

ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND EFFICIENCY PERFORMANCE OF SMES IN OGUN STATE METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The informal sector in Nigeria is frequently confronted with challenges related to poor managerial competencies and the difficulty of sustaining the growth of small-scale enterprises. Against this backdrop, this study examined the influence of entrepreneurship training needs assessment on the efficiency performance of small and medium-sized enterprises in Ogun State, Nigeria. The central objective was to determine whether training programs tailored to the specific needs of participants to address performance gaps within the informal sector. A quantitative research design was adopted, complemented by qualitative insights obtained through structured interviews with selected entrepreneurs in major cities of Ogun State. The study population comprised 270 registered SME owners/operators, from whom data were collected from 250 that responded to inquiry using a well-validated questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach's alpha test, which produced an overall value of 0.890, thereby confirming its internal consistency. Data analysis and hypothesis testing were conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, with 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed a strong, positive relationship between ETNAs and SME performance in Ogun State ($r = 0.7504$, $n = 250$, $p = 0.000$). This finding suggests that the extent to which organisers of entrepreneurship training conduct comprehensive TNAs substantially determines the effectiveness of such programmes in enhancing enterprise efficient performance. The study concludes that entrepreneurship training tailored to identified needs considerably strengthens the competitiveness and efficiency of SMEs. It therefore recommends that training programs should be systematically designed around participants' assessed needs to ensure sustainable enterprise growth and long-term success.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship TNAs, SMEs efficiency, Informal sector, Ogun State metropolis, Nigeria.

Introduction

The concept of training need assessment finds credence in the metaphorical phrase “if the goal of a thing is unknown, then it becomes difficult to make progressive progress.” (Akpoyibo, 2025). This highlights the significance of clearly clarifying objectives before undertaking any ventures, especially training programs. Apparently,

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without a well-established goal, organisers of training may struggle to identify the specific skills and knowledge required, ultimately hindering their development efforts. It has been established from diverse literature that SMEs are a component of any economy; some authors describe them as vital catalysts for employment generation, economic growth, and creativity across the universe. If the views of these writers could be true, then those saddled with the commitment of driving them should be properly trained in the required and appropriate skills and awareness. It is an ongoing debate that the success and sustainability of SMEs hinge on the skills and competencies of their owners and managers. For instance, Marina, Rocha, and Edson (2022) disclosed that entrepreneurship training is very significant due to its link to job creation and economic expansion. According to Akpoyibo (2024), humans require understanding to do well in life, so firms require employees whose skills match their job requirements. This further highlights the importance of entrepreneurs acquiring the right skills, knowledge, awareness, and information to remain competitively viable. This can be made possible via the training needs assessment initiative.

Nganu and Bula (2018) posited that the effectiveness of entrepreneurship training is greatly influenced by training needs assessment. It is also argued in separate quarters that for SMEs to do well, their HR development via entrepreneurship training is one of the vital components for enhancing performance. Training Needs Assessment (TNA) is broadly described as a methodical process applied for identifying and filling in the voids between present knowledge, skills, and competence and the desired competencies required to meet corporate objectives. TNAs, in the context of entrepreneurship, focus specifically on the ability needed to successfully launch or start, run, and grow an enterprise successfully. This covers areas such as marketing, strategic planning skills, financial management, marketing ability, strategic planning and HRM strategies, creativity, and leadership. Others may include record keeping, human relation skills, etc.

TNA allows for the establishment of a tailored program that caters to the specific needs of entrepreneurs, in line with their distinct contexts, industries, and stages of business development, rather than taking a one-size-fits-all model to education/training. Research carried out by Jusoh, Ziyae, Asimiran and Kadir (2011) revealed that via TNA, vital issues relating to entrepreneurship training can be emphasised/highlighted and attention given to aspects that require training for enterprise success. Nganu and Bula (2018) established a positive influence of TNA on the performance of small and microenterprises in the ICT sector in Nairobi City. In order to provide successful entrepreneurship training, Rajani (2008) further highlighted the necessity for increased effort to evaluate the social attitude, mentality, requirements, and abilities of different entrepreneurs. Furthermore, a study by Nadeem and Hafeez (2016) found that assessing training needs is crucial for organisations, particularly when it comes to staff training. Accordingly, a study by Huka, Mbugua and Njehia (2015) found that youth and women's groups in Marsabit County, Kenya, are less likely to acquire business competencies when training requirements are not assessed.

However, it must be noted that different enterprises have different training requirements or needs, which are based on the enterprise's goals at any given time. As a result, conducting a training needs assessment would highlight particular

requirements for particular firms. Although SMEs in Nigeria contribute significantly to employment and income, they frequently confront obstacles that cause their development rate to lag. Second, a lot of people are unable to withstand the swift changes in the corporate environment brought about by technological advancements and other external circumstances. According to Ngoma and Sichimba (2020), entrepreneurs including those of the Nigeria extraction Nigerian frequently struggle with a lack of awareness, poor managerial skills, perspicacity, and skills. But as time has gone on, entrepreneurship training has become an essential instrument for tackling these issues by giving SME owners the knowledge, abilities, and skills they need to successfully negotiate challenging business situations. Notwithstanding this discovery and the initiatives of governmental organisations and non-governmental organisations that invest in entrepreneur training, the performance of SMEs continues to fall short of expectations.

