

THE IMPACT OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF
ENTREPRENEURS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMES IN DUBLIN,
IRELAND.



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Abstract

Poor performance of SMEs occasioned by inadequate exposure to relevant training that would uplift their knowledge and skills needed for business growth is rising in Ireland. This menace of inadequate training has resulted in different business failures in the past. There has been dearth of recent literature on entrepreneurship training and performance of SMEs in Ireland and this study will no doubt fill this vacuum. This study therefore investigated the impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance in Dublin, Ireland. The methodology used was a cross-sectional survey, whereby data was collected once, and a mixed design was used in which both the quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized. The population of the study was the SMEs' operators in Ireland. The Microsoft forms format of online questionnaire was used, with a total of 50 responses gotten for the analysis. Two research hypotheses were tested, and three research questions answered in this study. There were both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary source was online questionnaire, while the secondary source was through research journals. Entrepreneurship training scale had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.778, while the business performance scale had a reliability coefficient of 0.288; discriminant validity of the scale indicates that the entrepreneurship training scale and business performance scale had a value of -.263. The statistical tests that were applied in this study were One Way Analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA), regression analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) was used as the tool for the analysis. It was found that the most attained educational level of education of operators was SMEs was college degree with participants being 24 (48%). The most used method of entrepreneurship training is formal education, with mean of 6.167, standard deviation of 0.753 which is the highest in the series. That there was no significant relationship between entrepreneurship training and business performance among SMEs operators in Ireland ($r = -.263$, $n = 50$, $p > .05$). That the effect of Entrepreneurship training methods on the performance of SMEs among SMEs in Ireland was ($R = .263$ and $R^2 = .069$ and adjusted $R^2 = .030$, $F\text{-ratio} = 1.777$; $P > 0.05$). Training will enable entrepreneurs to develop great capacity towards building sustainable relationship with customers; that training gives them more exposure to the workings and happenings in the industry; it gives them edge over the competitors. It was concluded that in order to ensure best practices in business, that would be globally acknowledged, the need to embrace training of the SME operators becomes crucial.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Performance of SMEs in Ireland is a catalyst for economic growth and development of the country. The performance of businesses is a function of skill and knowledge acquisition of the owners and their willingness to subject their workforce to suitable training programmes that will optimize their rate of performance. The stimulation of new business innovation and entrepreneurship performance is best driven by SMEs (Zhou and Gao 2019). The output of the SMEs is a function of the level of growth and development that can be witnessed in the country. Any nation that is passionate about motivating the best performance of the SMEs is doing herself a lot of good. However, the low level of attention paid to the yearnings of the SMEs in the areas of incentivising and training will portend doom for the industry and the nation's economy at large.

Scholars have opined that entrepreneurship is the core of national development (Gagoitsope and Pansiri, 2012). This indicates that government should give the needed attention to entrepreneurial development at all levels of the enterprise in Ireland. The needed skills for business owners must be made available to them at a reasonable cost and the capital financing options for businesses should be encouraging and not demotivating. Adequate attention should be paid to manpower development and knowledge acquisition should be seen as a salient factor in the industry.

In a vibrant economy as Ireland, SMEs are the most important part that should be given the required and needed attention (Okundaye, Fan and Dwyer 2019). In order to develop SMEs on the basis of entrepreneurship is a kind of strategy that involves in the creation of jobs, reduction of poverty, making the environment suitable for the growth of socioeconomic activities and generation of revenue (Rahayu and Day, 2017). This is because a large proportion of the workforce is absorbed by them. SMEs are the highest employer of the youth in the country because most of the works performed by these businesses can only be carried out by only the youthful population. It is not only the youth that are employed by these SMEs, other categories of the population are also absorbed in their enterprises. In essence, small and medium scale businesses are the veritable tool for ensuring reduction of unemployment in the country. Therefore, a sector that reduces the unemployment burden on

the government deserves better in terms of being treated kindly and given the necessary focus.

In order to attain performance of business that is sustainable, essential skills are critical (Perks and Smith, 2006). This is because with relevant entrepreneurial skills, SMEs will be able to thrive more and become sustainable. The skills will help new businesses to develop the needed and relevant capacity for the business. Skills are important for small and medium scale enterprises to grow and survive in a competitive business world (Amatori, 2006). These skills are acquired through relevant trainings organized by experts in the industry. Therefore, on the basis of this, the study investigated impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance in Ireland.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Poor performance of SMEs in Ireland over the years is as a result of inadequate skills and knowledge of the actors of the industry on the art of doing business. This can be seen in most of the output of the various industries that have no international competitive edge. Several businesses are springing up for the purpose of making profit, without having the understanding that the key to long-term profitability is customer retention through superior performance attainable through the acquisition of relevant skills. Therefore, poverty of skill acquisition will have its toll on the performance of the business.

For SMEs to actually perform, the need to train the staff must not be negotiated. The issue of considering entrepreneurial training as less essential should not be allowed in the industry. Therefore, in order to avoid a total collapse of SMEs through inadequate entrepreneurial training which might result in economic recession, the need to refocus attention on ways of sustaining their activities should be taken seriously by the policy makers in the country. Hence, this study sought to unravel the impact of entrepreneurial training on the performance of SMEs in Ireland.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance in Ireland, while the specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the most attained educational level of entrepreneurs of SMEs.

2. To investigate the effect of entrepreneurship training on SMEs performance.
3. To determine the relationship between training and development and entrepreneur's performance.
4. To determine the most effective method of entrepreneurship training.
5. To examine the view that SMEs have on entrepreneurial training.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the most attained educational level of entrepreneurs of SMEs?
2. What is the view that SMEs have on entrepreneurial training?
3. What are the most used methods of training and development that have effects on the performance of SMEs?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

1. Training and development of entrepreneurs have a significant relationship on the growth and performance of SMEs.
2. Entrepreneur training methods have a significant impact on the performance of SMEs.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in the Republic of Ireland among the SMEs operators. The independent variable of the study was entrepreneurial training, while the dependent variable was the performance of SMEs. A total of 50 respondents participated in the investigation.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study will add value to the body of literature, as it fills the gap in the dearth of recent literature on entrepreneurial training and SMEs performance in Ireland. It will serve as eye opener to the SME entrepreneurs on the benefits of training to their enterprise. The study will help the government and policy maker on making laws that will address issue of entrepreneurial training in an efficient and effective manner. It will help future researchers as a reference point for boosting their research referencing. It will help in economic

sustainability, as trained entrepreneurs will add value to the economy through increase output and performance.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Entrepreneurial Training: This is the process by which owners of businesses (entrepreneurs) are made to acquire relevant skills, knowledge and experience required of their job by the experts in the field.

SME Performance: This is the level at which the productivity and output of the SMEs are considered to know if they are functioning to capacity or not.

SMEs: Small and medium enterprises.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

One of the first argument in entrepreneurship literature is whether entrepreneurs are born or made and the effects of training and development of an entrepreneur. Studies have shown that there is a genetic component to entrepreneurship. However, overtime the discussions have also stated that entrepreneurs are made. This argument shows two extreme side as: one of which is that “entrepreneurs are born” and the other side states that “entrepreneurs can be made”. Confronted with these positions, it seems that the line emerges that one should learn to employ differentiated education policies and instruments as an entrepreneur. A wide literature review on entrepreneurship and business establishment provides support to this view and suggests important links between entrepreneurship education, business development and business performance in the context of SMEs.

Therefore, conducting a literature review is a key part of the research process to determine the importance of training and development of SME entrepreneurs. Knowledge of prior work and theories in this field of study will help to conceptualize the issue, perform the survey and analyse the findings. The literature studies have been conducted to show the impact of entrepreneurs training and their performance in SMEs in Ireland as well as other countries. During the literature review, it has been noticed that the term “entrepreneurs training and SMEs performance” has been used in different senses by researchers. This chapter will highlight entrepreneurs training as well as SMEs performance across the world.

2.2 Review of Relevant Literature

2.2.1 Entrepreneur

The entrepreneur is also seen as a visionary person, an innovator, a source of innovative concepts, products, services and/or procedures for achievement of goals and objectives. “Some researchers believed that entrepreneurs are born and not made” (Cohen, 1980); others are of the opinion that entrepreneurs are made and not born (Burns and Dewhurst, 1993; Kent, 1984). Whilst debating if entrepreneurs were born or made, most of the researchers accepts that entrepreneurship are encouraged, motivated and taught the major aspects of entrepreneurship. (Kuratko 2005).

Entrepreneurs should be able to develop a business plan showing that they plan wisely in terms of budget and to show investors that they consider the various risk that might be involved. Some of the possible risks include but not limited to bankruptcy, competitive risk, environmental risk, financial risk, reputational risk, economic and political risks. Technological changes as a risk factor should also be considered and that Market demands are unpredictable because the trends of consumers are changing rapidly, thereby creating problems for them.

According to Gallup poll 2004, 89 percent of small business owners said they were satisfied being a business owner, whereas 39 percent said they were very happy and 16 percent extremely satisfied and just 10% claimed they were not satisfied being a business owner. Despite the challenges faced by entrepreneurs, it was stated that the entrepreneurs were more satisfied being their own boss than being employees. The reason being they can have flexible schedules, business and profit autonomy, create a career that align with their values, Constant growth and development, greater self-confidence with leadership experience.

