

IMPROVING JOB PERFORMANCE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS THROUGH WORK-BASED LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study sought ways of improving job performance of students of technical and vocational education through work-based learning in Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. A total of 245 respondents were used for the study, comprising 115 workers of industries and 130 teachers of technology education randomly selected from industries and tertiary institutions offering technical and vocational education courses. A thirty-five items questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The data collected from the research questions were analysed using Mean and Standard Deviation, while, and hypotheses were tested using t-test at .05 level of probability. Findings from the study revealed among others that: Work-Based (WB) learning has the potential of improving the job performance of Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) graduates because it allows student to observe the work world so as to develop workplace skills; WBL helps student understand workplace expectations. Findings also revealed that the integration of WBL for improving job performance of TVET students is constrained by the fact that the National Policy on Education places no emphasis on the need for WBL. Similarly, the study revealed that WBL can be integrated in TVET for improved skills through greater collaboration between technical and vocational institutions and the industries for effective WBL experience. It was recommended among others that for an improved job performance by students of TVET, there should be a review and restructuring of TVET curriculum to accommodate WBL experiences that have much impact on technical education.

Keywords: job performance, technical vocational education and training, work-based learning

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is a program designed to equip the youth with skills, knowledge and habit that would enable them secure both paid and self-employment successfully. The National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004) defined technical and vocational education as those aspects of educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and other related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge related to occupation in various sectors of economic and social life. Technical and Vocational Education prepares individuals for gainful employment as semi-skilled or skilled workers, technicians, or sub-professionals in recognized occupations. TVET also equips individuals with new technical skills

necessary for emerging occupations in advanced technical education program. One of the goals of technical and vocational education and training is to provide trained manpower in applied science, technology, and business particularly at crafts, advanced crafts levels necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development; and to give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who should be self-reliant economically (National Policy on Education, 2004). TVET is designed to equip individuals with both practical and theoretical skills and knowledge needed in a particular vocation or vocations which helps the beneficiary to be self-reliant thereby making him/her to earn a living. TVET is designed to develop skills, abilities, understanding attitudes, work habits and appreciation encompassing knowledge and information needed by workers to enter and make progress in

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significant

- Ho1: There will be no significant difference in the mean response of workers of industries and teachers of technology education on the importance of work-based learning experience in improving the job performance of TVET graduates.
- Ho2: There will be no significant difference in the mean response of workers of industries and teachers of technology education on the constraints to effective integration of work-based learning experience in TVET institutions in Nigeria.
- Ho3: There will be no significant difference in the mean response of workers of industries and teachers of technology education on the ways of integrating work-based learning experience for improved skill performance in TVET institutions in Nigeria.

Methodology

The study is a survey research carried out in five (5) institutions offering Technical and Vocational Education program and three (3) selected industries in Nigeria. The institutions include Federal University of Technology, Minna; Federal Polytechnic, Edah, Kogi State; Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nasarawa

Polytechnic, Keffi, Nasarawa State; and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Bauchi State. The industries include Kainji Hydro-Electric Power Station, New-Bussa, Niger State; Dantata and Sawoe Construction Company, Abuja; and White-Heart Furniture, Minna, Niger State. The population of the study comprised of workers of industries and teachers of technology education in institutions offering Technical and Vocational Education courses in Nigeria. A stratified random sampling was used for the study since the respondents were randomly selected, and divided into strata. Each stratum comprises of workers of industries and teachers of technology education. A total of 245 respondents were sampled from the population out of which 115 were workers of industries and 130 were teachers of technology education. Questionnaire was developed by the researchers containing 35 items and divided into three sub-sections in line with the research questions. Data collected for the study were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation, and t-test. A four level scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) was used as response continuous. A mean of 2.50 and above was considered agreed while responds below 2.50 was considered disagreed and also an inferential statistics t-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the importance of Work-Based Learning experience in improving the job performance of TVET graduates in Nigeria?

