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APPRENTICESHIPS AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH OF FAMILY BUSINESSES: A REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

Abstract

A practical government policy on apprenticeship is a requirement to continuously advance and encourage the company toward top performance and adaptability for a long-term sustainability. In Nigeria, which has a significant young unemployment problem, apprenticeship has emerged as a key to reducing youth unemployment. Thus, sustainability of family businesses is a source of employment, and continuing apprenticeship practices have also raised the likelihood that an individual will obtain employment in the southern regions of Nigeria. This study aimed to examine how job creation, vocational and technical training, and apprentice competences aid in sustaining family business growth in southern Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey and stratified sampling technique; a sample included 329 apprentices in 48 SMEs in southern regions of Nigeria. Using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, data were analyzed using a normality test, linearity test, and multicollinearity test to ascertain the adequacy of the data. Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed that job creation is related to sustainable family business growth; however, the strength of the correlation, though weak (30.0%), was statistically significant; a significant degree of association also existed between apprentice vocational training and sustainable family business growth; lastly, apprentice competences relate significantly to sustainable family business growth (72.1%, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that continuous apprenticeship practices influence the objective of business growth as a pivot for socioeconomic development and a long-term sustainability of family businesses.

Keywords

small businesses, entrepreneurship, growth, skills, knowledge, family enterprise, job creation

JEL Classification

J23, L26, M13, M21, O17

INTRODUCTION

The absence of effective regulation and organized system of apprenticeship practice has been the cause of the rising rate of joblessness and nefarious acts by youth in the southern regions of Nigeria. Also, efforts by the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) have not successfully met the demand for apprenticeship training and education in areas of livestock feed manufacturing, printing presses, and carpentry. Therefore, a well-articulated apprenticeship program is often poorly implemented to address the incessant economic activities in society. This disorder is because of a lack of proper regulation of apprenticeship practice to improve job creation, vocational training programs, and apprentice competences to help the unemployed and improve the socioeconomic development of the southern regions of Nigeria. This emanates because technical skills have not been given the needed support for high economic growth and the creation of job opportunities due to the absence of the skills needed to run businesses sustainably, which renders economic activities stagnant.

Apprenticeship as a long-aged practice and system has revolved around the human resource development (HRD) scheme, which helps blend training and learning and propelled the setting up of business ventures. This has been a widespread practice in the southern regions of Nigeria, which has helped transmit human knowledge and skills through training and learning of a particular craft or trade to improve future livelihood and wellbeing. Over the years, the continuous transfer of skills has become a part of human capital for developing people. Therefore, apprenticeship practices offer individuals opportunities to improve their performance in various areas of trade. Today, apprenticeship practice has transitioned from the informal to the official employment sector, characterized by significant job advancement and benefits to Nigeria, which is faced with huge unemployment among youth.

The need for sustainability in a family business has been a source of employment, and the chance of individuals finding jobs has increased with continuous apprenticeship practices, which has been a sustainable factor for business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria. A qualified individual with adequate knowledge and skills enhances economic development and business sustainability.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Apprenticeship, which enhances entrepreneurship, is a key factor in business growth; hence, the study adopted Lucas' Growth Model (1978). Lucas (1978) opined that people with different endowments and managerial abilities are critical determinants of business growth. This model assumes that better managerial ability in enterprises helps such businesses operate efficiently with increasing output. Apprentices who acquire skills and become entrepreneurs must increase productivity and provide better business opportunities in society (Diyoke, 2014). The relevance of this model to the study is that vocational and technical skills are essential for family business growth (Yusuf & Soyemi, 2012).

Hence, these skills increase productivity in business for those living in an informal sector of the economy. Iwueke et al. (2020) and Okadi et al. (2021) conceptualized apprenticeship as work-based placement enhanced by on-the-job training and continuous learning within a set period. Apprenticeship training is a philosophy of creating a productive environment and self-reliance, where new attitudes are promoted against future challenges (Ertelt et al., 2021). Effective inculcation of required skills for trade is achieved through apprenticeship practice (Udu, 2015).

Traditional, informal, and modern apprenticeship practices have been identified as apprenticeship categories. Traditional apprenticeship is a learning system that compels learning in an environ-

ment that facilitates technical know-how and the acquisition of social knowledge (Olulu & Udeorah, 2018). Traditional apprenticeships lack formal structure. It is linked to the family apprenticeship system and is largely unstructured in lineage, which also aids in the transfer of dominant lineage occupations to generations. Peter (2017) opined that knowledge of survival in an environment is offered through traditional apprenticeship. Learning is acquired through direct participation and observation within a less theoretical framework. Traditional apprenticeship practice is now an approach for acquiring specific and transferrable skills in an informal sector (Sani et al., 2021).

