

NEEDED IMPROVEMENT in WORK-BASED LEARNING PROGRAMME for QUALITY OCUPATIONAL TRAINING in MINNA METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

This research study determined the needed improvement in work-based learning programme for quality occupational training in Minna metropolis. The study was a survey research in which data was collected with the use of a 30 items questionnaire on a population of 150 respondents purposively sampled from Bosso, Maikunkele, Tunga, Chanchaga and Kpakungu area of Minna. The data were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation on a 5-point scale. Findings of the study revealed among others that the current ways of carrying out work-based learning programme is scanty and hinders effective skill acquisition by work-based learners. Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) appears to be the most commonly used practice for work-based learning in technological and technical institutions. The study recommended among others: that there should be regular review of the TVET curriculum and the curriculum for training of TVET teachers and trainers to equip the teachers and trainers with the technical and pedagogical skills needed to facilitate teaching and learning of new work skills through variety of work-based learning approaches outlined in the study so as to enhance quality occupational training.

Key words: Work-based learning, occupational training, technical education.

INTRODUCTION

Development of vocational skills and occupational training for economic self-reliance of individuals and communities appears to be ineffective in Nigeria. This is because the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) practiced in Nigerian technical institutions and training centers has been unable to fully equip the learners with the requisite vocational skills and technical knowledge for self-reliance, job creation and employment. Agencies established to address these problems among others included the National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Directorate for Food, Roads and

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Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Better Life for Rural Women, Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Agencies for Adult and Non-formal Education, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and Industrial Training Fund (ITF) (Akintayo and Oghenekohwo 2004; Akanji 2008). These agencies have undertaken to ensure the formal and non-formal training of youths and adults on vocational skills acquisition and occupational training through Work-Based Learning.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) is the “umbrella” term used to identify activities which collaboratively engage employers and schools in providing structured learning experiences for students. WBL can be defined as an institutional arrangement in which learners are concurrently exposed to both work and learning environments. WBL literally is an attempt to expand the walls of classroom to include the community as a learning resource. It therefore, extends the frontiers of the classroom to the work-world (National Centre on Secondary Education and Training (NCSET), 2011). WBL provides learners ample opportunities to learn a variety of skills that guarantee synergistic relationship between the school and the world-of-work. It is an attempt to narrow the gap existing between theory and practice thereby, making meaningful learning possible. Okon (2011) defines WBL as experiential learning programmes that use the work environment as an important component of the curriculum. Through WBL, structured learning experiences are provided to the learners through the collaborative efforts of employers of labour and the school. This arrangement avails learners opportunities to acquire a variety of skills upon exposure to rigorous academic engagements simultaneously with hands-on career development experiences.

WBL forges a formidable link between classroom instruction, the world of work and career opportunities, as neither school-based learning nor involvement of a learner in professional work alone (i.e. apprenticeship) guarantees the occurrence of appropriate learning to the extent of satisfying the qualification requirements of the work-world (Jarrad&Jefsioutine, 2006). These experiences focus on assisting students to develop broad transferable skills for post secondary education and the workplace. A quality WBL program can make school-based learning more relevant by providing students with the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to real world situations. Work-based learning is supported in the school and at the work site, while school-based learning focuses on academic the education. Work-based learning occurs, away from school, in industries, training centers, a business or community organization.

Agbai (1992) and et.al. Johnson, (2004) identified a wide range of work-based learning types such as apprenticeship, cooperative education and cooperative work experience, credit for prior learning program, internship, job shadowing, career mentorship, practicum, service learning, teacher externship, vocational student organizations, students industrial work experience scheme, volunteer services in industries, school-based enterprises and school entrepreneurship ventures, clinical work experiences, career fairs, career day and exhibition, worksite field trips and excursion among others. Although work-based learning programmes are currently

carried out in a variety of ways, they aim at the common goal of providing learners with experiential exposure to the work-world. This enable guarantee of eventual smooth transition to the world-of-work upon graduation.

