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PRE-RETIREMENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP TRAINING AND VETERANS' OCCUPATION: A TRACER STUDY OF NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES RESETTLEMENT CENTRE (2002-2023)

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Pre-Retirement Entrepreneurship Training (PET) and Veterans' Occupation: A Tracer Study of Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre (NAFRC) from 2002 to June 2023. It adopted a descriptive survey design. The study was undertaken at the NAFRC Oshodi, Lagos State and, at six (06) veterans' clusters domiciled across the six (06) geo-political zones of Nigeria. A sample size of 404 graduating and the past participants were engaged in focus group discussions and interviews. The qualitative research objectives include to examine the level of impact of the NAFRC in conducting the PET; and, to examine the factors limiting the participants' adoption of the PET, needed to aid the establishment of veterans' occupation among others. The outcomes are that the NAFRC has adequate impact to effectively train 500 personnel annually, as participants averred that NAFRC now have a very good training programme and trainers who taught them how to identify business opportunities, make business plans and proposals, but training does not still capture the interests of the participants who might be willing able and ready to take-up bridge employment afterwards; hence they need every aspect of the PET training to enable them own their own businesses, while the technical professionals/experts preferred exception from the PET scheme; and, there still exist some factors limiting the participants' adoption of the NAFRC PET scheme, which require a comprehensive approach to address, these include: limited access to financial resources; faulty selection process without mapping their military experiences with business ecosystem, mentoring and awareness campaign by supervisors/experts to identify individual's PET needs; the non-establishment of cooperative support services; and, the non-inclusion of junior other ranks in the PET scheme. The study concluded that: the DHQ should sustain the on-going efforts to reposition NAFRC capacity and capability for conducting PET scheme; it recommended the establishment of a NAFRC PET Alumni Cooperative; and, extension of duration of the PET scheme to one year among others.

Keywords: Pre-Retirement, Entrepreneurship, Training, Veterans, Occupation, Nigerian Armed Forces, Resettlement Centre, 2002-2023.

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INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, retired military personnel, over the years, have charted various career paths and successful one is being publicized. For instance, many retired military personnel are involved in various businesses, spreading across oil and gas, manufacturing, constructions, quarries, mechanized agriculture, poultry, educational services, and small-scale businesses among others (Obi, 2013). They thrive through discipline acquired in the course of their military career (Smaliukiene, 2013). This highlights the importance of the need to reveal the intention and type of career paths of the retiring military personnel in the recent years as a result of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training provided to the individual.

The Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) like other employers of labour, owe soldiers the duty to ensure that they are adequately prepared and equipped for post-retirement life by exposing them to new skills through pre-retirement entrepreneurship training long before they finally take their exit from the service (Tar & Wapmuk, 2021). The AFN has retired many of its veterans over the years, many of whom have also been trained. For example, it was reported that in preparation for their retirement, the Nigerian military provided pre-retirement entrepreneurship training for 41,000 veterans between 1945 and 2016 (This Day, December 11, 2016; Tar & Wapmuk, 2021). Given the number of military personnel that have retired within the period of 71 years (1945-2016) vis-à-vis the number trained, it is evident that many must have retired without receiving the necessary pre-retirement entrepreneurship training and exposure to opportunities and challenges for self-reliance in post-retirement era.

Prior to the retirement of military personnel, the military authorities through the Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre (NAFRC) provides the retiring personnel vocational and pre-retirement entrepreneurship training in mechanized farming, soap making, shoe and leather works, foundry, welding, poultry, furniture making among other skills (Yusuf & Mina, 2016). In addition, the years of serving in the Nigeria military affords some military personnel, valuable opportunities to acquire professional and trade qualifications, that provides them the needed specialized skills which encourage and motivate them to set up own business upon retirement from the military. For military personnel, it is expected to leave after 35years of service or on attaining 55years of age except on health reasons whichever comes first. Military personnel therefore retire at relatively younger ages than civil servants whose statutory age of retirement from public service is 60 years or 35years in service.

The NAFRC scheme was thus established to serve as the training centre to bridge the gap of reintegration of servicemen into civil life as well as repositioning ex-service men and women to cope with challenges of service in their post military service life. The aim of pre-retirement entrepreneurship training of military personnel is to ease the process of reintegration of the retirees (in which many of them are still active and able to engage in various social activities) into civil life which enables them seek employment in public sector or become business owners. Yusuf and Minai (2016) and Usman (2016) suggested that the entrepreneurship training provided at NAFRC is to build, sustain, and develop small businesses as well as to enhance small business development and creating jobs through the retired military personnel as well as to prepare the individual psychologically for resettlement into civil life. In spite of the efforts made by Nigerian Government to equip the retiring military personnel with relevant trades and vocational skills, to enable them integrate into civil life as well as face future economic challenges, the success ratio has remained low based on intelligence reports (DHQ, 2017). It is against this backdrop that the

study seeks to examine the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training through NAFRC in a bid to establish viable veterans' occupation.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the establishment and operation of NAFRC, the authorities of the Centre through its internal mechanism of evaluating its progress over the years observed that considerable gaps still exist in the ability of ex-participants to transform into successful entrepreneurs after retirement in spite of their training. The difficulties faced by some retired military personnel contrasted opinions that pre-retirement entrepreneurship training fuels the passion in the individual for creating and implementing new business ideas. It also assisted the military personnel to pursue a career as an entrepreneur upon retirement. This is based on the fact that over 90 per cent of the trainees attend the training a few months to the termination of their 35 years of service. The training include the hands-on experience gained through the corps or areas of specialization of the military personnel during their service years.

Previous institutional assessments of the NAFRC have focused on issues such as legal framework, adequacy of name, state of the facilities and equipment, dearth of instructors professional staff and need for facilities upgrade. These studies failed to investigate the adequacy of the contents of the trainings in terms of equipping the trainees for a seamless transition to full post service life. Among the previous retirees that benefitted from the trainings, no study has been conducted to establish the success or failure ratio of the ex-military personnel engaged in pre-retirement entrepreneurship training, private businesses or self-employment with particular reference to the impacts of the military pre-retirement skills acquisition scheme.

This study is apt given the recent observation by the military authorities that considerable gaps still exist in the ability of ex-participants to transform into successful entrepreneurs after retirement in spite of their training at NAFRC. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the research gap by examining the impact of the NAFRC on pre-retirement entrepreneurship training in the establishment of veterans' occupation in Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine how NAFRC has conducted pre-retirement entrepreneurship training with the focus of establishing veterans' occupation from the year 2002-2022:

- Investigate the impact of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC on the business performance of the ex-military personnel that participated in the scheme.
- Identify the factors limiting the participants' adoption of NAFRC pre-retirement entrepreneurship training needed to aid the establishment of veterans' occupation.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been posed to guide the study:

- What is the impact of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC on the business performance of the ex-military personnel that participated in the scheme?