In informal apprenticeship, relevant skills are continuously acquired through observation by the master. The modern apprenticeship, or formal apprenticeship, is regulated by an act that aligns the period of training, the hour of training, etc. This type of practice is associated with large and medium enterprises. The training is done both within the organization and vocationally. According to Achugo and Chigbo (2014), it provides general education for secondary or post-secondary school students. It can exist for one to three years, in which the apprentice is made to acquire fundamental skills to narrow specialization. A structured training program with a professional trainer is available to guide the apprentice. In addition, it requires a written contract on the training arrangement and verification of the acquired skills (Smith & Kemmis, 2013). In developed economies, this form of training demonstrates the efficacy of apprenticeship training, and it is made to promote

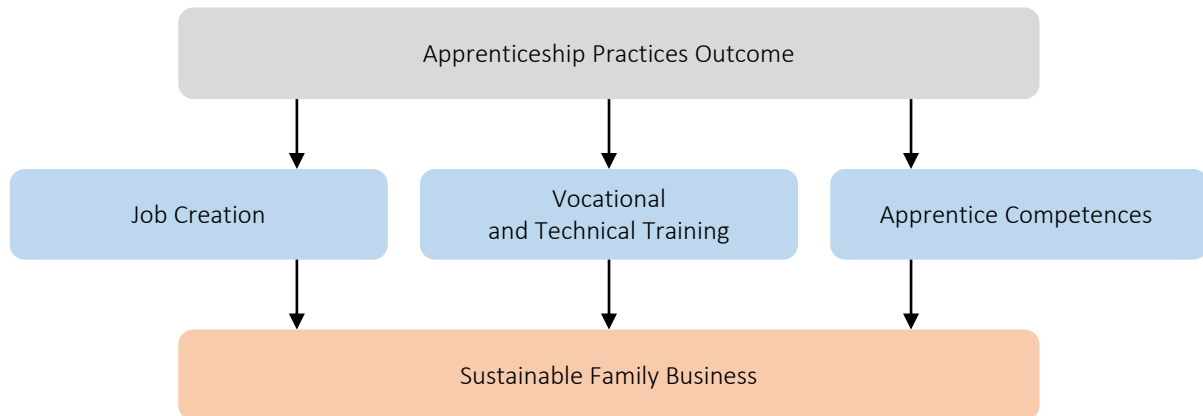


Figure 1. Apprenticeship practices

apprenticeship in Nigeria to address the incessant mismatch of skills needed to develop critical areas of the economy in Nigeria. Apprenticeship practice is depicted in Figure 1.

Job creation is conceptualized as a creative process of developing something unique, which requires investment in time and money and undertaking investment in physical and financial risk and social hazards (Sani et al., 2021). In support, Ejo-Orusa and Lloyd (2019) admitted that job creation gives apprentices freedom and fulfillment. Bolukbas and Guneri (2018) and Akram and Syed (2019) justified that it is the readiness of individuals to engage in new enterprises through entrepreneurship where individuals are able to demonstrate a willingness to take risks and opportunities in an environment. Forces that drive job creation involve experimenting and accomplishing something (Adamu, 2020) to create wealth while minimizing waste. In support, Sharma (2021) supports that job creation relates to the process of creating incremental wealth through individuals by providing value for products and services while undertaking business risk about equity, time, career commitment, and risk-taking.

Apprenticeship has become a tool for self-determination with the rising population of job seekers without a ready labor market for people graduating from universities (Obi & Agha, 2016). This worrisome trend of unemployment has imposed a challenge to the hopes of students from higher institutions. Enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge is sustained through apprenticeship, which enhances job creation through structured training. Usman et al. (2021) posited that job crea-

tion through apprenticeship practice broadens the scope of entrepreneurship to accelerate the creation of new initiatives. This reflects that entrepreneurial society is embedded in job creation that enhances economic progress. Hence, job creation is a national priority through apprenticeship that improves knowledge and skills based on structured training.