PROFILE OF AN ENTREPRENEUR	
Characteristics	Traits
Self-confidence	Belief in one's ability Independent Anticipation
High energy	Commitment and resilience, Determination
Task/result oriented	Goal oriented Hard work, willingness Initiative

Risk-taker	<p>Risk evaluation and ability to take risk</p> <p>Likes challenges</p>
Leadership	<p>Good communicator</p> <p>Gets along well with others</p> <p>Responsive to suggestions, feedbacks and criticism</p> <p>Concern for other persons</p> <p>Develops other people</p>
Originality	<p>Innovative</p> <p>open minded</p> <p>Talented</p> <p>knowledgeable</p>
Forward looking	<p>Foresight, vision, perceptiveness</p>

2.2.2 Entrepreneurs, Born or Made?

Over the years, there have been serious argument about Entrepreneurs being born or made. In some local surveys conducted, a lot of people believe that entrepreneurs are born and endowed with the entrepreneurial traits. They also believe that it would be impossible for them to succeed as entrepreneurs and find themselves comfortable as employees. They do not have the ability to handle the risks and rewards that will arise. Others believe that if they had the opportunity of training, they will succeed as entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are not like athletes; they need no natural body and muscles inherent in it. A child of an athlete may grow up being an athlete, but this does not happen in the family of an entrepreneur. (Mitchell, Busenitz et al 2002) proposed a hypothesis that connects different mental processes with the actions of entrepreneurs, suggesting that entrepreneurial cognitions are systems of

information that people are using in their evaluations, decisions or judgments, which involve evaluation, creation and development of opportunities. Nabi et al. (2010) states that the research on the intention of an entrepreneur states very little about: (i) the process involved in the personal transition of higher education towards entrepreneurship (ii) the transformation from being a student to becoming an entrepreneur; and (iii) failure to clarify the low follow-up on the intention of an entrepreneur.

Nevertheless, it has been stated according to a research's nature or nutrition: the decode by Ernst and Young of the entrepreneur 's DNA, which means they have gained some experience outside of the entrepreneurial world before starting their business. It is believed that during childhood and adolescent years the optimal stage is to learn the fundamental skills and to establish a healthy mindset towards entrepreneurship (Peterman and Kennedy, 2003; Paço et al., 2011). Peterman and Kennedy (2003) emphasized that corporate practices would help the ethos in colleges. These activities should be included in the institution's programs from the very beginning. In addition, several findings have shown that early schooling in structured business affects the behaviour of pupils, impacts them towards their potential professions and affects their entrepreneurial tendency in adults. Florin et al. (2007) said individuals ought to consider the use of their expertise as possible, a business strategy is ideal and emphasis on cultivating a productive entrepreneurship attitude. All of these indicate that the company provides a great deal of dedication training. Entrepreneurs that are successful are indeed born, and they need to apply their traits in certain way. However, nobody is born with all the qualities or characteristics required to be 100% successful on their own. Also, to prove that entrepreneurs are born, Bridge et al (2003) examined various theories such as, behavioural theories, personality theories and sociological theories. It was stated that the personality and traits of an individual leads to successful entrepreneurship which distinguished them from other entrepreneurs. Many authors have agreed that the psychological traits of the orientation of an entrepreneur are excellent foresight (Park and Ku, 2008), however, other researchers have pointed out that it is possible to develop these traits through the appropriate kind of entrepreneurship training (Shaver, 1995; Dunbar and Mullen, 1991; Fayolle, 2005). Andrews (1998) proposed that entrepreneurship personality exist in the genes or is engraved in the early years of life or a combination of the two, without which an individual is not likely to succeed entrepreneurially. However, Lumsden and Wilson (1981) argues that although, genes are the potential for an individual action, but it is not responsible for dictating it. The literature reinforces perceived behavioural control with respect to

behaviour patterns associated with entrepreneurship. Ajzen (1991) proposed that every action requires a certain degree of preparation and an ability to pursue the activity may be anticipated (theory of planned behaviour –TPB). Consequently, Li (2006) argued that the TPB is very helpful and provides a good theoretical framework to understand past intentions of entrepreneurs. Also, Souitaris et al. (2007) in their research used the Theory of planned behaviour to test the impact of entrepreneurship training on the attitude and actions of the science and engineering students by empirically applying the theory of planned behaviour.

Generally, the main psychological characteristics associated with entrepreneurship whether born or made are: locus of control (which means a psychological concept that refers to the level at which an individual believe they have control over the situations and experiences that affect their lives), propensity to take risk, self-confidence, need for achievement, tolerance to ambiguity and innovativeness which can be learnt by an individual. Innovation which is not necessarily done is the core attribute of entrepreneurship. Innovation is a new idea, a new technique, and a new path for a new sector. Most cases of businesses having collapsed because of lack of creativity. For example, in 1966, because of the replacement of the new car construction, Carrozzeria Touring, an Italian automotive coach builder, came to an end. The renowned Apple company, on the other hand, is succeeding with innovation. As we all remember, every year Apple launches its latest devices or its current items, and Steven Jobs had the fantastic popularity in iPhone, iPad and iMac. In addition to creativity, practice, expertise and management qualities are often of great significance such as collaboration and leadership, honesty and enthusiasm (Pinelli, 2001). Teamwork and leadership is a key ability that has not been born out of life. This needed the contractor "to solve complicated challenges with the use of abilities of different community leaders," and "to build a partnership that promotes creativity and performance" (Reimers and Williams, 2009). The team has an important impact on the company, so the contractor must organize his team well. "Pass and listen, ask and summarize, express and create faith between entrepreneurs and leaders' representatives. Therefore, the schools of business teach and train students to learn the above skills. Moreover, integrity that leads to an honest business is also a personal ability, which is strongly influenced and not born by the living environment. If it cheated its customers, it wouldn't exist long. "This is a blocker for unification" (Anderson, 2008). Employers must persuade consumers to purchase their goods or spend their company through the honesty process, so that they earn income and obtain support for their company. Similar to your entrepreneurship ambition, passion improves your employment and your entrepreneurial

experience (Kamai, 2011). Everyone is passionate, and passion leads entrepreneurs to start and to grow their business. Passion is an interest acquired of professional performing. It's some sort of trust for your enterprise. He or she would only be excited about the market if the entrepreneur achieves his or her goal. Teamwork and management, integrity and passion, therefore, are not achieved, but are acquired after birth. In view of understanding the psychological features that are unique to entrepreneurs, this evidence should be expected, according to Koh (1996). Studies of Ahmad (2010) also shows that personality characteristics is one of the most popular theories of psychology used to understand, explain and predict the action of an individual including in entrepreneurship. Therefore, the challenge is to have an in-depth understanding of whether the outcome of personal characteristics can accompany entrepreneurship training both on the level of cognitive development and psychological development of young people.

According to a research carried out by Logendran Mayuran (2016), the learning approaches were explained by different approaches which are Knowledge based theory, resource-based theory and situational based theory. It was further explained that the knowledge-based theory emphasized on the role of business as knowledge repository, set of routines and procedure in the business whereby knowledge responds by means of a developmental process of life-long learning or experiences to external stimuli. It also enabled the description of small businesses in terms of skills, practise and procedures developed through the process of selection and retention, execution of strategies to optimize the degree of adjustment between the business and its external environment. The resource-based theory explained the performance of a business based on its capacity to access and develop within itself, critical and inimitable resources. The situational approach analysed the competencies of an individual based on the segmentation of the set of typical tasks or activities carried out by an individual holding role in recurrent work situations.

The subjective standard is characterized as a definition of whether or not the behavior should be carried out or not. Therefore, the highest subjective norm may be described as the overall definition of the person and the measurement of motivation for all related aspects. In their study, Souitaris et al. (2007) gives possible interpretations of the subjective norm after the entrepreneurship training programme: the small rise in the “significant others’ expectation” could reflect the development of a new circle of entrepreneurial-minded people from the programme. Levie and Autio (2008) have summarized a literature which emphasizes that

training provides an individual with the cognitive ability to combine their skills and ability with potential entrepreneurship opportunities. In addition to the literature, van der Van et al (2005) and Isaacs et al. (2007) outlined a collection of literature that illustrates the way schooling provides a person with a cognitive capacity to balance future entrepreneurship with their respective skills. Kolvereid (1996) said the greater behavioural influence experienced by a individual, the better his purpose is to become autonomous. This assumed power is in effect one of the key factors of self-efficiency, perceptible viability. According to Fayolle (2005) self-efficacy was found to significantly influence the behaviour of entrepreneurs and also support entrepreneurship students' self-efficacy which is therefore seen as a key tool in entrepreneurship training to encourage students' entrepreneurial intentions (Raposo, et al., 2008).

All these prove that Training and development of entrepreneurs is necessary whether born or made, irrespective of the level of entrepreneurship education, formal education, age group, gender, race etc. It increases the chance of success of an entrepreneur.

2.2.3 Training and Development of Entrepreneurs

Training and development can be said to be the formal process made within a business to improve performance and self-fulfilment through educational programs and methods. In addition, Magjuka (1999) defined training as a narrow concept whereby skills, knowledge or values acquired are targeted towards a specific issue while education is the acquisition of skills and knowledge that are easily generalized and can be used in various settings within an enterprise.

The importance of training and development in any area cannot be overemphasized. It increases morale, motivation, financial gain, turnover, adaptation to technology, development of new strategies, improved risk management etc. The study conducted by Watson and Jurie (2002), emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship training program to the success of a business. It further stressed that the training acquired were on business skills such as financial, marketing, production, calculations than on other skills. Hisrich & Peters (1998) argues that training of entrepreneurs brings about new opportunities and possibilities as well as a willingness to carry out and complete specific task in various way.

