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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INVESTIGATING THE MAJOR CHALLENGES CONFRONTING MASTER
CRAFTSMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR IN GHANA

*Munkaila Alhassan

Tamale Polytechnic, Welding and Fabrication Department P.O. Box 3 ER Tamale, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at investigating the major challenges confronting the manufacturing sector, in particular master craftsmen. The study was carried out in the Tamale Metropolis. The target population was stratified into their trade areas such as mechanics, welders, electricians, blacksmiths, etc, and a total of 200 artisans were sampled using the simple random method. The results revealed that majority (97%) of the master craftsmen lack the requisite financial support to boost their firms irrespective of level of education and age in business. Rate of expansion of business was also slow as most of the respondents (69.7%) rated their businesses were slow in terms of growth. Lack of access to market was another major constraint to the master craftsmen. It was concluded that most Master Craftsmen lack financial support to enable them expand their businesses. In view of the increasing youth, as well as graduate unemployment, it is evident that the manufacturing sector is capable of absorbing most of the youth only if it is given the necessary attention it deserves. It was recommended that Master Craftsmen be given in-service training to enhance their technical and managerial skills. They should also be given financial support, irrespective of the size of the firm, to boost it.

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INTRODUCTION

There is increased recognition of the important role small scale enterprises play in the economic development of Ghana. The sector is said to be efficient and prolific job creator. It is the fuel of national economic engine. The number of small scale businesses found in Ghana is innumerable and diverse, and are considered the seedbed for indigenous entrepreneurship. The sector generates all the micro investments where many Ghanaians earn their livelihood. However majority of the youth are still unemployed, notwithstanding the diverse multiplicity and indigenous nature of small scale enterprises in the country. Berry *et al.* (2000) noted that small, medium and micro enterprises contribute between 52% and 57% GDP and provide about 61% of employment. This sector is still bedeviled with challenges such as lack of expansion, lack of access to credit facility, lack of modern technology, etc. Research indicates that unemployment rate in Ghana is about 21% among the youth between 20 -24 years, and lack of decent work in the country is thrice the percentage of unemployment (Selby, 2010). Urban poverty is increasing in dept in Ghana as a result of population growth rate of 30% which is far above the rate of job creation (Nkum, 1998). Small scale Entrepreneurs usually have difficulties in gaining access to appropriate technologies and information on available techniques (Aryeetey *et al.*, 1994). Low educational levels of Small Scale Entrepreneurs do not

appreciate the degree to which changes in technology impacts on production processes, Product quality, etc, and they are unable or unwilling to employ qualified technical staff (Boeh-oceansey, 2000). Small and Medium Enterprises are more labour intensive than larger firms and therefore have lower capital costs associated with creation. (Anheier and Seibel 1987). Cook and Nixson (2000) made it clear that the development of small and Medium Enterprises is always constrained by the limited availability of financial resources to meet a Variety of operational and investment needs. A World Bank study revealed that about 90% of Small Enterprises stated that Credit was a major constraint to new investment (Parker *et al.*, 1995). In the case of Ghana, the cumbersome procedures for registering and commencing business are key issues often cited. The world Bank Doing Business Report (2006) indicated that it takes 127 days to deal with licensing issues and there are 16 procedures involved in licensing in Ghana (Kayanula *et al.*, 2000). "In view of the fact that access to credit had been a major constraint on the growth and development of Micro and Small Enterprises in the country, the NBSSI set up the Investment and credit Department to help ease the financial constraints facing the sector" (Mensah and Yiadom, 2005). The Manufacturing sector has been identified as a catalyst for good provider of employment to the youth. Small and Medium Enterprises contribute about 85% of manufacturing employment and account for about 92% of businesses (Steel and Webster, 1991). It is on the basis of the facts explained above that the researcher took pains to explore the manufacturing sector within the Tamale Metropolis to find out what makes the sector live below expectation, and to examine

*Corresponding author: Munkaila Alhassan,
Tamale Polytechnic, Welding and Fabrication Department P.O. Box 3
ER Tamale, Ghana.

the positive aspects that need to be expanded or improved upon and hence introduce more vibrancy into the sector. Some craftsmen in this sector have not been able to sustain their activities; most craftsmen have not seen any expansion before, some even go out of business. What then could be the major challenge of this sector? Is it that the training programmes are not effective? Or the support services such as financial, technological or advisory are absent or inadequately offered? This concern calls for a survey into the manufacturing sector, and I have therefore taken the challenge to carry out the study in order to unearth the real challenges facing this sector by measuring two variables against each other.

