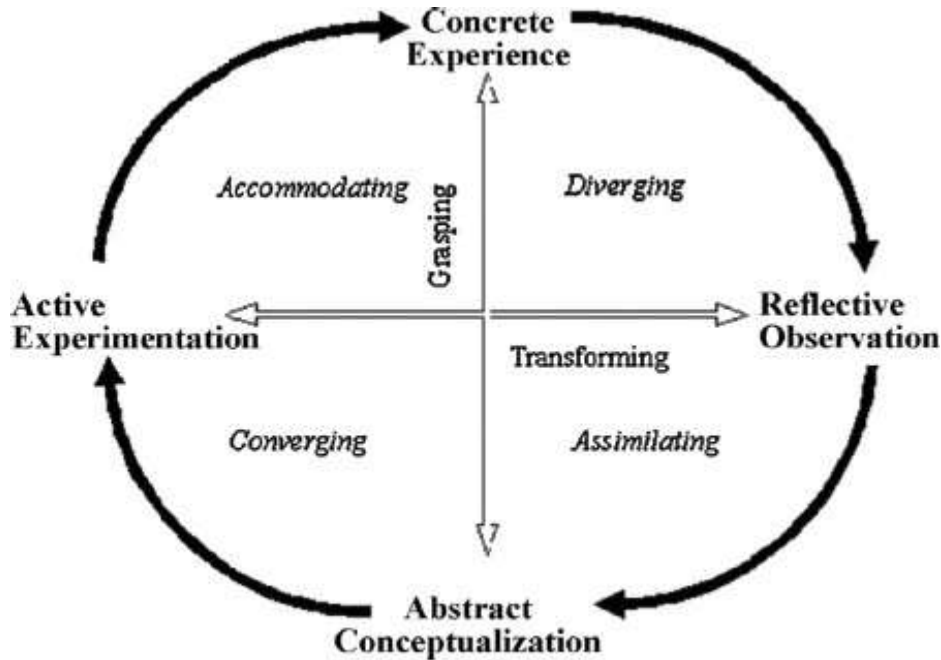


Fig. 1. Experiential learning cycle.

Figure 1, shows the four-stage learning cycle. It also depicts how experience is transformed through reflection into concepts, which then serve as a guide for active experimentation. In the first stage ("CE"), the learner actively experiences an activity. In the second phase ("RO"), the learner consciously reflects on this experience. In the third phase ("AC"), the learner tries to create a theory or model of what has been observed. In the fourth phase ("AE"), the learner tries to plan how to test a model or theory or plan a new experience this model is based on Learning Theories and Knowledge.

There are six propositions from this theory. (1) Learning is best understood as a process, not an outcome. This involves engaging individuals in a process that best enhances their learning, including feedback on the learning process. (2). All learning is relearning. Learning is best fostered through a process that elicits individuals' beliefs and ideas about a topic so that they can be explored, tested, and integrated with new, refined ideas. (3) Learning requires resolving conflicts between dialectically opposed ways of adapting to the world. Conflict, difference, and disagreement drive the learning process. In the learning process, one is challenged to move back and forth between opposing modes of thinking and acting, feeling and thinking. (4) Learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world. Learning is not merely the result of cognition but involves the integrated functioning of the whole person who thinks, feels, perceives, and behaves. (5) Learning results from synergistic transactions between the person and the environment. Learning occurs through the dialectical processes of assimilating new experiences into existing concepts and adapting existing concepts to



new experiences. (6) Learning is the process of creating knowledge. ELT proposes a constructivist theory of learning in which social knowledge is created and recreated in the learner's knowledge. This contrasts with the 'transmission' model on which much of current educational practice is based, where learners are taught pre-existing, fixed ideas.

METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the importance of the apprenticeship system in Self-leadership learning and how the apprenticeship system can help in the development of the Self-leadership strategies of SME leaders in Nigeria. The qualitative research design was deemed necessary for this study because it is exploratory research that takes place when there is little or no knowledge about a phenomenon, especially in a situation where there has been little or no previous research, to discover new ideas and expand knowledge about the phenomenon (Gray 2018). Although self-leadership is a concept that has been heavily researched in literature, however, the concept has not been studied in connection to how the apprenticeship system could be a learning platform for the internalization of self-leadership strategies. Therefore, it is of particular interest to understand how the apprenticeship system could enable SMEs to acquire self-leadership skills for their effectiveness and business performance.