The training needs of entrepreneurs of SMEs have been widely researched (Storey 2004; Storey and Westhead 1997) and the results of their study showed that SMEs are not

committed to formal training and qualification but seeks opportunities that will enable them solve their immediate problems (Gray 1994). According to (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2015), the training of an entrepreneur can be said to build a person's capacity in order to turn ideas into action. The concept behind teaching and developing entrepreneurs is to enable an individual learn, build and practice the skills and techniques that are required. (Neck and Greenen 2011).

2.2.4 Entrepreneurship Training and Education

Caroline and James (2013) defined entrepreneurship education as the process or series of activities aimed at enabling an individual to assimilate and develop knowledge, skills, values and understanding to identify, analysis and solve a broad range of problems while entrepreneurship training is the means of learnings to make effective results in an activity or a range of activities as a more planned and systematic effort to change or develop knowledge, competencies.

The entrepreneurial training focuses on the knowledge, skills, ability and job performance which is for a short period and on a specific job while the entrepreneurship education focuses on a structured development of an individual to certain specific outcomes which is for a specified period. The common methods of training involve demonstration, practice, feedback, apprenticeship, mentoring while the education involves lectures, guided reading, presentations, debate and self-managed learning.

In apprenticeship, practical training of related skills that will eventually increase the performance of a person is acquired from learning by practice with an experienced trainer. Mentoring is focused on developing leadership and managerial skills.

The commonalities between Entrepreneurship training and education is the acquisition of skills and knowledge in order to better operate in running a business. In the research carried out by (Hanti et al. 2008), it was discovered that offering students the chance to do real life projects was the most beneficial method of learning. Participants were directly involved, and they developed their managerial skills.

All that want to be actively interested in the teaching phase will profit from a variety of advantages. According to Rae (2010), education is important for the understanding of entrepreneurship, creating market potential, and contributing to an individual, group, and

social identity and culture of entrepreneurs. However, preparation is aimed at forming ideas on what businesses want to prevent transmitting the ideology of entrepreneurship and at creating critical awareness that leads to entrepreneurs' duty to society. The educational curriculum for entrepreneurship aims both to strengthen the development of main entrepreneurial aspects and to build a clear view of entrepreneurial issues, according to Bakotic and Kruzic (2010). Throughout this way, the authors support the need for further education of the graduates, which should be based on acquiring new skills and needed later on in the sense of the sector. In his analysis on the need for entrepreneurial training, however, Jusoh et al (2011) found that there is a lack of entrepreneurial skill training in fields like innovation and creativity improvement. The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education (2008) stated that the entrepreneurship education was not all about teaching someone to operate a business. It also promotes creative/innovative thinking and fosters a strong sense of self-esteem and empowerment. Students can learn how to create a business through entrepreneurship education, but they also learn a lot more. The main knowledge developed through entrepreneurship education includes:

- The ability of one to identify opportunities in life.
- The ability to pursue opportunities, by creating innovative concepts and solutions.
- The ability to develop and run a new business.
- The ability to think in a critical manner and creatively.

2.2.5 Benefits and Issues of Entrepreneurial Training

Globally, entrepreneurship training programs introduced are intended to provide the level of education or knowledge needed to identify and make use of entrepreneurial opportunity which could help the economic development of such countries. These trainings also come with some benefits, issues and challenges. Caroline and James (2013) stated that the current issue is the poor quality and curricula of the courses that are concerned. Consequently, Rosa and McAlpine (1992) supported this statement by stressing out that there was a void where substantial elements within the entrepreneurship training program existed and that people are trained without the necessary elements needed. Henry et al. (2003) states that entrepreneurship programmes can be effective and provide tremendous benefits for aspiring entrepreneurs. However, there have been concerns about the influence of university education

on entrepreneurship as to the effects on the transition from intentional behaviour of entrepreneurs or the success of an entrepreneur (Nabi et al., 2010).

While a certain number of studies have been conducted on a variety of aspects of start-up practices, one thing which is not very evident is how practices leading to start-ups or businesses suit the content of entrepreneurial classes' course work, therefore, it is significant to reflect about the relevance of what is being taught particularly, if the activities of start-up are effectively expressed in the content and delivery entrepreneurship course (Edelman et al., 2008). Likewise, Hanushek and Woessmann (2008) stated that entrepreneurs are usually good at starting businesses but poor at managing the business with a sense of obligation to run their businesses and become great. Garavan and Barra (1994) identified the most popular referred objectives of entrepreneurship training programmes to be the following: i) gain valuable knowledge of entrepreneurship; ii) gain the appropriate skills in the application of strategies, in market analysis and in the review of action plans; iii) identifying and promoting the appropriate skills of entrepreneurship; iv) to develop support and empathy for the various aspects of entrepreneurship v) to develop an attitude that welcomes uncertainty and change; and vi) to encourage the new start-ups.

These training programmes of entrepreneurship will contribute to the development of entrepreneurial capabilities. Hisrich and Peter (1998) states that the different skills required by an entrepreneur can be categorised into: technical skills, business management skills and personal entrepreneurial skills. OECD (2015), Identifies the core skills required by an entrepreneur to be literacy, communications, problem solving, creativity, risk taking, self-awareness and the desire to innovate. Henry et al. (2005) added that the development of these personal skills is what determines the performance of an entrepreneur.

Thus, these different goals of entrepreneurship training programs can require very different abilities, skills and knowledge. While many aspects of entrepreneurship can be taught, there must always be some attitude to risks.

Nonetheless, some of these courses, rather than preparing for industry, relate entrepreneurship to new projects and management, and inform company and enterprise, very seldom concentrate on the skills and behaviour (Kirby, 2004).

The best educational framework for entrepreneurship is found in the realistic theory of pedagogy, according to Dewey (1963). This theory acknowledges that circumstances in real

life are ambiguous and that personal experience needs to be developed. The authors proposed the concept of teaching entrepreneurship as a way of identifying opportunities and implementing a business, which is different from the current way it was taught to do so. Furthermore, Neck and Greene (2011) indicated that teaching entrepreneurship as an approach "implies that we enable students to understand, build and practice the skills and techniques required for successful entrepreneurship. Basically, it calls for practice, and that means educators focus on helping students. The assumptions in this method are: (i) applies to beginners and experts; (ii) applies across all ranges of applications; (iii) require constant practical practice; and (iv) applies to a volatile environment.

(Murray and White, 1986) posits that the duty to teach entrepreneurship does not rely solely on the educational world. In fact, there is a need to build an environment that promotes entrepreneurship at public level.

2.2.6 Performance of Small and Medium scale enterprises (SMEs)

Business performance is a complex structure that is difficult to measure accurately (Rogers and Wright 1998) and to address the problem, some studies have proposed that the performance of SMEs should be measured as the degree to which the business is generating revenues. According to (Maduekwe & Kamala, 2016), SMEs make use of the financial and non-financial metrics to measure their performance, although the financial performance indicators are frequently applied rather than the non-financial performance measure. The financial performance measures the profit generated by the business and gives an indication of whether the business can be expanded, maintained or closed. It also shows the possibility of diversification if necessary.

Cook and Nixon (2000) stated that the interest in the role of SMEs in the process of development continues to be at the top of policy debates in developed countries. Therefore, the operation and development of modern businesses are in the present digital economy which is directly related to entrepreneurship and Westhead et al (2011) states that entrepreneurship continues to play a key role in the creation and growth of businesses.

(Thurik and Wennekers, 1999) stated that small and medium scale enterprises can be a platform pioneers for entrepreneurs who are introducing new processes and products that transform the market as well as individuals who operate a business for a living. The effect of

the global financial and economic crises calls for a greater position for entrepreneurs and self-employment in economic and social growth policies.

According to Arzeni (2015), it is important for youths who faces high unemployment rate and difficulties entering into the labour market to start their own businesses. However, starting up a new business is a challenging, an unsustainable operation and several businesses have struggled in the first 12 months of trading (Reynolds & Miller, 1992, Sullivan et al, 1998). it is important to remember that today's business world is more competitive than ever before. Many businesses face a wide variety of difficult issues like finding the right finance, planning, hiring of good helps if required, staying committed, time management, information management, finding the right location, budgeting and having a balance between work and personal life that could easily put an end to them before they even begun. Luckily, some developed countries develop policies and grant resources that can help minimize the challenges of starting a new business.

Previous studies established a range of possible impacts on the performance of SMEs, including the effect of size of business at start-up, the entry phase, customers and innovation. For example, Johnson, et al (1996) observed that the size of a business plays an important role in the rate of growth of very small businesses, with small enterprises reporting the highest rate of growth. SMEs varies in different sizes, operations and the type of business in which they are engaged, thus the small size of the business has its benefits such as easy processes and simple structures which allows for increase in flexibility, adaptability as well as drawbacks such as scarcity of resources, superficial managerial and technological expertise. Brandstatter (1997) indicates that, while there are various explanations as to why so many new businesses tend to fail within the first five years, the absence of personality and task structure could be one of the major reasons why businesses fail thus, There is further proof that most small business owners who are successful had previously worked in small businesses or smaller units of larger companies (Lussier, Robert N., 1996; Fothergill & Gudgin, 1982).

In general, SMEs usually have limited resources as well a low aspiration for finding new knowledge, skills, ideas, information, technology and tools that will be considered to bring about an increase in capabilities and competences that results in the superior performance. Bernes et al (2016) revealed the impact of organisational, marketing and innovation on SMEs performance, the study showed the important roles for businesses that generated rare,

valuable, unique and irreplaceable goods and services which brought about superior performances.