- What are the factors limiting the participants' adoption of NAFRC pre-retirement entrepreneurship training needed to aid the establishment of veterans' occupation?

Scope of the Study

The study was carried out among the select 2002-2022 ex-participants and the graduating current 2023 participants of NAFRC, Oshodi-Lagos, Nigeria. The reason for choosing this period is that most of the participants are still alive and could still be reached through their telephone numbers available at NAFRC and precedes the COVID-19 years. The study is expected to cut across the entire other rank-personnel of Armed Forces of Nigeria. In content extent of the study, it reflected the concept of pre-retirement entrepreneurship training and veteran's occupation for retiring military personnel through pre-retirement skills acquisition scheme. Also, the content aspect will consider other related concept to retirement, entrepreneurship and their relevant to the betterment of post-retirement military personnel while deducing limitations and proffering possible recommendations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Life-Cycle Income Theory

The Life-Cycle Income Theory was formulated by Modigliani and Brumberg (1950). They developed this theory based on their observation that people make consumption decisions based on the resources available to them over their lifetime, on which their current stage of life is anchored. The life-cycle theory postulates that individuals plan their consumption and savings behaviour over their lifecycle. They intend to even out their consumption in the best possible manner over their entire lifetimes, by accumulating when they earn and discontinue savings when they are retired. The key assumption is that all individuals choose to maintain stable lifestyles. This implies that they usually save up a lot in one period to spend judiciously at another time, keeping their consumption levels approximately the same at all times.

Modigliani and Brumberg observed that individuals build up assets at the initial stages of their working lives. Later on during retirement, they make use of their stock of assets. The working people save up for their post-retirement lives and alter their consumption patterns according to their needs at different stages of their lives.

The life-cycle theory is relevant to this study because individuals plan their consumption and saving habits over their lifecycle. Thus, this is significant to this study because it is expected of the military personnel to continue their life in their retirement through entrepreneurship that is expected to provide for their consumption as well as their continuous saving.

The Continuity Theory

The continuity theory of normal aging states that older adults will usually maintain the same activities, behaviours, relationships as they did in their earlier years of life. According to this theory, older adults try to maintain this continuity of lifestyle by adapting strategies that are connected to their past experiences. The continuity theory can be classified as a micro-level theory because it pertains to the individual, and more specifically it can be viewed from the functionalist perspective in which the individual and society try to obtain a state of equilibrium.

The continuity theory was formerly proposed in 1971 by Robert Atchley in his article "Retirement and Leisure Participation: Continuity or Crisis?" in the journal *The Gerontologist*. Later, in 1989, he published another article entitled "A Continuity Theory of Normal Aging, in *The Gerontologist* in which he substantially developed the theory. In this article, he expanded the continuity theory to explain the development of internal and external structures of continuity. In 1999, Robert Atchley continued to strengthen his theory in his book *Continuity and Adaptation in Aging: Creating Positive Experiences*.

The theory deals with the internal structure and the external structure of continuity to describe how people adapt to their situation and set their goals. The internal structure of an individual such as personality, ideas, and beliefs remain constant throughout the life course. This provides the individual a way to make future decisions based on their internal foundation of the past. The external structure of an individual such as relationships and social roles provides a support for maintaining a stable self-concept and lifestyle.

The relevance of the Continuity Theory to this study is to explain what retirees ought to be able to continue their lifestyle and maintain good living standard same as when they were in service. This theory showed that every individuals that have maintain a certain way of life will strive to continue such life even after retirement which through entrepreneurship it's expected that military retirees at their retirement can continue their life living standard and maintain their ways of life.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Entrepreneurship has assumed a leading role in society through its substantial contribution to the economic development of nations, noting a growing importance in the universe of higher education institutions. This is justified by the rising needs to accelerate economic growth through the generation of new ideas and the conversion of these into profitable companies (Aikhuomobe, 2016).

Akanwa and Agu (2005) considered entrepreneurship to be the active process that propels the entrepreneur not only to create of enterprises and employment, thus organizing his/her business, but also fosters the increase of wealth as well as economic development. Akinde (2006) referred that the main reason for entrepreneurship is the ability to capture the attention of universities, as well as policy-makers. This is due to the growing needs of entrepreneurs to accelerate economic growth and development based on new ideas that will generate profitable companies. The first predictive factor of entrepreneurial intention is, thus, the education provided by the higher education institutions. Innovation appears linked to this phenomenon, requiring the participation and collaboration of the various players in the scientific and technological system (universities, and research centres, companies and public administration) (Henry et al., 2012).

Hope et al. (2011) supported that the increasing relevance in the development of entrepreneurially oriented educational programs and start-up processes is due to the identification of the entrepreneurs' characteristics as well as the knowledge of the entrepreneurial profile of their potential. It was argued by Smaliukiene (2013) that military personnel retire as much as twenty years earlier than other civilian counterparts in Europe and the United States of America (USA). Henning (2011) argued that military personnel are likely to retire 15-20 years earlier in the US, one in seven veterans is self-employed or a small business owner. This is different from the perspective of Europe that encourages the reintegration of ex-military personnel into civil life through employment in public sector or big businesses rather than

starting self-owned business. Comparative practices in transition to retirement for the military reveal two best practices globally. They are either prepared towards seeking to bridge employment or in the alternative, to train them to learn how to start a new business - entrepreneurship training. Hardie et al. (2020) were of the opinion that there is a need to understand the peculiar requirement of individuals and category of people before preparing them either for bridging employment or entrepreneurship. This is necessary to avoid failure that may result in a fruitless entrepreneurship experience, accompanied with loss of self-confidence and life's savings that may have been ploughed into the venture.

The reality is that there is no one size fit all yardsticks to determine who should go for bridging employment or become an entrepreneur. Nevertheless, Guerrero and Urbano (2012) noted that there is the need to assess the interests and special skills in order to equip people with necessary skills to accommodate the change in their circumstances and provide supportive services to develop their entrepreneurial activities. This is necessary because every service man is unique and his life might have been shaped by institutional factors such as previous work experiences, the rank attained, communicability, and temperament, differences in individual personality and characteristics and flexibility. A study carried out by Smaliuekiene (2013) on Entrepreneurship Opportunities after Military Career; Practice in Central and Eastern Versus Western Europe, revealed the varied practices on transition from military service to retirement in the different European countries examined. Smaliuekiene (2013) divided European countries into four groups. Group one consisted of Lithuania, Great Britain, Croatia, France, Ireland, Romania, Poland and Germany. The common characteristics of these countries are that servicemen go into early retirement and are subjected to measures of reintegration into labour market or entrepreneurship and coordinated by an institution of the National Defence. For instance, in both Britain and France, the process of reintegration into civilian life is mainly focused on making the veteran employable or guiding them to pursue a self-reliant employment option.

