

Do Apprenticeships Provide Skills Beyond the Master's Trade?

Evidence on Apprenticeships, Skills and the Transition to Work in Senegal

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Abstract

Traditional apprenticeships offer a “second chance” opportunity for youth to acquire skills that will benefit them in the labor market. Informal training through an apprenticeship involves transmission of sector specific knowledge from a master craftsman to an apprentice. The paper takes advantage of a panel dataset designed to study the transition to adulthood in Senegal to explore the role of the Senegalese traditional apprenticeship training in the transition to work. The paper shows that, while selection into apprenticeship is mostly driven by the lack of formal schooling and serious delays in educational progression by teenage years, apprenticeship experience is associated with positive returns in the labor market. Former apprentices are more likely to work outside of agriculture, especially the young men in the lower end of the skills distribution. Moreover, conditional on education, apprentice experience is associated with higher earnings. The paper next explores whether apprenticeship are associated with improvements in cognitive skills. A value-added model is used to estimate a production function of cognitive skills during teenage years, and the paper shows that apprenticeship experience does not contribute to the development of numeracy or literacy skills.

Keywords: Apprenticeship, Labor market, Cognitive skills, Value-added model, West-Africa
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