Various studies have supported the notion that apprenticeship is one traditional means of acquiring skills and trade in developing countries, particularly Nigeria. For instance, traditional apprenticeship has enhanced training or capacity building in middle and higher workforce training (Adofu et al., 2013; Akpama et al., 2011; Okolocha et al., 2020). The reality has made it obvious that acquiring skills through apprenticeship is a tool for sustainability and development as well as future self-employment. The contemporary apprenticeship practice is sustainable as the government enacts apprenticeship programs to empower youth (Adeyeye et al., 2015). In southern regions, the process of apprenticeship that results in job creation involves the master providing the physiological needs of apprentices within a specific number of years based on the academic qualification and age of apprentices. They learn a trade or craft to completion. At this stage, such an apprentice is settled by the mentor either by cash or by setting up a similar business based on agreement.

Strategic factors have enabled job creation through apprenticeship practices. Self-confidence helps the apprentice to master new tasks and skills through training. It is a tool to achieve set goals because apprentice achievement is dependent on

interactions between the environment, one's behavior, and personal variables. Hence, self-confidence predicts job creation through apprenticeship. Knowledge and skills have a solid contribution to job creation through acquired training. For instance, Ezenwakwelu et al. (2019) revealed that the Industrial Training Fund and Nigeria Council for Management Development (NCMD) are institutions for the premier acquisition of skills for apprenticeship. In addition, Sani et al. (2021) also noted that the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) is an institution that aids in vocational skills, business development, and strategic job placement of unemployed youth. However, today, the establishment of the Entrepreneurship Development Centre (EDC) is an enabler of knowledge and skills acquisition for job creation. Family support serves as motivation for apprenticeship training within a given period. The need for family support has been linked to a lack of funding, making sponsoring an apprentice difficult. Hence, family support becomes an avenue for apprentices to undertake training for efficiency in meeting the technological needs of the environment and thereby creating jobs.

Technical training has been a means to prepare individuals for effective involvement in business. This indicates that vocational training prepares citizens to promote economic activities with sustainable development to alleviate poverty (Arthur et al., 2021). Vocational training and education related to knowledge acquisition through teaching and learning aimed at acquiring skills for a specific career. Studies have identified vocational training as a measure for facilitating task performance in which learners are engaged in a career that involves practical abilities (Bullem et al., 2021). For instance, areas of practical education oriented in technical education consist of metalwork, mechanical/automobile technology, electrical and electronic, or woodwork. This demands special attention for an individual to acquire the needed skills and objectives (Okoye & Arimonu, 2016). On the other hand, vocational and technical education, being a reliable and viable instrument for economic transformation, needs to be improved in Nigeria. This is because efforts are needed to emphasize occupational skills for an individual to have gainful employment. This disadvantaged state is linked to a lack of facilities, fund-

ing, trained personnel, inaccessibility, and apathy of political elites (Kehinde & Adewuyi, 2015).

Despite this argument, graduates from vocational education are meant to be employers of labor (Ovbiagele, 2015). This affirms Oguntuyi Akinola (2013) that growth and development depend on vocational and technical training. Vocational education and training are needed to improve informal sector operations in diverse ways. For instance, Liadi and Olutayo (2017) observe that while it helps build up the informal business skills and experiences required for entrepreneur survival, Fluitman (2002) maintained that in the informal economy, skill training increases productivity, occupational safety, poverty reduction, and income. Chanthalanonh et al. (2011) indicate that vocational education and training allow individuals to improve their strength by learning skills that help them pursue income-generating activities, which may be family business or personal business as a source of livelihood. Today, the practical development of individual potentials is driven by technical training that enhances socio-economic activities to enhance value for business growth (Sule et al., 2020). For instance, mastery of the equipment, techniques, and methods involved in carrying out tasks such as manufacturing, engineering, and finance requires competency, specialized knowledge, and analytical ability to solve business problems (Ikupolati et al., 2017).