In this study, a purposive sampling method was used to select respondents from the SME population in Enugu state Nigeria to provide accurate data. Silverman (2018) stated that purposive sampling for studies requires selection based on specific criteria to ensure adequate data on the actual phenomenon. Therefore, the criterion was based on (1). SME leaders who have successfully run their businesses and whose businesses have survived up to five years and beyond. According to Igwe et.al. (2018), SMEs in Nigeria die within the first five years of their existence and most do not survive beyond the sixth and tenth years, while others do not outlive their owners and only about five to ten percent reach maturity. Therefore, any small business in Nigeria that lives beyond five years is said to have outlived the mortality range for SME businesses. So, this criterion was adopted in selecting SME leaders for this study. (2). SME leaders studied had gone through the apprenticeship system and graduated to establish their businesses after serving their masters/mentors as well as engaged other apprentices in their business. The researchers engaged 16 SME leaders in semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews which were divided into two sections and each lasting between 45 minutes to one hour, to explore respondents' perceptions of the apprenticeship system to understand how the training they received helped them to acquire self-leadership skills for their effectiveness and business success. The apprenticeship system was to help identify the attitudes, behaviours, and cognitive thought patterns needed to shape what they have learned about their physical experiences.

The researcher also used document analysis such as looking into invoices, group WhatsApp chat, and

loan application letters from the SME leaders. The researchers also engaged in sustained observation where they obtained first-hand information on the activities of these leaders in their environment as they interact with their apprentices in their day-to-day business transactions. The 16 respondents were made of 8 women and 8 men in different trades and businesses mostly agricultural production, manufacturing, and wholesale and retail trading. The proportional number of males and females in the study was deliberate to avoid gender discrepancies that may arise in the study. Though the researcher interviewed 16 respondents, the saturation point was reached at the thirteen interviews where it becomes obvious that no new insights or themes will be identified, corresponding to what Braun and Clarke (2019) said that qualitative studies require a minimum sample size of at least 12 homogeneous respondents to achieve data saturation. The interviews were recorded and transcribed word for word for further analysis. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify codes in the narratives of all respondents, which were then grouped into categories and finally into themes to answer the research question.

FINDINGS

The 16 respondents selected for this study have been given a pseudonym to protect their identity. Each of them has their experience having gone through the apprenticeship system, however, the number of years they spent in the training varies depending on the agreement reached between them and their master/mentor before they embarked on the training. Table 1 shows the number of years each respondent spent in the apprenticeship training and the number of years they have been in business after the training. The data was analysed using the Nvivo software. The passages from the transcripts were thoroughly immersed in and analyzed and studied carefully and 97 codes were generated. the codes were later sieved into 18 categories were generated before the final 4 themes emerged. Table 2 defines the emerging themes from the data analyses. The four emerging themes include; (A) Self-efficacy (B) Empowerment (C) Seeking opportunity for growth and Expansion (D) Creating Value and Innovation.

Table 1. Respondent’s profile and their line of business.

Respondents	Years of apprenticeship Experience	Years of SME leader Experience	Line of Business
Respondent 1	8	9	Motorcycle Dealer
Respondent 2	7	12	Wholesale Bakery
Respondent 3	6	9	Fashion and design
Respondent 4	7	11	Events Planner
Respondent 5	8	6	Electronic Devices
Respondent 6	7	9	Sports Equipment

Respondent 7	8	8	Water Packaging
Respondent 8	6	7	Mobile Catering
Respondent 9	6	10	Iron Welder
Respondent 10	6	9	Wholesale Bakery
Respondent 11	9	7	Plastic Production
Respondent 12	7	11	Floor Tiles
Respondent 13	9	8	Water Packaging
Respondent 14	7	11	Electrical Parts
Respondent 15	6	10	Poultry Farmer
Respondent 16	7	7	Motor Spare Parts