The recognition of ET's components as strategic determinants of SME effectiveness, such as training requirements assessment and entrepreneurship training content, is conspicuously lacking. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of ET provided by organisations such as the SMEDAN, government ministries, and non-governmental organisations. Even though more people are signing up for training programs, it's still unclear how this will impact enterprise effectiveness. For this reason, it's important to find out if the skills participants are learning are in line with their needs and contain the appropriate content to support the resilience and expansion of SMEs in the area. At this point, ET becomes essential. The efficacy and competitiveness of SMEs are significantly enhanced by the substance of such training exercises or programs (Bochra, George, & Stewart, 2020). It is against that backdrop that this study seeks to examine the link between TNA and the performance of SMEs. The central aim of this research is to determine how TNA impacts SMEs' performance in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Objective of the study

This research is guided by this general objective, that is, to examine the correlation between training needs assessment and the performance of SMEs in the Ogun State metropolis. The above general objective is backed by the following specific objective: *To determine the influence of TNAs on the performance efficiency of SMEs in the Ogun State metropolis, Nigeria.*

Research Questions

The research questions stated that: do TNAs contribute to SMEs' performance efficiency in Ogun State metropolis, Nigeria?

Hypotheses Formulation

*The research is directed by the hypothesis stated that: **Ho1:** Training needs assessment doesn't have any positive and significant correlation with SMEs' performance efficiency in the Ogun State metropolis.*

Literature Review

Entrepreneurial Training

Simply put, entrepreneurship training refers to a planned, structured program that is specifically created to educate and equip people with the new and contemporary skills, insights, knowledge, competence, attitude, and aptitude necessary for spotting business opportunities and effectively managing or handling enterprises. People who receive this kind of training are also better able to recognise environmental concerns and handle them for the benefit of the company. According to Fayolle and Gailly (2015), entrepreneurial education fosters the behavioural and cognitive qualities required for an enterprise's success and efficacy, playing crucial, illuminating, and transforming roles. Success in the ever-evolving industry of today demands not only knowledge of new trends but also the flexibility to innovate and adjust. Entrepreneurial education equips people to successfully overcome obstacles and seize new possibilities by cultivating a mindset that values resilience and ongoing learning. This emphasises even more how important entrepreneurship training is for all SME managers and operators in the present day. ET improves management and administrative proficiency, fosters creativity, and elevates successful decision-making results in SMEs.

Existing research has shown that by enhancing skills, knowledge, information, flexibility, and awareness, entrepreneurial training favourably impacts the growth and development of SMEs. According to Lindh and Thorgren (2016), ET facilitates the identification of opportunities, improves the entrepreneur's creative skills, fosters the growth and development of the business, and presents obstacles that will force the entrepreneur to use critical thinking and provide improved decision-making results. Long and Chrisman (2014) claim that ET is a means of developing entrepreneurial traits and competencies like resourcefulness, resolve/determination, creativity, decision-making, and leadership. Nonetheless, ET promotes enterprise development and entrepreneurship, according to Namusonge (2006). He further said that SMEs with ET as a top priority had higher survival rates than those without such programs.

According to Akpoyibo (2024), an organisation's capacity to compete is largely based on the worth of its employees. This further emphasised the importance of training for entrepreneurs and the success and efficacy of entrepreneurship. Gorman, Hanlon, and King (1997) proposed that the propensity to become an entrepreneur has been linked to a number of personal attributes that can be influenced by a formal educational program. Gorman et al. (1997) claimed that training can prepare individual entrepreneurs for areas of innovation by imparting knowledge resources and developing the necessary competence, talents, and skills that improve the involved entrepreneur's performance and self-efficacy. Research has also shown how important training is to starting and growing new businesses. In domains like financial control, record management, inventory administration and control, human resource management, marketing, planning, etc., some of this research confirmed that training offers the necessary managerial perception, abilities, and tactics. According to Alberti, Sciascia and Poli (2004), ET is a formalised expression of entrepreneurial capabilities, which in turn refers to the concepts, information, abilities, and mental

acuity/awareness that entrepreneurs employ or employ when establishing and growing their business with room to grow.

Research has also shown that entrepreneurial education and training improved SME managers' and operators' enterprise accounting and financial management abilities, records management, and inventiveness (Kawimbe, (2024). Additionally, it is suggested that entrepreneurs who have received training are more likely to report higher business growth and development. Additionally, since entrepreneurial training accounted for more than 49.1% of SME operational performance and strategic model creation, it has been shown to be responsible for the success of large businesses (Mustapha, *et al.* 2023). By expanding access to fresh and innovative methods of conducting business, knowledge, risk management abilities, and flexibility in response to changing trends in the global business environment, entrepreneurial education significantly aids in the survival, expansion, and development of SMEs.