Table 1:

Mean Response of Workers of Industries and Teachers of Technology education on the importance of Work-Based Learning experience in improving the job performance of TVET graduates in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_t	SD _t	Remarks
1	It improves learner's self-confidence and motivation	2.54	0.50	2.52	0.49	2.53	0.50	Agreed
2	It improves attractiveness of TVE program	3.28	0.53	3.42	0.49	3.35	0.51	Agreed
3	It helps students to make better decisions and plans	3.30	0.45	3.39	0.49	3.35	0.47	Agreed
4	It Keeps academic and occupational circular up-to-date through regular integration between school and industry.	3.23	0.42	3.63	0.48	3.43	0.45	Agreed
5	It provides opportunity for individualized instruction	3.75	0.44	3.72	0.45	3.74	0.45	Agreed
6	It allows students to learn work terminology, work environment and business and industry protocol.	3.30	0.45	3.39	0.49	3.35	0.47	Agreed
7	It helps student understand workplace expectations	3.39	0.51	3.63	0.54	3.51	0.53	Agreed
8	It allows student to observe the work world so as to develop workplace skills	3.77	0.42	3.67	0.47	3.72	0.45	Agreed
9	It helps the learner to develop career management skills	3.32	0.47	3.52	0.50	3.42	0.49	Agreed
10	It helps the learner to build in skills and competences required to operate in a workplace	2.91	0.50	2.81	0.66	2.86	0.58	Agreed
11	It helps the learner to develop the spirit of craftsmanship and deep professional expertise	3.28	0.53	3.42	0.49	3.35	0.51	Agreed
12	It expose students to state-of-the-art practices and technology	3.66	0.47	3.53	0.49	3.60	0.48	Agreed
13	It helps the learner to become employable	3.30	0.45	3.39	0.49	3.35	0.47	Agreed
14	It expose learner to different ways of solving problems in his field	3.46	0.72	3.48	0.50	3.47	0.61	Agreed
15	It provides the learner with the opportunity to obtain individualized instruction	3.18	0.72	3.16	0.63	3.17	0.68	Agreed

Table 1 revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items as the importance of Work-Based Learning experience in

improving the job performance of TVET graduates- in Nigeria with lowest mean score of 2.53 and higher mean of 3.74

employment on a useful and productive basis. It is designed in such a way that individual who acquire TVET would simultaneously be exposed to both practical and theoretical experiences during the training period.

However, TVET institutions seem to be faced with inadequate or obsolete training facilities and other factors which might affect the outcome of their training. Ojimba (2013) opined that the practical nature of technical and vocational education makes it unique in content and approach thereby requiring special care and attention. Consequently, where technical and vocational education is provided with insufficient practical skills, its achievements become haphazard. Unfortunately, the TVET institutions are not well equipped to provide the needed practical skills and knowledge, requiring the need to collaborate with the workplace in order to avoid disconnect between TVET institutions and workplace. This is meant to enable TVET graduates keep abreast with challenges in the industry. Much concern is centred on the quality of standards and outcomes of educational practices in Nigeria and other developing countries of the world. The industries have continued to cry out that there is lack of harmony between what learning institutions are doing and the demand of the modern workplace. These situation among others could be checked through work-based, internship, apprenticeships among others. According to National Centre on Secondary Education and Training (2005), Work-Based Learning (WBL) is an institutional arrangement in which learners are concurrently exposed to both work and learning experiences. It is an act of learning technical, academic, and employability skills by engaging in real work environment. Okon (2011) defines Work-Based Learning as experiential learning programs that use the work environment as an important component of the curriculum implementation. Through Work-Based Learning, structured learning experiences

are provided to the learners through the collaborative efforts of employers of labor 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 is often coordinated with school-based learning which offers project and problem focused teaching and learning, rather than the more abstract and theoretical teaching and learning that often characterized the conventional classrooms teaching and learning process. Urquiola (1997) explained that WBL is designed to help the learner in acquiring knowledge or skill related to employment in particular occupations or industries; providing career exploration and planning; learning all aspects of an industry; increasing personal and social competence related to work in general; and enhancing students' motivation and academic achievement. According to United State Office of Statistics, Career and Technical Education (2014), WBL provides students with the opportunity to learn a variety of skills by expanding the walls of classroom learning to include the community. It explained that Work-Based Learning provides opportunities for students to learn a variety of skills through rigorous academic preparation with hands-on career development experiences under the guidance of adult mentors. Students learn to work in teams, solve problems, and meet employers' expectations.