Objectives of the Study

The study looked at the challenges facing Master Craftsmen to find out why they are not able to establishment themselves or expand their businesses and even why some of them go out of business. The Biological age of the respondent, his age in the industry and level of education were each measured against other variables to determine their relationship or difference between them.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Tamale Metropolis, which was the study area, is situated in the Northern part of Ghana and capital town of Northern Region. The (2010) population and Housing Census showed that the population of the metropolis is 371,351 and a growth rate of 2.9. The Metropolis is divided into sub-metros such as Tamale North, Tamale Central and Tamale South. The Northern zone constitutes about 21 communities; the central zone is made up of 17 communities whilst the southern zone consists of 16 communities. Tamale Metro Assemble (2003). The southern part of Tamale Metropolis has the highest concentration of small-scale Manufacturing industries, usually referred to as “Industrial Area”. There is a cluster of manufacturing industries located at this area.

“The more accurately we expect the data to reflect the total population, the larger will be the sample size and the more reliable and valid the results based on it will be” (Agyedu *et al.*, 1999). Nwana (1992) suggests that if the population is few hundred a 40% or more sample size will do, if several hundred a 20% sample will be suitable, if a few thousands a 10% sample will do. Based on this criterion 10% of 2000 will equal 200, and hence the 200 sample drawn for the study. A sample fraction of 1 in 10 was used by the researcher to draw the sample size of 200. The population was first stratified into various trade areas as Mechanics, welders and fabricators, Electricians/Electronics, etc. The simple random sampling was used and a simple calculation was put as follows: 1 in 10 with a total population of 2000 —→ $\frac{1}{10} \times 2000 = 200$.

In all 200 master craftsmen were selected. However on administering, 192 questionnaires were retrieved for the study. The instruments used were predominantly questionnaire and structured interview. The researcher also made use of unstructured interviews and observations. The questionnaires which consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended items were used as interview guide. It consisted of 37 items including the personal data. The data were then analyzed using SPSS; all tables and figures were generated using SPSS. The SPSS is capable of producing quick, concise and more accurate results as compared to the manual approach. Also inputting data, generating tables and figures are much easier.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The gender characteristics showed that only males responded to the questionnaires and interviews and therefore represented 100%. Out of a total of 200 respondents surveyed, only one (1) respondent was below 20 years, representing 0.5% of the total number, 22 of them representing 11.1% were within the range groups of 21 to 25 years, 60 of them were between 26 to 35 representing 30.2%, 68 of them representing 34.2% were within the age of 36 to 45. And 41 of the respondents, representing 20.6% were between 46 to 50, and 7 of them,

The method of selection has been tabulated below in major trade areas

STUDY AREA	TRADE AREA	SAMPLE SIZE
Three sub-metros of Tamale Metropolis	MECHANICS automobile, motorbike, vulcanizers, auto-body repair workers, refrigerator mechanics	50
	WELDERS/ FABRICATORS welders, black smith, lathe operators, foundry workers, sheet metal workers	90
	ELECTRICIANS/ ELECTRONICS House/motor wiring, vehicles, radio , TV repairers	60
TOTAL		200

The “Industrial Area” which is located at Lamashegu in the south is characterized by trade specializations such as mechanics, welders, “vulcanizers”, automobile-body repair workers, refrigerator mechanics, sheet metal workers, etc. Evidently, the small Manufacturing Industries in the other two sub-metros, the north and the central are scattered and not concentrated at a particular location like that of the southern part of Tamale. The accessible population was about 2000. The researcher used the descriptive method; the case study approach was used in this study.

representing 3.5% were 51 years and above. The levels of education of the respondents were distributed as follows: For basic education, 52 of the respondents, representing 26.1% were surveyed. Those with secondary or technical education were 46 representing 23.1%, those with tertiary education were 6, representing 5.0%. Those respondents without formal education at all were 81, representing 40.7%. In terms of marital status of respondents, out of the 200 surveyed 173 of them, representing 86.9% were married, whilst 22 of them representing 11.1% were single. There were no records of divorced or widowed response.

