



Strategies For Improving Apprenticeship Training Programme In Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State Of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated some of the strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State of Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study is descriptive survey design. A sample of 280 respondents was drawn from the estimated population of 2450 through multi stage sampling techniques via purposive sampling. The instruments titled strategies for improving apprenticeship training (SIAT) which was designed by the researcher was used for data collection. The face and content validities of the scales were duly certified. The reliability of the instruments was established through test re-test method. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.82. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. The results revealed that, there is no significant difference in means responses of trainees and instructors on the roles, constraints and strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme in Rivers state. Based on the results, it was recommended among others that, workshops and seminar should be organized to educate apprentice on how they can establish on their own after graduation. Their areas of emphasis should include how to plan a personal business, role of human and public relation in the promotion of personal business organization and effective utilization of profits.

Keywords: Apprenticeship and Training

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, some states in the country including Rivers State have been over taken by nefarious activities instigated by jobless youths. The youth and their unholy economics activities can be controlled with a well-planned apprenticeship training programme. Charles (2018) added that, the state can advance in technologies if the youths on the street are given adequate training for the development of skills. However, the researchers reiterated that, no individual or group of persons engaged in meaningful economic activities will like to dwell into any form of disorder. A number of factors could be responsible for the incessant repulsive lifestyle in the society. Such factors include; illiteracy, joblessness, gangster's, lack of requisite vocational knowledge for employment in private organization which is the major key players in the nation economic growth to name the least.

Franklin and Ndidika (2000) defined apprenticeship training as an art, trade or craft under a legal agreement defining the relationship between the master, trainees, the duration and the condition of their service. It is a combination of on- the- job training and related instruction in which workers learn the practical aspect of a skilled. In the same vein, Okoro (2000) opined that, apprenticeship training is a type of vocational training in

which an individual attaches him/her self to a master craftsmen or skilled technicians and acquired skills as he/she works with their masters. It is evident that apprenticeship training is one of the methods of producing skilled labor force. However, the researcher defined it as a process, in which an instructor undertakes by contract to train a trainee systematically for a trade for a specified period depending on the types of trade which has been fixed in advance and the course of which the trainees is bound to work in the employers services.

Wodi (2004) advocated that, apprenticeship training is a contract between an employer and a trainee as an apprentice under the terms of this contract, the trainee undertakes to work for the employers for a specified period and the employer undertakes to provide practical experience and instruction which will allow the apprentice to the status of a skilled craftsman. Nwakuo (2003) pointed out that, there are hundreds of artisans spread throughout the country, who are self employed. He contended that many girls acquired skills in needle work, sewing, catering, domestic service, soap making etc.

Similarly, Akanninwor (2005) added that, to bring this initiative even closer to the Rivers State people, in 1985, the then Governor F. Oyakhilome founded Rivers State Skill acquisitions authority which developed various vocational training programme to help unemployed school leavers to acquire relevant vocational skills to function properly in self employment. This laudable programme helped several persons to realize their career goal in the various areas of specializations in vocational training such as electrical installation, vehicle mechanics, welding and Fabrication, plumbing, carpentry/joinery, concrete/masonry work, tailoring, Radio/television servicing, barbing etc. He also observed that, the national open apprenticeships Scheme (NOAS) is a branch of the directorate of employment. He lamented that; agency has since taken over the authority, spreading its activities to cover all the states of the federation. By this programme, individual are encourage to pool wasting materials together for reprocessing to produce other useful products. There is also the "school on wheel" programme through which the training specialist used special equipped lorries fitted with machine and tools to areas to serve as workshop.

The researcher advocated that, for the programme to be effective the following conditions must be fulfilled;

1. **People Eager to Learn:** for the training to take place, the trainees must be willing and ready to learn and the instructors willing to impart the knowledge. The desire to learn is based on interest, aptitude and motivation resulting in a strong determination to succeed. Learning a crafts for instance under apprenticeship is a tedious task and required an interest and willingness before one can succeed.
2. **Competent and Skilled Instructors:** having ability, power, authority, skills, knowledge etc. to do what is needed, a competent instructors should be humane, having the ability to direct, control his trainees and as well as being able to impart the required knowledge and skilled to others.
3. **Resources and Materials:** the availability of certain resource in a particular State especially in Nigerian context, determine to a large extents the vocation practiced by the people. However, availability of resources materials and efficient utilization, of these resources will promote the development of indigenous technology.
4. **Readiness for the Market:** many nations of the world, like Britain, Russia, and Europe etc. are taking steps to revitalize existing apprenticeship programme and to establish new ones. In the same vein, the federal Government of Nigeria has realized the importance of the programme and has committed much fund to enhance its growth.