Work-Based Learning is important because it provides active participation of educators; employees, students, parents, appropriate agency and community representatives with learning and workplace competencies. This allows participants stay in school, and yet improve their employability skills; increased awareness of non-traditional career opportunities; and help students in identifying career pathways. WBL benefits

students by exposing them to adult role modeling; improving scholastic student motivation; try out classroom learning in the workplace; exploring career options; helping students make better decisions and plans; improving post-secondary prospects; helping students understand workplace expectations; and exposing students to state-of-the-art practices and technology. Work-based learning activities include apprenticeships, career fairs, field studies, guest speakers, job shadows, and student internships. Amadi (2013) opined that although Work-Based Learning programs are presented in a variety of ways, they aim at the common goal of providing learners with experiential exposure in the work-world, and to guarantee eventual smooth transition to the world-of-work upon graduation of the learner. Amadi listed some of the Work-Based Learning programs relevant to Technical and Vocational Education and training to include: industrial training, field trips, excursion, job shadowing, school-based enterprises and school entrepreneurial ventures, internship/practicum, clinical work experiences, cooperative work experiences, youth apprenticeship among others. Each of these Work-Based Learning experiences has its own mode of operation. Therefore, training and requirement varies, but irrespective of learning provided to the learners, it must provide such learning experiences that must follow a progressive path that can be initiated at early schooling and continue through secondary to post-secondary level. In Nigeria, the number of technical and vocational education graduates been produced annually is numerous, most of whom have little or no skills-needed to perform adequately in the industries. This has led to the increasing number of unemployed graduates on the streets that are usually half-baked, because of their lack of competences for employment (both paid and self employment). Similarly, the seemingly absence of partnership between industries and learning environment

(Okorie, 2000) might be responsible for poor job performance by TVET professionals. It is in this premise that the study intends to determine ways for Improving the Job Performance of Technical and Vocational Education Graduates through Work-Based Learning Experience in Nigeria. This is with a view to producing quality TVET graduates that can compete with the requirement of the modern workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The study determined ways for improving job performance of technical vocational education and training graduates through work-based learning experience in Nigeria. Specifically, the study identifies the:

1. Importance of work-based learning experience in improving the job performance of TVET graduates.
2. Constraints to effective integration of work-based learning experience in TVET institutions in Nigeria.
3. Various ways of integrating work-based learning experience for improved skill performance by TVET graduates in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions posed guided the study:

1. What is the importance of work-based learning experience in improving the job performance of TVET graduates?
2. What are the constraints to effective integration of work-based learning experience in TVET institutions in Nigeria?
3. What are the various ways for integrating work-based learning experience for improved skill performance by TVET graduates in Nigeria?

Research Question 2

What are the constraints to effective integration of Work-Based Learning experience in TVET institutions in Nigeria?

Table 2:

Mean response of Workers of Industries and Teachers of Technology education on the constraints to effective integration of Work-Based Learning experience in TVET institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	Remarks
16	National Policy on Education Places little or no emphasis on Work-Base Learning	3.74	0.44	3.53	0.49	3.64	0.47	Agreed
17	Technical and Vocational institutions are poorly funded to cope with cost of engaging in other Work-Base Learning Programmes	3.70	0.47	3.55	0.49	3.63	0.48	Agreed
18	Poor collaborative relationship between work world and schools	3.66	0.47	3.53	0.49	3.60	0.48	Agreed
19	Most identified Work-Base Learning forms are presently not integrated in the curriculum of technical and vocational education training	3.49	0.50	3.45	0.49	3.47	0.50	Agreed
20	Industrial and employers of labour are scarcely informed on their role in the implementation of technical and vocational education curriculum	3.24	0.42	3.35	0.48	3.30	0.45	Agreed
21	Lack of commitment on the part of school-based supervisors	3.30	0.47	3.30	0.45	3.30	0.46	Agreed
22	Lack of commitment on the part of work-site supervisors.	2.54	0.50	2.52	0.49	2.53	0.50	Agreed
23	Low level awareness on the need for collaboration between the school instructors and the industries	3.50	0.50	3.58	0.49	3.54	0.50	Agreed
24	Technical and vocational education training instructors' poor access to relevant Work-Base Learning program	3.70	0.47	3.55	0.49	3.63	0.48	Agreed
25	Work-base learning program is capital intensive.	2.47	0.90	1.99	0.89	2.23	0.90	Disagreed

Table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed with nine items as the constraints to effective integration of Work-Based Learning experience in TVET institutions

in Nigeria with mean scores ranging between 2.53 as lowest and 3.64 as highest. However, item 25 with mean score of 2.23 was disagreed.