The training is usually provided by a contractor – a private company that would have won a public tender. Before this, each serviceman is first expected to have a talk with his/her supervisor who provides general guidance on the process of the training for reintegration into society in the post retirement era. The second group consist of Belgium, and Germany. In Belgium, the difference between retirement age for servicemen and the full retirement age is 5 years and difference between the pension and previous salary is 15 per cent. Integration programme is available for only those who leave the service voluntarily at an early age of 40 to 45 and pension is usually not paid until a particular age such as 60. The third group of countries include Estonia, Slovakia, Latvia and Finland, all of which have no special reintegration plans for service men going into retirement. According to Smaliuekiene (2013), the servicemen are expected to key into the national or local entrepreneurship development programmes like other citizens of the countries. The fourth categories of countries examined by Smaliuekiene (2013) are Denmark, Luxemburg and the Netherlands. These countries do not subject servicemen to early retirement or reintegration programmes. Persons who retire earlier voluntarily can apply for support to national programmes for entrepreneurial skills development like other citizens.

On a whole, our examination of the transition from active military service to entrepreneurship shows that in every part of the world, military retirees tend to look for economic activities to support their pensions. The comparative experience of countries in Europe and USA also shows that while some countries have designed transition programmes including entrepreneurship trainings for servicemen for retirement, others expect them to key into the local,

national or regional programmes like other citizens. It is against this backdrop that we proceed to examine entrepreneurship training for the military and opportunities for self-reliance in Nigeria.

Entrepreneurship Training (Development) in Nigeria

Entrepreneurship Training Programme is increasingly recognized as important driver of economic growth, generating employment, fostering innovation and poverty reduction through the empowerment of young men and women (Asogwa & Dim, 2016). Poor entrepreneurship training has also been identified as an immediate reason why businesses in developing countries fail to start or progress. Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) have been described by Asogwa and Dim (2016) to mean a purposeful intervention by an adult (the teacher) in the life of a learner to impart entrepreneurial qualities and skills to enable the learner to survive in the world of business. Its aim is to equip learners with skills, knowledge and disposition that can help them develop or implement innovative social or business plans. Asogwa and Dim (2016) defined EDP as the process of enhancing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through structured training and institutional building programmes. Entrepreneurship Development Programme is refers to the process of enhancing the capacity of recipients through structured training and institutional building programme (Asogwa & Dim, 2016). According to Asogwa and Dim (2016), two approaches have been used for entrepreneurship development in Nigeria. One of the approaches is concerned with provision of generous credit facilities for small-scale industrialists. The scheme, which was formally launched at the beginning of the third National plan period (1975-1980), aimed at providing entrepreneurs with seed capital. The second approach is concerned with provision of training. This led to the establishment of the first training centre, known as Industrial Development Centre (IDC) in Owerri, in 1972. Other IDCs were established in different parts of the country. These two elements (training and funding) are the twin components of Nigerian EDP initiative. Although the NAFRC scheme is tailor made for the retiring military personnel; this was in response to the needs of returning soldiers of World War 2 as well as those of the Nigerian Civil War.

The history of NAFRC dates back to the post World War II era when the British Colonial Government under the auspices of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) established 2 Vocational Resettlement Centres in West Africa; one in Nigeria and the other in Ghana. The Centres were charged with the responsibility of imparting skills relevant to the resettlement needs of the colonial West African ex-servicemen. The advent of the Nigerian Civil War also necessitated the hurried recruitment of able-bodied Nigerians into the non-commissioned cadre of the Armed Forces, mainly the Nigerian Army, irrespective of academic qualifications. Again, at the end of the civil war, there was the need to rehabilitate and prepare these soldiers for integration into productive civilian life. To meet these needs, the Vocational Resettlement Centre in Nigeria was upgraded to rehabilitate the disabled soldiers of the civil war. Hence, the Centre became more of an Army establishment and was then known as the Nigerian Army Rehabilitation Centre (NARC). By the early 1980s, virtually all the demobilized soldiers had been rehabilitated and there was again the need to review the mandate of the Centre. Therefore, in 1982, the Centre was re-designated NAFRC with the mandate to conduct vocational training for discharging able-bodied armed forces personnel and those with little disability (NAFRC,2018).

The Centre has evolved over time from a Rehabilitation Centre for demobilized soldiers to a Resettlement Centre equipped with vocational and skills acquisition facilities. The earlier

trainees had little or low educational background, the current crop of retirees are highly educated with some having doctorate degrees. Consequently, the authorities observed that these modern crops of participants have little or no interest in the traditional artisan vocations. Rather, they have tremendous inclination towards setting up small scale enterprises where managerial skills are essential. In spite of the progressive update of the NAFRC, obviously, the Centre concentrate on training-skill acquisition leaving the twin component- funding to individual ex-participants of the EDP initiative.

Pre-Retirement Plan through Entrepreneurship Training

Workers in well-organised private sectors of the economy are noted to perceive retirement as something good. These workers look forward to the day they would retire. One major reason for this is because they are sure of receiving their retirement benefits without delay and also sure of receiving their monthly pensions where it is applicable. Retirement to this second category therefore, means leaving regular employment for death. This group of workers who are basically in public sector may seem to dread retirement because of the seeming `agony retirees undergo before receiving their retirement benefits. According to Muratore and Earl (2010), preretirement planning is said to be individual effort put together before retirement in a bid to secure healthy and doubtful wellbeing for the future.

Public servants' perception of retirement and their attitude towards pre-retirement counselling was surveyed by Inaja and Rose (2013). A representative sample of 1200 civil servants was selected using purposive sampling approach. Responses were elicited from them using a self-structured questionnaire to test one major proposition that guided the study. Data analysis were carried out using one-way ANOVA and tested at 0.05 alpha levels. Results of the study showed that civil servants' perception of retirement significantly influence their attitude towards pre-retirement counselling with respect to income and expenditure management, health related issues, management of loneliness and change in physical environment. It was recommended among other things that pre-retirement seminars and workshops should be organized for civil servants on a regular basis to prepare them for life at retirement.

Chinyere (2019) investigated financial pre-retirement plans of lecturers in public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all the 2330 lecturers in the three public universities in Rivers State; University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Rivers State University (RSU), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUOE). The instrument for the study was titled "Financial Pre-Retirement Plans of Lecturers Scale" (FPRPLS). Simple percentage was used to answer the research questions while Chi-Square statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. It was found among others that 46% of the lecturers agreed that they have financial plans while 54% disagreed. It was recommended among others that economists and finance managers should from time to time be invited to the universities in Rivers State to sensitize the lecturers on the possible ways to make savings out of their regular salaries.