Table 2. Themes and Categories

N0s	Themes	Categories
1	Self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Awareness of current events II. Being in control of situations III. Being positive about oneself IV. Having a clear vision and purpose V. Skill acquisition and development VI. Using one’s initiative
2	Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Acquisition of resources II. Getting support and encouragement III. Motivation to tackle challenges IV. Positive interaction with people
3	Seeking opportunities for growth and Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Anticipating the next engagement II. Adding more responsibilities III. Continuous learning IV. Making customers the priority
4	Creating Value and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Continuous Improvement II. Implementing new concepts III. Making the business more attractive IV. Working with creative individuals



Self-efficacy

SME leaders are aware that the training and learning they received under the apprenticeship system have equipped them with confidence and the capacity to create a positive effect in what they do. They stated that the experiences they acquired have enhanced their ability to achieve more in their respective fields and adapt seamlessly to the situations presented before them. Respondent 4 succinctly stated;

“I started as an apprentice in my first year like, maybe I work in a water factory, I pack water, arranging it inside nylon per bags, from there I become an operator in a satchel line I learned a lot, I was being trained and from there I proceed to bottle line, from there I become a manager in a factory, from the manager I become the C.E.O of my own” (respondent 4)

Training an apprentice involves the idea of enabling the apprentice to acquire as much experience as possible by moving the apprentice from one department of the company to the other to gain the knowledge and self-awareness needed to operate in those areas which will help the apprentice to stand on their own once they graduate and start their own business, as we have seen with respondent 4. Respondent 2 also admitted to this when she stated;

“When I started, I started as an apprentice and I learned for seven years, in these years, I worked first with the expansion of the dough, later I moved to dry the surface and the one we called crush browsing before I begin to handle the machine because it is a big company we bake the bead, cake both wheat and wholemeal. And we do other confectionaries like sweets...

...later I was moved to the sales department where I was dealing with the customers, supplying them with our goods and then I was put in charge of purchasing the raw materials and of the sales and supply we made. Before I was settled to start my own, I also worked in the accounting department, receiving all the money, and keeping the correct account making sure I balance the book and no money was missing” (respondent 2)

The experiences these apprentices acquire working in the environment and situations they are likely to meet when they start their business increases their self-efficacy belief. The development towards acquiring the self-efficacy belief is when they are exposed through all the stages of learning, where a lot of events happen in their lives, and they can understand the cause and effects of certain actions in some situations which enables them to taste success and failure, they become masters in their field with the belief that they can do it better and rightly next time. Respondent 13 shared how he made a mistake in his water factory as an apprentice but later learned to do it right the next time, an experience which he claimed has helped him since he began his factory.



“...I remember when I was working in the factory and some machine broke down, so I got a technician to fix it and the amount they are quoting was huge, so I looked for someone who

will charge me less because I wanted to save some money, then the technician did the job but ended up damaging the machines, and because of this all the production we did that time spoiled and we lost so much money...

...I learned a lot from this that we have to maintain quality, if I used the first technician, even though I will pay him higher but we will not lose the kind of money we lost because I decided to use a technician who will charge me cheaper. So, it is a learning process for me to make sure I maintain quality not just as regards technicians but in every area of my factory”. (Respondent 13)

The experiences that these SME leaders undergo under the apprenticeship system also enable them to acquire self-leadership competencies. These competencies here are a combination of skills, cognitions, and behaviours that help to strengthen their Self-efficacy belief. The process of competence development is understood as learning and training which centres on the hands- on job training and practical applications of those principled learned in the physical environment. Respondent 9 captures these elements when he admitted that;

“... in learning to be a welder, I watched closely what my master is doing, and I did the same, and sometimes he will let me do all those things alone without assisting me, and then he will come and inspect my work. That is how I learned how to manufacture all these iron kettles and doors and buckets...

...I followed my master anywhere he goes, and I learned how he talked with customers and how to behave when I am negotiating with them because my master tells me every time that I must respect customers and treat them well because without them, we cannot sell and make money...” (respondent 9)

Among these SME leaders, there is a strong sense of personal belief that is not pretentious, casual attributions or intentions but that of solid self-efficacy belief. This self-efficacy facilitates cognitive processes and performance in a variety of areas, including the quality of decisions and material investments (Zulkosky 2009). For example, the SME leader’s behaviours and their choice of activities are been influenced by their level of self-efficacy. In addition, self-efficacy increases their level of motivation such that they see difficult activities as challenges and they try to overcome them and not evade them. Self-efficacy beliefs determine the level of motivation an individual has which is reflected in how much effort such a person put into an endeavour and how long they persevere in the face of



obstacles (Bandura 2001). The level of self-efficacy among SME leaders is what enables them to set higher goals for themselves and stay committed to those goals and their ability to achieve a level of performance in their business activities and their effectiveness.