Entrepreneurs require new skills, knowledge, information, and awareness to succeed in the business world, just as people require understanding to survive (Akpoiyibo, 2024). This does, in fact, emphasise how important entrepreneurial training is as a driver or catalyst for business efficacy. In their study, Ukenna *et al.* (2010) discovered that continuous training and development are crucial for SMEs' survival, growth, and expansion-particularly in the midst of extremely volatile and dynamic business environments. Effective decision-making processes inside SMEs are improved, innovation is encouraged, and entrepreneurs' managerial skills are strengthened through entrepreneurial training. Research has shown that by improving access to new information, awareness of environmental agents' actions, flexibility, and abilities, ET greatly enhances and supports the survival, growth, and development of SMEs.

SMEs' Performance Efficiency

Conceptually, organisational effectiveness shows that the company is functioning and fulfilling its purpose. This entails not just accomplishing its objectives but also making sure that resources are used effectively and that workers are motivated in their positions. A highly effective and successful business eventually cultivates a culture of success, continual and steady improvement, and adaptability in responding to evolving market conditions and dynamics. Additionally, it is stated that enterprise effectiveness encompasses how well an organisation uses its resources to accomplish its mandate objectives and strategic goals.

However, the following important indicators-profitability, customer and employee satisfaction, market share values, adaptability to market fluctuations, and consumer preference-are frequently employed when talking about organisational performance (Zamudio, Mah, & Swaminathan, 2025). According to Daft (2015), a business that operates well frequently has a culture of continuous learning, strategic direction, dedication, and a strong leadership style. According to Judge, Robbins, & Timothy (2015), an enterprise's effectiveness can be defined as the way it embodies or expresses its goals and objectives. Mohyi (2012) defines organisational effectiveness as the degree of accuracy with which a goal is achieved through the effective use of available resources. This claim aligns with the perspective of Pathak & Singh (2013). According to their opinion, enterprise effectiveness concerns are

about how well an organisation uses particular resources and approaches/methods to accomplish its goals without putting undue strain on its personnel. An organisation's ability to mobilise its sources of influence for productive action and flexibility/adaptation is a measure of its effectiveness, and it can be linked to the enterprise's survival (Pathak & Singh, 2013).

In a more general sense, effectiveness is derived from the word "succeed." As a result, effectiveness is the relationship between planned output and goals, and it is evaluated or quantified by the extent to which strategies, enterprise procedures, and expected output are able to achieve the stated objectives. Stated differently, the metrics of planned input with projected results are used to quantify effectiveness. Maloney (2019) defines organisational effectiveness as an organisation's capacity to achieve its objectives and function effectively and efficiently. It is a crucial component of an organisation's success, evaluating how well it meets its goals and objectives with minimal waste or loss of time or resources. According to Vulpen (2020), this idea encompasses a number of important elements, including employee participation, internal procedures and processes, leadership disposition, objective planning, and resource allocation. According to Jiang & Liu (2015), enterprise effectiveness is the capacity of an organisation to efficiently accomplish its goals and objectives. It involves evaluating how well a business plans its processes, employs its people, and uses or manages the resources at its disposal in order to achieve the intended objectives.

Achieving financial effectiveness and performance is only one aspect of organisational effectiveness; other aspects include stakeholder trust and confidence, which are nurtured or built by leadership's relationship dynamics (Jiang & Liu, 2015). As can be seen from the foregoing, one element that consistently resonates with the opinions of the different authors is an organisation's capacity to fulfill its stated mission of operational success. In fact, the aforementioned necessitates a capacity-building program, which is the characteristic of training for entrepreneurs. In addition to giving entrepreneurs the information, resources, and strategic skills they need to overcome obstacles, this program fosters creativity and accountability in the business world. To put it another way, business owners can increase their adaptability and resilience in a constantly shifting market environment by cultivating or supporting a culture of continuous learning.

Training Need Assessment and SMEs Performance Efficiency

There is a wealth of evidence in the literature demonstrating the beneficial relationship between TNA and MSE performance in both local and global economies. For example, Mallo and Singhry (2019) discovered a strong and favourable relationship between TNA and SMEs' efficacy. According to the results, this connection is demonstrated by the rho value of 0.936, which is significant at $P 0.000 < 0.05$. The authors claim that this correlation coefficient shows a tight link between the study's constructs and implies a high relationship. The idea behind TNA is based on the idea that there needs to be a reason for action to occur. The training requirement assessment theory, developed by Kaufman and English (1979), serves as another example of this. According to the principle, a true need can only be identified without the hasty selection of a solution. It goes on to clarify that in order to conduct a standard needs evaluation, it is crucial to determine the current outcomes first, after which the

intended results are determined. Consequently, the real need is the gap between the results. Based on the aforementioned, it can be further said that a solution that addresses the void can be identified once the requirement for a need has been established. According to this paradigm, a need is merely a quantifiable and determinable gap between two or more conditions: what is and what ought to be. In a nutshell, need assessment procedures deal with obstacles, problems, aspects, challenges, opposition, or issues that require relevant attention or gaps that must be filled.