Mambwe and Mwape (2016) investigated the preparation level, survival skills, and entrepreneurial knowledge among retired teachers in Zambia, as well as the success of their post-retirement business ventures. Descriptive survey design utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed through use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The conclusion showed that most retired teachers lack survival and entrepreneurial skills to manage their business ventures. Lack of pre-retirement entrepreneurial training, lack of pre-retirement

counselling, and poor planning for retirement life were found to be the major hindrances to retired teachers' success in managing their business ventures. They recognised the need for major reforms in teacher training and in pension's scheme policies in Zambia to accommodate issues of financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills among teachers as a way of preparing teachers and other civil servants for life after formal employment.

Ali (2014) noted retirement is a must for all workers. Despite government roles at providing social security income, retirement period has been a tension provoking and devastating phenomenon in Nigeria and other emerging economies of Africa, Asia and Latin America. This is so because of the regular non-payment of gratuities and pension benefits in Nigeria. Ali (2014) recognised that workers who ignore retirement planning do so at their perils, stressing that life consists of entry and exit and that one must plan for exit immediately after getting appointment. Furthermore, outfit(s) be a sweet and enjoyable post-retirement life demands that certain capital or income generating production/service put in place before the retirement day. The study identified and discussed entrepreneurship opportunities available for managing post-retirement conditions in Nigeria.

Vaughan and Vaughan (2014) opined that retirement planning involves three steps that are more or less parallel to those considered in planning life insurance which include: (i) estimating the future income need, which demands prediction into the income requirement which exist after retirement and also discovering sources that would be made open to satisfy these requirements; (ii) determining how all financial requirements meet up with the needs stated in the preceding step will be accumulated by designing and implementing a plan to accumulate assets sufficient to fund the difference between the resources that will be needed and the resources that will be available to provide the required retirement income; and (iii) planning the methodological process through which accumulated resources will be distributed and consumed.

Stephen, Gbenga and Kamal (2018) examined the relationship between preretirement pension planning and life insurance purchase with its empirical findings from retired civil servants in South western, Nigeria using descriptive research design. Results showed that preretirement pension education has not encouraged the purchase of life annuity among retired civil servants in Nigeria and life annuity insurance has not been fully subscribed to among retired civil servants in Nigeria. Further, retired civil servants have not seen annuity as an investment vehicle. The study recommended that more stringent efforts should be made by insurance practitioners to collaborate with government and other private employers by creating awareness on annuity as the best financing vehicle for retirees to earn gradual income.

Garba and Mamman (2014) reviewed the retirement challenges and sustainable development in Nigeria. Retirement from active civil service is a sine qua non in the life of every public officer. It is a stage that every worker must surely reach whether he prepares for it or not. Some of the basic challenges faced by the retirees in Nigeria include problems associated with planning and management, the exit stage, corruption at the pension board, discrimination by the society, domestic violence within the family, sudden death etc. Some the solutions to these problems include adequate planning during retirement, period of retirement itself, financial needs during retirement, expected income during retirement, estimating your sources of income, joining or forming a network of related stakeholders, etc.

Amune, Aidenojie and Obinyan (2015) examined the management of life after retirement and its implication on retired academic librarians in Edo State, Nigeria using survey method. The study revealed that most of the retirees retired as a result of their attainment of the prescribed length of service or age limit, that librarians prepare for their retirement through monthly

contribution to specific pension schemes, maintaining a personal savings fixed deposit account with a bank, investing in skills acquisition and training, ownership of property, investment in shares and stocks and insurance policy. The implication of not preparing for retirement is that after retirement, the retiree will be unhappy, dejected, feeling of inferiority complex as a retiree, low self-esteem in the community, regretted retiring from Public Service and inability to contribute to the society.

Iyortsuun and Akpusugh (2013) examined the effective management of life after retirement and its impact on retirees from the public service among the people of Benue State, Nigeria using survey research method. Among others, the study revealed that most employees do not invest towards retirement as a result of the inadequate pay package given to them by their employers and the challenges faced by retirees is due to poor preparation towards their retirement period. Also, if every worker receives his retirement benefits as and when due, it will enable retirees to make investments that will supplement their income at retirement while effective management of retirement life is a very crucial aspect of personnel administration that requires careful attention. They concluded that retirees and employees should be encouraged to embark on continuous education and skills acquisition training as a way of preparing for life after retirement.

Aikhuomogbe (2016) guided by the human capital theory, explored the how 15 civil service employees in Grade Levels 15–17 at the public service attained small scale business information before retirement. Using Yin's 5 step data analysis process, member checking, and triangulation, key findings emerged on financial institutions, mentoring, and vocational training opportunities as avenues employees can attain small scale business information required for entrepreneurship. The study findings may create awareness on how employees can attain small scale business information regarding sources of funding, mentorship, and vocational training during their final years of employment. This awareness may promote positive social change by preparing these individuals for entrepreneurship in retirement, thereby reducing the rate of post-retirement poverty.

In considering the nature and design of defined contribution plans, their institutional arrangements as well as the governance structures of the new pension plans in Nigeria. Afolabi (2015) and Adeniji, Akinnusi, Falola, and Folakemi (2017) argued that good things about the new Pension Act is the exemption from tax, however, because of the challenges of pensioners at life after active service, bearing in mind that pension provision will continue to gain recognition as retirees place less reliance on family to look after them at old age, comprehensive accounting standards for retirement benefits must be established to protect the pension funds. However, the military is exempted from the contributory pension scheme like their counterparts in other climes.

Undiyaundeye (2016) examined the retirement and issues that the aged adults face in adjusting to retirement and implication for counselling this group of people to make a successful life transition. Psychological effects of disengagement from a work life and the challenges of societal life issues were discussed. These effects include partial identity disruption, decision paralysis, diminished self-trust, experience of a post retirement void, the search for meaningful engagement in society, development of a retirement life structure, the confluence of aging and retirement, death anxiety, the critical nurturing of social relationship and self-actualization.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted is descriptive survey using qualitative data. The Questionnaire matrix was used to elicit information from respondents. The questionnaire adopted for the study made use of closed-ended format and was divided into sections; *Section A*: the section captured the demographic details of the respondents so as to be able to describe respondents in terms of gender, age, rank, state origin, income, ethnicity and religion. *Section B*: the section set out questions that provided answers to the research questions.