Empowerment

SME leaders in Nigeria feel empowered by the training they received and the experiences they have accumulated while under the apprenticeship system. This empowerment helps them to strengthen their resolve and take ownership of their actions and reward themselves for the milestone they have accomplished in their business as they feel enabled to perform their task. Respondent 16 summed it up when he stated how he was given the freedom to make decisions during the latter part of his apprenticeship training. He commented;

When I was an apprentice, my master always left the business for me and he will travel overseas to meet some of our customers to import, our spare parts. so, I will be in charge and because we have three shops, I will coordinate the three shops, and direct other apprentices on what to do ...you know there are ranks, in this apprentice, the older one and the ones who just newly came. At that time, I was about to be settled and freed to start my own so my master trusted everything to me then and I will coordinate the three shops that we have. (respondent 16).

Apart from the structural empowerment where greater responsibility is given to the subordinates to carry out some primary work tasks, as we have seen with respondent 16, the SME leaders were also empowered psychologically through the cognitive process of believing in the knowledge and experiences they have. Respondent 3 expressed her views thus;

I was determined to succeed after I started my own business, because of what I learned from my madam, she taught me everything and I use to work with her, for 6 years and we had so many customers and most of the designs we did for the customer are my concept. I designed the clothes and sewed them and during the festive seasons we had so many I was in charge of delivery and we did it on time... And I made a lot of money for her, so with that mindset I know I will make it on my own. And as you can see, I have a lot of clients, I have so many schools that I designed their uniforms and sew for them. And some of my madam customers are coming to me because they know what I can do. Also, so many church groups that I sew their clothes for them. (respondent 3)

Another empowerment that is often common in the apprenticeship system in Nigeria is compensation or settlement empowerment. This is a situation where the apprentice is given a large sum of money or materials related to the trade at the end of their apprenticeship according to the earlier agreement to start their own business. This form of financial and material empowerment is confirmed by all of the



SME leaders interviewed. Respondent 14 confirmed that;

When I finished serving my master for 7 years, he settled me with 1.5 million naira, with some goods worth 500 thousand naira that was 11 years ago. So, I started with that and now I import my goods because we deal in electrical parts. Even though the money is not enough but I managed it and as you can see, I have two shops that belong to me and also I have other people working for me as apprentices and I will settle them once they finished serving based on the agreement we wrote. (respondent 14)

...yes, I served my master as an apprentice before I was freed to start my own, and he settled me with money, and the money helped me to start up my own business, now I am into the importation of floor tiles from China and I have customers who I sell to on a wholesale basis. all these boys are my workers, and I will settle them also when the time comes. It all depends on the way they served me, that is how I will settle them... yes, we had an agreement but the agreement did not say the amount I have to use to settle them and you know things change, the dollar is rising so the mount to settle them will not be the same. (respondent 12)

SME leaders stated that financial empowerment is crucial, especially in Nigeria where there is so much constraint with inflation hitting hard on the masses, so it has become the norm to settle the apprentice financially because most of the people who send their children for apprenticeship are indigent parents who are unable to send their children to school. However, apart from this compensation policy, SME leaders are also empowered through education as some masters allowed their apprentices to attend adult education classes in the evening after closing for business. Respondent 5 confirmed thus;

... we are into electronics it's true because I did not go to school before I came to serve my master. But there is an evening school that he allowed us to go to when we come back from work. He paid for us to go to the school so that we can learn how to read and write and I attended the school for 5 years because I served my master for 8 years before he settled me. So, before he settled me, I learned how to read and write... yes, I can do it for other apprentices but the people I have here know how to read and write (respondent 5).