Table 1. Characteristics of the respondents (master craftsmen)

Characteristic	Count	Percent (%)
Gender		
Female	-	-
Male	200	100
Age		
Below 20	1	0.5
21 – 25	22	11.1
26 – 35	60	30.2
36 – 45	68	34.2
46 – 50	41	20.6
51 and above	7	3.5
Total	199	100
Level of education		
Basic	52	26.1
Secondary/Technical	46	23.1
Tertiary	6	3.0
Drop out	10	5.0
Nil	81	40.7
Total	195	98.0
Married	173	86.9
Single	22	11.1
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	-	-
Total	195	97.0

Lack of Access to Credit

One major challenge of master craftsmen is lack of access to financial assistance and this was to find out whether one’s access to credit depends on how long one has been in business, (table 2). As the results indicated in chapter four, exactly 31 respondents out of 193 within the range of 1 – 5 years in business disagreed the fact that one’s age in business influences his access to financial credit. And 39 out of 193 within the range of 6 – 10 years in business also responded negatively and 63 respondents out of 193 within the range 11 – 15 years also answered negatively, also 41 out of 193 responded negatively, and these were within the range of 16 – 20 years in business, and 19 respondents within the range of 21 and over were also likely to disagree. In general, 193 out of a total of 197 rejected the idea that the length of period in business has relationship with one’s access to credit, and the p-value = 0.739. Whilst 4(2.0%) out of 197 accepted the fact, implying that access to credit does not largely depend on one’s age in business.

Table 2. Age in business and Access to finance

$\chi^2 = 1.984; P\text{-value} = 0.739$

	Yes	No	Total
1 – 5	1 25.0%	31 16.1%	32 16.2%
6 – 10	0 0.0%	39 20.2%	39 19.8%
11 – 15	1 25.0%	63 32.6%	64 32.5%
16 – 20	1 25.0%	41 21.2%	42 21.3%
21 and above	1 25.0%	19 9.8%	20 10.2%
Total	4 (2.0%)	193 (98.0%)	197 (100%)

Likewise, level of education was plotted against access to finance (Figure 2) and the revelation is as follows. Those with basic education 51 out of 192 responded negatively, representing 26.6%, the illiterates among them also responded negatively, representing 80(41.7%) out of 192. Those with tertiary education were only 6 (3.1%), and the drop outs were

10(5.2%). These groups therefore make a total of 192 out of 195 respondents, representing 98.5%. Only a total of 3 respondents answered in affirmative. The inference drawn is that access to credit does not largely depend on one’s level of education. Generally speaking, financial institutions are not readily available to offer the needed support to the craftsmen since these institutions do consider craftsmen as not having collateral security.

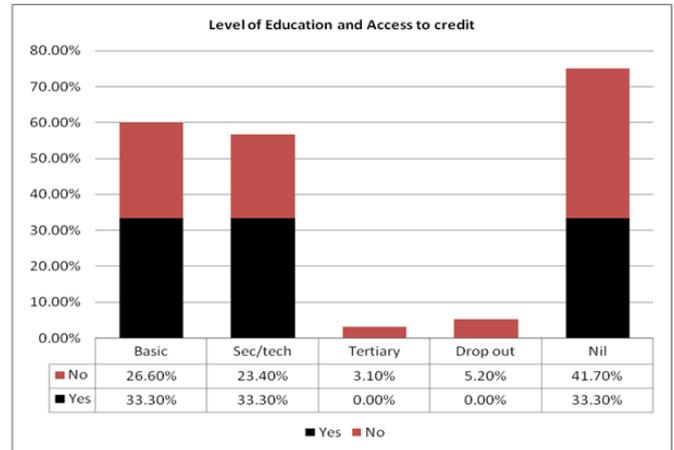


Figure 1.