Furthermore, apprenticeship is a period of service as a learner of a trade. It is a craft carries out under legal agreement defining the relationship between the master, learners and condition of the service. On the other hand, training is the knowledge, professional skills attitude and ability requires by individual to perform a job effectively and make if result outline.

Franklin et al. (2000) outline the following roles of apprenticeship training;

1. The programme help to reduce the rate of unemployment thus enables young person to acquire skills that will provide them financial and psychological security as trained craftsmen. In a country like Nigeria, where unemployment is too high, apprenticeship training could be employed to develop saleable skills, so that upon master of the trade or accomplishment of the apprenticeship programme, one can be self employed.
2. Although the individual is the primary beneficiary of the programme, the society receives continuous supplies of skilled labor and quality goods.

3. Promotion of economic development: economic development is the expansion of the productive capacity and improving of the overall welfare of the citizens.

In its broad sense, apprenticeship ensures that the demand for various types of labor matches with supply. It provides technical knowledge and skill necessary to function as craftsmen. It facilitates the development of occupational competence. In the same vein, it is practical on-the-job experience after an experience-able period of training. The master entrusts production of certain goods to the apprentice in order to test the level of his skill. However, the availability of skilled men will aid the recruitment and retention of good work force.

In view of the roles of apprenticeship training programme, Okoro (2000) posited that, apprenticeship is still beset with so many problems viz; lack of funds after the apprenticeship programme, inadequate facilities that can guarantee positive outcome. Government and non-government organizations lack a positive attitude towards the funding of the programme.

The researcher asserted that, one of the major setbacks of the programme is that, the training given is narrow in scope and does not have adequate theoretical content. The result of this is lack of creativity and as such, they do not find it easy to adopt their skills to other situations. He also observed that, the instruction is individualized and not institutionalized.

Adekola (2019) pointed out that, it is generally believed to be meant for people who cannot do well in the formal educational system or those whose parents cannot afford to sponsor their education. This particular problem makes it difficult to attract young graduates into the programme because it is assumed that, people undergoing apprenticeship are "never do well" people and they are not given deserved respect like their counterparts in the formal school system. Wokocha (2000) observed that, modern technology has rendered some skills obsolete and as such, there is the need for training and retraining of apprentices so as to update their knowledge, skills and increase their productivity. The specific occupational skill is essential in obtaining employment in established occupational areas and lack of which, would limit the chances of an individual being employed in our modern technological age.

Furthermore, the researcher added that, choosing of wrong career by the apprentice constitutes a constraint to the development of apprenticeship. This could be as a result of lack of exposure, limited knowledge of career counseling often makes them to choose a wrong career. In most cases, careers are forced by parents or guidance without due consideration for the interest, ability and capability of the trainee.

Nevertheless, it is on the above constraints that various strategies were mapped out to enhance the quality of apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. These include:

1. Adequate funding -- funding is needed to provide the human and material resources that will help to improve on the standard of apprenticeship to cushion effect of the increase in enrollment and to ensure that, the adequate infrastructures and equipment are provided for both instructors and trainees to acquire quality knowledge that will make them impact positively in the society. In the same vein, oil companies operating in the region can be persuaded to play a vital role in promoting apprenticeship programme through direct funding of the programme or regular cash endowments to apprentices, since they are the major beneficiaries of the product of the programme. Okeke (2000) added that, area of emphasis would include procedures for financing the business, promotion of personal business organization and effective utilization of profit.

Olakekan (1998) observed that, the federal advisory committee on industrial training was set up by the federal government. The committee in its report in 1969 indicated that there is a great need for the production of skilled craftsmen and also recommended the expansion of apprenticeship programme in industries as a means of producing more craftsmen.

2. Provision of safety equipment in workshops-- The concept of safety forms a check in every human operation. Puyate (2000) recommended that safety in the workshop demands setting and provision of a safe working environment, safe working habit or action and good housekeeping habit.
3. Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation unit by the national directorate of employment-- This is to ensure that the objectives of the programme are still intact. Proper monitoring should be carried out to ensure that efforts of all stakeholders are directed towards meeting the targeted objectives of the apprenticeship programme. This is because; there may be cases of negligence on the part of some instructors. However, when the programme is being monitored at a close range, all craftsmen in

organized industries, Government establishment and road side workshop will be alive to their responsibilities.