Empowerment is a term that can mean different things to different people, often it suggests the delegation of authority or power to a subordinate. It encourages individuals to be self-leaders and it is defined as a cognitive state achieved when a person feels that he or she has been enabled to perform a task or carry out a function that he or she would not normally have been able to do (Conger and Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer 1995) Empowering leadership is also connected to self-leadership because it gives people the influence to exercise greater autonomy (Amundsen and Martinsen, 2015). And serve as an observable model for subordinates (Manz and Sims 1987). Empowerment can be structural



or psychological, where an individual feels the responsibility in the increased decision process and the perception of being empowered regarding the performance of a particular task (Lee and Koh 2001). Empowerment measures and practices promote constructive attitudes and behaviours among individuals that foster the capacity for self-leadership. These empowerments enabled SME leaders to enhance their self-leadership strategies

Seeking opportunities for growth and Expansion

SME leaders shared their experiences of how they have created a niche for themselves by effectively exploiting the opportunities available to them. In the apprenticeship system, there seems to be a kind of healthy competition among apprentices as each one of them under the same master tries to get more sales, or customers or get more productive to win the heart of the master. This same mindset they carried with them as they established their own business. Respondent 6 pointed out that;

..during that time we normally have target our master set for us, maybe he says we must sell some amount of goods within a week or sometimes in a day so we go out to get customers and to sell those products because we deal on sports equipment and anybody that sells them within that time will be rewarded and so on. So, all of us try to sell and to get more customers for our master. Sometimes he will give us different branches of the shop to manage to see how we can increase sales after that he will give us good recognition, or reward (respondent 6)

Moving on to set their own business SME leaders carried on the behaviours and constructive thought processes they learned from their apprenticeship in their various businesses in terms of seeking opportunities and capitalizing on them, SME leaders indicated that they put more effort into growing their business by ensuring that the vision and mission of their organization are realized. They indicated that growth is necessary for them to stay in business, so they look for opportunities and take advantage of them to stay visible. Respondent 4 stated that she expands her business through referrals and by satisfying her customers so that her business can get a good recommendation. She said;

"The goal I have set for myself is this: When I organize a wedding or a funeral or any event, I pass my card and say, 'I need to get another order from you.' Like a recommendation or the guests will say, wow, who did that, I like that, and the person might want me to work for them in their own time. Or recommend me to other people who need the same service. So, I usually try to make my service as good as possible and make my clients happy" (respondent 4)

Though the apprentices are meant to work independently, however, the system encourages the collective efforts of all the apprentices under one master with everybody working together towards the success of the company. It is easier to make progress more quickly in that manner



than in a company run by one person. The independent mindset of the apprentices enables them to acquire the self-leadership skill which enables them to always seek to enhance growth in their personal life and expansion in their business. Respondent 8 illustrated this when he said;

...As a mobile catering owner, some occasions may fall on the same day, and I cannot say no to one of them, I have to do both because I need to grow my business and expand too, so I accept both, then I will use my workers and set them at the two places and try to coordinate both events...

...it is a difficult thing but that is how I do it, I will go to one of the events stay there briefly and instruct them on what to do, and when I see that they are carrying on with the activities there, I will leave them and move to the next event and supervise them too and make sure they are doing the right thing and my work is going on. That is how I can handle the two events at the same time. (respondent 8)

The apprenticeship system offers apprentices the training to acquire knowledge and skills that enable them to seek out opportunities through continuous learning. Learning under this process is a lifelong affair that continues even when they become masters. For instance, most SME Leaders stated that they take advantage of the technology, and the changing events in the environment and also follow some of the social trends on the internet to expand their market. The internet allowed them to read and learn as most of them become technology savvy, surfing the internet to obtain some technical information to help in the growth of their business. Respondent 3 admitted thus;

"during the time I was learning as an apprentice, there were some levels of learning that I was exposed to, I went through so many challenges, you know, that fashion involves a lot of things, it is dynamic. I expect that at some point people will change their fashion tastes and then I might not have the knowledge. And the proactive measure is that I have exposed myself to learning. I have learned new ideas from people, I have done the research, and from there I set more goals to get more market for my business, I have read a lot of fashion magazines and I have learned on the internet, especially on YouTube. I have learned new designs and I am implementing them (respondent 3).