Conceptually, competence relates to a state of being adequate in carrying out a function based on sufficient judgments, knowledge, and skills (Egbosionu, 2021). The need for competence enables the apprentice to establish performance criteria (Fabi et al., 2015). Apprentices can manage and sustain business through adequate acquisition of proficiency in skills, attitude, and knowledge. For instance, competence may apply to repairs of electrical appliances or motors, leading to self-employment or active participation in organizations. In setting up SMEs, apprentice competence in marketing, technical, managerial, and financial areas is necessary to sustain business. Apprentice acquisition of competence becomes self-employed, reducing high unemployment rates (Evanciew & Rojewski, 1999). In a work environment, competence plays a critical role in entering any organization or managing a business outfit. For instance,

artisans require technical competence to interpret ideas, see, and listen (Adejigbe & Dahunsi, 2010). Therefore, a prospective apprentice in SMEs is anticipated to acquire managerial competencies through sensitivity to workers' feelings, effective schedule planning program, meeting up dateline for demands, personal skills evaluation, effective communication, goal setting in an organization, and in-depth knowledge of a chosen career (Agabi et al., 2013). On the other hand, managerial competencies associated with technicians are to foster sustainable relationships with organizational members, effective policy development, and implementation. Abzari et al. (2010) consider that for technicians, the absence of managerial competencies makes apprentices dependent on paid employment, which is unforeseen in a contemporary economy where jobs are lacking.

Financial competence is a critical factor for sustainable business, and it requires identifying, procuring, allocating, and evaluating financial resources for current and recurrent expenditures. In addition, marketing competencies require determining the selling price of a product, carrying out advertisements on products, prudent management of fun, sales promotion, proper record keeping on all transactions, and the ability to identify a target market and customers (Egbosionu, 2021). These indicate that a venture's sustainable success is dependent on market competencies. Therefore, the importance of personal competencies through innovativeness, determination, focus, punctuality to work, good judgment, resourcefulness, cooperation and dependability, initiative and respect for others, and attention to details are anticipated from apprentice for effective management of business (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

The need to adopt a competency-based model relates to the ability of the apprentice to demonstrate skills and knowledge in a competent way that can be measured and observed. The importance of competence is that it aids the manager in determining if the apprentice can gain competence through technical instruction and have mastery in each course of action. In the course training, an apprentice is anticipated to be punctual, hardworking, reliable, and polite. A strong work ethic is required to show honesty in taking responsibility and have a positive career path in the organi-

zation. In a dynamic workplace, the apprentice's technical, managerial, financial, and marketing competencies could result in a high commitment of the apprentice in bringing business goals to reality. For instance, affective occupational commitment requires an apprentice to accomplish training and overcome turnover to enhance positive learning outcomes (Salzmann et al., 2018).

The concept of occupational commitment is a source of influence on apprentice career development. Occupational commitment covers continuance, affective, and normative commitment that help stabilize an occupation's emotional attachment (Meyer et al., 2004). Apprentices with a high affective state of commitment are involved in the course of action; apprentices with continuance commitment choose to remain where they are; those with normative commitment have a sense of obligation (Meyer & Maltin, 2010). The level of apprentice competences influences these three levels of occupational commitment in carrying out assigned tasks. Salzmann et al. (2018) argued that normative commitment decreases when an apprentice commences a training program, while continuance commitment increases. The assumption is that during the training program, the apprentice becomes aware of the time and effort invested to acquire skills. Despite this, apprenticeship is encouraged to consider their career and remain committed to the organization, and this helps to reduce recruitment costs and improve retention of workers in the organization. This affirmed the views of Ekoja et al. (2019) that the retention rate in many organizations has improved by 80% by hiring apprentices. Also, 65% of apprentices can stay committed to an organization that trained them during skills development.

The concept of sustainability has been a framework that encourages entrepreneurs to reorient their business ventures with a focus on new strategies and growth in a new area. Sustainability is important to link the entrepreneur's capabilities with the available business resources (Okoye & Asika, 2013). Andrada (2015) noted that sustainability in business growth is dependent on the sustainable environment. Business has a critical role to play in today's sustainable development. Business activities are linked with sustainable development due to its influence on environmental changes glob-

ally. For instance, business activities affect diversity directly in forestry, commercial fishing, and agro-industry and indirectly in air and water pollution (Jones et al., 2017).

An obvious reason business influences sustainable development is the increased reliance on the private sector for wealth creation and the interconnection with the growing world economy. For instance, with the emergence of privatization in 1980, the development of the private sector became a key part of economic reform in Nigeria beyond oil. This significant transition has created strong reliance on both private firms and market forces. Hence, there is an increase in capital flow, such as foreign direct investment, private loan, and portfolio investment from the developed to developing economy. Again, in today's business investment, foreign direct investment has clearly reflected the growth of many corporations and companies with business and commercial activities in Nigeria and globally (Eruemegbe, 2015).