According to Firedousi (2013) in Mallo and Singhry (2019), TNA is the most important type of assessment method employed by HRDPs within the company. NAs are helpful in determining when training is necessary and for whom, the author stresses. As a result, evaluation ensures that training exercises are relevant to the people they are meant for. As a result, TNA offers pertinent and appropriate information that enhances the training program. TNA's primary objective can be viewed from two general angles: first, it is intended to pinpoint the knowledge and abilities people should have in order to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently; second, it suggests suitable and feasible actions and solutions that can fill in these gaps (Firedousi, 2013). According to Watkins and Kaufman (2002), TNA necessitates identifying the existing circumstances or conditions, deciding what will be required or wanted in the future, and comparing the aforementioned. As a result, TNA involves evaluating needs and ranking them in order of importance to help choose the next course of action.

To get the intended results, it is crucial to have a comprehensive perspective and comprehend the necessity of any training. This contribution supports the findings of Jusoh, Ziyae, Asimiran and Kadir (2011), who all agreed in their study that entrepreneurship training should begin with an assessment of training needs. Thirty chosen entrepreneurs made up the sample size for their study, which was conducted in Malaysia. In reality, the goal of the study was to identify the knowledge and abilities needed for successful business management. The study found that the moderate skill level of the questioned entrepreneurs contributed to low firm performance. The result suggested, among other things, thorough training and instruction in entrepreneurship skills in areas like financial management, bookkeeping and record keeping, sales promotion and advertising, human relations, and invention and creativity. According to the study's findings, TNA can be used to draw attention to important ET-related issues and address them, as well as to emphasise areas that need education for business expansion and success (Rajani, 2008).

The purpose of the study was to determine the cause of the increasing poor performance of a large number of entrepreneurs and to develop a new paradigm. The study's main focus was on the social attitudes, mentality, needs, and competencies of stale entrepreneurs and how these factors affect their performance results. The study's findings showed that the entrepreneurs in the sample lacked the abilities and insight necessary to manage and maintain their businesses successfully. It also suggested that TNA be strategic because various people have varied demands. Thus, interest-based skills and adaptable training programs are essential for encouraging various entrepreneurs to pursue particular business ventures.

Empirical Review

This section of the study provides evidence-based studies that have previously assessed the correlational nexus between entrepreneurial training and enterprise effectiveness of SMEs. There is a wealth of empirical evidence on the positive influence entrepreneurship has on enterprise performance. These studies, both local and international, x-rayed the concept of ETNA and enterprise performance. For instance, Nganu and Bula (2018) examined the influence of TNA on the performance of SMEs in the ICT sector in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The focus of the research was to determine the degree to which TNA influences the performance of SMEs. The research was guided by the TNA theory. A descriptive research design was employed to gather data. The population is composed of 273 selected SMEs that have received entrepreneurship training prior to the year 2012 under the ICT Authority. Thereafter, SRST was employed to select 73 respondents.

Data collected were analysed by means of Descriptive statistics incorporated absolute percentages, frequencies, measures of central tendency, and measures of dispersion, while inferential statistics were analysed through correlation and regression analysis to establish the nature and magnitude of the relationships between the variables and test the hypothesised relationships. The findings of the study revealed a positive influence of TNA on the performance of SMEs in ICT in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The study recommended, among other things, that trainers should conduct TNAs before conducting entrepreneurship trainings.

According to Firdousi (2013), the most fundamental type of evaluation that HRDP utilises in the workplace is training needs assessment. In this way, needs assessments aid in identifying who needs training and when. In other words, evaluation makes sure that training courses are applicable to the learners. Therefore, the information that is typically required for creating training programs is provided by training needs assessment. According to Firdousi (2013), the primary goal of a training needs assessment is to determine what knowledge and abilities individuals need to have in order to function well at work and then to provide suitable interventions that can bridge these gaps. This is consistent with Watkins and Kaufman's (2002) explanation that needs assessment entails determining the current situation, determining what is desired in the future, and comparing the two; therefore, needs assessment involves evaluating needs and prioritising them to inform decisions about the next course of action.

Prior to implementing entrepreneurial training, Jusoh, Ziyae, Asimiran and Kadir (2011) affirmed the necessity of assessing training needs. Thirty entrepreneurs in Malaysia participated in a study to examine the business competencies required for business success. The results showed that the entrepreneurs were moderately skilled and felt the need for entrepreneurship skills training in areas like innovation and creativity, how to create a business account, how to create promotions and advertising, how to set the right prices, and how to sell. According to the study, by evaluating training needs, important concerns about entrepreneurship education may be brought to light, and focus can be placed on areas that require training for company growth. But the sample size was modest.

Dejan, Sonja and Bojan (2024) investigated how entrepreneurs' expertise aids in promoting economic progress. The research was carried out in Serbia. The study

examined how experienced and talented businesspeople propel the Serbian regional economy over an extended period of time. The time frame covered by the study is 2011–2020. For the study, a sample size of 25 chosen NUTS 3 level participants was employed. Using the proper statistical methods, the data was evaluated, and the findings showed that the training and educational framework of entrepreneurial endeavours greatly enhances economic efficacy. The findings further emphasise how important HC quality and entrepreneurial activity are to the expansion of RE. According to the report, entrepreneurs with the necessary foresight, skill, and inventiveness should run and oversee regional development and advancement.