"I am improving my business by learning more skills, I also go to training, I meet a lot of people and I network, and I seek new business when I meet these people. Also, interacting with other business people has helped me develop myself and my communication and learn how to deal with people. I am learning more skills to grow my business and I am also trying different experiences to learn more; I am trying different styles in my Plastic production without worrying about the risks, I am trying different designs to know how they come out" (respondent 11)



Studies in the literature have shown similar findings that SMEs continuously seek opportunities for growth, expansion, and profitability through quality product manufacturing, learning, and process improvement (Hulbert, Gilmore, & Carson, 2015). This is because they want to spread the sales of their products over many markets. The decision to expand markets and improve product quality is a means by which small firms take advantage of opportunities, creating a competitive advantage for their company through a diversification strategy (Boer and During 2001; Kraus, Harms, & Fink, 2010). The findings have shown that SME Leaders can look for opportunities by creating channels through which they can expand their market and increase their sales in a complex and dynamic environment that inevitably requires the growth and expansion of their business. SMEs and other start-up ventures are known for struggling for survival in the early stages of their existence, however for them to sustain their development and growth, they have to prioritize the growth and expansion of their business by seeking opportunities to create more markets for the outlets of their goods and services.

Creating values and Innovation

The apprenticeship system affords SME leaders the skills and knowledge needed to embark on continuous improvement of their existing products and the creation of new products and services. To achieve this, they focused on understanding their customer's tastes and preferences and what should be done towards meeting up with their customer's expectations Customer satisfaction, therefore, becomes the key motivation to improve their product and service delivery The SME leaders said that everything they do to improve their products is aimed at retaining their existing customers and attracting new ones. Respondent 7 reflected that he does this by taking into account the growth of his business, the needs of his customers, and the changing market environment, all of which drive him to innovate differently and add value to his business. He said;

...we do a lot of changes because there is a lot of competition in this water business, first, we know that packaging is very important, if your packaging is not attractive, people will find it difficult to patronize you. So, we changed our packaging both in the water bottle and the sachet water, we also asked our customers for feedback concerning the changes we made, whether they like them or not and the message we are getting is that they like it. Again, we treat our water very well and we maintain a high level of hygiene. You know customers come around here, they see our factory, if they come and see that the place is dirty and not neat, they will change and begin to buy their water somewhere else, so we make sure our environment is very clean. When we add chlorine, we make sure it is not so much that it doesn't change the taste of the water, because once the taste of the water changes, then customers will run away from you because they will think you want to poison them. So, these are the things we do to retain and even attract more customers (respondent 7)



They go into research about what the customers needs, it is interesting to know that as part of learning, the apprentices also survey the customers in their environment to understand their preferences, then they adjust their product to appease their taste and, in most cases, go for new products that will meet their expectation. In the production sector, most innovations are done towards meeting the customer needs due to surveys carried out locally by asking questions about products and services. Respondent 10 stated that he does things differently to stand out from other competitors and win the heart of his customers. He does this by asking questions and constantly improving his products and services to make them unique. He said;

...I do not do something similar to what they do. I do things differently; I try to study the pattern and understand what the customer needs. For example, some manufacturers use wheat flour but we introduced cassava bread and whole meal which is rare in this part of the world, and our customers bought into it because it is healthier and the best alternative to starchy bread. Everybody wants to stay healthy and live longer. So, we can improve to make ourselves and our products unique. Yes! We do not always rely on producing exactly what other people produce, they set the pace in that case, but we improve it because we have our customers in mind. We mostly do, but I think by now they are learning from us...

...we also improve on delivery our goods on time, and to do this we change our production rate, time and output. We checked and ascertain the best time to produce bread so that to keep it fresh was the early hours of the morning, we begin production by 2 am and by 5 am we are done, and before 6 am we are already delivering these products to our customers so that it will fresh and they can sell them that morning. And through this way, we can retain our customers and even attract new ones because we keep to our promises (respondent 10).