Notably, each of these WBL experiences has its own mode of operation; in that respect therefore, allowance for work-based experience may be for hours, days or weeks as the case may be. In whatever form WBL is provided to the learners, it needs to be emphasized that such learning experiences must follow a progressive path that can be initiated at early schooling and continue through secondary to post-secondary levels. WBL programmes vary in the way they are structured and operated as well as in their intensity and duration, and for the purpose of this study, a brief explanation of some programmes would be presented which include: field trips, as general exploratory strategy that offers career awareness to learners at their very formative stage. Specifically, planned field trips to industries and the business avail the students enough opportunities to explore different work places (Aghenta, 1991). Career exploration is a component of WBL that exposes learners to a variety of work settings to assist them in making decisions about future career directions and occupations. It involves examination of interests, values, beliefs and strengths in relation to the demands and other characteristics of work environment (Schrenko, 2010). Cooperative work experience programme consists of an arrangement between the school and employers that make use of work-place and its environment to create links between learning in school and skills required in the work place (Orji, 1996).

Youth Apprenticeship Programme (YAP) is a school-to-work initiative designed to afford learners the opportunity to be simultaneously engaged in both school-based and work-based exposures. Internship, also known as practicum is a one-time, short-term placement of learners in a students' programme of study. It is designed to ensure intensive observation of how the intern performs tasks on specific job areas (Schrenko, 2010). School-based Entrepreneurial Ventures are designed to encourage students to produce goods and services as part of their educational programme of study, thereby assisting learners to develop competencies requisite to ownership and management of business outfits. Under this structure, students plan, implement programmes, conduct feasibility studies, evaluate business operations including marketing services.

Job shadowing implies a student keenly observing and modeling one employee or worker at a workplace for one or more days to learn a particular occupation. This enables learners to refine their career objectives, select a career focus area for the latter part of high school and participate in a more advanced level of WBL (Johnson, et. al., 2008). Work-Based Learning programmes strive to equip individuals and communities with skills in various vocational areas of interest such as auto mechanics, vulcanizing, electrical installation, block and brick making, welding and fabrication, carpentry, soap and pomade making, baking and confectionary skills, barbing and hair dressing, computer literacy skills, among others. Work-based learning gives individuals the chance to discover things you can't learn in a classroom. Work-based learning is beneficial to both students and employers, since it can help students improve academically. It helps them learn how the things they learn in the classroom are connected to the real world. It's also a great way to explore career options. Work-

based learning can improve student motivation, attendance, and graduation rates. It can also improve the school's relationship with the community.

Work-based learning helps employers reduce their recruitment and training costs. It also helps them hire better-prepared employees who understand workplace expectations. WBL offers students the critical opportunity to experience how a classroom instruction connects to the work-world and future career prospects as well as job opportunities. In specific terms WBL makes it possible for active collaborative participation of students, educators, employers, parents and appropriate agencies and community representations; development of learning and work-place competencies, motivation of students to stay in school, improvement of students' performance, improvement of graduate employability, increased awareness of non-traditional career opportunities as well as student's ability to identify career pathways.

Despite the numerous beneficial potentials of work-based learning, it is facing a lot of challenges which hinders its effectiveness in Nigerian technical institutions and training centers. The quality of skill acquisition and occupational training provided by work-based learning programmes appears to be poor and inefficient. Since it has failed to equip the work-based learners with the necessary vocational skills, technical knowledge and work habits are needed to secure employment and job creation. The unabated increase in youth unemployment rate in Nigeria poses a huge burden of conscience on the quality of work-based learning programme being delivered at the moment. This state of affairs demands that extra efforts be made in the non-traditional dimensions (i.e. schooling) to ensure that graduates of work-based learning programmes and TVET programmes become job creators and employers of labour, rather than job seekers. It is obvious that there is an improvement gap to be filled to enhance effectiveness of work-based learning programmes in North central Nigeria. It is therefore imperative to investigate the needed improvement in work-based learning for quality occupational training in Minna metropolis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Work-Based Learning is a strategy that allows young people to spend time with adults whether in a mentoring relationship, role model situation, or informational interaction to learn about careers. Its aim is to make learning relevant by incorporating industry valued standards to inform curricula, by providing opportunities for contextual and applied learning, and by promoting program continuity in education and training. The theories of work-based learning are based on the belief that knowledge is constructed and influenced by social interaction. Most educators and learning theorists accept the fact that learning is constructed; more recent work has focused on how this happens. According to Piaget in Brainerd (1988) the child constructs learning through a combination of biological development and experience. The child's ability to process information is dependent on his or her level of biological maturity; it qualitatively changes as the child moves through distinct developmental stages. Experiences provided in WBL have great potentials in promoting child's learning.

