

Vocational and Technical Education Teachers' Apathy and Lack of Motivation to Workshop Practice in Developing Society

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ABSTRACT

This study explores and describes the challenges confronting technical institute teachers in VTE dealing with practical skills acquisition in their workshops. Based on the indept analysis adpoted by study, it reveals among other challenges, inadequate supply of instructional materials as well as weak linkages with local industries for hands-on-experience for both instructors and trainees lead to ineffective and inefficient training of students and teachers. This inadequacy in preparation for the job market brought workplace challenges to the graduates. Recommendations made are for stakeholders to complement the effort of government in the provision of training resources. The institution of effective industrial attachment schemes that will enable students to identify and gain practical knowledge required for the workplace through hands-on experience in local organizations, improvement in instructional quality through instructor training initiatives through pre-service and in-service modes are also proffered.

Keywords: Vocational and Technical Education Teachers, Apathy, Lack of Motivation, Workshop Practice

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, and in particular the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, governments are renewing efforts to promote technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with the belief that skill formation enhances productivity and sustains competitiveness in the global economy. According to Bhuwanee (2006), in recent years, concerns have been raised by most African countries about the move towards making VTE complementary to post-basic education. Abban and Quarshie (1996) point out that the paradigm shift towards practical skills training with VTE in Africa is increasingly being reshaped to make it more attractive, efficient and effective.

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One of the most important features of VTE, as recognized by African governments, is its orientation towards the world of work with the curriculum emphasizing the acquisition of employable skills. African Union (2007) report also stressed the current vision of African countries in developing a new strategy to revitalize VTE in Africa. The expectation is that VTE will promote skills acquisition through competency-based training. If this vision should materialize, it will require proficiency testing for employment in order to promote sustainable livelihoods and responsible citizenship

To achieve this goal of practical skills acquisition, Roeske (2003) explains that Industrial Skills Development Centre in close collaboration with the Association of Industries (AI) and the Employers Association (EA), was tasked to harness the financial and material resources required for achieving excellence in skills training. A number of other institutions like Integrated Community Centre for Employable Skills (ICCES), the Opportunities Industrialization Centre (OIC) and the Department of Social Welfare's Vocational Centers are part of government's effort to produce skillful technical personnel. Other innovative programmes like the Skills Training and Employment Placement (STEP) and the Vocational Skills Project (VSP) were also put in place to turn out skillful technical personnel for the job market (Roeske, 2003). The Regional Appropriate Technology Industrial Service (RATIS) and Intermediate Technology Transfer Units (ITTU) are also providing VTE trainees with additional and enriched practical skills to enable them set up their own enterprises. But all these interventions have not yielded the expected result.

Development of TVET in Africa

Ngome (1992) notes that VTE in Sub-Saharan Africa attracted increasing attention during the 1970s, because of the expectations that practical skills training as offered by VTE institutions would address the need for skilled labor. As a result of these developments, many African governments started technical and vocational education institutions modelled after those of their former colonial powers. The technical skills acquired were supposed to raise individuals' job prospects and productivity. As a result, enterprises were expected to become more competitive and make a greater contribution to economic growth, on condition that those trained in these institutions actually matched the requirements of the labor market.

However, public TVET institutions, according to Atchoarena and Esquieu (2002), continue to attract a great deal of criticism. First, they were unable to train skilled workers to meet the requirements of enterprises and were unaware of the need for continuing education which also subjected to teaching apathy and workshop practice. Second, they were extremely costly. Often, the graduates of these institutions joined the ranks of the unemployed, an indication that the training provided did not match the jobs available. In many countries, including Ghana, and Nigeria public VTE institutions have not been able to adapt to the new structure of the labor market and the new skill requirements of companies in both the formal and

informal sectors. The teacher hate rate of practicals in the workshop is also a contributive factor. It is commonly accepted that all forms of education will help people to improve themselves and to get better jobs, but many parents believe that only a university education will offer their children the opportunity to acquire a good job. As a result, many countries find that the number of graduates from universities far exceeds the capacity of the labour market to provide appropriate employment. At the same time, these countries are unable to attract enough people to train for those positions of greater need, which might be ,blue collar jobs that might appear to involve manual labor, be dangerous, dirty and difficult (Commonwealth of Learning, 2001).

Challenges of TVET in Africa

Lauglo and Lillis (1988) posit that one dilemma which has preoccupied many countries for a long time is whether to concentrate investment in general or vocational education. But, in human capital terms, general education creates ,general human capital and VTE leads to specific human capital. The former has the advantage of flexibility and, therefore, the possibility of moving from one job to another, while the latter does not. In this regard, many people consider general education as a suitable type of education that is capable of responding to economic and labor force changes in society. On the other hand, technical and vocational education has the advantage of imparting specific job-relevant skills which make the worker more readily suitable for a given job and more productive. Hence, both are important. It is in this light that most educational systems in Africa try to combine both general and vocational streams of education in varying proportions to suit their educational goals and aspirations. Conversely, Carnoy (1993) notes that despite the advantages of imparting job-related skills and the high level of unemployment amongst those with general education, the recognition and preference for general education by the youth in the Sub-Saharan Africa is high. The reason for this is that personnel in administrative and leadership roles are generally chosen from people with a general education background. Therefore, talking about the importance of VTE, without any deliberate action to follow up the rhetoric, will not change its poor image and low status.