Mayuran (2016) looked at how ET affected small business (SE) performance. The study found that enterprise effectiveness and ET were positively correlated. The survey also found that the program of activities content presented in ET includes customer service, financial management, quality maintenance, marketing organisation, etc. It appears that the study's disclosure also showed that enterprise management skills made up the majority of the ET's content, with the effects of the other entrepreneurial skills on efficacy being emphasised. A correlational design, which focused on the study's primary constructs (independent and dependent variables), was the methodology used. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to assess the data gathered from a chosen sample of respondents.

Ladzani and Vuuren (2016) evaluated how ET affected new SMEs or how ET improved the efficiency of South African businesses. The analysis of training materials and their effects on participants – including enterprise skills, motivation, and entrepreneurship abilities – is the main emphasis of the study. The study also demonstrates that the following skill contents are included in the training manifest: managerial, financial management, leadership, HR and marketing skills, enterprise planning, operational competencies, creativity, risk-taking ability, drive and concept creation, the need for achievement, and the capacity to motivate and deal with failure. The study's data came from a sample of SMEs' employees as well as trainers. The study used interviews to collect data, and descriptive and inferential statistics were used to evaluate the results, which revealed a strong and positive relationship between ET and the performance of SMEs in South Africa. In order for aspiring entrepreneurs to understand and grasp how to generate and manage business ideas as well as approaches to adopt to screen such ideas in order to identify business opportunities from such pools of ideas, the study suggested that entrepreneurs' trainers should enhance their managerial and entrepreneurial perspicacity.

Observed Gaps

The conceptual and empirical reviews showed a connection between the performance of SMEs and the evaluation of their training needs. The evaluation also emphasised the correlation between SMEs' performance and training. Nevertheless, the studied literature's context was broad and focused on SMEs' performance rather than specifically mentioning Ogun State informally. Both financial and non-financial measures were used to gauge performance. Since they were easier to quantify and maintained the study's objectivity, sales numbers and profit margins were employed as financial indicators. Customer happiness and the quantity of new items launched were utilised to gauge the non-financial metrics. This current study, therefore, is aimed

at addressing the above-observed void by providing empirical evidence on the effect of TNAs on the performance of SMEs in the informal sector of Ogun State, Nigeria.

Theoretical Structure

The hypothesis that underpins this study is the HC theory. The relationship between productivity, performance efficiency, and human capacity improvement through training appears to be well explained by the idea put forth by Becker in 1964. According to the model, investments and efforts made to train, educate, and develop human resources (workers) improve participants' productivity, performance efficiency, and organisational effectiveness. Consequently, this creates a more competitive work climate where the company and its people may prosper. Businesses can strategically align their training programs to optimise returns on their investments in human capital by utilising the HC theory's concepts. Other rival and well-known theories in the domains of management, human resource management, and the social sciences support the HCT's perspective. The RBV is one well-known model of this type. The foundation of this model's support for HCT is the idea that an organisation's competitive advantage and distinctive feature can be linked to the effectiveness of its internal resources. It also asserts that internal competency and capability – such as skilled and trained employees – are important for creating, preserving, and growing competitive advantage. The aforementioned distinct viewpoints emphasise the importance of training to improve entrepreneurs' perceptions of how to effectively run and manage their businesses. Barney developed the RBV model (1991).

Bivariate Correlational Analysis

A statistical method called bivariate analysis looks at the relationships between two different things or phenomena. The goal of the bivariate analysis is to determine whether there is a statistical link between the two variables and, if so, how strong and which way it is. It's a helpful technique for identifying patterns and trends in the data as well as how two phenomena (variables) are related to one another (Akpoyibo, 2024). The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between employee work and company performance. To put it another way, how does job fit affect business performance in the industrial sector?

Methodology

To investigate the relationship between training needs assessments (TNAs) and the performance efficiency of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the study employed a cross-sectional research design. This design was considered appropriate as it provides a reliable snapshot of the study variables at a given point in time without manipulating them, thereby allowing for valid correlational inferences.

The study population comprised 270 SMEs registered with the Ogun State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, each with verifiable evidence of functional status. Given the heterogeneity of SMEs across different sectors, a stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure adequate representation of the diverse categories of enterprises. The SMEs were first stratified into sectors—ICT installers and accessory dealers, furniture makers and dealers of AGF and MBF cabinets and shelf boards, laundry service providers, fast-food and local food vendors, point-of-sale (POS) and other pay-point operators, agribusinesses (poultry and fish farmers), bottled and sachet water producers, cake and confectionery makers, and event designers.

Thereafter, random selection was conducted proportionately from each stratum to maintain balance and minimise bias.

Primary data were collected using a structured 15-item questionnaire designed to elicit responses on TNAs and performance efficiency. The instrument was based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). A total of 270 questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents, of which 250 were successfully retrieved and deemed valid for analysis, representing a 92.6% response rate. To establish reliability and validity, the adapted questionnaire was subjected to a pilot test involving 50 entrepreneurs in Warri, Delta State, Nigeria. Necessary revisions were made following the pilot study, and the instrument's reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, while validity was assessed using the Smart PLS criterion.