Research Question 3

What are the various ways of integrating work-based learning experience for improved skill performance TVET institutions in Nigeria?

Table 3:

Mean responses of workers of industries and Teachers of Technology education on the ways of integrating work-based learning experience for improved skill performance in TVET institutions in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	Remarks
26	There should be greater collaboration between technical and vocational institutions and the industries for effective work-base learning experience	3.66	0.47	3.49	0.50	3.56	0.49	Agreed
27	Technical and Vocational education curriculum should be revised in other to accommodate more work-base learning experiences	3.71	0.45	3.45	0.50	3.58	0.48	Agreed
28	Technical and Vocational Education Training teachers should be encouraged to undertake professional courses bordering in Work-base Learning experiences	3.67	0.47	3.35	0.48	3.51	0.48	Agreed
29	Placement of students to industries should be carried out by the school and such students should be properly supervised	3.32	0.47	3.52	0.50	3.42	0.49	Agreed
30	In-house workshops, talk shops or conferences and seminars on Work-Base Learning should be organized regularly for Technical and vocational education teachers.	3.39	0.51	3.63	0.54	3.51	0.53	Agreed
31	Work-Base Learning placement officers/coordinators should be very knowledgeable and experienced in various Work-Base Learning experiences.	3.30	0.47	3.60	0.49	3.45	0.48	Agreed
32	Technical and vocational education policy should be revised so as to place more emphasis on work-base learning experiences	3.56	0.52	3.57	0.50	3.57	0.51	Agreed
33	School-based coordinators of work-base learning should be provided with adequate incentives so as to ensure greater supervision of students on any work-base learning experience	3.70	0.46	3.64	0.48	3.67	0.47	Agreed
34	Regular inspection/supervision of students on Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) or any work-base learning experience.	3.66	0.47	3.49	0.50	3.56	0.49	Agreed
35	Students should be exposed to the world of work on a yearly basis through annual placement to industries	3.30	0.47	3.60	0.49	3.45	0.48	Agreed

Table 3 revealed that the respondents agreed with all the items as ways of integrating work-based learning experience

for improved skill performance in TVET institutions in Nigeria with mean scores of 3.42 as lowest and 3.67 as highest.

Hypothesis 1

There will be no significant difference in the mean response of workers of industries and teachers of technology education on the importance of Work-Base Learning experience in improving the job performance of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) graduates.

Table 4:

T-test analysis of mean responses of workers of industries and technology education teachers on the importance of Work-Base Learning experience in improving the job performance of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) graduates.

Status of Respondents	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	Decision
Workers of industries	115	49.67	7.58	243	-1.04	Not
Teachers of technology education	130	50.68	7.66			Significant

The analysis in Table 4 reveals that the t-cal value is less than the t-table value. This means that the differences in the mean responses of workers of industries and technology education teachers were not statistically significant. Therefore, the null

hypothesis was accepted regarding the importance of Work-Base Learning experience in improving the job performance of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) graduates.

Hypothesis 2

There will be no significant difference in the mean response of workers of industries and teachers of technology education on the constraints to effective integration of Work-Base Learning experience in Technical and Vocational Education program.

Table 5:

T-test analysis of mean responses of workers of industries and technology education teachers on the constraints to effective integration of Work-Base Learning experience in Technical and Vocational Education program.

Status of Respondents	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	Decision
Workers of industries	115	33.34	5.14	243	1.49	Not
Teachers of technology education	130	32.35	5.25			Significant

The analysis in Table 5 reveals that the t-cal value is less than the t-table value. This means that the differences in the mean responses of workers of industries and technology education teachers were not statistically significant. Therefore, the null

hypothesis was accepted regarding the constraints to effective integration of Work-Based Learning experience in technical and vocational education programme.

Hypothesis 3

There will be no significant difference in the mean response of workers of industries and teachers of technology education on the the ways of integrating work-based learning experience for improved skill performance in TVET institutions in Nigeria

Table 6:

T-test analysis of Mean responses of workers of industries and Teachers of Technology education on the ways of integrating work-based learning experience for improved skill performance in TVET institutions in Nigeria

Status of Respondents	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	Decision
Workers of industries	115	35.27	4.76	243	-0.11	Not
Teachers of technology education	130	35.34	5.34			Significant