In early childhood, the child responds to the world in concrete, literal terms; during the middle school years, the child becomes capable of understanding and

manipulating more abstract information. Within each stage, and without conscious thought, the developing child creates increasingly sophisticated conceptual schemas or mental maps in order to understand and respond to sensory information. When new information does not fit easily into existing structures, the mental landscape is altered as the child creates a new structure or makes existing structures more complex. Learning is facilitated by situations that require children to both assimilate and accommodate new information.

Social cognition theory according to Vygotsky (1989) emphasizes the primary role of culture in knowledge construction. It argues that culture provides the child with both the content of thought and the tools for thinking about it. In other words, cognitive development occurs as children acquire information from the surrounding culture, typically processing it, directly or indirectly, through interactions with a teacher, parent or friends who transfer knowledge from that culture. As a result of this interaction, knowledge is shaped as children increase their understanding of the world.

Situated learning theorist, Lave (1989) also holds that social interaction plays a major role in constructing knowledge. Learning arises out of a specific activity, context, and culture. It occurs in a community of practice organized around certain beliefs, behaviors, and knowledge. Beginning learners remain at the periphery of such groups until they begin to learn through interaction and collaboration with others and acquire the group's core knowledge. Eventually, their growing expertise brings them to the group's center. Learning is situated in the places where young people spend time and in the relationships they have with those around them.

Positive youth development theory has re-evaluated how adults view young people and the challenges they face. Positive growth is most likely to occur in an environment that recognizes and builds on young peoples' abilities rather than simply working to prevent weaknesses. According to Pittman and Fleming (1991) positive youth development refers to an ongoing process in which meaningful content, practice, and opportunities for active participation allow young people build the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and experiences that equip them for life. It is also a deliberate approach for working with young people that can be implemented in various settings. Its practices are grounded in the tenets of developmental theory, beginning with the notion that young people develop at various rates along several dimensions; intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically (Catalano, 1998)

Catalano recognizes that supportive environments promote growth in all these areas. Following psychologist Abraham Maslow's well known hierarchy, it calls for learning environments that address young people's basic needs so they can successfully meet higher order challenges. Abraham (1980) acknowledges Urie Bronfenbrenner's understanding that young people experience the world in concentric, expanding circles of family, school, community, and the larger society. Effective learning environments find ways to intentionally connect all of the systems that affect young people's lives, home, school, and community.

The impact of work-based learning in occupational training and in improving the performance skills of workers are enormous. Its capability to improve learners'