4. Development of curriculum – Bright, Uchendu & Chidi (2015) advocated that curriculum is the blueprint used to manage the activities executed in any organization or school system. The increasing levels of enrolment of apprenticeship programme and manpower needs of the society are among the changes that need to be captured in the curriculum. This will equip the apprentice to contribute meaningfully to the development of the society. On the other hand, the researcher added that, the curriculum planners should as a matter of urgency design a curriculum for this programme, so that instruction will be institutionalized and these will provide a systematic approach to enable the apprentice acquire skill and competence over a period of time.

Purpose of the Study

1. To examine the roles of apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State of Nigeria.
2. To identify the constraints against improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State of Nigeria.
3. To examine the strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State of Nigeria.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions were raised.

1. What are the roles of apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?
2. . What are the constraints against improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?
- 3 what are the strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the trainees and instructors on the roles of apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the trainees and instructors on the constraints against improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

H₀₃ There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the trainees and instructors on the strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, River State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, because the researcher collected data from a large sample of a population comprised instructors and trainees in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State describing the roles, constraints and strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme. The estimated population of the study consisted of 2450 (researchers field work, 2020). A multi-stage sampling technique via purposive sampling was used to draw a population of 280 respondents, 100 instructors and 180 trainees respectively. The instruments tagged strategies for improving apprenticeship training (SIAT) has 15 items was designed by the researcher and validated by measurement and Evaluation expert based on face and content validity. The instrument consists of three sections and each of the section has five questions, measuring the roles, constraints and strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme. The reliability of the instrument was established using test re-test method and reliability coefficient of 0.82 was established. The scale are weighed after the four-point likert scale of strongly agree 4point, agree 3point, disagree 2point and strongly disagree 1 point. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant. The weighed means average of 2.50 was used as criterion for decision rule, accepting or rejecting the responses on the items of the questionnaires. Any items with mean score of below 2.50 was discarded while those with means scores of 2.50 and above were accepted

RESULTS

Results were obtained from the answer to the research questions and testing of the hypotheses

Table 1 Mean responses on the roles of apprenticeship training programme

S/NO	Items	TRAINEES'			INSTRUCTORS		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1.	Facilitating the development of occupational competence	3.583	.494	Agreed	3.630	.485	Agreed
2.	The training provides necessary skills leading to the production of craftsmen	3.560	.5189	Agreed	3.650	.500	Agreed
3.	Reduction of unemployment rate by individual being self reliance after the training	3.577	.495	Agreed	3.48	.502	Agreed
4.	Promotion of economic development	3.616	.498	Agreed	3.730	.489	Agreed
5.	Developing the fundamental principles of that branch of technology	3.477	.500	Agree d	3.550	.500	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.563			3.608		

Table 1 showed that the trainees and instructors were in agreement on items, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. On the average though, the grand means of 3.563 and 3.608 for trainees and instructors respectively, showed that, they agreed to the items as the roles of apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers states.

Table 2 means responses on the constraints against improving apprenticeship training programme

6.	Lack of funds to setup workshop after apprenticeship programme	3.616	.4875	Agreed	3.660	4.76	Agreed
7.	Poor societal perception of the programme	3.677	.498	Agreed	3.4500	.500	Agreed
8.	Dearth of facilities and equipment	3.588	.493	Agreed	3.600	.492	Agreed
9.	Poor remuneration of the instructors and trainees by the government.	3.522	.5436	Agreed	3.63	.485	Agreed
10	Lack of motivation of instructors through in service training scheme.	3.359	.535	Agreed	3.570	.517	Agreed
	Grand Mean	3.552			3.589		

Table 2 showed that both trainees and instructors were in agreement on items 6 ,7,8, 9 and 10. The grand mean of 3.552 and 3.589 averagely showed that both trainees and instructors agreed on the items as the constraints against improving apprenticeship training programme in Rivers State.