The study was undertaken partly at the NAFRC located in Oshodi, Lagos State, Nigeria. Lagos is situated within latitudes 6°23'N and 6°41'N and longitudes 2°42'E and 3°42'E. The coastal state of Lagos lies in south-western region of Nigeria, on the Atlantic coast. The NAFRC was established as a world class training institution capable of repositioning ex-service men and women to cope with challenges of businesses/occupations in their post service life. The institution has been providing quality training, geared towards preparing Nigerian Armed Forces personnel to face the challenges of re-integrating into civil life. The vocational and ET are in areas such as mechanized farming, soap making, shoe and leather works, foundry, welding, poultry, furniture making among other skills. The other areas of study include the six selected identified veteran clusters in Abuja, Bauchi, Kaduna, Lagos, Onitsha, and Warri. These locations were chosen based on security situation and belonging to the Nigeria's six (06) geo-political zones of North Central, North East, North West, South West, South East and South South regions to ensure spread and even representation.

The study would source its data from both primary and secondary sources: *Primary Data*: The primary data was obtained with the aid of the interviews and focussed group discussions with past participants and current half-year 2023 graduating participants. *Secondary Data*: For this study, such data include the contact records of the retired military personnel, record of the scheme activities for every personnel, the scheme achievement over the years and their feedbacks records on the relevance of the NAFRC scheme on the current employment of retired military personnel. Secondary data that was used for this study will also include the published reports, facts and data from NAFRC, DHQ, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), and NBS etc.

The population of the study comprised of retired military personnel that participated in pre-retirement entrepreneurship training and vocational training programme course at the Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre, Oshodi- Lagos. The Centre annual intake is 500 military personnel which imply that between the period of 2002 and June 2023, the Centre intake was 10,500 military personnel, hence, the population of the study.

For the intent of this study, the research respondents were collected at the Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria where every retiring personnel is expected to partake in the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training and vocational training programme course. Additionally, respondents were selected based on exclusion/inclusion criteria at some known veteran clusters covering the six (06) geo-political zones of Nigeria. Using Taro Yamane (1967) at 95% confidence level and an error limit of 10% as a means to ascertain the sample size of the research drawn from the projected population of 10,500 was adopted. Therefore, the sample size was 404.

For this study, a simple random sampling technique was adopted to select respondents from the study area. The respondents (404 participant military personnel) were shared across the years of study while the records of the then participants (at the centre) were retrieved from the

NAFRC Scheme. In achieving the randomness of the sampling, contacted personnel will be entitled to one-time participation in the study and each will be selected once.

A questionnaire matrix was used as a guide during the interviews and focus group discussions to elicit information from respondents. The instrument (questionnaire) for the study is titled “Pre-Retirement Entrepreneurship Training and Veterans’ Occupation: A Tracer Study of Nigerian Armed Forces Resettlement Centre from 2002 to June 2023 and was sectionalized into two:

Section A: The section captured the demographic details of the respondents in a manner that it captured the intended objectives of the study as well as the demographic details of the respondents (Military personnel) so as to be able to describe respondents in terms of gender, age, and religion.

Section B: The section sets out questions that provided answers to the research questions that includes the level of capacity and capability of the NAFRC in conducting pre-retirement entrepreneurship training needed to aid the establishment of veterans’ occupation (Four items), how effective is the curriculum and duration of the NAFRC pre-retirement entrepreneurship training towards attaining optimum veterans’ occupation (Four items), the impact of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC on the business performance of the ex-military personnel that participated in the scheme (Four items), and the factors limiting the NAFRC in conducting pre-retirement entrepreneurship training needed to aid the establishment of veterans’ occupation (Four items).

The questionnaire was presented to the three experts in data analyst to examine the instrument and they made corrections based on the language of the instrument, to make it more appropriate and for final approval for data to be collected from Ex-military personnel’s between 2002-2022 and 1st half year 2023 graduating participants. Their corrections were effected to make the instrument valid to be able to elicit the needed information that aided the analysis of the study.

For reliability of the instrument to be ascertained, a trial testing was conducted. Using Cronbach Alpha test of reliability, the reliability of the questionnaire was carried out. Using this technique ensures that the internal consistency of the 27 items was adequate to guarantee continuity, thus, a Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate of .858 was realised.

Focus group discussions were conducted with the respondents that trained at the Centre, from 2002-2022 for pre-retirement entrepreneurial and vocational training programmes, the exercise took place between July and August 2023. The 2nd part of the exercise was conducted in June 2023 during the Graduation Ceremony Week of Course 01/2023. The researcher and his assistants personally delivered the interview/discussion to the respondents (retired and retiring military personnel). The questionnaire was a closed-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire matrix was employed because it ensures uniformity of responses.

Additionally, the researcher procured the services of 10 research assistants to assist in data collection at the Centre. The assistants comprised of National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) members and junior instructors at the NAFRC, Oshodi-Lagos. The assistants were fluent in Pidgin English and military slangs to enhance smooth interaction between and among participants. The research assistants were trained by the researcher on how to administer the questionnaires to elicit responses and the needed information from the respondents. Thereafter, they engage the ex-participants in close-ended discussions either in persons or through telephone lines provided at the NAFRC Alumni database. Further to which visits were made to various veteran clusters in Abuja, Bauchi, Kaduna, Lagos, Onitsha, and Warri. Lastly, prior to the

collection of data from the field, the study areas were mapped in order to identify the categories of respondents and states of residence as well as their present employment status.

Responses on the items statement 1-8 of the research instrument, the matrix, were tallied along “dissent = -1, suggest dissent=1/2, non-response=0, suggest agreement=1/2, agree=1.” The mean scores were used to determine the percentage of agreement or disagreement of the rated items.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the impact of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC on the business performance of the ex-military personnel that participated in the scheme?

Table 1: Focus group discussions and interviews held with former participants of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training on the impact of the armed forces resettlement centre (NAFRC) in conducting pre-retirement entrepreneurship training needed to aid the establishment of veterans’ occupation

RQ1	What is the impact of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC on the business performance of the ex-military personnel that participated in the scheme?	ABUJA AREA Group A	BAUCHI AREA Group B	KADUNA AREA Group C	LAGOS AREA Group D	ONITSHA AREA Group E	WARRI AREA Group F
1.	The skills learned at the NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme is related to your current occupation-	SA	NR	A	NR	NR	NR
2.	It is your previous military skills and experiences that help your current business.	SD	A	SD	A	A	A
3.	Among the skills learned most ex-participants preferred to apply the vocations that are easy to practise like crop farming, fish farming, driving and security guard etc.	SD	A	SD	A	A	A
4.	The skill learned include; financial and entrepreneurial management.	SA	D	SA	D	D	D

Table 1- Findings on Question 1.

