

Implications of Apprentice Attrition to Manpower Need among Artisans in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

Apprentice attrition poses a significant challenge to the manpower needs of artisans in Lagos, Nigeria, as it disrupts the steady supply of skilled labor. This attrition impacts both the completion of training and the overall productivity of artisan businesses. The study investigated the implications of apprentice attrition to manpower need among artisans in Lagos, Nigeria. The study utilized a descriptive survey research design, targeting artisans in Lagos. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 35 respondents, including plumbers, furniture makers, electricians, painters, fashion designers and metalworkers. The primary data collection tool was a self-structured questionnaire. Data collection was done via online survey, and completed questionnaires were retrieved by the researcher. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 was used to organize and code the data. Descriptive statistics (frequency tables and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson product moment correlation) were used to analyze the data assessing the degree of correlation between variables at a 5% significance level. Findings revealed a significant relationship between apprentice attrition and training completion rates, no significant relationship with skill proficiency levels, and a significant relationship between attrition and business output (manpower availability) of artisans in Lagos. The study recommended that Artisans and training outlets should restructure apprenticeship programs to make them more engaging and flexible, providing pathways for apprentices to gain skills without the pressure of traditional timeframes that may contribute to dropout.

Keywords: Apprentice; Attrition; Artisans; Training completion rate

1. Introduction

The Nigerian economy is marked by declining growth, low wages, and high levels of unemployment and underemployment. Secondary schools, colleges, polytechnics, universities, and other higher education institutions produce a large number of graduates annually, exacerbating the unemployment crisis. The Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) 2016 reported an increase in the unemployment rate from 10.4% in the last quarter of 2015 to 12.1% in the first quarter of 2016, affecting approximately 24.5 million people in the labour market who were either unemployed or underemployed. Among the youth aged 15-35, the unemployment rate reached 16.39% in the first quarter of 2016. Additionally, NBS (2012) noted that the unemployment rate rose from 18.8% in Q3 2017 to 23.1% in Q3 2018. As industries evolve and economic conditions change, graduates of the formal school that are without jobs keep increasing while the non-formal school from its own end experience high dropout rates among apprentices. An apprentice is an individual who learns a trade or skill by working under the guidance of a highly skilled professional for a specific period. This individual typically seeks to acquire practical skills and, in some cases, theoretical knowledge in a field of interest or occupation that they aim to pursue for their future career or livelihood. An apprentice dedicates themselves to learning from a master or expert to

gain hands-on experience and a deep understanding of a trade or profession (Nnonyelu and Onyeizugbe, 2020). The International Labour Organization (2017) defines apprenticeship as a structured, extended training program for a recognized occupation that takes place primarily within an organization or under a freelance craftsperson, governed by a formal apprenticeship contract, and held to established standards. Ejo-Orusa and Mpi (2019) noted that apprenticeship allows an individual, whether male or female, to work closely with family or community members, or in some cases, with a successful entrepreneur who is not necessarily a family or community member.

Apprenticeship in recent times encounter apprentice attrition and this creates a significant mismatch between the availability of skilled labour and the labour market's needs. This issue is particularly evident in artisanal sectors, where practical skills and hands-on experience from apprenticeships are vital for both personal and sectoral advancement (Ogunleye, 2018). The consequences of apprentice attrition extend beyond immediate skill shortages; premature departures disrupt the continuity of skilled labour, affecting the quality and consistency of artisanal services. This disruption can threaten the sustainability of artisanal businesses, hinder their ability to meet market demands, and lead to higher costs and diminished competitiveness (Adebayo, 2019). Apprentice attrition refers to the premature withdrawal of individuals from apprenticeship programs before completing their training (Chikwendu and Nwogbaga, 2022). This dropout can result from financial challenges, poor working conditions, or lack of motivation, disrupting the supply of skilled labour. In the artisanal sector, apprentice attrition signifies the rate at which trainees leave skill development programs, often due to inadequate support or disconnect between their expectations and the realities of the workplace (Omotayo and Ogundele, 2023). The loss of apprentices before the end of their training period negatively impacts future staffing and workforce planning. Apprentice attrition involves the early termination of apprenticeships, leading to increased training costs and a lower return on investment for businesses and the economy, as it hampers the development of fully skilled professionals (Adebayo and Abiola, 2023). Lulu and Riyanto (2011) observe that while most apprentices aspire to become master craftsmen after their training, some acquire minimal skills or fail to advance to the point of starting their own workshops. Some key factors driving apprentice attrition:

- Lack of job satisfaction: Many apprentices leave due to dissatisfaction with their work conditions, pay, or lack of personal growth. Unfavorable environments and low wages can discourage apprentices from completing their training. The repetitive nature of tasks without opportunities for development makes the work feel unfulfilling. When apprentices' expectations are unmet, they may see no future in the trade, leading to early exits. Tackling these issues is crucial for keeping apprentices engaged and ensuring workforce continuity (Adeoye and Taiwo, 2022).
- Inadequate training: A lack of structured and practical training can frustrate apprentices, pushing them to seek other opportunities. When apprentices do not receive proper guidance or hands-on experience, they may feel they are not gaining valuable skills. This frustration often leads to premature departures as apprentices look for better opportunities to grow. Providing quality mentorship and skill development is essential for reducing attrition and improving workforce readiness (Okafor, 2020).
- Financial constraints: Financial difficulties are a major factor in apprentice attrition. High living expenses, low wages, and lack of financial support can force apprentices to drop out. Many must also support their families, making long-term training unaffordable. Employers who fail to provide adequate financial assistance contribute to the issue, as

apprentices may seek jobs offering immediate income. Addressing these financial hurdles by offering stipends or other support is essential to retaining apprentices and developing skilled labour.

- Desire for quick employment: Some apprentices leave their training programs to pursue quicker employment opportunities, often in industries requiring less skill. Immediate financial pressures may drive them to seek faster income, even if the roles offer little future growth. This desire for instant stability can cause apprentices to abandon their training before acquiring the necessary skills. Offering clearer career prospects and rewards throughout the apprenticeship can help keep apprentices focused on long-term goals.
- Poor work-life balance: Many apprentices suffer from burnout due to long hours and an imbalance between work and personal life. The demanding nature of some trades can cause apprentices to prioritize their health or personal lives over completing the program (Madu, 2020). Extended working hours, physical exhaustion, and limited time for personal activities contribute to an unsustainable lifestyle. This issue is particularly challenging for younger apprentices, who may seek careers offering better flexibility and quality of life. Improving work-life balance by implementing reasonable hours and breaks can help artisans retain apprentices and minimize burnout-related attrition.
- Lack of career progression: The absence of clear career advancement opportunities within the artisan industry can discourage apprentices, making them question their long-term prospects. Without incentives like wage increases, leadership roles, or specialization, apprentices may feel trapped in low-level positions with limited growth potential, leading to attrition (Ibrahim and Eze, 2023). Artisans who establish clear career paths and long-term benefits can enhance apprentice retention and contribute to a more stable workforce.
- Conflicts with master artisans: Poor relationships between apprentices and their master artisans often result in conflicts, which can drive apprentices to leave. A lack of respect, poor communication, or unfair treatment may cause apprentices to lose trust in the program. Master artisans who use authoritarian methods and provide little mentorship can create a hostile learning environment. These conflicts, sometimes arising from cultural differences or misaligned expectations, hinder positive working relationships. Creating a respectful and collaborative environment can reduce conflicts, improve retention, and strengthen apprentice-mentor connections.
- Migration to other regions: Apprentices sometimes leave their roles to migrate to other regions or countries in pursuit of better economic opportunities. This trend is particularly evident in areas with low economic prospects. Apprentices in economically disadvantaged regions may be drawn to areas with higher wages, better working conditions, or more advanced industries. This migration disrupts local manpower development and leaves skill gaps in the artisan sector. To retain apprentices, local artisans and governments must create incentives that make staying in the region more attractive.
- Technological disruption: Some apprentices leave their positions due to the rapid pace of technological advancements in their industry. When artisans do not update their skills and training practices, apprentices may feel unprepared for contemporary challenges and seek other career options (Balogun, 2021). If training programs do not include current tools and methods, apprentices might view their skills as outdated. This perception of obsolescence can drive them to pursue education or jobs in fields with more modern

prospects. To address this issue, artisans should modernize their training approaches by incorporating new technologies and teaching apprentices to use them, ensuring that the workforce remains competitive and future-ready.

Peer influence and social pressures: Social factors, such as peer pressure, can also lead apprentices to leave their programs. Friends or family who perceive artisan work as less prestigious may encourage apprentices to pursue more esteemed career paths or educational opportunities. Young apprentices often face criticism from peers who view artisan jobs as less valuable compared to white-collar professions or academic pursuits. This negative perception can cause apprentices to feel undervalued and discouraged. To combat this, it is important to promote the significance and benefits of skilled trades, which can help shift perceptions and encourage apprentices to stay committed to their training.