One of the areas of sustainable development in Nigeria is environmental sustainability, and business has much interest in social responsibility. The need for social responsibility is to enforce social trust on a business and the flexibility that the business needs to operate in a changing environment for survival and profitability. In any society, sustainable development occurs when a business chooses to be environmentally sustainable.

2. AIM AND HYPOTHESES

This study aims to examine apprenticeship practices and sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria. The hypotheses developed to accomplish the study's goal are:

H₀1: Job creation has no correlation with sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria.

H₀2: Vocational and technical training has no correlation with sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria.

H₀3: Apprentice competences have no correlation with sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria.

3. METHOD

The survey covered SMEs in livestock feed manufacturing, printing press, and carpentry in six states (Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, and Rivers State) in southern regions of Nigeria. The study investigated 8 SMEs from each state with a total population of 1,844 apprentices from 48 SMEs. The Taro Yamane sampling formula determined a sample size of 329 apprentices. A descriptive research design explored the data on apprenticeship practices and sustainable business growth. A stratified sampling method was used in selecting the sample for the study. A five-point Likert scale structured questionnaire was adopted to elicit relevant information for the study.

The data collected were analyzed using a normality test, linearity test, and multicollinearity test to ascertain the adequacy of the data, while correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The instrument's reliability was established with the use of content and face validity, and reliability was carried out with the use of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. According to Bonett and Wright (2015), Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is a tool used for reliability in social and organizational sciences. The instrument is reliable and fit for data collection with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.7 and above (Hair et al., 2014) (Table 1).

Table 1. Coefficient reliability with Cronbach's Alpha

| S/N | Variables | No. of items | Reliability |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Job creation | 5 | 0.742 |
| 2 | Vocational and technical training | 5 | 0.795 |
| 3 | Apprentice competence | 5 | 0.765 |
| 4 | Sustainable business growth | 5 | 0.774 |

4. RESULTS

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics on apprenticeship practices. Job creation, vocational and technical training, and apprentice competences were used to measure sustainable business growth. Constructs designed to measure sustainable business growth included: Sustainable environment encourages entrepreneurs to reorient their busi-

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of apprenticeship practices and sustainable family business growth

| Item | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Variance |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------|----------------|----------|
| Job creation | 322 | 3.61 | 1.256 | 1.577 |
| Vocational and technical training | 322 | 3.88 | .479 | .229 |
| Apprentice competences | 322 | 4.01 | .618 | .382 |
| Sustainable business growth | 322 | 3.03 | .852 | .726 |

ness venture with a focus on new strategy and growth; environmental sustainability increases reliance on wealth creation and makes businesses take social responsibility; good management practice on sustainability prevent wastage, improve efficiency and enhance competitiveness in market; good government policy stimulates business to optimal performance and creates flexibility for sustainable development in the future; and sustainable development principles in business allow the use of financial assets to promote investment in society. All the constructs had a mean of 3.03, which indicates that the questions were of positive response; and standard deviation, which is higher than one, indicates that 95 % of the variance was elicited from the mean. Therefore, the spread of data was confirmed to be adequate.

Job creation was measured through: Apprentice's readiness to engage in entrepreneurship demonstrates his willingness to risk-taking and also take advantage of opportunities in the environment; the worrisome trend of unemployment is addressed through job creation for youth through apprenticeship; entrepreneurial skills and knowledge for job creation are enhanced through structured training for economic progress; apprenticeship promotes sustainability and development of youth for future self-employment in society; and apprentice self-confidence predicts knowledge and skills that have strong contribution to job creation in society. All the constructs had a mean of 3.61, which indicates that the questions were of positive response. The standard deviation, which is lower than one, indicates that 68 % of the variance was elicited from the mean. Therefore, the spread of data was confirmed to be adequate.

Five constructs were designed as measures of vocational training. They were: An apprentice is effectively involved in business through technical training acquired; tasks performance in a career with practical abilities is effectively facilitated through vocational training; vocational educa-

tion and training have helped to build the informal business skills and experiences required for entrepreneur survival; the acquisition of skills in vocational education helps apprentices to pursue income-generating activities in personal business as a source of livelihood; and technical training enhances apprentice potential for socio-economic activities that create value for business growth. All the constructs had a mean of 3.88, which indicates the questions were of positive response. The standard deviation, lower than one, indicates that 68% of the variance was elicited from the mean. Therefore, the spread of data was confirmed to be adequate.