Growth Problems

Another major problem of small scale enterprises is growth constraints, some of the enterprises had not realized any expansion since inception. The researcher hypothesized that there is no relationship between age in business and growth of business. And in terms of rating the growth of their enterprises, 14 out of 138 respondents rated their business “slow”, and those who were in business for 6 – 10 years also rated their growth slow, for those 11 – 15 years in business, exactly 52 out of 138 respondents rated their business slow, and those in the range of 16 – 20 32 of them rated their businesses slow, and about 21 years and above, representing 13 out of 138 rated their businesses slow. The other options were rapid with a total of 36, very rapid with a total of 8, and very slow with a total of 13. Precisely, the slow option attracted a total of 138 out of 195 respondents, and the p – value is 0.005 indicating that the growth of an enterprise does not depend on the age of the enterprise. Growth problems were attributed to several factors such as lack of access to credit, frequent upward adjustment of material cost, and worst of all lack of market.

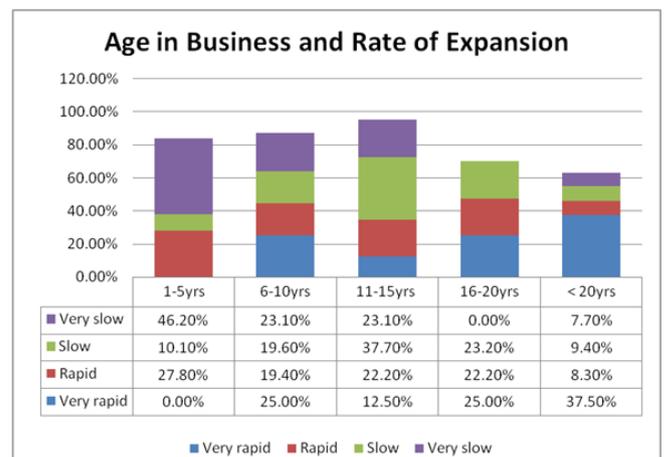


Figure 2.

Lack of Market

Most of the tradesmen complained of lack of market (Table 3), and that there was very low patronage to their products and services. However the researcher had plotted age in business against customer patronage to products and it revealed that there is no relationship between age in business and product patronage. With reference to the result, those in business between 1 – 5 years were 12 out of 113, representing 10.6% rated patronage of products low, and 21(18.6%) out of 113 within the range of 6 – 10 years in business also rated patronage low, and 43(38.1%) out of 113 within 11 – 15 years in business rated the product patronage low, for the range between 16 – 20 years in business, 23 (20.4%) out of 113 also rated their businesses low in terms of product patronage by customers, and 14(12.4%) of those above 20 years also rated their customer patronage low. The “very low” option attracted 7(3.6%) out of 196; and the “high” option attracted a total of 64(32.6%) out of 196; and those who rated patronage very high were 12(6.1%) out of 196. It is evident that those who rated patronage were 113 out of 196 respondents and for that matter P-value stands as 0.0052. Hence there is significant difference between age in business and customer patronage to products. It stands to reason that those who were much experienced in terms of age were likely to sustain their customers.

Table 3. Age in business and product patronage

$\chi^2 = 30.552; P\text{-value} = 0.0052$					
	Very high	high	low	very low	Total
1 – 5 yrs	0	14	12	5	31
	0.0%	21.9%	10.6%	71.4%	15.8%
6 – 10	2	15	21	1	39
	16.7%	23.4%	18.6%	14.3%	19.9%
11 – 15	3	17	43	1	64
	25.0%	26.6%	38.1%	14.3%	32.7%
16 – 20	4	15	32	0	42
	33.3%	23.4%	20.4%	0.0%	21.4%
21 and above	3	3	14	0	20
	25.0%	4.7%	12.4%	0.0%	10.2%
Total	12(6.1%)	64(32.6%)	113(57.6%)	7(3.6%)	196(100%)