The data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Both linear regression and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient were employed to examine the hypothesised relationship between TNAs and SMEs' performance efficiency

Data and Analysis

Table 1: Analysis of Respondents Distributions

S/N	SME Category	Frequency	Relative Frequency (%)
1	ICT Installers / Accessories Dealers	32	12.8%
2	Furniture Makers / Dealers of AGF & MBF Cabinets and Shelf Boards	60	24.0%
3	Laundry Service Providers	34	13.6%
4	Fast-Food / Local Food Vendors	28	11.2%
5	POS and Other Pay-Points Vendors	22	8.8%
6	Agribusinesses (Poultry and Fish Farmers)	18	7.2%
7	Bottle/Sachets Water Producers	14	5.6%
8	Cake and Confectionery Makers and Events Designers	42	16.8%
	Total	250	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Distributions Analysis

Statistic	Value
Total SMEs Owners/Mgrs.	250
Number of Categories	8
Mean (Average) Frequency	31.25
Median Frequency	30
Mode Frequency	None (no repeats)
Range	60 - 14 = 46
Minimum Frequency	14
Maximum Frequency	60
Standard Deviation (σ)	≈ 14.14

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Apparently, the above statistical representation grossly displayed a comprehensive reflection of how the 250 selected SMEs in the Ogun State metropolis are spread or distributed around the 8 studied business categories. This lucidly displayed that while the average category has about 31 SMEs, some categories are significantly widespread or larger or smaller, and there exist no dominant frequencies from the group data, showing that diversity in category size is high. This variability suggests that each business category has unique characteristics and challenges, which may influence their growth trajectories and market strategies.

Table 3: Analysis of distributed Questionnaire

Category of Respondents	Number of Administered questionnaire	Percentages %
ICT Installers/Accessories Dealers	32	11.85%
Furniture Makers/Dealers of AGF & MBF Cabinets and Shelf Boards	60	22.22%
Laundry Service Providers	34	12.59%
Fast Food/Local Food Vendors	28	10.37%
POS and Other Pay-Points Vendors	22	8.15%
Agribusinesses (Poultry and Fish Farmers)	18	6.67%
Bottle/Sachets Water Producers	14	5.19%
Cake and Confectionery Makers/ Events Designers	42	15.56%
Tailors/Fashion Designers	20	7.40%
Total	270	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4: Analysis of Retrieved/Returned Questionnaire

Number of Administered questionnaire	Number of Returned/ Retrieved questionnaire	Percentage %
270	250	92.59%

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 4 revealed that the study administered a total of 270 questionnaire instruments to the selected respondents. However, 250 were returned/retrieved, accounting for a 92.59% success rate, and were found useful to perform statistical examination. This high response rate indicates a strong level of engagement among the participants, enhancing the reliability of the findings. Consequently, the data collected will provide valuable insights into the research questions posed in the study.

Table 5: Analysis of not Returned Questionnaire and Causes

Number of Administered questionnaire	Number of not returned (non-useful) questionnaire	Percentage %	Causes/Reasons
270	20	7.41%	Not-properly filled, mutilation, and not attended to etc.

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 5 showed that out of the two hundred and seventy (270) questionnaires distributed to the target respondents, 20 copies could not be recovered due to some factors, including defacing mutilation, not being given attention, and not being properly assessed; hence, they could not form part of the study analysis, representing a ten percent (7.4%) non-response rate. The result is too insignificant to have a direct and consequential effect on the study outcome; hence, it was ignored. This non-response rate is within an acceptable range for survey research, allowing for the remaining responses to provide a reliable basis for analysis. Consequently, the findings derived from the analysed questionnaire can still be regarded as indicative of the overall trends and opinions within the target population.

Table 6: Validity and Reliability Test

Construct	Number of items	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Variance Extract
Entrepreneurship Training Needs Assessments	15	0.890	0.776	0.721
SMEs Performance Efficiency	10	0.866	0.755	0.699

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

According to Table 6, the values for the two constructions vary from 0.866 to 0.890 for composite reliability and from 0.755 to 0.776 for Cronbach's alpha, respectively. Given that the composite and Cronbach's alpha coefficient values are higher than (>) the Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2017) 0.07 recommended level, this implies that all of the constructions are dependable. The discriminant validity

values of Average Variance Extract (AVE), which range from 0.699 to 0.721 and are also above the recommended level of 0.50 by Hair *et al.* (2017), back up the reliability findings. As a result, the study's two constructs showed strong internal consistency and dependability. They are therefore thought to be suitable for the kind of research being conducted for this project. With the use of SPSS 23.0, the study data analysis process was carried out using linear regression and Pearson's coefficient of correlation. These are deemed appropriate for the nature of this work's investigation.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 7: Respondent Gender Distributions

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	187	74.8%
Female	63	25.2%
Total	250	100.0%

Source: SPSS Output, 2025.