Table 3: Responses on the strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme

11.	Provision of well-equipped workshops by the government	3.622	Agreed	3.450	Agreed	.500	Agreed
12.	Giving of loans to apprenticeship after graduation	3.600	.491	Agreed	3.670	.472	Agree
13.	Proper maintenance of the excising equipment	3.477	.5009	Agreed	3.550	.500	Agree
14.	Provision of accommodation and payment of monthly allowance to apprentice	3.383	.5208	Agreed	3.560	.537	Agreed
15.	Organization of workshop and seminars to apprentice by a resource person on the choice of vocation	3.638	.5152	Agreed	3.680	.468	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.544			3.582		

Table 3 above showed that, the trainees and instructors were in agreement in items 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 respectively. The grand means of 3.544 and 3.582 averagely showed that, both trainees and instructors agreed on the items as the strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

Table 4: Independent samples t-test of the difference between the mean response of trainees and instructors on the role of apprenticeship programme

Roles of Apprenticeship Training Programme	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig(2-tail)	Decision
Trainees	180	17.822	1.246	-1.441	278	0.151	Retained Ho1(P>0.05)
Instructors	100	18.04	1.145				

Observation of **table 4** shows that trainees has 180 subject, 17.822 mean, 1.246 standard deviation while instructors has 100 subject, 18.04 mean , and 1.145 standard deviation respectively. To determine if there is any significant difference in the trainees and instructors, independent sample t-test conducted yielded a t-value of 1.441 with a p-value of 0.151 at 278 degree of freedom. From this analysis, it is observed that, p-value was greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05. Therefore indicates that, there is no significant difference between the trainees and instructors on the roles of apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt metropolis of Rivers State

Table 5: Independent samples t-test of the difference between the mean response of trainees and instructors on the constraints against improving apprenticeship training programme

Constraints against apprenticeship	N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig (2-tail)	Decision
Trainees	180	18.000	1.16753	0.598	278	0.550	Retained Ho2(p>0.05)
Instructors	100	17.9100	1.27204				

From table 5 above, it shows that trainees (N=180) had a mean value of 18.000 and standard deviation of 1.16753 while instructors (N=100) had a mean value of 17.9100 and a standard deviation of 1.27204 .To ascertain if there is any significant difference, the independent sample t-test conducted yielded a p-value of 0.550 at 278 degree of freedom. From the analysis, it is observed that, the p-value was greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05. This therefore indicates that, there is no significant difference between the trainees and instructors on the constraints against improving apprenticeship programme in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

Table 6: Independent samples t-test of the difference between the mean response of trainees and instructors on the strategies for improving apprenticeship programme.

Strategies for improving apprenticeship	N	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig(2-tail)	Decision
Trainees	180	17.7222	1.2774	1.233	278	0.219	Retained Ho3 (P>0.05)
Instructors	100	17.9100	1.1109				

From table 6 above, it shows that trainees has (N=180) with a mean value of 17.7222 and standard deviation of 1.2774, while instructors has (N=100) with a mean value of 17.9100 and standard deviation of 1.1109. When subjected to the independent sample t-test, yielded a t-value of 1.233, df of 278, p-value of 0.219 (sig for 2-tailed).since the p-value sig at 0.219 is greater than the chosen alpha of 0.05, the null hypothesis is sustained. Hence, there is no significant difference in the mean response of the trainees and instructors on the strategies for improving apprenticeship training programme in Port Harcourt, Metropolis in Rivers state.

DISCUSSION

The result in research question one revealed that, the programme facilitates the development of occupational competences. This is in line with Franklin etal (2000) who posited that, the programme help the young people to acquire skilled that provide them financial and psychological security as trained craftsmen hence, reducing the rate of unemployment in the state. The training also revealed the promotion of economic development, expansion of productive capacity and improvement of the welfare of the citizen.

The finding in research question two revealed some of the constraints, against improving apprenticeship training Programme to include lack of fund to set up workshops after apprenticeship. This is in consonance with the findings of Okoro (2000) who posited that, there is lack of fund, for trainees to set up workshop after the training. It's also indicated that, there is dearth of facilities and equipment which hindered the improvement of the programme. The researcher lamented over inadequate, facilities, tools and poor workshop that could guarantee positive outcome after the programme. He added that some workshop have been taken over by flood during rainy reason.

The finding in research questions three revealed that, loan should be given to apprentice to set up business on their own after the training Franklin etal (2000) supported that, loan enhance their speedily commencement of their business.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the finding, the following are recommended,

1. Workshops and seminar should be organized to educate apprentice on how they can established on their own on graduation. Their areas of emphasis should includes, how to plan a personal business, roles of humans and public relation in the promotion of personal business organization and effective utilization of profit.
2. Curriculum planners should as a matter of urgency designs a curriculum for this programme so that instructors will be institutionalized and these will provide a systematic approach to enables the apprentice acquired skilled over a period of time.
3. Loans should be given to apprentice to set up workshop on their own.
4. Government should train instructors and only competent and qualified one should be allowed to engage in the programme for proper implementation
5. Safety materials and equipment should be provided in the workshop in case of any unforeseen circumstance.

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