Also the level of education of tradesmen did not show any close relationship with customer patronage to products, see table 4. Those with basic education, 23(20.5%) out of 112 rated the customer patronage low, and 19(17.0%) out of 112 of those with secondary/technical education also rated the customer patronage low, for those with tertiary 3(2.7%) out of 6 rated customer patronage low. For the drop outs 6(5.4%) out of 10 respondents rated patronage low, and for those who had not been to school at all about 61(54.5%) out of 81 respondents rated patronage low. This gave a total of 112 (57.4%) out of an overall total of 195. The other options were “very low” with a total of 7, “high” with a total 64 and “very high” with a total of 12, representing 42.6%, and all measured against a grand total of 195. The results actually indicated that there is no relationship between level of education and customer patronage to products. During his rounds, the researcher witnessed some artifacts produced by artisans which were not purchased for several months, and this development actually dampened the

spirit of this craftsmen. At times they fail to determine customer needs and also fail to pinpoint the specific market targets. At times unit cost is so high and can easily scare clients away. Owing to lack of modern tools to facilitate and produce in large quantities, master craftsmen fail to take advantage of product count reduction as compared to their counterparts in the industrialized economies.

The craftsmen claim that before they can create a market mix to meet the needs and wants of clients they need financial support; a major factor which is completely absent to the craftsmen.

Table 4. Level of education and product patronage

$\chi^2 = 24.965; P\text{-value} = 0.015$					
	Very high	high	low	very low	Total
Basic	6	22	13	1	52
	50.0%	34.4%	11.8%	14.3%	26.7%
Secondary/Technical	3	21	19	3	46
	25.0%	32.8%	17.0%	42.9%	23.6%
Tertiary	0	3	3	6	6
	0.0%	4.7%	2.7%	0.0%	3.1%
Drop out count	0	3	6	1	10
	0.0%	4.7%	5.4%	14.3%	5.1%
Nil	3	15	61	2	81
	25.0%	23.4%	54.5%	28.6%	41.5%
Total	12(6.2%)	64(31.8%)	112(57.4%)	7(3.6%)	195(100%)

Lack of Registration of Business

For those in business between 1 – 5 years, 31(18.9%) out of 164 responded that their businesses had not been registered, also those between 6 –10 responded negatively, and they were 35(21.3%) out of 164 respondents. Those in business between 11 and 15 years were 53(32.3%) out of 164, and they ticked the negative option, likewise those who were 16 – 20 years in business were 33(20.1%) out of 164 respondents. Those with 21 years and over were 12(7.3%) out of 20, also answered negatively. All these together make a total of 164(83.2%) out of an overall total of 197. The other option was “yes”, which attracted a total of 33(16.8%) out of a grand total of 197 respondents. The P – value is 0.008, and the inference drawn here is that registration of business has no bearing on age in business.

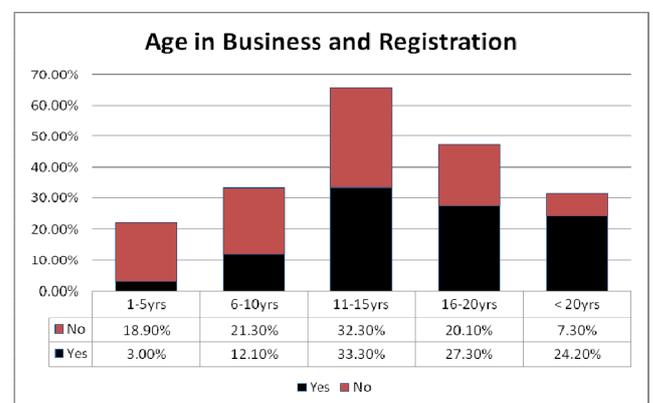


Figure 3.

Considering level of education against registration of business, for basic education 44(26.8%) out of 164 also respondents said they had not registered their businesses. For secondary/technical 35(21.3%) out of 164 responded negatively, and for tertiary only 3 out of 164 responded negatively, representing 1.8%. For the drop outs, 9 out of 164 also answered negatively, representing 5.5%, and those who had not been to school at all were 73(44.5%) disagreed to the fact, and out of a total of 164. And all together gave a total of 164(84.1%) out of a grand total of 195 respondents. The affirmative option recorded 31(15.9%) respondents out of a total of 195. The conclusion drawn here was that registration of business is not influenced by level of education within the metropolis, since the P-value is 0.042. The general concern was that, in the course of data collection, some of the tradesmen expressed ignorance about registration, some also complained of lack of money to register their businesses, some complained about the long processes and bureaucratic nature involved in the registration. It is interesting to note that most credit unions as well as financial institutions were ready to support craftsmen who have registered their firms.