academic understanding and achievement is also remarkable but the impact of this is yet to be felt among work-based learners in Niger state. This is manifested in the high number of unproductive and skill deficient learners in various occupations found around the state. The reason for this shortcoming is yet to be known as there is not enough empirical evidence to explain the reason for these learning challenges among work-based learners. This has left one with the question of whether the learners are aware of how work-based learning are currently carried out, its' role in skill acquisition, and the strategies for improving work-based learning programme. Providing answers to these questions calls for the need for the study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The current practice of work-based learning in Nigeria is deficient in terms of curriculum and method of instruction. It is characterized by poor training method, outdated and inadequate training facilities and pedagogical incompetence on the part of the trainer. In the apprenticeship system for instance, mode of instruction is by observation and imitation since the training is unorganized, haphazard and unstructured. The essence of work-based learning programmes which focuses on vocational skills acquisition is yet to be felt at both individual and community levels especially within Minna metropolis. This resulted to the apparent poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and general underdevelopment in the area. The dilemma that this situation creates is whether these work-based learning programmes do normally have any bearing with the social, cultural and economic contexts of their beneficiaries. Also, the economic factors such as occupational type, employment status and poverty levels of target participants are feared to have not being given adequate consideration in the process of designing such programmes. The extent to which these factors matter may equally not have been ascertained by providing agencies. One fundamental problem with non-formal education and training programmes is the top-bottom approach in their design and delivery process. This approach tends to make well intentioned programmes look like imposition on the people with far many negative effects. Many work-based learning programmes have been carried out over time in the North central geo political zone of Nigeria without visible impact in the area. Consequently, unemployment, illiteracy, youth restiveness and glaring underdevelopment are still prevalent. There seems to be some disconnection between these programmes and the unimpressive situation in Minna metropolis. To unearth this disconnection, this study investigated the needed improvement in work-based learning for quality occupational training in Minna metropolis.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the needed improvement in work-based learning for quality occupational training in Minna metropolis.

The study specifically sought to:

1. Determine how WBL is currently carried out.
2. Determine the strategies for improving WBL programme.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions formulated to guide the study:

- How is WBL programme currently carried out?
- What are the strategies for improving WBL programme?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The null hypothesis below tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

- H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the mean responses of TVET teachers and work-based learners on how work-based learning is currently carried out.
- H_{02} : There is no significant difference in the mean responses of TVET teachers and work-based learners on the strategies for improving work-based learning programmes.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design to investigate the needed improvement in work-based learning for quality occupational training in Minna metropolis. Olaitan and Nwoke (1999) defined survey research design as one in which a group of people or items is studied by collecting and analyzing data from people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the study areas which are: Bosso, Maikunkele, Tunga, Chanchaga and Kpakungu which forms the major towns in Minna with a good concentration of technical institutions and vocational training centers. The total population of the study was 150 respondents comprising of 50 TVET teachers and 100 work-based learners evenly selected across the study area

A 30 item questionnaire structured on a 5-point scale response option was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured to indicate the degree to which respondents agree to each item as, strongly agree(SA), agree(A), undecided(UD), disagree (D) and strongly disagree(SD). The response category was assigned numerical values as 5,4,3,2,1. The questionnaire was validated by three TVET teachers/experts selected from Peugeot maintenance /dealership outlet, Minna, Government Technical College- Chanchaga and Federal University of Technology, Minna. Corrections were made appropriately before it was administered. The weighted Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions. Therefore items with mean score below 3.00 (cut off point) were regarded as disagreed while those with mean score of 3.00 and above were regarded as agreed. The t-test inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The t-critical (t-table) value for accepting or rejecting the null hypothesis was ± 1.98 .

RESULTS

Research Question 1

How is work-based learning programme currently carried out?

- H_{01} : There is no significant difference in the mean responses of TVET teachers and work-based learners on how work-based learning is currently carried out.

Table 1: t-test analysis of mean responses of respondents on how work-based learning is currently carried out.