2.2.7 Factors That Influence Business

There are a lot of factors that can influence the performance of a business. Business environment has shown to have a combination of two major factors which are internal and external factors that influences their business operating situation. Therefore, understanding of the various factors that affect or impacts on the performance of SMEs is very crucial to this study. According to a study carried out by Mehralizadeh and Sajady (2005), the internal factors were considered to be:

- i) characteristics of entrepreneur,
- ii) financial management and
- iii) planning and organization.

In addition the Business Research Centre (2008), it is stated that the dominant feature of the issues faced internally is the one man issue whereby most of the management responsibility solely lies on an individual who may not possess the required skill set or the time to apply them appropriately and this one person is usually the entrepreneur who tend to handle all the management functions including sales, marketing, resourcing, financial control, purchasing and planning thereby requiring training and development of those functions.

In terms of external factors, it is generally accepted that successful businesses are those which adapts to the opportunities in the business environment in which they operate (Kalleberg & Leicht, 1991). The external factors were considered to be:

- i) economic and infrastructure,
- ii) government,
- iii) social support and
- iv) information.

The study showed that skills, training, economic situation, human relation were important effects on the high performance of a business. Mahmood (2008) indicates the role corporate

governance is an important factor for SMEs performance and sustainability. Corporate governance describes the process and structures in place through which a business is managed. It looks at different policies that are put in place to encourage and support the SMEs growth as well as making use of the resources. The growing number of SMEs indicate how good an economy is performing.

Another study carried out by (Alam 2011; Mothibi 2015) described the business age, the owners educational qualification, experience, managerial competence, business size, sector and location of the business as the major demographic factors that influences the performance of SMEs, However, Blackburn and Wainwright (2013) concluded that the business age and size influences the performance and are more important than the strategy and characteristics of the entrepreneur. Omerzel and Kusce (2013) shows that self-efficacy and Risk-taking, and that the desire for independence are the most significant factors impacting the success of a businessman.

2.2.8 Reasons for Business Failures

According to Clark, S. (1997), the reasons for business failure are majorly money, management and marketing. Lewis Paul (2003) listed twelve leading management mistakes that leads to the failure of a business;

- i) starting up a business for the wrong purpose,
- ii) taking advice from family and friends,
- iii) being at a wrong time in a wrong location,
- iv) getting worn out,
- v) family pressure or money commitment,
- vi) pride,
- vii) lack of market awareness,
- viii) falling in love with the business or product,
- ix) lack of financial knowledge or responsibilities,

- x) absence of clarity.
- xi) excess cash
- xii) not being realistic.

Trainings plays a major role in the success and profitability of a business. According to Aderemi Ayinla Alarape, (2007), small enterprises whose owners had the knowledge acquired from entrepreneurship programs-exhibited superior management practice; thus, had a higher profit margin and growth rate than those small enterprises whose owners/managers did not partake in the experiential learning. However, some studies have been conducted to investigate the issues concerning the involvement of SMEs in training (Westhead, 1998; Hunt and Hogan, 2005) and according to their results, the issues faced by SMEs trainings were related to

- i) lack of time,
- ii) high training costs, and
- iii) underestimation of training effects among the main issues affecting the role of SMEs in training.

Roomi, Harrison and Beaumont-Kerridge (2009) stated that growth in a business is a complex process and can be seen by a range of SMEs in different sectors and maturities. However, the idea of SMEs success could be equated with a firm that in five stages of small business growth has completely completed the transition into stage two. The key problem in the growth of a new business is that most SMEs fail to move from the first stage to the phase of success, survival, take off and maturity of resources.

2.3 Identification of the Research Gap

The literature review on entrepreneurial training has found that an interest and research focus of a wide spectrum of management disciplines is the phenomenon of entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurship is a field of research that is relatively new, it is not more than 20-25 years old, a comparatively young area of study. It has shown to be more important than the other areas of management studies over the past decade. (Spain, 2005). As in several other social science study fields, entrepreneurship research is grounded in society 's growth

and transition. Entrepreneurship has become a motivating force in many countries and particularly in Europe for the settlement and the catalyst for development (Fayolle and Kyro 2008). Thus the theory's predictions concerning the connections between self-employment behaviours, the subjective norm and behavioural management (Kolvereid, 1996) were widely supported by many empirical studies in entrepreneurship of performers in SMEs.

In this milieu, the failure in some research to find a connection between subjective norm and intention, this study is an attempt to study the impact and training of entrepreneurs and SMEs performance in Dublin, Ireland.

2.4 Summary

This chapter sheds light on the importance of entrepreneurship training for optimum performance of SME's growth. It further highlighted the fact that whether some entrepreneurs are born or made, training and development plays a key role in the success of the business. Unlike the past where you can only learn about the trade and skills required to be an entrepreneur, the way businesses are conducted in this era is mostly through the internet. This requires that entrepreneurs also train on Information Communication Technology (ICT) related courses, social media marketing strategies, advertising etc, in order to keep up with the trend where the customer base is high. That way, the chances of success is increased.

Key Emerging Themes	
Personality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk-taker Innovative/Creative Self-efficacy

<p>Training and Development (Formal and informal)</p>	<p>Immediate problem solving Focusing on a specific skill</p>
<p>Education (Level of education)</p>	<p>Business managerial skill Personal entrepreneurial skill Decision making</p>
<p>Performance</p>	<p>Growth Profit Competitive advantage</p>

The personality of an entrepreneur would determine how far and how well they will succeed in their business because personality has to do with oneself, how they carry themselves, and how they run their business. They are seen to be innovative and a risk-taker.

Training and development seek to address the needs of a particular group of people and these needs will vary on a number of factors such as size, location, sector, stage of the business, learning style and outcome. The needs tend to change in relation to the situation of the business and environment of the business.

Education of an entrepreneur has seen in some studies had a positive impact in building the skills of the entrepreneurs and their decision making in business all of which determines how the entrepreneur is going to perform.

Therefore, the purpose of the research is to understand the relationship between these factors and how they affect the performance of the SMEs.

Chapter 3 - Methodology of the Study

3.1 Introduction

This section discusses the research questions and examines the impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance through the investigation and literature view. Rajasekar et al (2006), research is a logical and systematic search for finding new and valuable knowledge on a specific topic. A research can lead to new findings and contributions on an existing knowledge and the effectiveness of the research is to identify the condition as it occurs.

Ghauriv and Grohaug (2005) describe the research method as a formal and oriented procedure to acquire information as well as answer a specific research question or issue through the use of qualitative or quantitative research or even both methods.

This chapter addresses the theoretical approach of the appropriate research methodology process to identify and choose the preferred data collection technique that can be used in the conduct of this research. It looks at the methodological approach adopted and the justification of the study.

3.2 Research objections

1. To ascertain the most attained educational level of entrepreneurs of SMEs.
2. To investigate the effect of entrepreneurship training on SMEs performance.
3. To determine the relationship between training and development and entrepreneur's performance.
4. To determine the most effective method of entrepreneurship training.
5. To examine the view that SMEs have on entrepreneurial training.

3.3 Research Questions

1. What is the most attained educational level of entrepreneurs of SMEs?
2. What is the view that SMEs have on entrepreneurial training?

3. What are the most commonly used training and development methods that have effects on the performance of SMEs?

3.4 Research Hypothesis

With reference to previous literatures on training and development of entrepreneurs, the following hypothesis will be useful in deciding whether the literature supports entrepreneurship training having an impact on SMEs performance or not. This will be gathered from the answers collected from the survey respondents and shown in the analysis.

The hypothesis below will either be Null (H_0), which is in support of the previous literature or Alternative hypothesis (H_a) which is not in support of the previous literature.

H1: Training and development of entrepreneurs have a significant relationship on the growth and SMEs performance.

H2: Entrepreneur training methods have a significant impact on the performance of SMEs.

3.5 Research Design

The quantitative and cross-sectional research design was used for this research. The design of the research is associated with the research questions that intend to determine the effect of training of entrepreneurs and the impact it has on the performance of SMEs among other variables of the research.

3.6 Qualitative research

This is a multimethodology study which takes a naturalistic and interpretive approach to its subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This approach provides for a narrative view of people to reality and relies on people's words. This method of approach does not concentrate on a specific issue but examines the theory and philosophical concept in an explicit inquisitive way which describes how they feel (Neuman 2006). It is used to obtain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motives. Qualitative data collection methods such as focus groups or interviews vary using unstructured or semi-structured techniques. It focuses on understanding and interpreting of a social construction meaning in a natural setting.

3.7 Quantitative research

This is a study that describes a phenomenon by gathering statistical data to help investigate accurately on the method Creswell (2013). The approach used is a survey for data collection with the use of empirical techniques for testing and verifying of experimental or null hypothesis through scientific methods. The design for quantitative research aims to investigate and examine the impact and relationships which can establish a cause and effect in highly controlled circumstances. Quantitative research method can also help establish the correlations between a given variables and the outcomes. These data allow for others to validate the original findings by independently replicating the analysis (Dudwick, et al 2006).