Technological Constraint

Rapid technological change is a major constraint to small scale enterprises as proved by literature review. This study had also proved the fact that master craftsmen are confronted with rapid change in technology (Table 5). Considering those who agreed, the age range of 1 -5 years in business about 23(18.0%) respondents out of 128 agreed that rapid technological change was a constraint, and 22(17.2%) out of 128 within the range of 6 – 10 years in business also agreed. Those in business between 11 -15 years also agreed to the fact that rapid change in technology was a constraint, representing 43(33.6%) out of 128, and exactly 26(20.3%) out of 128 within the range of 16 – 20 years in business also agreed to that fact, and 14(10.9%) respondents of 128 of those above 20 years in business agreed to the fact that they are grappled with rapid change in technology. Those who strongly agreed were 32, representing 16.4% out of a total of 195, whilst those who agreed were 128, representing 65.6% and out of a total of 195. The other two options were “disagreed” with a total of 34(17.4%) out of 195, and “strongly disagree” with a total of one (1) out of 195. Then it is quite evident that technological change is a constraint to master craftsmen within the metropolis. The study also revealed that there is no relationship between age in business and technological change, and the p-value = 0.278. See Table 5.

Table 5. Age in business and technical constraint

$\chi^2 = 14.373$; P-value = 0.278

	Strongly Agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	Total
1 – 5 yrs	5	23	3	1	32
	15.6%	18.0%	8.8%	100%	16.4%
6 – 10 year	10	22	10	0	38
	18.8%	17.2%	29.4%	0.0%	19.5%
11 – 15 years	14	43	7	0	64
	43.8%	33.6%	20.6%	0.0%	32.8%
16 – 20 years	5	26	11	0	42
	15.6%	20.3%	32.4%	0.0%	21.5%
21 and over	2	26	11	0	42
	6.2%	10.9%	8.8%	0.0%	9.7%
Total	32(16.4%)	128 (65.6%)	34(17.4%)	1(0.5%)	195(100%)

With level of education against technological change, the results indicated that those with basic education, 25 respondents out of 126 agreed to the fact that they are grappled with technological change, and this represents 19.8%, for secondary/technical education, 27 (21.4%) out of 126 also agreed. Those with tertiary only one (1) out of 126 agreed, and 7(5.6%) of the drop outs also agreed, and this is out of a total of 126 whilst 66(52.4%) out of 126 among those who had not been school agreed to lack of technological change. Exactly 126(65.2%) out of a grand total of 193 agreed, and 32(16.5%) out of a total of 193 strongly agreed. The other options were “disagree” which attracted a total of 34(17.4%) out of an overall total of 193, those who strongly disagree were only one (1) out of 193. The inference drawn is that there is close relationship between level of education and technological change, since the P-value is 0.002. It implies that level of education can influence technological change. Even though this category of master craftsmen were grappled with rapid technological change, they always put their expertise to bear in order to meet the needs of the market. However craftsmen expressed their desire to acquire more modern equipment to facilitate productivity.

Table 6. Level of education and Technology constraint

$\chi^2 = 31.050$; P-value = 0.002

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Basic	10	25	16	0	51
	31.2%	19.8%	47.1%	0.0%	26.4%
Secondary/Technical	11	27	7	0	45
	34.4%	21.4%	20.6%	0.0%	23.3%
Tertiary	3	1	2	0	6
	9.4%	0.8%	5.9%	0.0%	3.1%
Drop out	0	7	3	0	10
	0.0%	5.6%	8.8%	0.0%	5.2%
Nil	8	66	6	1	81
	25.0%	52.4%	17.6%	100%	42.0%
Total	32(16.5%)	126(65.2%)	34(17.4%)	1(0.5%)	193(100%)

Table 7. Level of Education and Business Registration

$\chi^2 = 9.896$; P-value = 0.042

	Yes	No	Total
Basic	8	44	52
	25.8%	26.8%	26.7%
Secondary/Technical	11	35	46
	35.5%	21.3%	23.6%
Tertiary	3	3	6
	9.7%	1.8%	3.1%
Drop out	1	9	10
	3.2%	5.5%	5.1%
Nil	8	73	81
	25.8%	44.5%	41.5%
Total	31 (15.9%)	164(84.1%)	195(100%)