S No.	ITEM STATEMENT	X1	SD1	X2	SD2	t-cal	t-tab	REM
1	WBL programmes are devoid of quality learning activities that effectively use the resources of a work setting	4.75	0.60	3.86	0.40	0.34	1.98	NS
2	WBL programme is carried out without a well laid down curriculum	4.67	0.30	3.05	0.10	0.88	1.98	NS
3	Learning activities are not designed to encourage teamwork, problem solving and collaborative work skills	4.70	1.20	3.11	0.30	0.62	1.98	NS
4	WBL is carried out without appropriate instructional materials	4.69	0.36	3.40	0.70	1.25	1.98	NS
5	WBL activities does not adequately accommodate the pressing and competing demands of the present workplace	4.70	1.21	4.03	0.65	1.21	1.98	NS
6	WBL is carried out without the use of pedagogical methods	4.33	0.83	3.82	1.27	0.60	1.98	NS
7	Learning activities that learners are engaged in are determined by available work to be accomplished on the job	4.68	0.32	4.05	0.81	0.50	1.98	NS
8	Learning activities usually begins with simple tasks and proceeds to the more difficult tasks	4.34	1.00	3.47	0.72	0.59	1.98	NS
9	Tasks and problems assigned to learners often arise from job production concerns rather than learning needs for the students	4.00	1.39	4.06	0.63	0.50	1.98	NS
10	Inadequate formal teaching is carried out in WBL	4.01	1.29	4.75	0.74	0.21	1.98	NS
11	Students take responsibility for their own learning by observing work sequences and identify areas where additional skills are needed	4.10	0.75	3.71	0.11	1.08	1.98	NS
12	Students are provided the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills in real world situation in WBL	4.20	1.30	4.01	0.64	1.12	1.98	NS
13	Students are not strictly supervised in task performance in WBL	4.71	0.45	4.36	0.81	0.18	1.98	NS

14	Proper evaluation of learners is not always carried out	4.56	0.56	4.70	0.72	0.65	1.98	NS
15	Most WBL are not carried out with the right tools and equipment	4.71	0.45	4.45	1.05	1.02	1.98	NS

Analysis on table 1 shows that 15 of the items presented had their weighted mean values ranged from 3.05-4.75. The values are above the cutoff point of 3.00 which implies that the respondents agreed to the items as regards how work-based learning is currently carried out. The t-test analysis revealed that all the items had their t-calculated (t-cal) values less than the t-table (t-tab) value of ± 1.98 . This implies that there was no significant (NS) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the ways in which work-based learning is currently carried out. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What are the strategies for improving work-based learning programme?

H_{02} : There is no significant difference in the mean responses of TVET teachers and work-based learners on the strategies for improving work-based learning programmes.

Table 2: t-test analysis of mean responses of respondents on the strategies for improving work-based learning programmes.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT	X1	SD1	X2	SD2	t-cal	t-tab	REM
16	Restructuring the learning experiences in WBL to focus on actual jobs that will arouse student's interest	4.74	0.68	4.65	0.70	0.44	1.98	NS
17	Developing and reviewing the curriculum for WBL programmes	4.64	0.48	3.73	0.71	0.83	1.98	NS
18	Organizing WBL activities to boost problem solving skills through team work	4.17	1.10	4.80	1.41	0.67	1.98	NS
19	Equipping training workshops in schools and industries with appropriate facilities and instructional materials	4.26	1.15	3.06	0.45	1.26	1.98	NS
20	Designing WBL activities to focus on the pressing demands of the workplace	4.34	0.96	4.05	0.41	1.17	1.98	NS
21	TVET teachers in schools and industries should adopt appropriate pedagogical method in training	4.09	1.39	3.90	1.07	0.65	1.98	NS
22	Structuring learning experiences to be based on learners needs	3.77	0.36	3.75	0.69	0.53	1.98	NS

23	Reviewing TVET teacher training curriculum for effective implementation of work-based learning programme	4.68	0.42	4.10	0.74	0.56	1.98	NS
24	Training sequence for learners should be in gradual progression from known to unknown	3.70	1.12	3.45	1.15	0.66	1.98	NS
25	Organizing in-house work shops, conferences and seminars on WBL for TVET teachers and WBL supervisors	4.04	0.78	4.40	0.67	0.23	1.98	NS
26	Periodically giving TVET students orientation on the relevance of WBL to effective occupational training	4.74	1.01	4.12	0.64	1.19	1.98	NS
27	Work-based learners' placement should strictly be based on area of specialization	4.68	0.45	3.40	0.55	1.15	1.98	NS
28	WBL supervisors should carry out proper monitoring and supervision of students to ensure consistency in skill acquisition	4.11	1.36	3.71	1.15	0.27	1.98	NS
29	Adopting criterion-referenced evaluation to assess students skill proficiency in WBL	4.35	0.96	3.65	1.14	0.87	1.98	NS
30	Establishing strong linkage between industry & training institutions for funding support in terms of facility procurement	4.34	0.96	4.05	0.41	1.22	1.98	NS