Teachers Apathy to Workshop Practice due to Lack of Motivation

Despite the various interventions to ensure that technical institute graduates and the teachers of VTE are well equipped with the requisite practical skills for the job market and the campaign about the benefits of technical and vocational education, it has not attracted the youth in the region to move into technical and vocational training at all because most technical graduates have not been motivated and able to enter into employment in their respective fields of training. The poor transition from school to work by the youth has a large group of VTE graduates, who are mostly teenagers, leave to the part of the country for menial jobs. This

trend of affairs may suggest that training programmes offered by the Palmer (2005) subjects this to teacher apathy of practical in the workshops, technical institutes probably fail to develop the skills required for employment within the region and beyond.

Causes of Teachers Apathy and Lack of Motivation

Nyankov (1996) summarizes these causes which include;

- 1) Poor quality in the delivery of VTE programmes;
- 2) High cost of training;
- 3) Training not suited to actual socio-economic conditions;
- 4) Disregard of the needs of the informal sector; and
- 5) Disregard of the labor market and high unemployment rate among graduates

In an attempt to address these causes, Reddan and Harrison (2010) argue that VTE institutions need to restructure their programmes to be responsive to the needs of the job market, especially the industry. To achieve this goal, VTE curricula must focus on outcomes in terms of the skills, knowledge and attitudes required industry. That is, provision should be responsive to the demands of industry.

King and McGrath (2004) argue that with VTE being more diverse because of the changes in the labor market, it should be able to integrate the youth into the working world. Given the prevailing economic trend, UNESCO (2004) identified the two major objectives of VTE as the urgent need to train the workforce for self-employment and the necessity to raise the productivity of the informal sector. They point out that lack of resources have led to cuts in the volume of training provided in public institutions. These cuts are a hindrance to pursuing the critical objectives of providing training and raising production.

Considering the expensive nature of VTE as a form of education, it is imperative that an expanded system with necessary and adequate facilities and equipment will lead to the effectiveness of the system. Related studies carried out by Islam and Mia (2007) in Bangladesh reveals that both formal and non-formal VTE lacked an effective linkage between training and the world of work. It further noted that because of its lack of coherent mode, practical skills training which does not produce the requisite skills for the job market. Additionally, the trainees also lacked training experience, initiative and motivation to discharge their duties effectively.

Causes of Teachers Apathy to Workshop Practice in VTE

Islam and Mia (2007) express the following as the general causes

- 1) There is inadequate provision of training materials
- 2) The class size has negative effect on effective practical teaching
- 3) There is inadequate provision of basic workshop tools and equipment
- 4) Little attention is given to industrial attachment
- 5) Parents are not contributing to the purchase of additional training materials.

- 6) Inadequate practical training given to teachers affect the practical training of students
- 7) Lack of industrial attachment for teachers affect practical skills training
- 8) VTE Teachers develop apathy to workshop practice due to lack of motivation
- 9) Inappropriate teaching methods also affect practical skill training
- 10) Inability to control large class size during practical skills training
- 11) There is sufficient practical skills training for students
- 12) Lack of training materials has no effect on students' competency levels
- 13) Students have not adequate time to practice requisite skills at school during training
- 14) The practical component in technical curriculum is effectively used
- 15) Quality of training at school helps students get employment on the job market

The study revealed that lack of resources has led to cuts in the volume of training expected to be provided in technical institutes. These cuts are a hindrance to a pursuit of the critical objectives of providing training and subsequent job placement of technical institute graduates. Considering the expensive nature of VTE as a form of education, it is logic that VTE system will be effective if resources are adequately supplied to march the expanding intake Teachers and if highly motivated to teach practical skills when there is a regular supply of instructional materials thus ensuring active participation of trainees.

The linkage between the technical institutes on the one hand and the industry on the other is not strong enough. The technical institutes have not been able to access opportunities for industrial attachment for both teachers and students. As a result, the practical skill training is not closely related to the requirements at the world of work. Technical institute graduates lacked the requisite skills for the job market, so had few chances of gaining employment. This situation left many of the technical graduates unemployed.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explores and describes the challenges confronting technical institute teachers in VTE dealing with practical skills acquisition in their workshops. Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that there is generally inadequacy in the provision of instructional materials which leads to focusing more on theoretical teaching leading to trainees lacking proficiency in their chosen fields of specialization. Large class sizes do not match with inadequate supply and provision of training resources. These inadequacies negatively affect the necessary skills for the world of work. In addition, the importance of industrial attachment is relegated in priority. This seriously affects training with a resulting mismatch with job market expectations. Finally, there are inappropriate teaching methods used for practical teaching. In view of the findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. To address the short supply of training materials and basic hand tools for

- skill training in the technical institutes, all stakeholders should contribute in providing adequate training materials; encouraged to possess own basic hand tools.
2. Large class sizes should be discouraged in the technical institutes. Efforts should be made in securing more facilities to match the upsurge of student intake into the technical institutes.
 3. The technical institutes should ensure that practical lessons are both effective and efficient to achieve the desired result of imparting the practical skills necessary for the world of work.
 4. For the realization of quality in practical skill training, the technical institutes should vigorously promote industrial attachment programmes for both staff and students.
 5. Finally, to encourage students to enter into self-employment at the end of their course, it would be appropriate if the technical institutes were to introduce a tool-acquisition scheme under the production unit system. By means of this scheme, the students would use the incomes realized from the income-generating activities they undertake to acquire basic tools for themselves. This arrangement, over a specified period, could assist trainees to acquire some basic tools to help them take off smoothly in the world of work, especially in the area of self-employment individually or co-operatively on a micro- or small-scale basis.

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