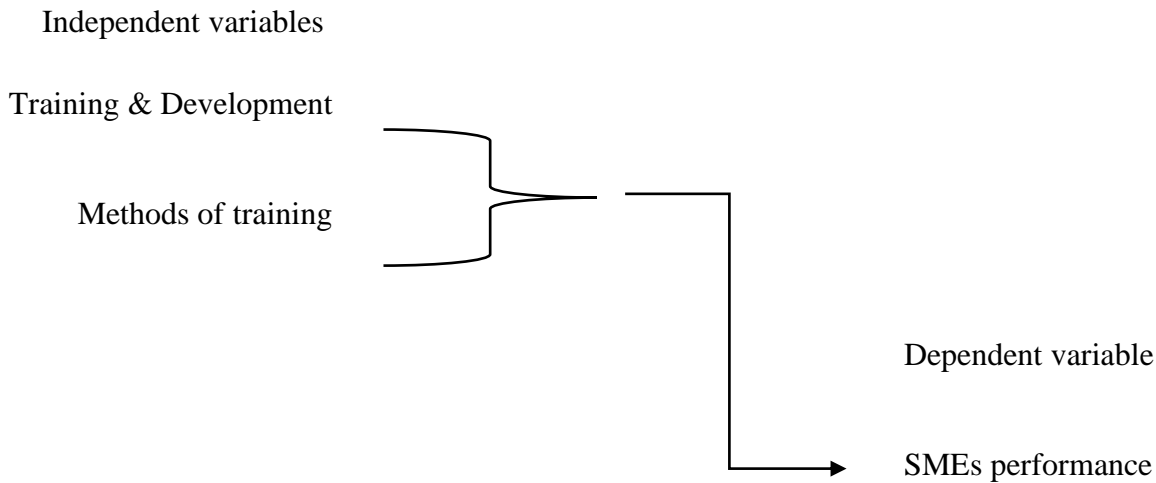
3.8 Justification of approach

The quantitative research approach was chosen because it is more scientific, objective, focused, fast, more reliable, acceptable and often restructures and reduces a complex problem to a set of variable which can be admitted and evaluated quickly while qualitative research is particularly challenging to narrow down because of its evolving characteristics and flexibility (Van 1998). The related problem of qualitative research is that it often fails to express its objectives, goals or research questions that frames the papers, guides the data analysis and research outcomes.

3.9 Cross-section design

This design seeks to investigate the relationship between the variable of interest on another within a population at a specified period of time. It can either be in an analytical or descriptive form. This method is adopted because of the effectiveness on exploring and measuring the relationship between variables, testing hypothesis and analysing data to support and suggest possible limitations and implications of the study.

Framework Designed for the analysis of variables.



The above variables will be investigated, and the implication will be analysed based on the information gathered from the participants of the study.

3.10 Proposed methodology

Van (2005) defines methodology as an organized approach to problem solving by empirical assistance to the analysis of the approvals and completion of study. The approaches used to define, explain and forecast the proposed phenomenon includes explanations and motivation behind the methods chosen.

The purpose of this study is hypothesis testing since the study is done to establish the relationship between training and development of entrepreneurs and SMEs performance. This section examines the practical and appropriate approach to methodology behaviour of the study in order to guarantee that the knowledge acquisition progresses smoothly and optimise the reliability of the tests and unidentified survey responses that the study aims to find. The proposed methodology as well as other considerations are discussed in this chapter. Discussing the methodology and research, the rationale for the chosen approach such sample size, sampling methods, data collection processes and the population of interest.

The two basic approaches to research methods are positivism and interpretivism. Positivism approach is based on the quantitative approach to get an overview of the society and to uncover social trends while interpretivism seeks to have an in-depth understanding of respondents and to gain an empathetic understanding of their actions. A qualitative method is used to analyse and perceive fact in order to establish an empirical view of what has been

experienced. The quantitative method is used as a theory or hypothesis and experiments are carried out to validate the idea. Myers (2009) points out that qualitative research is a thorough study of cultural and social phenomena, focusing on text, while quantitative research seeks to investigate the general trends across the population and focuses on numbers.

The research proposes to make use of the quantitative methods of research with a sample size of 100 participants to have a comprehensive knowledge of the impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance.

This type of analysis is more suitable for this research as it enables the researcher address the research question of whether the two variables have an impact on the performance of SMEs. Previous studies have shown that training and development has an impact on entrepreneur's performance therefore this method will help to validate whether the previous research was correct or wrong.

3.11 Data collection

The study relates to previous research on the impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance and the two sources of collection of data are primary and secondary data. The primary data which includes questionnaires that provides evidence of the fact that may agree or disagree with existing studies and the secondary data includes the previous works of other researchers; Google scholar, Journals, Books and other useful information from business bulletins.

3.12 Survey method

Questionnaires was prepared to gather information from a particular group of people within a short period of time. For the purpose of this research, questionnaire was used. Brace (2008) defined a questionnaire to be a multiple-choice based question designed to review and derive answers from a particular set of participants. The questionnaire will enable participants to give feedback on the questions so as to get a precise answer for the study. The questionnaire will contain three parts. Part I will include demographic information, part II aims at measuring training and development of entrepreneurs and part III focuses on the performance of SMEs. The use of Microsoft forms for distribution of the questionnaires. Saunders et al (2009) suggested the use of questionnaires to be the most preferred process of collate data for

testing the relationships of variables, as a support for testing hypothesis and measuring the outcomes for informal analysis.

3.13 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire used was subjected to the reliability test and it was found that the entrepreneurship training scale had a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.778, while the business performance scale had a reliability coefficient of 0.288. The discriminant validity of the scale indicates that the entrepreneurship training scale and business performance scale had a value of -.263, which shows that the scale did not converge and that they are measuring what they purpose to measure.

3.14 Method of Data Analysis

The use of SPSS software (software package used for statistical analysis) was used to analyse the data gathered from the participants, classified, presented in tables as well as charts and analysed using the software.

3.15 Research Population and Sample Population

The population of the study of interest includes SMEs in Ireland and was on a non-probability sampling technique. According to Saunders et al (2009), a non-probability method allows for subjective judgement. This hinges on the feelings, believe and perception of the survey respondent, the subjective judgement of the survey respondents will aid in answering the research question. The non-probability technique will involve the use of convenience sampling, snowball sampling and judgmental sampling.

The convenience sampling was selected because of the easy availability of participants, judgmental sampling was selected because of the selected group of people which are the owners of SMEs and snowball sampling was selected because it allows for voluntary participation.

Chapter 4 - Analysis and findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the hypotheses and research questions and the relevant demographic factors in charts and table as shown below.

4.1 Presentation of Results

The result of the statistical test reviews each variable presented in the study in relation to the performance of SMEs. This analysis addresses the impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance in Dublin, Ireland.

4.2 Analysis of Respondents' Demographic characteristics

Table 4.1: Marital Status of the Respondents

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	single	31	62.0	62.0
2	married	14	28.0	90.0
3	divorced	2	4.0	94.0
4	widowed	3	6.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	

Table 4.1 indicates the marital status of the respondents, with single having highest representation of 31 (62%), followed by the married with 14 (28%) and the least participants was divorced with 2 (4%). This is shown further in chart 1 below:

Chart 1: Marital Status of the Respondents

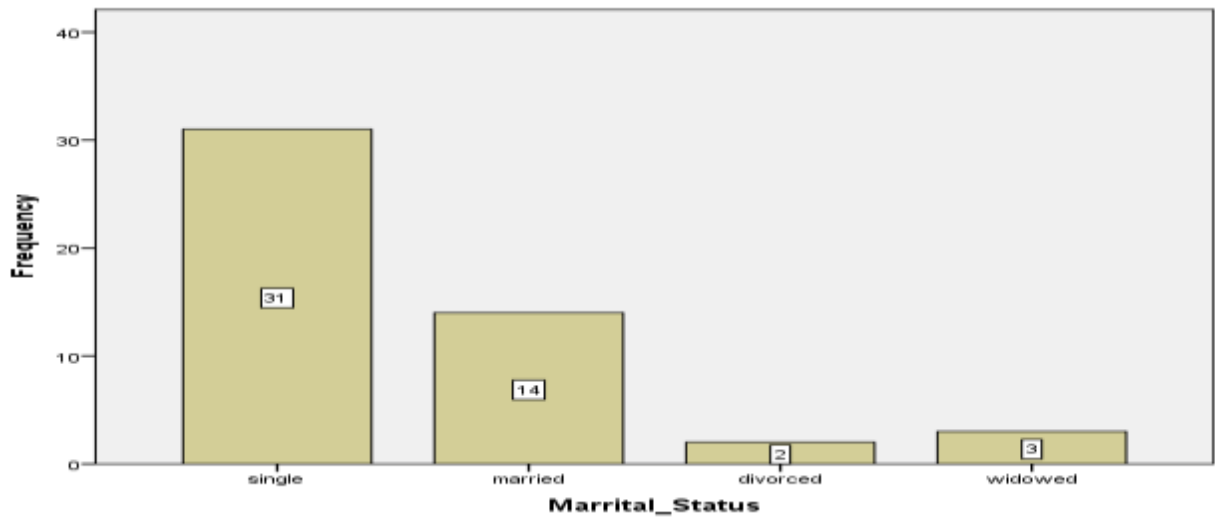


Table 4.2: Age of the Respondents

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	under 25	7	14.0	14.0
2	26-40	31	62.0	76.0
3	41-50	8	16.0	92.0
4	51 above	4	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	

Table 4.2 shows the respondents by age, with the highest respondents being 26-40 years 31 (62%), followed 41-50 years, 8 (16%), while the least respondents was 51 years and above, 4 (8%). This is depicted further as shown in chart 2 below:

Chart 2: Age of the Respondents

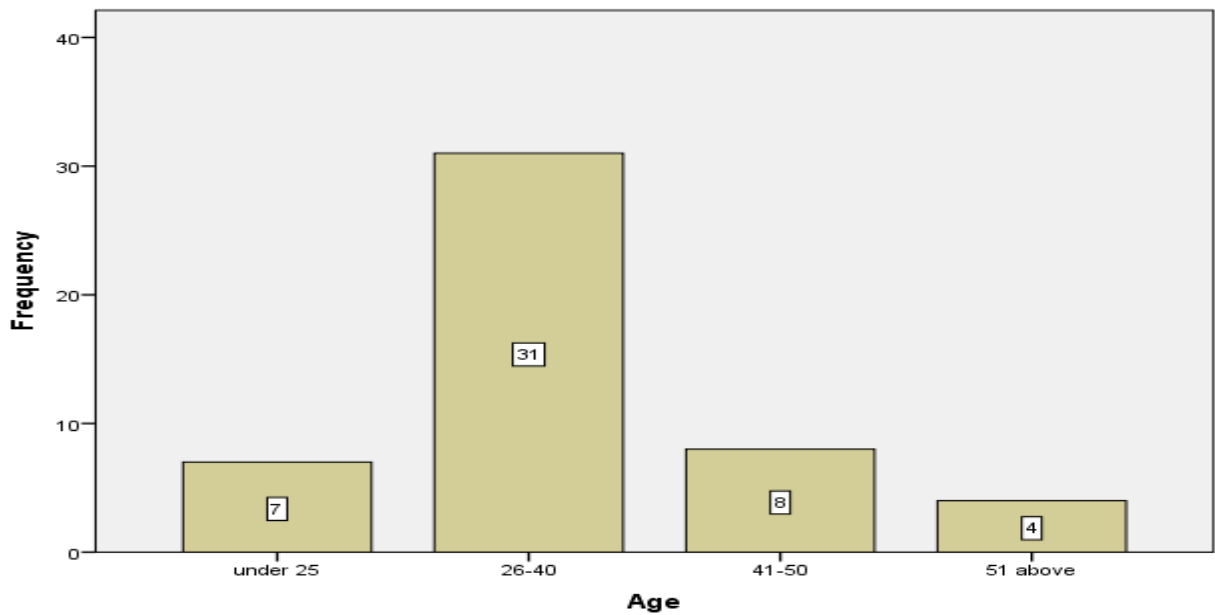


Table 4.3: Representation by Gender

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	male	30	60.0	60.0
2	female	20	40.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	

Table 4.3 shows the representation of the participants by gender, with male being the highest with 30 (60%), followed by female with 20 (40%). This is illustrated further in chart 3 below:

Chart 3: Representation by Gender



4.3 Analysis of Research Questions:

Research Question One: What is the most attained educational level of entrepreneurs of SMEs?

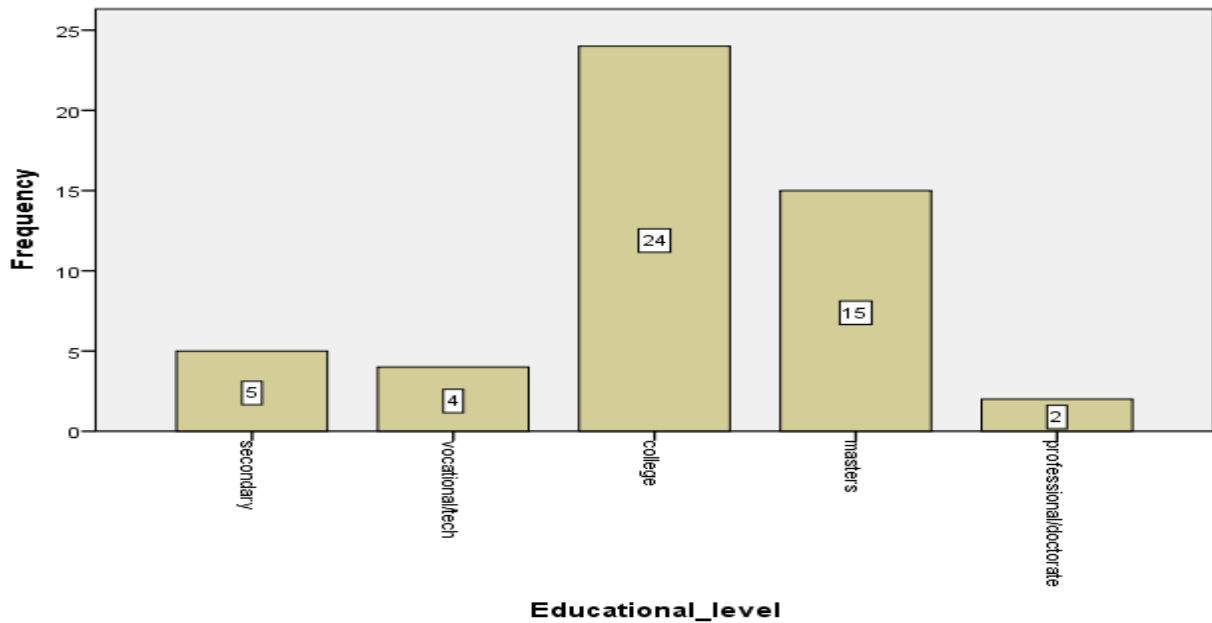
Table 4.4 Showing the Most attained educational level of Entrepreneurs of SME Operators

variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
secondary	5	10.0	10.0
vocational/tech	4	8.0	18.0
college	24	48.0	66.0
masters	15	30.0	96.0
professional/doctorate	2	4.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

Table 4.4 Shows that the college graduates among the SMEs entrepreneurs was 24 (48%), followed by masters with 15 (30%) while the least was professional/doctorate with 2 (4%).

This indicates therefore that the most attained educational level of education of operators was SMEs was college degree. This is further illustrated in chart 4 below:

Chart 4: Most attained educational level of Entrepreneur’s of SME Operators



Research Question Two: What are the most used methods of training and development that have effects on the performance of SMEs?

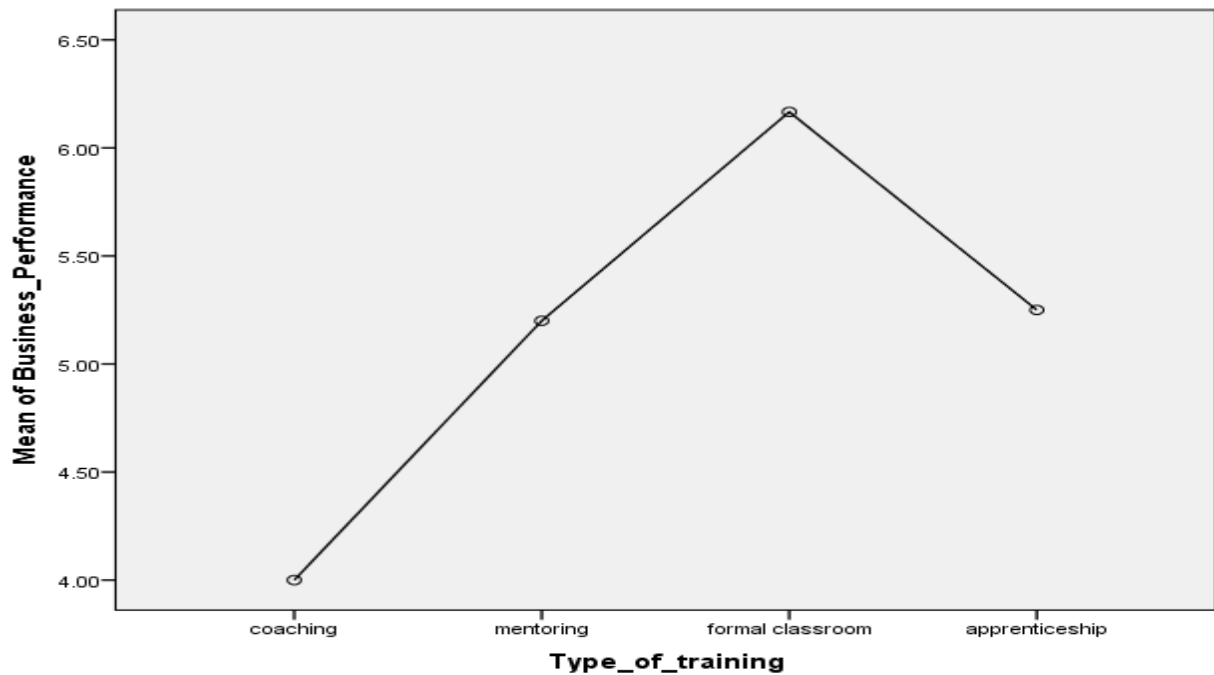
Tables 4.5a&b: One Way ANOVA of the Most used Method of Entrepreneurship Training

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
coaching	1	4.0000	4.00	4.00
mentoring	10	5.2000	1.54919	.48990	4.0918	6.3082	3.00	8.00
formal classroom	6	6.1667	.75277	.30732	5.3767	6.9567	5.00	7.00
apprenticeship	8	5.2500	1.66905	.59010	3.8546	6.6454	3.00	8.00
Total	25	5.4000	1.44338	.28868	4.8042	5.9958	3.00	8.00

Table 4.5 shows that formal classroom (mean = 6.167, SD = 0.753) which is the highest in the series, followed by apprenticeship (mean = 5.250; SD = 1.669), followed by mentoring (mean = 5.20, SD = 1.549) and the least in the series is coaching (mean = 4.000, SD = 0.000). This indicates that the most used method of entrepreneurship training is formal classroom,

while the least used method of training is coaching. This further depicted in chart 5 below.