The impact of apprentice attrition also intersects with broader socio-economic factors. High dropout rates can hinder local economic development by limiting the growth potential of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that depend on skilled artisans. As these businesses struggle to find qualified workers, their contribution to economic growth and job creation is compromised (Oluwaseun, 2022). The Implications of Apprentice Attrition to Manpower Needs among Artisans Is that it poses significant challenges to the artisanal sector by creating gaps in the availability of skilled workers. When apprentices leave their training programs prematurely, it results in a shortage of qualified artisans, impeding the sector's ability to meet demand and maintain high-quality standards. This attrition not only disrupts the transfer of essential skills and knowledge but also increases training costs and affects business continuity. Understanding these implications is crucial for developing strategies to improve apprentice retention and address manpower needs effectively. Other implications include:

- **Skill shortage and workforce gap:** High apprentice attrition rates contribute to a significant shortage of skilled workers in the artisanal sector, as fewer apprentices complete their training and enter the workforce. This results in a reduced pool of qualified artisans, affecting the ability of the sector to meet market demands and maintain high standards of craftsmanship. Chikwendu and Nwogbaga (2022) highlight that the dropout of apprentices undermines the effectiveness of training programs and exacerbates the skill gap in Nigeria's informal sector. The lack of skilled workers can lead to decreased productivity and limit business growth opportunities for artisans.
- **Decreased quality of work and business continuity:** Attrition among apprentices can significantly impact the quality of work within the artisanal sector. With a reduction in the number of skilled workers, artisans may struggle to maintain high standards, leading to customer dissatisfaction and potentially harming business reputations. Omotayo and Ogundele (2023) discuss how frequent turnover disrupts business operations and can threaten the sustainability of artisanal enterprises. The continuous need to retrain new apprentices may also strain resources and hinder long-term business continuity.
- **Increased training costs and inefficiencies:** Frequent attrition increases the costs associated with training new apprentices, as businesses must invest in additional resources to continuously educate incoming trainees. This repetitive cycle can lead to inefficiencies, with artisans spending more time and money on training rather than focusing on productive activities. Adebayo and Abiola (2023) emphasize that these increased costs can strain the financial stability of artisanal businesses and limit their ability to invest in other areas of growth.

- Impact on knowledge transfer and skill development: High apprentice attrition disrupts the process of transferring specialized knowledge and skills from experienced artisans to new apprentices. This can hinder the development of expertise within the sector, as essential techniques and practices may not be adequately passed on. Ismail and Adeyemo (2022) point out that the continuous loss of apprentices impedes skill development and innovation, reducing the overall capability and competitiveness of artisans. Effective solutions to address apprentice attrition require a comprehensive approach, including enhancements in training programs, financial support for apprentices, and stronger connections between educational institutions and industry needs. Collaboration among policymakers and industry stakeholders is essential to create an environment that supports the retention and development of apprentices (Moses and Suleiman, 2018). The study therefore focused on the implications of Apprentice Attrition to Manpower need among Artisans in Lagos, Nigeria.

The rationale for this study sustains from the affirmation that artisans in the communities are life support for everyone. The artisanal sector in Lagos especially plays a crucial role in providing employment, providing immediate solutions to life threatening problems and supporting economic growth. However, a growing concern is the high rate of apprentice attrition, which threatens the sustainability and effectiveness of manpower development in this sector. Many artisans depend on apprentices to support their businesses and ensure the transfer of skills from one generation to the next. When apprentices fail to complete their training, it disrupts the skill acquisition process, reduces the pool of qualified workers, and undermines the capacity of artisanal trades to meet the growing demand for skilled manpower. The problem is further compounded by factors such as inadequate working conditions, poor wages, lack of motivation, and limited access to resources for apprentices, leading to premature dropouts. This attrition not only affects individual artisans but also has wider implications for the continuity of artisanal businesses and the local economy. Despite these challenges, there is limited research on the specific impact of apprentice attrition on manpower needs among artisans. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the implications of Apprentice Attrition to Manpower need among Artisans in Lagos, Nigeria.