Apprentice competences were measured by: Adequate acquisition of proficiency in skills, attitude, and knowledge make apprentices manage a business successfully; technical competence by artisans is developed based on their ability to interpret ideas, see, listen, and actively participate; sensitivity to workers' feelings, effective schedule planning program, and meeting up dateline for demands are managerial competences that enhance sustainable business; financial competence helps apprentices identify, procure, allocate, and evaluate financial resources in relation to current and recurrent expenditures; as well as marketing competence makes apprentices determine the selling price of a product, carry out the advertisements on products, and sales promotion to achieve business goals. All the constructs had a mean of 4.01, which indicates the questions were of positive response. The standard deviation, which is lower than one, indicates that 68% of the variance was elicited from the mean. Therefore, the spread of data was confirmed to be adequate.

The test for normality was done to see whether the attributes of the dataset were normal. It requires a rule of thumb, which stresses that data skewness and kurtosis must not be above ± 2 and ± 7 for normality (Davcik, 2014). Table A1, Appendix A, shows that all the constructs met these requirements. However, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure

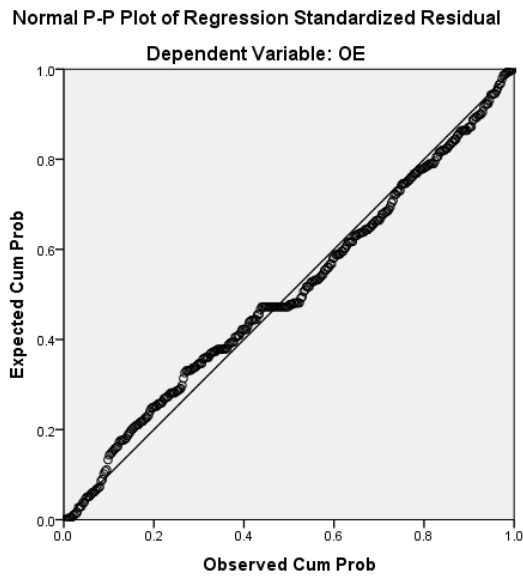


Figure 2. Linearity plot

of sampling adequacy (KMO) and Bartlett’s test of sphericity were adopted to affirm the normality of datasets. In this test, the rule of thumb holds that the KMO must not exceed 0.5, while the probability value must not be lower than 0.05. Table A1 validated the dataset’s normal qualities.

To ensure linearity, the closeness of variables probability plot line is recommended by Hair et al. (2014). Figure 2 depicts a linear relationship between the variables.

In this study, a multicollinearity test was carried out to assess whether there is strong inter-associ-

ation or intercorrelation among variables that are predictors. This requires using tolerance value and variance inflation factor (VIF) (Ringle et al., 2015). However, tolerance is known as a proportion of variation that is unexplained by any other predictors. Again, where substantial multicollinearity is close to 0, the standard error of the regression coefficient is then overstated. Ringle et al. (2015) stressed that based on a general guideline, tolerance is not to be lower than 0.1, and VIF is not to be more than 5. In line with this, Table 3 shows that the tolerance value is higher than 0.1 while VIF is lower than 5 as the permissible value.

Table 3. Multicollinearity tests result

| Variables | | Collinearity Statistics | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | Tolerance | VIF |
| Items | Job creation | .898 | 1.114 |
| | Vocational and technical training | .704 | 1.421 |
| | Apprentice competences | .652 | 1.533 |

Table 4. Correlation results indicating a relationship between job creation and sustainable family business growth

| Variables | | Job Creation (JC) | Sustainable Family Business Growth (SFBG) |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|---|
| Job Creation (JC) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .300** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 322 | 322 |
| Sustainable Family Business Growth (SFBG) | Pearson Correlation | .300** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 322 | 322 |

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5. Correlation results indicating a relationship between vocational and technical training and sustainable family business growth

| Variables | | Vocational and Technical Training (AVT) | Sustainable Family Business Growth (SFBG) |
|---|---------------------|---|---|
| Vocational and Technical Training (AVT) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .537** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 322 | 322 |
| Sustainable Family Business Growth (SFBG) | Pearson Correlation | .537** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 322 | 322 |

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows a relationship between job creation and sustainable family business growth. This implies a positive but weak correlation between competence-based recruitment and organizational efficiency ($r = .300$ (30.0%); $n = 322$; $p < 0.05$). Hence, the study accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_{11}) and concluded that there is a relationship between job creation and sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria.