Table 2 shows that all the items presented had their weighted mean values ranged from 3.06-4.74. This values are above 3.00 indicating that the respondents agreed to the items on the strategies for improving work-based learning programmes. The t-test analysis shows that all the items had their t-calculated (t-cal) values less than the t-table (t-tab) value of ± 1.98 . This implies that there was no significant (NS) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the strategies for improving work-based learning programmes. Therefore, the null hypothesis was upheld.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

On how work-based learning is currently carried out, the study identified the following major findings among others:

1. WBL programmes are devoid of quality learning activities, curriculum, appropriate instructional materials, team work and pedagogical methods.
2. WBL activities does not adequately accommodate the pressing and competing demands of the present workplace, learning activities depends on the available job task rather than learning needs for the students .

3. Students take responsibility for their own learning by observing work sequences and identify areas where additional skills are needed.
4. Students are not strictly supervised in task performance in WBL as a result proper evaluation of learners is not always carried out.

While on the strategies for improving work-based learning programmes, the study revealed among others the following:

1. Structuring the learning experiences and instructional method in WBL programmes to arouse student's interest in skill acquisition by giving them work-based tasks.
2. Developing curriculum for WBL and reviewing TVET teacher training curriculum for effective implementation of work-based learning through appropriate pedagogical methods.
3. Encouraging industries and business world to provide training support to TVET institutions and funding support in terms of facility procurement and instructional materials.
4. Training workshops in training centers, technical colleges & technological institutions should be updated with current training facilities to reflect the workplaces.
5. Work-based learners' placement should strictly be based on the industry related to their area of specialization and not for the monetary benefit accruable from a particular industry or bank.

DISCUSSION

On how work-based learning is currently carried out, table 1 shows that the TVET teachers and work-based learners agreed with the 15 items presented to them as the actual practice in work-based learning programmes. Table 1 revealed that work-based learning programmes are devoid of appropriate instructional materials, right tools and equipment. This is true because most school workshops and laboratories have poor practical training facilities and do not truly reflect the work place and consequently make work-based learning programmes to be ineffective. This agrees with the views of Bridges (1993) that practical skills are developed and transferable only when training operations are carried out the same way as in work environment and with the right tools and equipment. This feature conforms to the theory of vocational education which states that "vocational education will effective in proportion; if the training environment is a replica of the work environment" (Prosser (1949) in Amadi, Orikpe & Osinem, 2007).

Okoro (2006) attributed the inadequacy of some work-based learning programmes to the absence of organized learning activities and structured curriculum. The trainer decides out of experience what the trainee should learn and the skill acquisition is usually through observation and imitation of the trainer by the trainee. He also stated that this kind of training is lacking in theoretical content. He pointed out that the trainee is told what to do but not why they have to it in the way specified. He further stated that their creativities and abilities to innovate are not developed. They are therefore

unable to cope with new situations different from their previous experiences. Since work-based learning programmes lacks curriculum, the learning activities are based on neither students needs nor the demands of the workplace but rather learning activities present themselves in haphazard sequence as a result of the job task available or brought by customers. The non existence of laid down curriculum also account for the informal evaluation method which is usually based on the series of satisfaction and approval given by customers and trainers on a performance task carried by trainees (Ogwo,2004).