The objective of the study is to investigate the implications of apprentice attrition to manpower need among artisans in Lagos, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- To Determine the relationship between apprentice attrition and the training completion rate of artisans in Lagos.
- To examine the correlation between apprentice attrition and skill proficiency levels among artisans in Lagos.
- To assess the effect of apprentice attrition on the business output (manpower availability) of artisans in Lagos.

2. Methodology and Data Collection

The study utilized a descriptive survey research design, targeting artisans in Lagos. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 35 respondents, including plumbers, furniture makers, electricians, painters, fashion designers and metalworkers. The primary data collection tool was a self-structured questionnaire, divided into two sections: Section A focused on demographic information, while Section B addressed thematic issues related to

the topic. The questionnaire used a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Research experts reviewed the questionnaire for face and content validity, ensuring clarity, appropriate language, and measurement relevance. Data collection was done via online survey, and completed questionnaires were retrieved by the researcher. Descriptive statistics (frequency tables and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson product moment correlation) were used to analyze the data, assessing the degree of correlation between variables at a 5% significance level. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 aided the analysis of the data.

3. Results

In this section, the data collected from the respondents regarding the study "implications of Apprentice Attrition to Manpower need among Artisans in Lagos, Nigeria" were presented and analyzed using percentage and frequency tables, while the hypotheses were tested using Pearson product-moment correlation analysis.

Table 1: Socio demographic data of respondents

S/N	Variables	Items	Frequency	Percentages
1.	Age bracket	21-30 years	19	54.3
		31-40 years	16	45.7
2.	Gender	Male	27	77.1
		Female	8	22.9
3.	Education Level	Primary school	1	2.9
		Secondary school	5	14.3
		Vocational training	6	17.1
		Tertiary education	12	34.3
		Postgraduate education	11	31.4
4.	Years of Experience in the Trade	Less than 1 year	2	5.7
		1-3 years	10	28.6
		4-6 years	8	22.8
		7-10 years	10	28.6
		More than 10 years	5	14.3
5.	Current Employment Status	Self-employed	15	42.9
		Employed by a company	11	31.3
		Apprentice	8	22.9
		Unemployed	1	2.9

Source: Online Survey, 2024

Table 4.1 above showed that 54.3% of the respondents fall within 21-30 years while 45.7% fall within 31-40 years. Also, 77.1% of the respondents were male while 22.9% respondents were female. In addition, the table shows that 2.9% of the respondents had primary school education, 14.3% had secondary school education, 17.1% had vocational training education, 34.3% had tertiary education while 31.4% had postgraduate education. More so, 5.7% of the respondents had less than 1 years-experience in the trade, 28.6% had between 1-3 years, 28.6% had between 7-10 years while 14.3% had other qualifications. Similarly, 42.9% of the respondents current employment status is self-employed, 31.3% is employed by a company, 22.9% apprentice, while 2.9% were unemployed.

Test of Hypotheses

If the p-value is less than 0.05 (5%), the alternative hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than the significance level, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2: Relationship between apprentice attrition and the training completion rate

		Apprentice Attrition	Training Completion Rate
Apprentice Attrition	Pearson Correlation	1	.337*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.048
	N	35	35
Training Completion Rate	Pearson Correlation	.337*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	
	N	35	35

The table above indicates a coefficient of 0.337 with a p-value of 0.048 ($p = 0.048$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value (0.048) is lower than the significance level of 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. The results from the Pearson correlation test showed that there is significant correlation between apprentice attrition and the training completion rate of artisans in Lagos. It has been revealed that, there is significant correlation between apprentice attrition and the training completion rate of artisans in Lagos. this was supported by Wright and Bélanger (2017) that apprentice dropout rates were significantly associated with lower completion rates in vocational training programs, particularly in developing economies where socio-economic challenges play a major role. High attrition rates in apprenticeship programs often lead to lower training completion rates, adversely impacting the availability of skilled labor in key industries. Similarly, Ibrahim and Mohammed (2016), in their study of apprentice programs in sub-Saharan Africa, revealed that high attrition rates negatively affect the continuity and completion of artisan training programs. They emphasized that financial difficulties, lack of motivation, and limited career prospects were some of the key factors driving apprentices to quit before completing their training. Akinyemi and Ofem (2019) also identified a direct relationship between apprentice attrition and completion rates in the carpentry and plumbing trades. Their research concluded that the more apprentices leave the program, the fewer skilled artisans graduate, thereby affecting the overall manpower available in these critical sectors.