Table 5 shows a relationship between vocational and technical training and sustainable family business growth. Therefore, there is a positive and strong correlation between training and development and organizational efficiency ($r = .537$ (53.7%); $n = 322$; $p < 0.05$). The study accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_{12}). It concluded that a significant relationship exists between vocational and technical training and sustainable family business growth, as shown by the “sig” level in Table 5.

Table 6 shows a relationship between apprentice competences and sustainable family business growth. This implies a strong positive correlation

between performance appraisal and organizational efficiency ($r = .721$ (72.1%); $n = 322$; $p < 0.05$). Hence, the study accepted the alternative hypothesis (H_{13}) and concluded that a significant relationship exists between apprentice competences and sustainable family business growth.

5. DISCUSSION

The result of the first hypothesis reveals that job creation relates to sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria ($r = .300$ (30.0%); $n = 322$; $p < 0.05$). This is in tandem with Ejo-Orusa and Lloyd (2019) that job creation gives apprentices a sense of freedom and fulfillment. Responses indicate that 305 (94%) of apprentices in livestock feed manufacturing, printing press, and carpentry accepted that they are ready to engage in entrepreneurship, demonstrating their willingness to risk-taking and take advantage of opportunities in the environment. This is true because job creation is a national priority through apprenticeship. A survey of selected families affirmed that unemployment is addressed through job cre-

Table 6. Correlation results indicating a relationship between apprentice competences and sustainable family business growth

| Variables | | Apprentice Competences (AC) | Sustainable Family Business Growth (SFBG) |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Apprentice Competences (AC) | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .721** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 322 | 322 |
| Sustainable Family Business Growth (SFBG) | Pearson Correlation | .721** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 322 | 322 |

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

ation for youth through apprenticeship, where entrepreneurial skills and knowledge are enhanced through structured training for economic progress. Apprenticeship has promoted sustainability and development of youth for future self-employment in society. The self-confidence of apprentices predicts their knowledge and skills, which strongly contributes to job creation in southern Nigeria. Hence, a sustainable environment for job creation encourages entrepreneurs to reorient their business ventures with a focus on new strategies and growth.

The finding on the second hypothesis shows that vocational and technical training relates to sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria ($r = .537$ (53.7%); $n = 322$; $p < 0.05$). This result aligns with the findings of Arthur et al. (2021) that vocational training is a measure for facilitating task performance in which learners are engaged in a career that involves practical abilities. Responses affirmed that 310 (96%) of apprentices accepted that apprentices are effectively involved in business through technical training acquired. This fact is based on the notion that vocational training prepares citizens to promote economic activities with sustainable development to alleviate poverty. Therefore, in southern regions of Nigeria, task performance in a career with practical abilities is effectively facilitated through vocational training. Vocational education and training have helped to build the informal business skills and experiences required for entrepreneur survival. The acquisition of vocational education skills helps apprentices pursue income-generating activities in personal business as a source of livelihood. Technical training enhances apprentice potential for socio-economic activities, which creates value for business growth. Hence, good government

policy on vocational training stimulates businesses to optimal performance and creates flexibility for future sustainable development.

The result of the third hypothesis discloses that apprentice competences relate to sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria (721 (72.1%); $n = 322$; $p < 0.05$). This result agrees with the findings of Egbosionu (2021) that the need for competence enables apprentices to establish performance criteria. Responses confirmed 299 (93%) of apprentices accepted that in setting up SMEs, apprentice competence in marketing, technical, managerial, and financial areas is necessary to sustain businesses. This is true because apprentices that acquired competence become self-employed, reducing high unemployment rates. A survey of selected family businesses on livestock feed manufacturing, printing press, and carpentry in southern regions revealed that proficiency in skills, attitude, and knowledge makes apprentices manage businesses successfully. Technical competence in craftsmanship is developed through apprentices' ability to interpret ideas, see, listen, and actively participate. There is effective scheduling of planning program, meeting up dateline for demands and sensitivity to worker feelings, which enhanced the managerial competence that sustained business. Financial competence has aided the apprentice in identifying, procuring, allocating, and evaluating current and recurrent expenditures to achieve business goals. The selling price of a product, advertisement on products, and sales promotion are successfully implemented with marketing competence to achieve business goals. Hence, the need for sustainable development principles in business allows the use of financial assets to promote investment in society.