Tax payment by master craftsmen

Respondents were asked to indicate if age in business has influence on tax payment. See table 8 below. And the results indicate that those in business from 1-5 years were 24(15.9%) respondents, out of 151 agreeing to the affirmative option, and 8(17.4%) out of 46 saying no. For those with 6-10 years in business, 31 of the respondents, representing 20.5% and out of a total of 151 agreed that age in business has influence on the

desire to pay tax. Those within 11-15 years in business, 48(31.8%) out of 151 agreed to the fact, whilst 16 (34.8%) out of 46 indicated no. The age range in business from 16-20 years, 31 respondents, representing 23.9% and out of 46 indicated that there is no relationship between age in business and tax payment. Those who were 21 years and above were 17 (11.3%), out of 151 respondents also answered in affirmative, whereas 3 respondents, representing 6.5% and out of a total of 46 answered negatively. Exactly 151 out of a total of 197, representing 76.6% agreed to the fact that they pay tax while 46, representing 23.4% do not pay any kind of tax. Since P-value = 0.850, it implies that the result is not statistically significant (Table 8). Irrespective of how long one has been in business, most master craftsmen pay at least a kind of tax either to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or to the district assembly.

Table 8. Age in business and Tax payment

$\chi^2 = 1.369; P\text{-value} = 0.850$			
	Yes	No	Total
1 – 5 yrs	24 15.9%	8 17.7%	32 16.2%
6 – 10 year	31 20.5%	8 17.4%	39 19.8%
11 – 15 years	48 31.8%	16 34.8%	64 32.5%
16 – 20 years	31 20.5%	11 23.3%	42 21.3%
21 and over	17 11.3%	3 6.5%	20 10.2%
Total	151(76.6%)	46 (23.4%)	197(100%)

Respondents were asked to indicate whether there is relationship between education and tax payment as presented in figure 4. For basic education 40(26.7%) out of 150 indicated they pay tax, and 12(26.7%) out of 45 indicated they do not pay tax. The results also revealed the response of secondary/technical, and 40(26.7%) out of 150 indicated that they pay tax whereas 6(13.3%) out of 45 indicated absence of tax payment. Five out of 150, representing 3.3% on the part of tertiary education indicated that they pay tax whilst only one (1) respondent, representing 2.2% and out of 45 indicated absence of tax payment. For the drop outs, 5(3.3%) out of 150 agreed by ticking the “yes” option whereas 5(11.1%) out of 45 disagreed with the “no” option. For those who had not been to school at all, 60 of them, representing 40.0% and out of 150 indicated that they pay tax whilst 21 of them, representing 46.7% and out of 45 indicated that they do not pay tax. Looking at the results, A total of 150 out of 195, representing 77.0% agreed that they pay tax while 45 out of 195, representing 23.0% default in tax payment. This category of Master craftsmen who pay their taxes were able to prove by showing receipts of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and District Assemble.

Age in Business and Further Training

Age in business was measured against further training. This was to find out whether further training of master craftsmen after establishment was based on the age in business, and it revealed that those within 1-5 years in business 27 out of 149 did not attend any further course, representing 18.10%, 5 out of

a total of 45, representing 11.1% indicated that they had further training. Those within 6 – 10 years in business, 27 out of a total of 149 answered negatively (no further training), representing 18.1%, and 12 out of 45, representing 26.7% answered in affirmative.

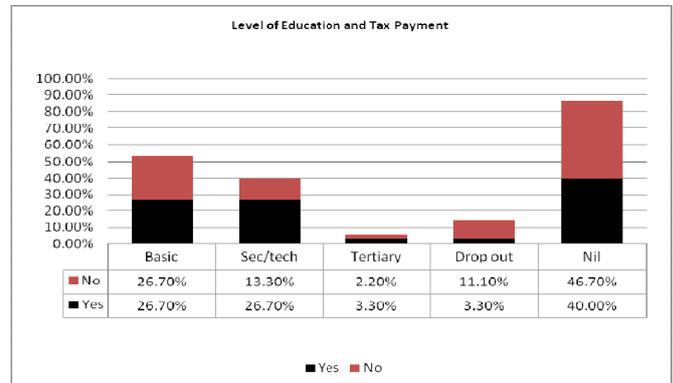


Figure 4.

