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ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SKILL ACQUISITION CENTERS IN TRAINING YOUTHS FOR SELF -EMPLOYMENT IN NIGER STATE

Chris O.Igwe,¹ Abutu, Francis¹, Celina, S. Gana² , Joy Nwokolo-Ojo³, Mohammed, M.Aminu⁴

1. Department of Industrial & Technology Education.

2. Department of Science Education.

Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State, Nigeria.

3. Department of Vocational and Technical Education.

Benue State University, Makurdi, Nigeria.

4. National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure, Idu Industrial Area, Abuja

Correspondence Author: christoigwe@gmail.com, GSM: 08034040840.

Abstract

This paper assessed the effectiveness of skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment in Niger state. The study was a survey research in which data was collected with the use of a 30 items questionnaire on a population of 158 respondents purposively sampled from National Directorate of Employment (NDE) skill acquisition centers for youths in Minna, Suleja and Bida towns. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation on a 4-point scale. While z-test was used to test the null hypotheses at .05 level of probability. Findings of the study revealed that: a number of programmes are put place in skill acquisition centers but faced several challenges in terms of effective implementation. The study found that the small amount of salaries paid to master trainers plus the irregularities and delay in payment reduces motivation to teach skills; poor monitoring, supervision and pedagogical competence in terms of instructional delivery of skills; poor funding and misappropriation of training funds plus disregards to the needs of the informal sector; erratic power supply; poor technical and vocational education level of master trainers or facilitators; and non existence of a standardized document to guide programme implementation, operation and certification; are among the major challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment in Niger state. The study recommended standardizing programme implementation, operation and certification at skill acquisition centers; developing a concrete and workable curriculum for teaching skills; and adequate funding of NDE youths training programmes at all levels of governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: assessment, skill acquisition centers, skill, training , self employment.

Introduction

Unemployment is one of the macro-economic problems which every responsible government is expected to monitor and regulate. The higher the unemployment rate in an economy the higher would be the poverty level and associated welfare challenges. Fajana (2000) described unemployment as a situation where people who are willing and capable of working are unable to find suitable paid employment. The situation of unemployment in Nigeria rises geometrically and mostly affects youths. Aisha (2014) reporting for Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in the month of June revealed that 70 percent of Nigerian youths are unemployed. Ngozi (2014) quoting the figures from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) unveiled that no fewer than 53 million Nigeria youths are unemployed while 1.8 million graduates enter the labour market every year. If government needed to know the gravity of the nation's unemployment

rate, especially youth unemployment, the trampling of job seekers to death during stampedes at the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment exercise on 15th March, 2015 across various recruitment centers in the country, presents a clear picture of the problem. That incident, alone, tells us that something needs to be done urgently to address the scourge of unemployment in the country. This accounts for one of major reason for the rising wave of various types of crime in Nigeria as the unemployed youths are potential tools for perpetrating crime in exchange for money for survival.

The alarming rate of unemployment calls for the need for self employment among youths in Nigeria. Self employment according to Akintoye (2008) is a situation whereby an individual creates job or alternative source of livelihood for himself and also provide avenues for gainful employment for others. In the view of Okoro (2005), being self employed implies that an individual possesses all the required technical knowledge and skills to successfully create job or alternative source of livelihood to earn a living. The benefits or advantages of being self employed are numerous: it offers the employee the opportunity of engaging in trade or business talents; successful self employment create in the employed a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction; the self employed does not need to undergo job selection interviews; the self employed is thus a creator and master of its fortunes. He/she decides his own works or programmes, work hours, what to produce, where to produce and when to produce.

It is worthy to note that enjoying the benefits of self employment requires that youth acquire relevant technical knowledge and vocational skills in chosen occupation for job creation and self reliance. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE)(2011) revealed that in Nigeria, these technical knowledge and vocational skills are usually acquired from Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and skill acquisition centers where youths are trained and equipped with the skills needed for self employment, job creation and self reliance. To possess a skill is to demonstrate the right habit of acting, manipulating, thinking or behaving in a specific activity which has become so natural to the individual through repetitive practice.

The Federal Government of Nigeria in recognition of the importance of skills in reduction of unemployment and in the training of youths for self employment made several attempts, with the introduction of some intervention programmes to help both graduates and non-graduates youths to acquire the necessary skills for survival. One of such programmes established by the government is the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) scheme on 22nd November, 1986 and was officially launched on 30th January, 1987 (Ekpenyong, 2011). The objectives of the NDE, as identified by Adebisi and Oni (2012) are: to design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment; to articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labor intensive potentials; to obtain and maintain a data bank on

vacancies and employment agencies; and to implement any other policy as may be laid down from time to time, by the directorate.