CONCLUSION

This study examined apprenticeship practices and sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria. The objective of business growth in livestock feed manufacturing, printing press, and carpentry is influenced by continuous apprenticeship practices as a pivot for socioeconomic development and the long-term sustainability of family businesses in southern regions in Nigeria. This study reviewed the growth objectives achieved through job creation in apprenticeship, apprentice vocational training, and apprentice competences as enablers. The result revealed that job creation, vocational and technical training, and apprentice competence all exhibited a significant association with sustainable family business growth in the southern regions of Nigeria. Therefore, an organized system of apprenticeship practice by a national open apprenticeship scheme is necessary.

A modern apprenticeship is governed by a law that aligns the length of training, the number of training hours, and other factors. It is typically connected to large and medium-sized businesses. In order to provide possibilities for people to improve their performance in various trades, apprenticeship practices are used. Over time, the continual transfer of skills has evolved into a component of human capital in the development of people. This type of training is designed to encourage apprenticeship in Nigeria to address the persistent mismatch of skills and to strengthen essential sectors of the Nigerian economy. It shows the effectiveness of apprenticeship training. Adopting a competency-based approach is necessary since it will allow apprentices to exhibit their abilities in a way that can be quantified and observed.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Skewness and kurtosis for the dataset normality

| +- | N | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
|---|--------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Apprentice's readiness to engage in entrepreneurship demonstrates his willingness to risk-taking and take advantage of opportunities in the environment | 322 | -1.247 | .136 | .642 | .271 |
| The worrisome trend of unemployment is addressed through job creation for youth through apprenticeship | 322 | -1.107 | .136 | .010 | .271 |
| Entrepreneurial skills and knowledge for job creation are enhanced through structured training for economic progress | 322 | -1.254 | .136 | .673 | .271 |
| Apprenticeship promotes sustainability and development of youth for future self-employment in society | 322 | -1.219 | .136 | .444 | .271 |
| Apprentice self-confidence predicts knowledge and skills that have a strong contribution to job creation in society | 322 | -1.082 | .136 | -.016 | .271 |
| An apprentice is effectively involved in business through technical training acquired | 322 | -1.238 | .136 | .564 | .271 |
| Tasks performance in a career with practical abilities are effectively facilitated through vocational training | 322 | -1.233 | .136 | .469 | .271 |
| Vocational education and training have helped to build the informal business skills and experiences required for entrepreneur survival | 322 | -1.091 | .136 | .072 | .271 |
| The acquisition of skills in vocational education helps apprentice to pursue income-generating activities in personal business as a source of livelihood | 322 | -1.125 | .136 | .124 | .271 |
| Technical training enhances apprentice potential for socio-economic activities, which creates value for business growth | 322 | -1.336 | .136 | .720 | .271 |
| Adequate acquisition of proficiency in skills, attitude, and knowledge make apprentice to manage business successfully | 322 | -1.150 | .136 | .210 | .271 |
| Technical competence by artisans is developed based on their ability to interpret ideas, see, listen, and actively participate | 322 | -1.278 | .136 | .520 | .271 |
| Sensitivity to workers' feelings, effective schedule planning program, and meeting up dateline for demands are managerial competences that enhance sustainable business | 322 | -1.231 | .136 | .459 | .271 |
| Financial competence helps apprentices identify, procure, allocate, and evaluate financial resources in relation to current and recurrent expenditures | 322 | -1.088 | .136 | -.102 | .271 |
| Marketing competence makes apprentices determine the selling price of a product, carry out advertisements on products, and sales promotion to achieve business goals | 322 | -1.378 | .136 | .857 | .271 |
| Sustainable environment encourages entrepreneurs to reorient their business venture with a focus on new strategies and growth | 322 | -1.115 | .136 | -.002 | .271 |
| Environmental sustainability increases reliance on wealth creation and makes businesses take social responsibility | 322 | -1.213 | .136 | .299 | .271 |
| Good management practices on sustainability prevent wastage, improve efficiency, and enhance competitiveness in the market | 322 | -1.375 | .136 | .569 | .271 |
| Good government policy stimulates business to optimal performance and creates flexibility for sustainable development in the future | 322 | -.649 | .136 | -.825 | .271 |
| Sustainable development principles in business allow the use of financial assets to promote investment in society | 322 | -2.194 | .136 | 4.815 | .271 |
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy | | .684 | | | |
| Bartlett's test of sphericity | Approx. chi-square | 2213.455 | | | |
| | Df | 190 | | | |
| | Sig | .000 | | | |