

SKILL ACQUISITION OF ART THROUGH THE APPRENTICESHIP METHOD OF BLACKSMITHING IN ART EDUCATION

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Abstract

This chapter is all about how people learn indigenous trade in Nigeria. apprenticeship orientation appears to be a perfect educational solution providing a clear leeway into the labour market. Its overall objective is the learning of a specific skill under the tutelage of a master that gives not financial reward to require a specified period of apprenticeship before one can qualify to practice the trade. And before one can learn a trade, there is always a tutelage agreement entered into in which the conditions and them will be spelt out. The agreement comes in two ways. In one hand, the boy lives with the master for the number of years agreed upon. At the end of the agreed period, the master settles him and enables him to establish his own trade. Another way of becoming an apprentice in Nigeria is through “Imu Oruaka”. Here the person is given to a master craft to be under his tutelage. The father of the boy pays a certain some of money to the master in what could be

probably called a tuition fee. The payment is usually accompanied with some drinks meant for the entertainment of witnesses who are usually tradesmen within the environment in which they learn the trade. The fee is usually a lump sum of money paid before the training is commenced. The apprentice in this case does not live with the master within the period of the training and the master only blesses him at the end of successful completion of the training. The master may employ him if the father is not able to establish him immediately. The results showed that apprenticeship training existed in the following trades: carpentry, blacksmithing, welding, carding, fishing, poultry, gardening, cookery, weaving and dyeing. Others include leather work, come crafts, mat carpet and native medicine. Age range of majority of the trainees was between 15 – 20 years while that of master craftsmen was between 41 – 50 years.

Introduction

Apprenticeship is a common way of undergoing training in South-East, Nigeria Apprenticeship orientation appears to be a perfect educational solution providing a clear leeway into the labour market. Its heavy emphasis on the job training makes it a potentially attractive option for individuals who are not positively disposed towards the classroom and lecture hall-based instruction of higher institutions of learning. Its overall objective is the learning of a specific skill under the tutelage of a master that gives no financial reward to the apprentice within the period the training lasts. It is a source of livelihood, a means of being employed and a way to actively engage in economically worthwhile ventures especially in the informal sector of the economy (Aka, 2015). According to Dike (1985),

some trades require a specified period of apprenticeship before one can qualify to practice the trade. Udu (2015) argues that over the years, Nigeria has practiced an unorganized and unregulated apprenticeships a profession for his son and consequently takes him to a known master of that profession to train. There is always a tutelage agreement entered into in which the conditions and terms will be spelt out. The agreement comes in two ways. In one hand, the boy lives with the master for the number of years agreed upon. At the end of the agreed period, the master settles him and enables him to establish his own trade. This is called 'Igba odibo' as the father does not pay the mater any premium for the training. The period for igba odibe lasts between 3-7 years. Another way of becoming an apprentice in through 'imụ ọrụ aka'. Here a boy is given to a mater craft to be under his tutelage. The father of the boy pays a certain some of money to the master in what could be probably called a tuition fee. The payment is usually accompanied with some meant for the entertainment of witnesses who are usually tradesmen within the environment in which the boy learns the trade. The fee is usually a lump sum if money paid before the training is commenced. The apprentice in this case does not live with the master within the period of the training and the master only blesses the apprentice at the end of successful completion of the training. The master may employ him if the father is not able to establish him immediately (Udu, 2015).

Blacksmithing happens to be one of such trades in where apprenticeship training is underdone. As in other places, certain rules and regulations are laid down for such venture. In some cases, the period of apprenticeship might stretch up to 4 to 5 years depending on the complexity of the trade and how

intelligent and artistic the apprentice was in acquiring the rudiments of the trade. According to Perani, Judith, Smith, Fred, (1998) the training of young blacksmiths last about eight years. After completion of the apprenticeship the young blacksmith is ready to begin forging tools, weapons, ritual masks and staffs, used for ceremonial purposes.

Shita (2000) did a study with the focus on the identification of the indigenous apprenticeship trades that exist in Taraba State. the methods of apprenticeship training system as well as its consequences on technical education were also investigated. Five research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. The area of coverage were all the three senatorial zones of Taraba State. a proportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted to select trainees for the study. Questionnaire items were administered to 120 mastercraftsmen, 103 technical teachers and 100 trainees. The researcher made use of frequency distribution, mean and t – test statistics for the data analysis. The result showed that apprenticeship training existed in the following trades: welding, carpentry, blacksmithing, carving, fishing, poultry, gardening, cookery, weaving and dyeing. Others include leather works, cone crafts, mat carpet and native medicine. Various methods of indigenous apprenticeship training in use in Taraba State include: oral instruction, demonstration, observation, try out by apprentices, occupational participation and project method. A good proportion of trainees had no formal education; majority of mastercraftsmen received formal education at below primary six level. Age range of majority of the trainees was between 15 – 20 years while that of the mastercraftsmen was between 41 – 50 years. On the decision to enroll for indigenous apprenticeship, trainee too to their fathers’

occupation and counseling by parents and guardians. Indigenous apprenticeship did not provide entry requirement into formal technical education programmes. It was not responsible for low image of technical education in the state. Graduates of indigenous apprenticeship complement the technical work force required in the private sector. Indigenous apprenticeship was not the source of supplementary work force required in formal technical education. The tests results of the study revealed no significant difference at $p < 0.05$ in the opinion of respondents regarding the consequences of indigenous apprenticeship on technical education in Taraba State, Nigeria. As regards factors that influence decision to enroll for indigenous apprenticeship, the results of the t – test revealed that opinion of respondents differed on the high unemployment situation in Nigeria.