Considering the huge capital investment involve in setting up skill acquisition centers and the rising rate of youth unemployment among graduates of the centers, it is necessary to carry out an assessment of the effectiveness of skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment in Niger state with National Directorate of Employment skill acquisition centers as case study.

Statement of the Problem

Field survey and observation by the researchers revealed that in Niger state several youths who graduate from skill acquisition centers and are still unemployed because they find it difficult to practice their trade upon graduating. A clear indicator to support the alarming rate of youth unemployment is the trampling of job seekers to death during stampedes at the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) recruitment exercise on 15th March, 2015 across various recruitment centers in the country especially in Niger state that recorded high casualty among the job applicants. That incident alone, tells us that something needs to be done urgently to address the scourge of unemployment in the country as this accounts for one of the major reason for the rising wave of various categories of crime in Niger State, since the jobless youths are prone to become potential tools for perpetrating crime in exchange for money for survival. This calls for the need to assess the effectiveness of skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment in Niger state.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment in Niger state. The study specifically:

1. Determined the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers.
2. Determined the effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.
3. Identified the challenges of skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers?
2. How effective is the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment?
3. What are the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment?

Research Hypotheses

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

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of NDE master trainers and graduates of skill acquisition centers on the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of NDE master trainers and graduates of skill acquisition centers on the effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of NDE master trainers and graduates of skill acquisition centers on the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. Therefore, the survey design was considered suitable since the study sought information from a sample that was drawn from a population using questionnaire. The study was carried out in Niger state in Minna, Suleja and Bida towns because these towns have more concentration of NDE organization/training workshops/ skill acquisition centers and supporting technical institutions. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 158 respondents comprising of 36 NDE master trainers and 122 graduates of skill acquisition centers. A 32 item questionnaire structured on a 4-point scale response option was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire items were structured using four point rating scale with response options of : Highly Implemented (4), Implemented (3), Moderately Implemented (2) and Not Implemented (1) for research question one; Highly effective (4), Moderate effective (3), Mildly effective (2) and Not effective (1) for research question two; Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1) for research question three.

The questionnaire was content validated by three senior staff from NDE and from the Department of Industrial and Technology Education (ITE) of 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. To determine acceptance level of the items, the mean average of the various points on the rating scale was taken to arrive at 2.50. As a result mean of 2.50 was used as decision point to agree or disagree to an item. Thus, a response with a mean of 2.50 and above was considered to be in agreement with an item while a response below 2.50 was considered to be in disagreement irrespective of the type of response options. The z-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of probability. The z-test was considered suitable because according to Uzoagulu (2011) the z-test is more appropriate when the sample size (n) is greater than 30 but maintains the same parametric

assumptions, table usage and other conditions as in the application of t-test. The z-critical (z-table) value for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses was ± 1.96 based on a degree of freedom of 156.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers?.

Table 1: Analysis of Mean and Standard Deviation of responses of respondents on the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers.

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | \bar{X}_1 | SD ₁ | \bar{X}_2 | SD ₂ | \bar{X}_t | Rem |
|-----|--|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----|
| 1 | Design of vocational and apprenticeship training in various training centers in the Niger state. | 2.65 | 0.76 | 2.72 | 0.71 | 2.69 | A |
| 2 | Identifying the training needs of unemployed youths. | 2.56 | 0.52 | 2.49 | 1.09 | 2.53 | A |
| 3 | Conducting capacity building and vocational training through the capacity acquisition programme in the major professional occupations in the labor market. | 3.66 | 0.76 | 2.81 | 0.45 | 3.24 | A |
| 4 | Conducting on the job training of artisans in the handling of machines and tools. | 3.22 | 1.86 | 2.61 | 0.73 | 2.92 | A |
| 5 | Offering technical assistant & help in conducting feasibility studies for intending small scale entrepreneurs. | 3.11 | 0.68 | 3.14 | 1.26 | 3.13 | A |
| 6 | Organizes training programs and workshops in the utilization of local raw materials, equipment & machines. | 2.65 | 0.73 | 3.13 | 0.54 | 2.89 | A |
| 7 | Promoting acquisition of vocational skills and facilitating the spirit of creativity & self-reliance. | 3.11 | 0.84 | 2.91 | 0.75 | 3.01 | A |
| 8 | Inculcating in the trainees the relevance of vocational skills in enhancing self employment. | 2.17 | 0.48 | 2.10 | 0.75 | 2.14 | D |
| 9 | Training youths in workshop management. | 2.40 | 0.78 | 2.94 | 0.35 | 2.67 | A |
| 10 | Enlightening youths on the causes of business failures. | 2.22 | 0.34 | 2.20 | 0.59 | 2.21 | D |

**Rem=Remark, A= Agreed, D= Disagreed*

Findings from data analysis on Table 1 revealed that eight of the items had their weighted mean values ranged from 2.53-3.24. Since the values are above the cutoff point of 2.50, it indicates that the respondents agreed with the items with respect to the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers. The table also showed that two items had their weighted mean values ranged from 2.14-2.21 showing that the respondents attested that to the non implementation as regards the two items.