Key to responses:

A = Indicated agreement (i.e., verbal or nonverbal)

D = Indicated dissent (i.e., verbal or nonverbal)

SA = Provided significant statement or example suggesting agreement

SD = Provided significant statement or example suggesting dissent

NR = Did not indicate agreement or dissent (i.e., non-response)

The ex-participants in various groups said they rarely agreed that skills learned at NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme are related to their current occupations. They claimed that their military training and hands-on experiences is what they fell back on to establish their businesses. The most groups agreed that, it is the easy to practice vocations and their military skills that help their current businesses; citing their level of understanding and rate of comprehension, since only of few of them had secondary school education.

The ex-participants agreed that they are mostly into crop and fish farming which are easy to practice among other vocations; citing their educational level, access to finance and difficulties in understanding business environment among other factors. The ex-participants in various groups safe Abuja and Kaduna, disagreed that they had training in financial and entrepreneurial management which could bolster their business performance during their own times on PET training; due to dearth of time allocated for the course.

Research Question 2: What are the possible challenges limiting participants' adoption of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training at NAFRC or their transformation to own their personal businesses?

Table 2: Focus group discussions and interviews held with former participants of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training on the possible challenges limiting the armed forces resettlement centre (NAFRC) in conducting pre-retirement entrepreneurship training needed to aid the establishment of veterans' occupation

RQ2	What are the challenges limiting the participants' adoption of entrepreneurship training and NAFRC scheme?	ABUJA AREA Group A	BAUCHI AREA Group B	KADUNA AREA Group C	LAGOS AREA Group D	ONITSHA AREA Group E	WARRI AREA Group F
5.	The NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme offered a certificate that is not accredited by funding agencies and makes access to funding difficult.	SD	SA	A	SA	A	SA
6.	Before the NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme, the selection process include counselling to map previous military professionalism with entrepreneurial skills to take care of individual personnel needs.	SA	SD	D	SD	SD	D
7.	The NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme has no Alumni cooperative to promote business development and	A	A	A	A	A	A

8.	monitoring department to track ex-participants' progress.	A	A	A	A	A	A
	NAFRC has no Pre-Retirement Scheme conducted for junior soldiers to promote early start and family business ownership and veterans' business growth.						

Table 2 Findings on Question 2.

Key to responses:

A = Indicated agreement (i.e., verbal or nonverbal)

D = Indicated dissent (i.e., verbal or nonverbal)

SA = Provided significant statement or example suggesting agreement

SD = Provided significant statement or example suggesting dissent

NR = Did not indicate agreement or dissent (i.e., non-response)

The retired soldiers in different Groups gave their different opinions concerning the possible challenges limiting their adoption of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training or transforming to own personal businesses; the foremost challenge is about funding of their businesses. Most groups agreed that NAFRC end- of-course certificate was not recognised by funding agencies and they were discriminated; but the Abuja Group noted that the trend has changed with the inclusion of external resources which now issue certification for different modules that are accredited and well recognised. The groups mostly agreed that there was no pre-course counselling; according to the Lagos Group, the time was too short to go through the curriculum of the training, hence, no time to undertake other essential aspects like; counselling, business awareness seminars, visibility study, IT, business plans and other skills. They emphasized the needs to extend the duration for better learning and practices. Opinions were unanimous on the need for an Alumni cooperative; as all groups agreed that there was none at present. As an Alumni Cooperative could stand in the gap for granting of funds and credit facilities as done by other funding agencies like the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN). As some ex-participants noted the need for necessary certifications; for recognition and acceptance to certain professional practices that requires licensing and admission to professional bodies like pharmaceutical, medical laboratory and others. These could only be achieved during their in-service years and with the introduction of early pre-retirement course for the junior cadre. In this case, there may arise the need for mapping the personnel professional specialties of technical and skilled personnel with possible pre-retirement skills and vocational training. The groups unanimously agreed that the PET training policy did not include the junior personnel to promote early start and family business. They suggested the need to establish similar PET scheme for the junior personnel who may wish to leave the service early or forced out of the Service. This would further reduced their ease of reintegration into civil employment. The six groups unanimously disagreed that they have NAFRC Alumni, which could help stimulate business networking and to create awareness about veterans' entrepreneurship endeavours and business development.

They noted further that, the lack of ongoing support and mentoring which is possible through PET Alumni is also an issue. Retired personnel observed that after the training program, participants required ongoing support, tracking, and monitoring to ensure the successful implementation and growth of their businesses. The absence of such support mechanisms hinder their performance and sustainability in businesses. Regulatory and bureaucratic hurdles are serious concerns for start-ups. Some ex-participants said dealing with government regulations,

licenses, permits, and other bureaucratic processes is complex and time-consuming. Lack of understanding, limited access to the necessary resources and financial supports to navigate these hurdles impede ex-participants' progress and business development. They suggested the need for NAFRC to maintain tab on their alumnus and alumnae through an established PET Alumni Cooperative; which could also save them the hurdle of running after micro finance banks without success. The six (06) groups unanimously disagreed that there is a PET for junior personnel.

Summary of Findings from FGD with Past Participant of 2002-2022

The findings from FGD held with past participants of the years 2002-2022, revealed that the Pre-retirement Entrepreneurship Training program offered by NAFRC, Oshodi-Lagos, has not yielded the desired positive outcomes in facilitating veterans' transition to civilian life and becoming business owners. The acquisition of business skills, improved confidence, and networking opportunities were the targeted key benefits of the Scheme. However, a summary of the findings from past-participants reveals the needs for major improvements on the conduct of the NAFRC PET scheme; as most of the observations raised by the former participants reflected negative impacts.

Firstly, the retired personnel did not unanimously agreed that NAFRC is a training institution with capacity and capability that they can effectively train 500 personnel annually; as only the Lagos Group suggested agreement. It was only the Abuja Group that suggested that military personnel (ex-participants) benefits from the programme immensely through the skill training programme and other activities put in place for them. When asked, the Abuja Group revealed that they trained recently at the Centre in the last three years, at a time when efforts had been made to reposition the NAFRC PET Scheme.

Secondly, the retired soldiers in different Groups gave their different opinions concerning the 6-month time duration and its effectiveness of the training curriculum; these indicate agreement and suggested agreement. According to the Abuja Group, the time was too short to go through the curriculum of the training, hence, no time to undergo other essential aspects like; counselling, business awareness seminars, visibility study, IT, business plans and other skills. They emphasized the needs to extend the duration for better learning and practices. Opinions were equally divided between and among the groups that the curriculum of PET was standard. The groups equally agreed that the PET Scheme did not guarantee entrepreneurship development. The six groups suggested disagreement that the Nigerian military has a standard PET scheme; they mostly agreed that there is room for improvement, noting that the certificates offered them were not recognised outside the military and by business funding agencies. And in most cases, appropriate certification is required for registration and granting of funds and credit facilities by funding agencies like the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies (SMEDAN) pre-retirement skills and vocational training. The groups almost unanimously agreed that the PET training did not equip them with multiple skills to guarantee their ready employment in labour market.