In addition, to making research, the apprenticeship system also enables collaboration and teamwork, which generates new ideas and promotes innovation and productivity. Through this process, there is no lack of initiative, and initiative means putting ideas into action, and the implementation of these ideas will lead to the improvement of products and services. Respondent 1 stressed the importance of collaboration and teamwork which helped them in building their business. He said;

.. we are motorcycle dealers and when I was working as an apprenticeship, my master had so many apprentices at that time, so he was into the importation of spare parts, mostly the engine parts, and when they are imported, we assemble them here and sell as a full engine and we have a warehouse. The day our goods will arrive, every apprentice must be present to work that day...

..what we do is that we import these Motorcycles parts are imported from Asia and we fix them



together here, that is how we do our business, so it requires everybody working together fixing them, so you must learn and know the names of the parts that make up an engine and sometimes we buy cars and pieces them and sell them as crabs in bits by bits. Whenever we have to do this, every apprentice must join hand and everybody bring their ideas and initiative on how best to go about it. (Respondent 1).

The use of technology in the apprenticeship system has been a revelation in Nigeria in recent to improve on innovation and create value. And they have performed better by acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to adopt these technologies in their various fields. Social media platforms have allowed the apprentices to learn and improve on their service delivery. This has greatly enhanced their competence as most of them learn to use some tools and equipment that were not previously used in their business. For instance, most of the respondents expressed their delight in using these technologies and the latest devices in their business such as WhatsApp group chat, posting products on Instagram and Facebook pages, and connecting with their customers. Respondent 3 and 15 shared their experiences,

...You know in fashion, things change all the time, new styles keep coming up and so we must keep up with the times. If you go through our catalogue, you see so many designs that we have. Some of these designs, we pick from the internet we search YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media platform, and we follow some celebrities in other to keep up with the changing environment and our customers like new designs. Also, we make use of the new Janome sewing machine, it is a new technology in sewing, we have both the mechanical ones and the electric ones but you own here there is no light so often we use the mechanical ones... (respondent3)

...I am a Poultry farmer and also a veterinary doctor and sell animal feeds for chickens, and we make use of modern devices like 3D printing, devices to record body temperature, heart rate, and breathing rate, nobody but me uses anything like that in this field. Then we offer laboratory services. You will know the real cause of a disease, then now you will use the right drug to treat that disease, which will give you better results, and that will make your work faster and more efficient. This is one of the measures to improve the existing situation. (respondent 15).

The apprenticeship system has allowed SME leaders to manage human resources in the dynamic economic environment that requires new skills and knowledge in the workplace. learning, through experiential learning and on-the-job training, which characterized the apprenticeship system, and the influence of the environment plays a significant impact on individuals' skills and behaviour which shapes their self-leadership skills (Ute Tat & Natascha Zeitel-Bank, 2013). Carmeli, Meitar, & Weisberg (2006) stated that self-leadership skills promote individual innovation in the workplace. The



use of self-leadership by SME leaders can thus enable them to develop problem-solving skills and implement decisions related to their tasks to ensure high performance in their business. On an individual level, this will encourage the development of ideas that will enable innovation and create value in their respective businesses to help grow and expand their business. Similarly, SME leaders are empowered to develop, implement and transform ideas into products and services, as self-leadership is an influence-based process enabled by apprenticeship training through which individuals can direct, motivate and change their behaviour towards achieving the desired goal.

Discussions and Implications for future research

The study indicates that apprenticeship could be a learning process through which the strategies of self-leadership can be acquired, as most respondents shared their thoughts on the importance of the apprenticeship system for their personal and business development. Apprenticeship involves on-the-job training and instruction in the craft of a particular occupation with practical learning and application of the skills and knowledge which has been learned. The system enables SME leaders to gain experience and learn the behaviours and the cognitive thought processes necessary to adapt to a similar situation in their daily activities. All of these learning encourage the internalization of self-leadership strategies and enable individuals to develop self-awareness and self-control which requires individuals to take control and evaluate their behaviour, establishing a link between individual beliefs about standards and behaviour (Khang et al., 2014).

The study we believe has added to the body of knowledge because this is a novel addition to the self-leadership literature and it is particularly relevant to the current challenges related to the lack of an acceptable training model for self-leadership strategies. Future research could develop a comprehensive training model that will incorporate self-leadership and the apprenticeship system and solve the issues of the lack of an acceptable training model to train individuals into acquiring self-leadership skills. SME leaders can benefit from apprenticeship-based self-leadership development because it promotes internal reinforcement, which is essential for individuals to enrich their experiences and initiate the self-learning process. Ross (2015), added that experiences are the catalyst that initiates the self-leadership development process, which is central to the development of self-leaders because successes form the basis for further successful experiences.