The age range of businesses between 11-15 years, 50 out of 149 ticking the “No” option, representing 33.6% whilst 12 out of 45, representing 26.7% ticking the “yes” option. For those who had been in business between 16 – 20 years, 30 out of 149, representing 20.1% responded negatively, whilst 11 out of 45 responded positively, and they represent 24.4%. And those who were 21 years and over, 15 out of 149, representing 10.1% had not attended any further training whilst 5 out of 45 attended further training making 11.1%. Since the P-value = 0.535, it is statistically insignificant, implying that even those who have been in business for a long time have no access for further skills or management training (Figure 5).

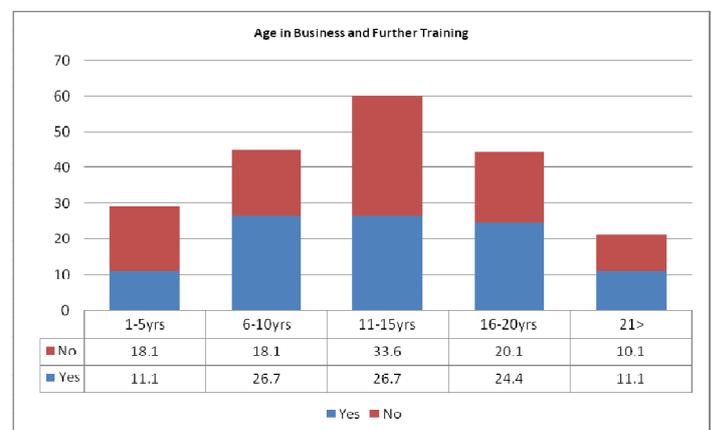


Figure 5.

Summary and Conclusion

The study generally intended to find out the major challenges faced by master craftsmen and the results revealed the following. Master craftsmen lack the requisite financial support to boost their businesses and about 97.9% attested to this fact. Growth rate was also slow as rated by most of the respondents, and about 69.69% of them admitted that the business was slow in terms of growth. It is worthy of note that level of education of tradesmen had no influence on one’s access to credit, and out of 195, 192 (98.46%) agreed to the

fact. Lack of access to market was another major constraint to the master craftsmen and 113 of the respondents, representing 57.6% rated their products low in terms of patronage. And 64 (32.6%) rated their products high in terms of patronage. Most master craftsmen have not registered their businesses and therefore failed to enjoy certain benefits like easy access to loans, and it was found that 164, representing 83.2% admitted the fact that they did not register their businesses. Even when level of education was considered, it was found that the situation was no different, since 164 (83.2%) out of 195 master craftsmen did not register their businesses. On the part of tax levied on business and level of education, only 45, representing 23.1% admitted that they were not paying tax, and 150, representing 76.9% agreed to the fact that they pay tax. Age in business was measured against further training and the P-value = 0.535, implying that even those who have been in business for a long time have no access for further skills or management training. With the tradesmen irrespective of how long they had been in business, it was noticed that most of them had tax levied on them, generally by District Assemblies and IRS. And out of a total of 197, 151 (76.6%) accepted the fact that they had at least one form of tax levied on them.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study had been eventful as it revealed a lot of interesting things. Master craftsmen are confronted with a lot of challenges, including lack of growth, lack of financial support, absence of market for their products and lack of management and skills training. These factors, in no doubt, have thwarted the growth of the manufacturing sector in the Tamale Metropolis.

Recommendations

In the light of the conclusions reached, the following recommendations are made for policy makers, players in the sector as well as future researchers. Master craftsmen should also be given a wholesale in-service training in technical skills to make them keep abreast with change in technology. These people also need support in terms of finance, advisory, managerial, etc. Irrespective of the size of the firm, they should have access to a kind of financial assistance that will keep them in business, and collateral security should not be a barrier in accessing credit facility.

Youth unemployment is increasing day in, day out, and this is even compounded by graduate unemployment and for that matter if pragmatic steps are not taken to address these concerns the future of the youth will still remain bleak.

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