Table 7 revealed that out of the 250 sampled respondents, 74.8% are male while 25.2% are female, respectively, showing that entrepreneurship practice in the Ogun State metropolis is being dominated by more males. This gender disparity highlights the need for targeted initiatives to encourage female participation in entrepreneurial activities. Such measures could help create a more balanced representation and foster a diverse business environment in the region.

Table 8: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	227	90.8%
Single	20	8.0%
Others	3	1.2%
Total	250	100.0%

Source: SPSS Output, 2025.

It is evident from Table 8 that the vast majority of the captured respondents from the sample pool were married, representing 90.08%, indicating that the majority of persons in the entrepreneurship activities in Ogun State are married. This finding suggests that marital status may play a significant role in influencing individuals' decisions to engage in entrepreneurial ventures. Additionally, it raises questions about the support systems and resources available to married entrepreneurs in the region.

Table 9: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Bracket (years)	Frequency	Percent
18–35	198	79.2%
36–50	42	16.8%
51–55	6	2.4%
56 and above	4	1.6%
Total	250	100.0%

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

On the age facet of the respondent, it is apparent from the above result that chunks of respondents representing 79.2% were within the age range of 18–35 years, suggesting copiously that operators and owners of entrepreneurial ventures in the Ogun State metropolis are relatively young people. This trend may indicate a burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit among younger individuals, who may be more inclined to take risks and innovate in their business practices. Additionally, the presence of a youthful demographic in entrepreneurship could lead to the infusion of new ideas and technologies into the local economy.

Table 10: Respondents work Experience/Years in Business

Years in Business	Frequency	Percent
1–5 years	73	29.2%
6–20 years	95	38.0%
21–25 years	51	20.4%
26+ years	31	12.4%
Total	250	100.0%

Source: SPSS output, 2025.

On the basis of work experience/years in business of respondents, it is evident from Table 10 that most SMEs, accounting for about 38%, have been in an effective operation for about 20 years, showing clearly moderately experienced entrepreneurs in the research domain.

Model Specification

SMEs performance Efficiency (SMEsPerEff.) f (Training Needs Assessment) eq. 1

Therefore, the following models were created in order to examine the study's hypotheses

Model 1

$$\text{SMEsPerEff} = f(\text{TranNeeAss}) \quad \text{eq.2}$$

$$\text{SMEsPerEff} = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 \text{TranNeeAss} + \mu_t \quad \text{eq.3}$$

The above model indicated algebraically that SMEs' performance efficiency is a direct function of TNAs among the selected SMEs in the Ogun State metropolis, Western Nigeria.

Variable Descriptions

SMEsPerEff = SMEs Performance Efficiency

TranNeeAss = Training Needs Assessment

α_0, β_1 = Regression coefficients of the model

μ_t = Error term.

Examination of postulated hypothesis

Re-Ho1: Training needs assessment doesn't have any positive and significant correlation with SMEs' performance efficiency in the Ogun State metropolis.

Bivariate Analysis (Test of Correlation) Decision rules

Bivariate analysis includes, in addition to what has already been mentioned, the test for the bivariate correlation between the dependent and independent variables of a study. However, when using the bivariate examination technique, there are rules that govern its application in terms of acceptance and rejection. The decision rule is

as follows: if the P value is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$), the hypothesis is accepted on the basis of the evidence of significant correlation; if the P value is greater than 0.05 ($P > 0.05$), the result of such a hypothesis is rejected on the grounds of insignificant correlation between the measured variables.

Table 11: Correlational outcome of TNAs and SMEs Performance Efficiency

	Variables		Training Needs Assessment	SMEs Performance Efficiency
Spearman's rho	Training Needs Assessment	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	1	.814** .000**
		N	225	225
	SMEs Performance Efficiency	Correlation Coefficient Sig. (2-tailed)	.823** .001**	1
		N	225	225

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: SPSS Output, 2025**

Table 11 revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between TNAs and SMEs' performance efficiency ($r = 0.823$, $n = 225$, $P = 0.001$). Consequently, the more priority attention given to an entrepreneur's trainee, the higher the trajectory of SMEs managers' performance. The result further implies that SME managers/operators with the right perspicacity, skills, awareness, and experience in the informal sector are confirmed potential factors of SME performance. Given the nature of the result from the hypothesis examination, the null hypothesis is rejected, necessitating the acceptance of the alternative, indicating that there is a positive and significant affinity between TNAs' initiative and SMEs' performance efficiency in the Ogun State metropolis.

Findings and Discussion

This paper focused on the assessment of the effect of TNAs on the performance efficiency of selected enterprises in the Ogun State metropolis, Nigeria. The findings of this study affirm the strong positive relationship between Training Needs Assessment (TNA) and the performance efficiency of SMEs in Ogun State, Nigeria, corroborating previous empirical research and theoretical assertions in entrepreneurial development literature. The significant correlation coefficient of 0.823 ($p < 0.01$) indicates that SMEs which undertake systematic TNAs are likely to experience marked improvements in various performance indicators, including productivity, innovation, and managerial effectiveness. The study further reveals that most entrepreneurs within the sampled population predominantly possess inadequate skills in critical areas such as financial management, record-keeping, customer relationship management, and profit reinvestment awareness.