The analysis in Table 6 reveals that the t-cal value is less than the t-table value. This means that the differences in the mean responses of workers of industries and

technology education teachers were not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted regarding the ways of integrating work-based learning

experience for improved skill performance in TVET institutions in Nigeria

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study emerging from Table 1 reveals that Work-based learning is of enormous importance in improving the job performance of graduates of industrial and technology education training (TVET). Findings show that Work-Based learning can improve learner's self-confidence and motivation; and help students to make better decisions and plans; allows student to observe the work world so as to develop workplace skills; also helps student understand workplace expectations. It also reveals that work-base learning helps the learner to build in skills and competences required to operate in a workplace; and also helps the learner to develop the spirit of craftsmanship and deep professional expertise. This is attested to by Utah State Office of Education, Career and Technical Education (2014) who stated that through Work-Based Learning, students have the opportunity to see how classroom instruction connects to the world of work and future career opportunities. Therefore, work-Base learning when properly conducted has the capacity and the capability of turning around technical and vocational education sector through the production of competent graduates who possess the needed skills both practical and theoretical to run and control our industries. Findings from Table 2 reveal the constraints to the effective integration of Work-base learning for improving job performance of graduates of technical and vocational education training. These include that the National Policy on Education Places little or no emphasis on Work-Base Learning and that technical and vocational institutions are poorly funded to cope with cost of engaging in other Work-Based learning Programmes; most identified Work-Base Learning forms are presently not integrated in the curriculum of technical and vocational education training in Nigeria; and Poor collaborative

relationship between work world and schools. This is line with Holmes (1995) who stated that the failure of the Nigeria's College of Education system in implementing a reliable Work-Based Learning -TVET synergy has been attributed among other factors to educational policies and curricula that are deficient in prescribing these modes of skills teaching and training. Other constraints are that the industrial and employers of labour are scarcely informed on their role in the implementation of technical and vocational education curriculum; and Low level awareness on the need for collaboration between the school instructors and the industries. Also included is lack of commitment on the part of school-base supervisors and work-site supervisors. This is in concordance with Johnson, Sword, and Habegger (2004) who blamed the poor skills development during SIWES programme on poor supervision and mobilization by school supervisors. Undoubtedly, work-based learning is poorly integrated in technical and vocational education training as its consequences are widely visible in the number of graduates that roam the streets of Nigeria looking for job. Therefore, government, employers in industries, and stakeholders in the field of technical and vocational education should collaborate with each other to make work-base learning effective and reliable.

Findings from Table 3 reveal the ways of integrating work-base learning experience for improved skill performance. These include that there should be greater collaboration between technical and vocational institutions and the industries for effective work-base learning experience; Technical and Vocational education curriculum should be revised in other to accommodate more work-based learning experiences; Technical and Vocational Education Training teachers should be

encouraged to undertake professional courses bordering in Work-base Learning experiences; and that Technical and vocational education policy should be revised so as to place more emphasis on work-based learning experiences. Others include that School-based coordinators of work-base learning should be provided with adequate incentives so as to ensure greater supervision of students on any work-based learning experience; and that Students should be exposed to the world of work on a yearly basis through annual placement to industries. Amadi (2013) stated that forming an effective synergy between the work-world and the school through work-based learning contacts can be improved upon by first reviewing the National Education Policy and curricula to embody the Work-Based Learning component. For effective job delivery or performance by graduates of technical and vocational education training, the teaching of both theoretical and practical skills must be effective and efficient; this can only be achieved through the work-base learning programme. Therefore, pragmatic steps have to be taken by government and employers of labour to ensure a greater job performance by graduates of technical and vocational education training through work-base learning.

Findings of the hypothesis show that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the respondents regarding the importance of Work-Based Learning experience in improving the job performance of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) graduates; the constraints to effective integration of Work-Based Learning experience in Technical and Vocational Education programme; and the ways of integrating work-based learning experience for improved skill performance. This means that the respondents share the same opinion on the importance of Work-Base Learning experience in improving the job performance of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) graduates; the constraints to effective integration of

Work-Based Learning experience in Technical and Vocational Education programme; and the ways of integrating work-base learning experience for improved skill performance respectively.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For an improved skills performance by graduates of technical and vocational education, there must be a greater collaboration between the institutions and the world of work (industries) through work-base learning programme. This can first of all be done by reviewing and restructuring the technical and vocational education policy so as to allow for better involvement of work-base learning programme in the curriculum. There should also be collaboration between the technical institutions and the industries for better training and skills acquisition.

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