Thirdly, the various groups did not agreed that the scheme impacted positively on their current occupations, rather they claimed that their military training and hands-on experiences is what they fell back on to establish their businesses. This is responsible for their preference for vocations that are easy to practice; noting further that the time was too short for the mastery of any new trade or skill during the 6-month PET scheme. They mostly agreed that it is a combination of skills learned in the Pre-Retirement scheme and their military skills that help

their current businesses. The groups disagreed that they were provided with certificates of participation for different modules; they said only end of course certificate of participation was granted to them. The lack of adequate professional certification during their time is an issue. Some ex-participants reported the need for necessary certifications for recognition and acceptance to certain professional practices that requires licensing and admission to professional bodies. These could be achieved during their in-service years and through early pre-retirement course. And in most cases, appropriate certification is required for registration and granting of funds and credit facilities by funding agencies like; the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies and other micro finance banks. The retired personnel noted that the granting of such certifications after the NAFRC training is key for their effective entrepreneurship development; as the certifications could assist them to secure start-up capitals.

The ex-participants agreed that they are mostly into crop and fish farming which are easy to practice among other vocations. The ex-participants in various groups disagreed that they had trainings in financial management and information technology which could bolster their business performance during their own times on PET training; due to dearth of time allocated to the course.

Lastly, the challenges against the adoption of training include limited access to capital deriving from non-accreditations of their course by funding agencies and faulty selection process. While the faulty selection process resulting from the non-mapping of their military experiences with the business ecosystem, has remained an issue for entrepreneurship development. Also, the lack of mentoring, market competition and networking among others still exist; most of which could be overcome through the establishment of an Alumni Cooperative at the Centre. The ex-participants observed the need to raise the standard of the NAFRC PET scheme, upgrade its facilities and need to collaborate with experts to handle some technical aspects of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training for the soldiers. While these vendors could issue certificates capable of assisting participating personnel to secure paid employment on completion and recognised by funding agencies. Other suggestions include: the inclusion of junior other ranks for PET, as job security could not be guaranteed in all cases.

DISCUSSION

The Impact of the Pre-Retirement Entrepreneurship Training by NAFRC on Business Performance of the Ex-Military Personnel

The information provided by the study's findings on the impact of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC on the business performance of the ex-military personnel that participated in the scheme revealed that the respondents disagreed that the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC impacted positively on their business performance but rather very poor and low. However, the situation on ground has changed as narrated by the current graduating participants 01/2023 below.

Part A-Past Participants

The ex-participants in various groups said they rarely agreed that skills learned at NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme are related to their current occupations. They claimed that their military

training and hands-on experiences is what they fell back on to establish and sustain their businesses. Stating further that the time was too short for mastery of any new trade or skill during the PET scheme; this made most of them to adopt the easy to practice vocations like crop and fish farming. They all agreed that it is a combination of skills learned in the Pre-Retirement scheme and their military skills that help their current businesses.

The ex-participant agreed that they are mostly into crop and fish farming which are easy to practice among other vocations. The ex-participant in various groups disagreed that they had training in financial management and information technology which could bolster their business performance during their own times on PET training; due to dearth of time allocated to the course.

According to Abdulkadir et al. (2018), the scheme also assisted the military personnel to pursue a career as an entrepreneur upon retirement. This is based on the fact that over 90 per cent of the trainees attend the training a few months to the termination of their 35 years of service (DHQ, 2020). However, the training includes the hands-on-experience gained through the corps or areas of specialization of the military personnel during their service years (Ojo, 2021; Ojo & Fakokunde, 2021; Tar & Wapmuk, 2021).

This study's findings are in line with the study of Agbim (2019), is the conceptual considerations regarding social networking and family businesses, presented in a review of the contribution of social networking to the financial and non-financial performance of family businesses. Based on an analysis of 55 peer-reviewed, published journal articles, the author identified the most frequently used social networking platforms, the measures of financial performance, the measures and proxies of non-financial performance, and the differences between the financial and non-financial performance. The study proposes the use of both financial and non-financial measures in assessing the performance of family businesses due to their complementary roles. Therefore, the presented research contributes to the family business literature by highlighting the importance of combining financial and non-financial measures in assessing family business performance, indicating that due to the specificity of a family business, its performance should be assessed in such a joint manner.

PART B-Current Participants

Trainees in different groups unanimously agreed that the impact of the entrepreneurial training is unmatched. This was the general views of the combatant personnel, since the in-service skills are peculiar and non-conventional; hence they need every aspect of the PET training to enable them own their own businesses. Some of the listed possible impacts are; transferable skills, business knowledge, networking opportunities as well as confidence and motivation. However, the non-combatants mostly still did not appreciate the impact of the PET Scheme and preferred exception from the scheme; while appreciating the efforts of the authorities to teach them financial and entrepreneurial management. Some participants reported the need for necessary certifications for recognition and acceptance to certain professional practices that requires licensing and admission to professional bodies. These could be achieved during their in-service years and early pre-retirement course. And in most cases, appropriate certification is required for registration and granting of funds and credit facilities by funding agencies like; the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agencies and other micro finance banks. The retired personnel noted that the granting of such certifications after the NAFRC training is key

for their effective entrepreneurship development. Thus they hold that the programme is worthless.

This is in line with the study by Guerrero and Urbano (2012) who noted that there is the need to assess the interests and special skills in order to equip people with necessary skills to accommodate the change in their circumstances and provide supportive services to develop their entrepreneurial activities. The reality is that there is no one size fit all yardsticks to determine who should go for bridging employment or become an entrepreneur. This is necessary because every service man is unique and his life might have been shaped by institutional factors such as previous work experiences, the rank attained, communicability, and temperament, differences in individual personality and characteristics and flexibility.

The Factors Limiting the NAFRC Training Needed to Aid the Establishment of Veterans' Occupation

The outcomes of the results on what are the factors limiting NAFRC in conducting pre-retirement entrepreneurship training needed to aid the establishment of veterans' occupation shows that the factors limiting the NAFRC in conducting pre-retirement entrepreneurship training needed to aid the establishment of veterans' occupation are germane and still exist as reflected below.

Part A-Past Participants

The data gathered shows that majority of the respondents disagreed that the NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme is adequately funded, they in addition disagreed that the NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme is run on standard curriculum. The respondents likewise disagreed that the NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme is well accredited by funding agencies. Similarly, the respondents disagreed that the participants of the NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme would readily access start-up capital. They also sent further to disagree that the participants of NAFRC Pre-Retirement Scheme are well motivated. The respondents did not hesitate to equally disagree that the NAFRC environment is conducive for Pre-Retirement Scheme or training.