These skill gaps, identified through comprehensive TNAs, are closely linked with suboptimal business performance, emphasising the importance of tailored training programs. The alignment of training content with the specific needs of entrepreneurs ensures relevance, applicability, and immediate impact, which aligns

with findings from Nganu and Gula (2018) and Mallo and Singhry (2019). Moreover, the analysis demonstrates that SMEs that engage in needs-based training exhibit enhanced managerial skills and operational efficiencies, leading to increased business resilience and growth. This aligns with training requirement assessment theory, which underscores that effective training must be predicated on an accurate diagnosis of current needs rather than generic solutions. The demographic profile indicating a dominance of male entrepreneurs and younger individuals suggests gender disparities and age-related factors that may influence training uptake and application. These findings support the recommendation to implement targeted initiatives to promote female participation and inclusive capacity-building strategies.

In addition, the diversity in business category sizes and challenges underscores the necessity for flexible and adaptable training frameworks. Standardised TNAs facilitate the development of customised curricula that address unique sectoral demands, thereby maximising training efficacy. Overall, the results reinforce the pivotal role of systematic TNAs in designing effective entrepreneurship training programs that translate into measurable improvements in SME performance efficiency. They underscore the need for policymakers and support agencies to institutionalise comprehensive needs assessments as a prerequisite to any capacity-building intervention, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic development within Nigeria's informal sector.

Conclusion

This paper examined how tailoring entrepreneurship training to what small business owners and managers really need can enhance their performance efficiency in Ogun State metropolis, Nigeria. It shows that when training is aligned with the specific needs of entrepreneurs, their businesses tend to perform better and stand the test of time. The study involved the use of structured questionnaire complemented with extensive interviews with over 200 SME owners and managers of SMEs. The findings pointed to a strong nexus/link between targeted training needs assessments and enhanced enterprise performance. The results support the hypothesis that there is a positive and significant correlation between TNA and SME performance, emphasising the importance of conducting effective training needs analysis before designing training programs.

The study reinforces the theoretical framework that investments in human capacity via targeted training directly impact productivity and performance outcomes. Basically, if the trainers placed emphasis on what entrepreneurs actually need, and such is eventually provided, their enterprises are more likely to do well, succeed, and grow in the midst of any circumstances. That is, when entrepreneurship training is tailored based on thorough training needs assessments, it is crucial in improving SMEs' performance in the informal sector of Ogun State.

This study underscores the significance of aligning entrepreneurial training with identified needs to improve SME performance in Nigeria. It advocates for a systematic, needs-based approach to capacity building, which can be adapted and expanded upon in diverse contexts for increased entrepreneurial success and economic development.

The outcomes of this paper hold the following implications for policymakers, organisers of training, and government ministries/agencies in charge of youth-entrepreneurship training, etc. Policymakers and training institutions should prioritise conducting comprehensive TNAs prior to implementing training programs for entrepreneurs. Training providers in Nigeria, especially in Ogun State, should adapt their curricula to address the specific challenges and skill gaps identified through TNAs. SME support organisations and government agencies should incorporate systematic TNA processes to ensure the relevance and efficacy of their training initiatives, thus optimising resource utilisation and boosting SME growth. Entrepreneurs are advised to seek or demand training programs that are tailored to their actual business needs to facilitate sustainable growth.

Recommendations

In accordance with the paper outcomes, the following recommendations were proposed:

- i. All SME training programs should begin with detailed training needs assessments to identify specific skill gaps.
- ii. Stakeholders should develop standardised frameworks for conducting TNAs to ensure consistency and effectiveness.
- iii. Continuous monitoring and evaluation should be incorporated post-training to measure the impact of the tailored training on business performance.
- iv. Training programs should be flexible and adaptable, capable of evolving based on changing business environments and newly identified needs.
- v. Government and non-governmental organisations should allocate resources towards capacity building for trainers to effectively undertake TNAs.

Limitations of the study

Apparently, the paper primarily focused on SMEs within Ogun State, which limits the generalisability of the findings across other regions or sectors. Secondly, it relied predominantly on quantitative data collected through questionnaires, which may be susceptible to response biases. Thirdly, the cross-sectional design adopted for the paper only offers a snapshot view, lacking insights into the long-term impacts of TNA-driven training on SME performance. Fourthly, the scope of the research may not have comprehensively captured all factors influencing SME performance, such as market dynamics or external economic variables.

Suggestions for further study

Against the observed limitations of this paper, the following suggestions were stated: Future studies could explore longitudinal designs to assess the sustained effects of tailored training based on TNAs over time. Secondly, comparative research between different regions or sectors within Nigeria and beyond could provide broader insights into the universality or contextual specificity of the findings. Thirdly, there should be an exploration of the specific components of TNAs that yield the most significant improvements in business performance, such as managerial skills, marketing, or financial management. Fourthly, further research could examine the barriers and facilitators influencing the successful implementation of training needs assessments among SME entrepreneurs. Lastly, investigations into the role of digital

and technology-driven TNAs could offer innovative approaches to SME capacity building.

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