Table 3: Relationship between apprentice attrition and skill proficiency levels

		Apprentice Attrition	Skill Proficiency Levels
Apprentice Attrition	Pearson Correlation	1	.236
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.173
	N	35	35
Skill Proficiency Levels	Pearson Correlation	.236	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.173	
	N	35	35

The table above presents a coefficient of 0.236 with a p-value of 0.173 ($p = 0.173$, $p > 0.05$). Since the p-value (0.173) exceeds the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis is rejected. The results of the Pearson correlation test indicated that there is no significant correlation between apprentice attrition and skill

proficiency levels of artisans in Lagos. This outcome implies that there is no significant correlation between apprentice attrition and skill proficiency levels of artisans in Lagos. Wenger and Billet (2018) found that while high attrition rates may reduce the number of fully trained artisans, it does not always correlate with lower skill proficiency for those who continue informal or on-the-job learning. In a similar study, Ajayi and Fashola (2016), observed that many dropouts gained substantial practical skills before leaving their programs, enabling them to achieve comparable skill levels to those who completed the formal apprenticeship. This finding suggests that formal completion may not be the sole determinant of proficiency, especially in contexts where hands-on experience plays a significant role in skill acquisition. Furthermore, Omotayo and Oladele (2020) found no statistically significant relationship between attrition and skill proficiency in their study of artisans in Nigeria's metalwork industry.

Table 4: Relationship between apprentice attrition and business output (manpower availability)

		Apprentice Attrition	Business Output (Manpower Availability)
Apprentice Attrition	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 .597** 35	.000 35 1
Business Output (Manpower Availability)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.597** .000 35	1 35

The table above indicates a coefficient of 0.597 with a p-value of 0.000 ($p = 0.000$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value (0.000) is below the significance level of 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. The findings from the Pearson correlation test showed that there is significant correlation between apprentice attrition and business output (manpower availability) of artisans in Lagos. This then means that, there is significant correlation between apprentice attrition and business output (manpower availability) of artisans in Lagos. This was in consonant with the finding by Adewale and Bakare (2018) that apprentice attrition significantly affects the availability of skilled manpower among artisans in Nigeria, leading to a decline in business output. Similarly, Olawale and Akanmu (2017) studied the tailoring and fashion industry in Lagos and concluded that high attrition rates among apprentices diminish the pool of skilled workers available to the industry. In the context of electrical work and plumbing services, Ogunlade (2019) observed a significant correlation between apprentice dropout rates and manpower shortages. The study highlighted that in fields requiring high technical expertise, attrition creates gaps in the workforce, which negatively impacts the ability of businesses to meet customer demand. Mensah and Ofori (2020) further supported these findings in their study of carpentry and furniture-making industries in urban Lagos. They found that the loss of apprentices during training directly led to a reduction in skilled manpower, which in turn diminished the businesses' output. Employers had to either stretch existing workers or turn down contracts due to insufficient staff, which limited the scale and scope of their operations.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the study revealed a significant correlation between apprentice attrition and the training completion rate of artisans in Lagos. High levels of apprentice dropout have negatively impacted the completion rate, indicating that attrition is a major barrier to successful skill acquisition and training completion. However, the study found no significant correlation between apprentice attrition and the skill proficiency levels of artisans. This suggests that while some apprentices drop out, those who remain are able to acquire adequate proficiency. Finally, the study demonstrated a significant correlation between apprentice attrition and business output (manpower availability), showing that high attrition rates reduce the availability of skilled manpower and consequently impact the productivity of artisan businesses in Lagos. In light of the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- ✓ Stakeholders, including vocational training centers and government agencies, should implement retention strategies such as mentorship, financial support, and career counseling to reduce apprentice attrition and improve training completion rates.
- ✓ Artisans and training bodies should restructure apprenticeship programs to make them more engaging and flexible, providing pathways for apprentices to gain skills without the pressure of traditional timeframes that may contribute to dropout.
- ✓ The Lagos State government and vocational training agencies should provide incentives to both apprentices and artisans to foster a more sustainable apprenticeship system, ensuring that the loss of manpower due to attrition does not adversely affect the economy.
- ✓ Efforts should be made to enhance the quality of training provided to ensure that those who complete their apprenticeship achieve higher levels of proficiency.
- ✓ To address the impact of attrition on manpower availability, artisan businesses should prioritize policies that encourage apprentice retention, such as offering incentives for completing training and creating clear progression paths for apprentices within the business.

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