Chart 5: Most used Method of Entrepreneurship Training



Research Question Three: What is the view of SMEs Operators on entrepreneurial training?

Entrepreneurs believe that training will enable them to develop great capacity towards building sustainable relationship with customers; that training gives them more exposure to the workings and happenings in the industry; it gives them edge over the competitors; that it makes them to understand how to manage different tax options and that it gives them the exposure and knowledge they need to survive in the industry.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

H1. Training and development of entrepreneurs have a significant relationship on the growth and performance of SMEs

H2. Entrepreneur training methods have a significant impact on the performance of SMEs.

Hypothesis One: Training and development of entrepreneurs have a significant relationship on the growth and performance of SMEs

4.6: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Showing the Relationship between Entrepreneurship Training and Business Performance among SMEs Operators in Ireland

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	R	p value	Remark
Entrepreneurship Training	21.462	2.370	50	-.263	.063	Not Sig.
Business Performance	5.420	1.38638				

Table 4.6 shows that there was no significant relationship between entrepreneurship training and business performance among SMEs operators in Ireland ($r = -.263, n = 50, p > .05$). The study further shows that there was an inverse relationship between entrepreneurship training and business performance. Therefore, the hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis Two: Entrepreneur training methods have a significant impact on the performance of SMEs.

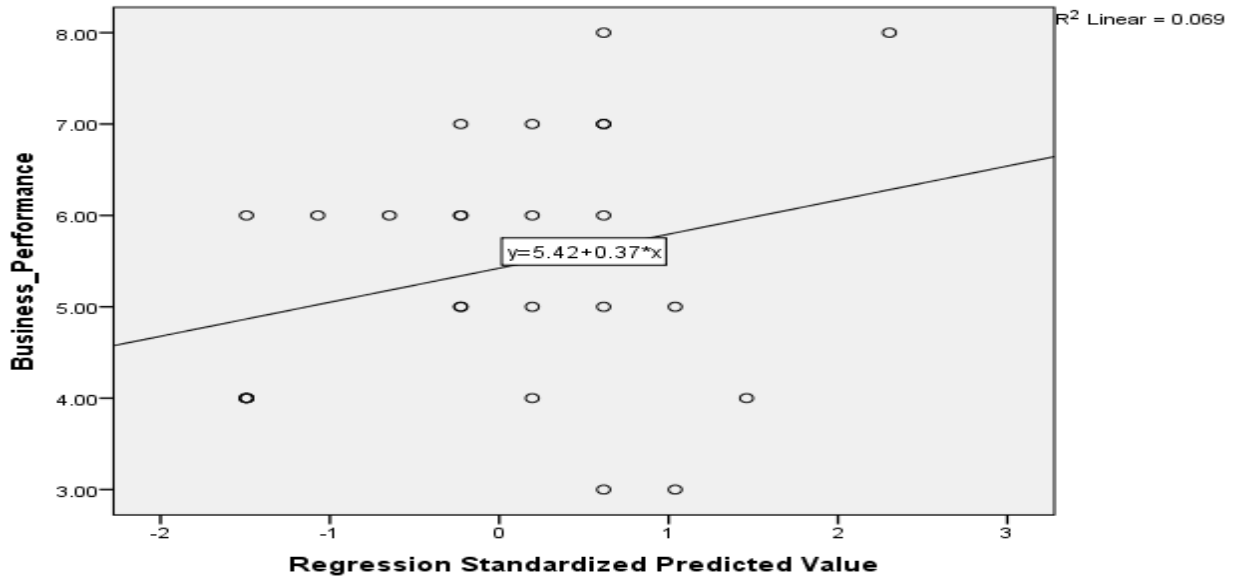
Table 4.7: Summary of Regression analysis showing the Effect of Entrepreneurship Training on Business Performance among SMEs Operators in Ireland

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
.263	.069	.030	1.39756			
A N O V A						
Model	Sum of	DF	Mean	F	Sig.	Remark

	Squares		Square			
Regression	3.470	1	3.470	1.777	.195	Not Sig.
Residual	46.876	24	1.953			
Total	50.346	25				

Table 4.7 shows the effect of Entrepreneurship training methods on the performance of SMEs among SMEs in Ireland ($R = .263$ and $R^2 = .069$ and adjusted $R^2 = .030$). This implication of this is 6.9% of the variance were accounted for by two predictor variables. The significance of the contribution was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$. The table 4.7 also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded (F-ratio = 1.777; $P > 0.05$). This implies that the impact of the Entrepreneurship training methods on the performance of SMEs was not significant. The hypothesis is rejected. This is further demonstrated in chart 2 below:

Chart 2: **Effect of Entrepreneurship Training on Business Performance among SMEs Operators in Ireland**



4.5 Summary of Findings:

The following findings were made in the course of this study:

1. That college graduates among the SMEs entrepreneurs was 24 (48%), followed by masters with 15 (24%) while the least was professional/doctorate with 2 (4%). Therefore, the most attained educational level of education of operators was SMEs was college degree, while the least attained level of education was professional/doctorate.
2. It was found that formal classroom (mean = 6.167, SD = 0.753) which is the highest in the series, followed by apprenticeship (mean = 5.250; SD = 1.669), followed by mentoring (mean = 5.20, SD = 1.549) and the least in the series is coaching (mean = 4.000, SD = 0.000). Therefore, most used method of entrepreneurship training is formal education, while the least used form of entrepreneurship training was coaching.
3. That there was no significant relationship between entrepreneurship training and business performance among SMEs operators in Ireland ($r = -.263$, $n = 50$ $p > .05$). This

implies that entrepreneurship training has no correlation or link with business performance. This is due to the current reality with regards to entrepreneurial training in Ireland.

4. That the effect of Entrepreneurship training methods on the performance of SMEs among SMEs in Ireland was ($R = .263$ and $R^2 = .069$ and adjusted $R^2 = .030$, F-ratio = 1.777; $P > 0.05$). This implies that the combination of all forms of entrepreneurship training produced an insignificant effect of 6.9%.

5. Training will enable them to develop great capacity towards building sustainable relationship with customers; that training gives them more exposure to the workings and happenings in the industry; it gives them edge over the competitors.

Chapter 5 - Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

This section focused on the discussion of the various findings in this study, with the appropriate conclusion and recommendations made in line with the results of this study.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 Most Attained Level of Education of SME Entrepreneurs

It was found that the most attained level of education was majority of the participating entrepreneurs are college graduates. This is a good feat for the business world in Ireland, as more educated people are getting involved in businesses. This shows that most of the entrepreneurs are driven towards knowledge acquisition and intellectual empowerment as opined by Caroline and James (2013), who believe that education is a way by which individuals develop the needed knowledge and capacity for effective performance in their businesses. Effectiveness cannot be attained in business without the right knowledge and skills and this is what education gives. The increasing number of graduates in business is a welcome development and the reason for the increasing growth in the sector.

This calls for the need to embrace some level of education by the business owners and the concept of entrepreneurship should not be perceived as the business of the illiterates in the society. Embracing education is the key to getting out of the hitch of impossibility that often faces entrepreneurs. This is because education makes one to develop capacity for deep insight, towards understanding what seems difficult to others. Education is an eye opener to several opportunities that are embedded in one's area of business and also gives one courage, strength and confidence to diversify one's level of investment. Therefore, the power that education wields is unlimited.

5.1.2 Most used Method of Entrepreneurship Training

The study found that the most used method of training is formal classroom, followed by apprenticeship, mentoring and the least was coaching. This indicates that although there are several training methods that trainers often adopt, but formal method of training has been proven to be highly effective and efficient. Formal classroom is the process by which the acquisition of knowledge and skills with relation to understanding and analysing a broad range of societal problems in the classroom settings (Caroline and James (2013). This is because the aftermath of the training using formal education has produced substantial encouraging results on the businesses of the participants. This was corroborated by Hanti et al. (2008) who opines that formal training helps participants to be deeply involved in the process and thus develop their managerial capacity. Formal classroom as a form of training is a typical way of bringing out the best in the participants. It instils in them the skills, insight, tact and the needed capacity to maintain stability on their businesses.

Generally, the level of education is a broad section of the education that is an advancement from elementary to a more complicated learning experience, encompassing all fields that may occur at that particular stage of progress and the acquisition of an educational qualification means the successful completion of a course of study or a training programme.

The need to embrace formal education becomes important, as Rae (2010) opines that it is the way of ensuring that participants understand the concept of entrepreneurship, develop capacity for the creation of market potentials and being able to contribute hugely to the business world. Training is good, but formal training is fantastic, because it is a way of gaining the best knowledge that is able to turn one's business world around. There are lots of things to be learned and no one is a highland. Education is a continuous process and getting the right education is the key to having a successful business.

5.1.3 Relationship between Entrepreneurship Training and Business Performance

It was found that there was no significant but inverse relationship between entrepreneurship training and business performance. The implication of this result is that significant number of entrepreneurs do not believe in training as a veritable tool for transforming their businesses. This was in contrast to the position of Bernes et al (2016), who sees entrepreneurship training as a way of developing the relevant innovation required for transforming the business. Therefore, entrepreneurship training should be restructured to address the relevant problems affecting entrepreneurs in Ireland. This will change the perception of the majority of entrepreneurs with regards to entrepreneurship training. This finding was supported by Nabi et al. (2010) who opines that entrepreneurship training has not been able to produce substantial notable effect on the entrepreneurs. This shows that although there have been different entrepreneurship trainings organized by different organizations in Ireland, however, these trainings have not been producing the desired effects on the entrepreneurs and SMEs' performance to be specific.