Nwanne (2015) that posits apprenticeship is from one blacksmithing family to another, one can have a blacksmithing person from Nkwere coming to learn blacksmithing in Awka; it is allowed. However, for somebody, who does not know what blacksmithing is, getting into a blacksmithing family to learn may be difficult, except where there's friendship or a case where one case where one has somebody who was sold as a slave such a person can work in the blacksmith's house to work out his freedom. In that case, he may learn. And by the time he tears, he will be initiated into blacksmith and he will swear to Ogadazu that he will never violate the rule of blacksmithing in the society.

Tools Needed for Blacksmithing

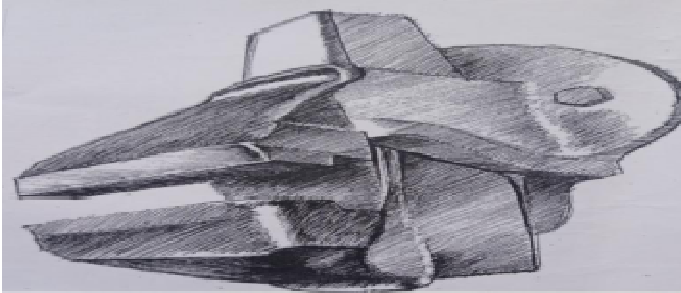


Fig 1. Vice (Mkpachi): A Tool used to hold metal while work is done on it.
Drawn by Nzoiwu Azuka

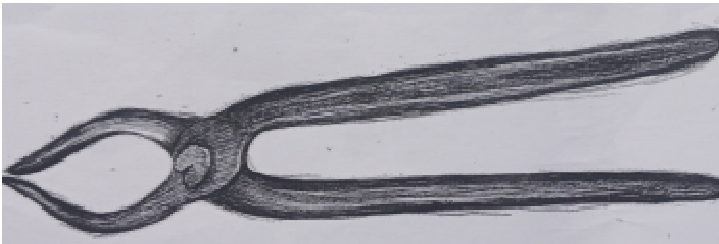


Fig. 2: Fire tone (Mkpachioku). A tool for bring out red hot materials from the furnace . Drawing by Nzoiwu Azuka (2017)

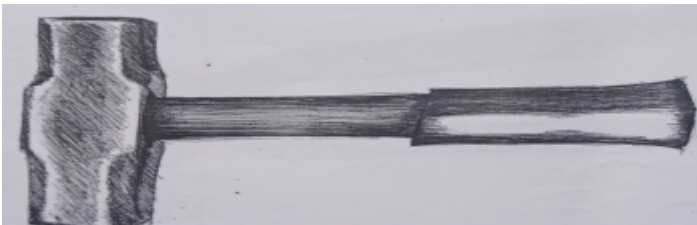


Fig. 3: Harmer (Anyunka): A Tool with heavy iron head used for hitting metals before putting them in the furnace. Drawn by Nzoiwu Azuka (2017)



Fig. 4: Cutter (Mkpachi): A Tool used to cut metal Drawn by Nzoiwu Azuka 2017

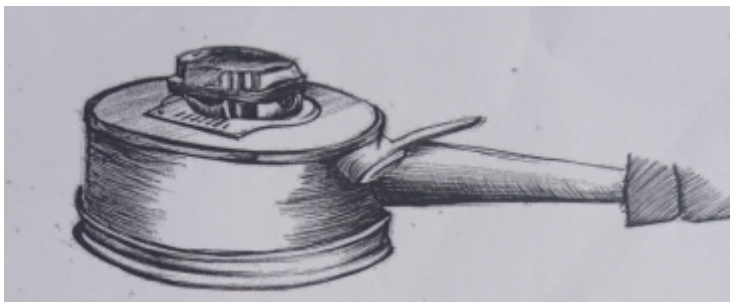


Fig 5. Electric Bellow: A device that produces air current to the furnace Drawn by Nzoiwu Azuka (2017)



Plate 1: An Apprentice Heating the Metal to Shape Photograph by Nzoiwu Azuka(2017)



Plate 2: An Apprentice is the heating metal checking in in the furnace. Photo by Nzoiwu Azuka (2017)



Plate 3: An Apprentice learning how to cut the metal sheet with a cutter. Photo by Nzoiwu Azuka (2017)

Conclusion

On the decision to enroll for indigenous apprenticeship, trainees took their fathers' occupation and counseling by parents and guardians. Indigenous apprenticeship did not provide entry requirement into formal technical education programmes. It the state. graduates of indigenous apprenticeship complement a good proportion of trainees had no formal education; Majority of master craftsmen received formal education at below primary six level. Government should organize special sectors that will introduce formal technical education programmes during the time of apprenticeship that will help the trainees to be successful in life.

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