Apprenticeship-based training in self-leadership is therefore important, especially in areas where the aim is to gain useful experience, as it can promote self-reflection and behavioural changes that can lead to effective handling of complex and unpredictable life situations. This finding indicates that the apprenticeship system, in general, is a means to facilitate a learning process for self-leadership in the context of education. Although this idea seems interesting, it does not provide a holistic framework for what self-leadership education should be based on. As a result, we know little about how to



incorporate this concept into self-leadership training programs to integrate it into the practices of a comprehensive leadership development program in both educational and professional settings. For instance, Onwuegbuzie (2017) proposed a model based on collaboration between educational institutions and industry, where students spend more time in organizations working in their fields of study than in school. The criteria of learning require that students studying marketing, for example, work in the marketing department of a company for four years or more before graduating from school.

The study is significant both to academia and stakeholders including government agencies in Nigeria for they can utilize the idea in the finding in developing the apprenticeship system and incorporating it into the education system in training budding entrepreneurs and SME leaders to become self-directed business people that will manage their careers effectively. By placing an increasing emphasis on the apprenticeship system, many of the issues outlined in the findings can be handled by the government by absorbing the teaming youths into small businesses thereby solving the issue of unemployment that is currently besieging the country. SME leaders play a significant role among their employees, particularly in leadership roles. The employees, model the lifestyles of their leaders. they imitate what they observe and regard them as role models. For employees to acquire self-leadership strategies their values, beliefs, and goals must be in line with those of their leaders. Therefore, SME leaders could foster the transmission of skill and knowledge to their employees as they model lives towards their masters through the apprenticeship system to the standard the SME leaders have set. This would mean that a study that involves promoting small businesses within an apprenticeship program might yield valuable results as apprenticeship programs tend to bridge the gap between theory and practice in a different way than the program in the current pedagogical methods used in Nigerian institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study sought to explore the importance of the apprenticeship system to self-leadership and how the system could be used for training SME leaders in the development of their Self-leadership skills. To our knowledge, this is the first study that links the apprenticeship training system to the acquisition of self-leadership strategies. The study adopted a qualitative research approach and the researchers were able to ask the SME leaders questions directly and ascertained from their perspective the impact of the apprenticeship system on the success of their business and the development of their self-leadership skills. The themes that emerged were somewhat expected, however, the dominant themes were significant in forming insights into the usefulness of the apprenticeship system in self-leadership training.

The findings indicate that the apprenticeship system as described above could be a learning method through which the strategies of self-leadership could be acquired. The effectiveness of the system



gives insight into the understanding of the relationship between learning and physical experience. The SME leaders expressed great confidence in achieving success in their business because of the knowledge and skills they received through the apprenticeship system that enabled them to develop such competencies as self-motivation, self-awareness, self-control, constructive thought pattern, self-reflection, and concentration, which are needed to improve their effectiveness and business performance. These competencies ultimately translated into the acquisition of self-leadership strategies. This result is timely at a moment such as this, for offering a training program with a significant impact on individual self-leadership development efforts particularly when there are discrepancies in the effective training method for the acquisition of self-leadership skills.

The authors identified the need to emphasize the behaviour of the apprentices toward the master/mentor as a critical factor in developing a comprehensive self-leadership training model as this could form the basis for the internalization of self-leadership strategies in the learning process. Apprentices are expected to learn the basics of their profession from their master, whom they emulate and model their lives towards, indicating that they go through some kind of induction into their profession by understanding their role in the overall training structure. This has an implicit implication for academia and stakeholders in designing an acceptable training model that will incorporate self-leadership and the apprenticeship system and take into cognizance, behavioural characteristics and individual disciplines as regards mentor and apprenticeship relationship. This finding is also valuable to the policymakers and the government who might find it necessary to include self-leadership training in the university program curricula for training students of tertiary institutions into acquiring self-leadership skills. The government can intervene to streamline the apprenticeship system into a formalized uniform standard for training business leaders all over the country.

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