The need to increase the willingness of entrepreneurs to get involved in training is non-negotiable. It is a task that must be embraced by those who wish to leverage above the competitors. To gain competitive advantage and to do business better than others, entrepreneurship training is critical to business success. Lack of the required training that cuts across human life so long it adds values to the business is the reason for business failure. This was corroborated by Brandstatter (1997), who opines that some of the young entrepreneurs fail due to personality and other problems they could not handle; with adequate training on emotional intelligence and emotional stability as applies to entrepreneurs, will go a long way in helping these young entrepreneurs to remain stable in business.

5.1.4 Effect of Entrepreneurship training methods on the performance of SMEs among SMEs in Ireland

It was observed that entrepreneurship training makes a contribution of 6.9% to business performance of SMEs. This shows that entrepreneurship training has substantial effect on performance of businesses in Ireland. This was in line with the submission of Johnson, Kattuman and Conway (1996) who posit that well established businesses through increased training would enhance the growth of other small businesses. This is done through a symbiotic relationship, whereby the grown businesses would help lift up the upcoming ones through the creation of enlightenment programmes and how to grow businesses and the small businesses too will send some of their workforce for training by paying a stipend as training fee.

5.1.5 Perception of SMEs Operators on entrepreneurial training

Some of the entrepreneur's belief that training will enable them to develop great capacity towards building sustainable relationship with customers. For others, training gives them more exposure to the workings and happenings in the industry. It gives them edge over the competitors. It makes them to understand how to manage different tax options. Some of them belief that entrepreneurship training gives them the exposure and knowledge they need to survive in the industry. These positions were corroborated by Garavan and Barra (1994), who opines that training is an effective way of gaining entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and aptitude needed to perform a given task. Therefore, training helps in building the capacity of the SME operators across Ireland and beyond.

5.2 Conclusion

In view of the immense contribution of entrepreneurial training on performance of SMEs as shown in this study, it is important to know that in order to ensure best practices in business, that would be globally acknowledged, the need to embrace training of the SME operators becomes crucial. There cannot be business growth and development without adequate

training of the workforce on how to best carry out the task. Failed businesses can come alive if the persons involved are trained on the basic skills and knowledge needed for the job.

To succeed in business demands prompt action at making sure that old things are done in a new way. Developing capacity for best practice is gotten through effective training strategy that would enliven a dying business. The revitalization of a dying business would increase the performance of SMEs and the entire economy in Ireland.

Training of different kinds should be embraced by the actors in the SMEs in Ireland because they are small and wouldn't be able to employ the various competent hands to take care of the different areas in business such as accounting area, technical area, marketing area and so on until they expand. This is because adequate entrepreneurial training would bring out the best in business owners however minute the capacity. Entrepreneurship training will give entrepreneurs the necessary confidence to act and run their businesses in line with the requirement of the regulatory body and become sustainable in business. The existence of a viable and vibrant entrepreneurship training institute that can address all the needed skills and knowledge deficits of the entrepreneurs would be a welcome development if given a pride of place.

The entrepreneurs' orientation with regards to training and development can be changed, by ensuring that the essential benefits of entrepreneurial training are communicated to the entrepreneurs in a simple and understandable form. There gainsaying the fact that entrepreneurs can be best if given the best of training they need. Therefore, for requisite SMEs' performance the need to embrace entrepreneurship training becomes vital and a necessity.

5.3 Recommendations

In view of the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made by the researcher:

1. That effective training strategy should be developed by the regulators of SMEs in Ireland. This will give SME owners to be in tune with the modern ways of doing business.
2. That good entrepreneurial training policy should be designed by the government of Ireland, to make it a compulsion for any prospective entrepreneurs to undergo a substantial certified training programme before permitted to start a business in the country.
3. That SME operators should see training as a way of making their businesses survive the competitive forces that may want to exit them from business. This is because, they will develop ability to sustain their business no matter the tension when adequate training is acquired.
4. The needed training facilities should be adequately provided by the relevant stakeholders at an affordable rate to the SMEs. This is to give every SME a level playing ground in accessing the training facilities.
5. That all the benefits of training should be communicated to the SMEs, to enable them to see the importance of undergoing training as much as possible.

5.4 Implications of the Study

This study is timely as it addressed the skills and knowledge deficit of the entrepreneurs among SMEs in Ireland. The need to optimize their skills level in order to meet up with the global standard of doing business is inevitable and therefore, this study has been able to contribute amply towards this. Several entrepreneurs in Ireland had hitherto had less belief in entrepreneurship training, their cognition has to be restructured so as to see the benefits of entrepreneurship training in their enterprise. The gap that has been created in literature over

the years with regards to entrepreneurship training and SMEs' performance in Ireland has been bridged in this study.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

There was time constraint, because the researcher had no adequate time to properly collect the needed data for the research. The global pandemic of corona virus (COVID 19) has restricted the movement of the researcher to distribute enough questionnaire and engage the participants on a one-to-one interview session, thus limiting the collection of data to online questionnaire. There was gender inequality in the distribution of the participants. The contacts of the participants were difficult to get and some of them were not willing to participate in the study, thus reducing the number of the participants.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Studies

In view of the limitations of this study, the researcher therefore, suggests that further studies be conducted when all the identified factors must have been taken care of and the global pandemic must have ended.

Appendices

impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance in Ireland

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Abstract

poor performance of SMEs occasioned by inadequate exposure to relevant training that would uplift their knowledge and skills needed for business growth is rising in Ireland. This menace of inadequate training has resulted in different business failures in the past. There has been dearth of recent literature on entrepreneurship training and performance of SMEs in Ireland and this study will no doubt fill this vacuum. The need to embrace training of the SME operators becomes crucial and effective training strategy and policy should be developed by the regulators of SMEs in Ireland.

SMEs Performance, Entrepreneurship Training, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises

Introduction

Performance of SMEs in Ireland is a catalyst for economic growth and development of the country. The performance of businesses is a function of skill and knowledge acquisition of the owners and their willingness to subject their workforce to suitable training programmes that will optimize their rate of performance. The stimulation of new business innovation and entrepreneurship performance is best driven by SMEs (Zhou and Guo 2019). The output of the SMEs is a function of the level of growth and development that can be witnessed in the country. In order to attain performance of business that is sustainable, essential skills are critical (Perks and Smith, 2006). This is because with relevant entrepreneurial skills, SMEs will be able to thrive more and become sustainable.

The broad objective of this study was to investigate the impact of training and development of entrepreneurs on SMEs performance in Ireland, while the specific objectives are:

1. To ascertain the most attained educational level of entrepreneurs of SMEs.
2. To investigate the effect of entrepreneurship training on SMEs performance.
3. To determine the relationship between training and development and entrepreneurs' performance.
4. To determine the most effective method of entrepreneurship training.
5. To examine the view that SMEs have on entrepreneurial training.

Results

It was found that the most attained educational level of education of operators was SMEs was college degree with participants being 24 (48%). The most used method of entrepreneurship training is formal education, with mean of 6.187, standard deviation of 0.753 which is the highest in the series. That there was no significant relationship between entrepreneurship training and business performance among SMEs operators in Ireland ($r = -.263, n = 50, p > .05$). That the effect of Entrepreneurship training methods on the performance of SMEs among SMEs in Ireland was ($R = .263$ and $R^2 = .069$ and adjusted $R^2 = .036$, F-ratio = 1.777, $P > 0.05$). Training will enable entrepreneurs to develop great capacity towards building sustainable relationship with customers, that training gives them more exposure to the workings and happenings in the industry, it gives them edge over the competitors.

Discussion

It was found that there was no significant but inverse relationship between entrepreneurship training and business performance. The implication of this result is that significant number of entrepreneurs do not believe in training as a viable tool for transforming their businesses. This was in contrast to the position of Okundaye, Fan and Dwyer (2019), who seen entrepreneurship training as a way of developing the relevant innovation required for transforming the business. Entrepreneurship training has substantial effect on performance of businesses in Ireland. This was in line with the submission of Amatei (2006), who posits that well established businesses through increased training would enhance the growth of other small businesses.

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Method

The mixed method was used in this study, which included quantitative and qualitative responses. Microsoft forms of questionnaire was used for the collection of data. Entrepreneurship training scale Cronbach's alpha reliability = 0.778, business performance scale = 0.288, discriminant validity of the instrument = .263. A total of 50 responses were available for the analysis. Percentage analysis, One Way ANOVA, regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were the statistic tests used. The statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis. The reliability and validity of the instrument were reported accordingly.

The figure contains two charts. The top chart is a scatterplot titled 'Scatterplot: Effect of Entrepreneurship Training on Business Performance among SMEs Operators in Ireland'. The x-axis is 'Entrepreneurship Training' and the y-axis is 'Business Performance'. A positive linear regression line is shown with the equation $R^2 = 0.069$. The bottom chart is a line graph titled 'Mean of Business Performance' with 'Type of training' on the x-axis (reading, writing, formal education, experience) and 'Mean of Business Performance' on the y-axis. The line shows a peak at 'formal education' and a dip at 'reading'.

Figure 1 Showing poster of ENT training and SME performance

Survey link below:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=5-9v4tcffECFDpv8ujMONWUvzp0QI-BEu-ZJXzoLoehUOEdWWUhIUkIRREZXRjIHTVFZTDZDRIA4Vi4u>

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