This study is in line with Henry et al. (2012) who noted that the first predictive factor of entrepreneurial training is the funding, education and training provided by the military institutions. Innovation appears linked to this phenomenon, requiring the participants and collaboration of the various players in the scientific and technological system. In addition, Hope et al. (2011) supported that the increasing relevance in the development of entrepreneurially oriented educational programs and start-up processes is due to the lack of the identification of the entrepreneurs' characteristics as well as the knowledge of the entrepreneurial profile of their potential.

It was further argued by Smaliukiene (2013) that military personnel retire as much as twenty years earlier than other civilian counterparts in Europe and the United States of America (USA). Henning (2011) argued that military personnel are likely to retire 15-20 years earlier in the US, one in seven veterans is self-employed or a small business owner. This is different from the perspective of Europe that encourages the reintegration of ex-military personnel into civil life through employment in public sector or big businesses rather than starting self-owned business. Comparative practices in transition to retirement for the military reveal two best practices

globally. They are either prepared towards seeking to bridge employment or in the alternative, to train them to learn how to start a new business - entrepreneurship training.

In the same vein, however, Jim-Suleiman, Ibiame and Fenan (2021) reviewed literature on veteran entrepreneurship to enable an understanding of veteran experiences in the enterprise journey. The paper reviews the literature on motivations of veteran entrepreneurship and the factors influencing veteran enterprises around the world. The review identified that both pull and push factors motivate veterans into entrepreneurship. The pull factors include all inherent conditions like the personality trait, personal background, and professional experience; while the push motivators are the external and usually unpleasant experiences like early retirement due to disability in service, post-retirement economic hardship, business environment, and government regulations. The review also identified five (5) factors that influence veterans entrepreneurship such as veterans' personal characteristics, military skills prior to hanging up the booths, accessibility to required finances for start-up, social network during the military, and the availability of programs and services to support veterans entrepreneurial activity.

In addition, according to Tar and Wapmuk (cf., 2021), factors on various levels, including individual, household, job, organizational, and macro level variables are expected to influence the availability of and changes in individual resources, which are described as the driving mechanism behind changes in well-being. Emotional, motivational, social, physical, cognitive, and financial resources are suggested to be of particular importance in this process. Resources are described as means or assets that can be used to cope with challenges associated with the transition. Resources are assumed to be key elements because they define the conditions of retirement and influence what people are able to do physically and what they can afford financially in retirement.

PART B-Current Participants

The graduating participants acknowledged ongoing efforts to ensure standard, NAFRC has continued to upgrade its facilities and currently outsourced peculiar aspects of the training; as PAU, Yaba Tech and EMPRETEC Limited among others, were engaged to handle some technical aspects of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training for the soldiers. While these vendors issued certificates capable of assisting participating personnel to secure paid employment on completion and recognised by funding agencies. However, challenges such as: limited access to capital; no previous mapping of military professionalism and business ecosystem; absence of Alumni Cooperative and financial support infrastructure; and, no PET policy for junior soldier. . Most participants agreed that it is necessary to include the junior category of personnel in entrepreneurial scheme noting the rate of attrition and job insecurity in recent times.

Addressing these challenges require a comprehensive approach that includes rigorous awareness campaigns, customized training programs, access to financial resources, establishment of support networks and mentoring programs, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation to track participants' progress. Most of the listed challenges are incumbent on: the employment of professional psychologists and career counsellors to map personnel's military background with entrepreneurship training needs; the inclusion of the junior soldier in PET scheme; and the establishment of a strong NAFRC PET Alumni Cooperative to solve a myriad and perennial entrepreneurial challenges for retired military personnel.

These findings concur with the Galvão et al. (2020) which in turn, conducted a study that had as one of its objectives to provide guidelines for opening new businesses. The authors argue that factors external to the development of entrepreneurial skills, such as funding and reduction of bureaucracy, were decisive for the results found and would need to be addressed so that the programs are more effective in terms of opening new businesses.

Our examination of the transition from active military service to entrepreneurship shows that in every part of the world, military retirees tend to look for economic activities to support their pensions. The comparative experience of countries in Europe and USA also shows that while some countries have designed transition programmes including entrepreneurship trainings for servicemen for retirement, others expect them to key into the local, national or regional programmes like other citizens. For instance, in both Britain and France, the process of reintegration into civilian life is mainly focused on making the veteran employable or guiding them to pursue a self-reliant employment option. The training is usually provided by a contractor – a private company that would have won a public tender; this is similar to what is currently practiced at NAFRC where vendors are used to complement the staff efforts in peculiar aspects of the training. Before this, each serviceman is first expected to have a talk with his/her supervisor who provides general guidance on the process of the training for reintegration into society in the post retirement era. This is lacking in the Nigerian scheme, as most of the interviewees stated that they were not previously briefed or counselled by their supervisors so that their acquired military professionalism is mapped with PET requirements.

CONCLUSION

On the impacts of the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC on the business performance of the ex-military personnel that participated in the scheme revealed the pre-retirement entrepreneurship training by NAFRC on the business performance of the ex-military personnel that participated in the scheme was very poor and low. However, the graduating participants held that currently, the impact of the entrepreneurial training is unmatched. This was the general views of the combatant personnel whose in-service skills are peculiar and non-conventional; hence they need every aspect of the PET training to enable them own their own businesses.

The non-combatants mostly still did not appreciate the impact of the PET Scheme and preferred exception from the scheme; while appreciating the efforts of the authorities to teach them entrepreneurial skills and financial management.

The issue of limited access to funding still remains a key limiting factor. The current participants expressed concerns the start-up funding from the Federal Government through the Ministry of Defence and disbursed by their respective Services. Noting that there may be disparity in the amount to be released by their respective Services except funding is centralised to alleviate their fears.

Other factors limiting the adoption of this training, as well as their subsequent sustainable business ownership of the participants include the following: faulty selection process resulting from no pre-training mapping of their military experiences and business ecosystem; lack of financial infrastructure support and NAFRC PET Alumni Cooperative; and, the lack of Entrepreneurial Training Policy for the junior serving soldiers among others.

Addressing these challenges require a comprehensive approach that includes: increased access to financial resources; diligent pre-training mapping of military professionalism with

business ecosystem; establishment of support networks and Alumni Cooperative to bridge the financial gap; and, counselling, monitoring and tracking of participants' progress.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in line with the study's major findings:

- The DHQ should implement the exclusion of the non-combatant professional/technical soldiers, seaman and airmen who do not require PET for post service employment.
- The DHQ should approve the establishment of a strong NAFRC PET Alumni Cooperative to solve a myriad and perennial entrepreneurial challenges militating against adoption of entrepreneurship training for retiring/retired military personnel.
- The DHQ should initiate policy to include the junior soldiers in PET scheme.

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