The acceptance of the items in table 2 shows that the set back to quality occupational training through work-based learning can be improve upon when most of the strategies outlined in table 2 are fully implemented. The opinions of the respondents on item 17, 23 and 25 concerning developing a training curriculum for WBL programmes, reviewing of TVET teacher training curriculum and encouragement of professional teacher development in work-based learning activities and experiences through in-house workshops, conferences and seminars was supported by Okorie (2000) who stated that the new technologies in modern machines demand new work skills and therefore new educational requirements. He added that common reactions to such changes in technology and occupational skills have been the re-training of workers in order to update/upgrade their technical knowledge and vocational skills. This in turn usually requires regular review of TVET curriculum so that school programs can reflect the work place (Ogwo, 2004).

Odigiri and Ogwo(2013) are of the opinion that periodic review of the TVET teacher training curriculum is necessary for effective implementation of quality occupational training through work-based learning. This is true because no educational programme can rise above the quality of its teachers, and no teacher can offer what he or she does not have. Therefore, the learning contents of the curriculum for training technical teachers should be regularly updated and upgraded to incorporate the new work-based learning activities and experiences needed for effective skill acquisition and occupational training. Developing training curriculum; structuring of the learning activities and experiences towards the demand in the workplace and needs of learners are also considered paramount. The views of the respondents are in line with Okoro (1993) who stated that the apprenticeship training which is a common approach to WBL is unorganized, haphazard and inadequate because they are lacking in theoretical content. He pointed out that the apprentice needs theoretical principles to enable them to understand why they do certain operations in the specified way; instead of merely learning by observation and imitation.

On the use of appropriate pedagogical method in training Ogwo and Oranu (2006); Schrenko, (2010) stressed that adopting appropriate pedagogical method have great potentials in enabling students to acquire skills in all three domain (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) of educational objectives. They also stated that the ability of TVET teachers and trainers to select and use appropriate pedagogical method is paramount to effective occupational training. Concerning proper evaluation of learners Ogwo (2000) and Akanji (2008) opined that Criterion-referenced evaluation is very important in

work-based learning programmes since it is devoid of comparison between student's scores but rather focuses on the acquisition of a predetermined level of performance skills before graduation to enable learners function properly in the workplace.

On the hypotheses, the study found out that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on: how work-based learning is currently carried out; and the strategies for improving work-based learning programmes. Hence the opinions of the respondents did not differ significantly in the items identified. The implication of the study is that the current ways of carrying out work-based learning programmes is not satisfactory significant to cope with the new technological challenges in the modern work place. As a result, the work-based learners are faced with a lot of problems in the use of modern tools and equipment, which calls for the need to initiate improvement strategies needed to improve work-based learning for quality occupational training in Minna metropolis. Therefore, the null hypotheses (H_{0_1} and H_{0_2}) were accepted for all the items.

CONCLUSION

With regards to the findings of the study, it is obvious that forming an effective synergy between the world -of-work and the school through active work-based learning contacts and linkages is necessary to improve the quality of skill acquisition and occupational training in any community.

The problems associated with the current ways of carrying out work-based learning programmes in TVET institution, training centers and industries are numerous and accounts for the deficiency in standard performance skills and obsolete skills possess by TVET graduates who has passed through work-based learning programmes. In summary, the work-based learning strategies identified in this study are relevant in our present system and if properly put into effective use are capable of encouraging acquisition of hands-on skills by work-based learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government at various levels, education regulatory bodies, relevant ministries and industries, wealthy Nigerians and other stakeholders should collaborate to fund and supply adequate training facilities to TVET institutions and training centers.
2. Awareness creation through government-industry forum should be instituted considering the fact that most employers presently do not appreciate the importance of such a synergistic relationship between the school and work.
3. Funding of TVET teacher education programmes should be improved substantially through partnership with employers of labour, and business organizations.
4. Periodic training and retraining of TVET teachers and trainers by regularly organizing workshops, seminars and conferences and free access to virtual resources should be employed.

5. Developing training curriculum for work-based learning programmes, reviewing and restructuring of the TVET teacher training curriculum to accommodate work-based learning activities and experiences that have succeeded in other countries.
6. Pre-vocational subjects should be taught at senior primary and junior secondary schools to arouse student's interest in TVET and work-based tasks.

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