Research Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of NDE master trainers and graduates of skill acquisition centers on the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers.

Table 2: z-test analysis of mean responses of respondents on the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers.

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | \bar{X}_1 | SD ₁ | \bar{X}_2 | SD ₂ | \bar{X}_t | z-cal | Rem |
|-----|--|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------|-----|
| 1 | Design of vocational and apprenticeship training in various training centers in the Niger state. | 2.65 | 0.76 | 2.72 | 0.71 | 2.69 | 1.13 | NS |
| 2 | Identifying the training needs of unemployed youths. | 2.56 | 0.52 | 2.49 | 1.09 | 2.53 | 0.85 | NS |
| 3 | Conducting capacity building and vocational training through the capacity acquisition programme in the major professional occupations in the labor market. | 3.66 | 0.76 | 2.81 | 0.45 | 3.24 | 0.96 | NS |
| 4 | Conducting on the job training of artisans in the handling of machines and tools. | 3.22 | 1.86 | 2.61 | 0.73 | 2.92 | 0.95 | NS |
| 5 | Offering technical assistant & help in conducting feasibility studies for intending small scale entrepreneurs. | 3.11 | 0.68 | 3.14 | 1.26 | 3.13 | 0.54 | NS |
| 6 | Organizes training programs and workshops in the utilization of local raw materials, equipment & machines. | 2.65 | 0.73 | 3.13 | 0.54 | 2.89 | 0.81 | NS |
| 7 | Promoting acquisition of vocational skills and facilitating the spirit of creativity & self-reliance. | 3.11 | 0.84 | 2.91 | 0.75 | 3.01 | 1.23 | NS |
| 8 | Inculcating in the trainees the relevance of vocational skills in enhancing self employment. | 2.17 | 0.48 | 2.10 | 0.75 | 2.14 | 1.12 | NS |
| 9 | Training youths in workshop management. | 2.40 | 0.78 | 2.94 | 0.35 | 2.67 | 0.45 | NS |
| 10 | Enlightening youths on the causes of business failures. | 2.22 | 0.34 | 2.20 | 0.59 | 2.21 | 0.57 | NS |

**Rem=Remark*NS=Not Significant*

The z-test analysis from Table 2 revealed that all the items had their z-calculated (z-cal) values less than the z-table (z-tab) value of ± 1.96 . This implies that there was no significant (NS) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers. Hence we uphold the null hypothesis one.

Research Question 2: How effective is the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment?

Table 3: Analysis of Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | \bar{X}_1 | SD ₁ | \bar{X}_2 | SD ₂ | \bar{X}_t | Rem |
|-----|--|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----|
| 11 | Competent graduates NDE center are given equipments & financial aids to start up their own business or practice the trade learned. | 2.51 | 1.2 | 2.53 | 1.23 | 2.52 | A |
| 12 | NDE recruit competent graduates for some industries and organizations. | 2.15 | 0.55 | 2.26 | 0.74 | 2.21 | D |
| 13 | NDE employ qualified master trainers to teach their trade. | 2.17 | 0.65 | 2.21 | 0.85 | 2.19 | D |
| 14 | The training programme is structured on curriculum modules. | 2.40 | 1.23 | 2.13 | 1.11 | 2.27 | D |
| 15 | NDE provides equipment, technical & financial supports to farmers to boost food production and empower the farming occupation. | 3.01 | 0.12 | 3.32 | 0.54 | 3.17 | A |
| 16 | The training follows an orderly sequence of instruction. | 2.45 | 1.43 | 2.00 | 0.75 | 2.23 | D |
| 17 | NDE exposes youths to employment opportunities through job awareness training. | 3.14 | 0.36 | 2.91 | 0.43 | 3.03 | A |
| 18 | NDE train individuals in small scale entrepreneurship to enable them create their own job and mange it. | 3.32 | 1.21 | 2.56 | 1.32 | 2.94 | A |
| 19 | The center trains youth in computer utilization & other information technology services. | 2.61 | 0.46 | 2.49 | 1.12 | 2.55 | A |
| 20 | NDE do a follow up of graduate progress in professional practice after graduation. | 3.21 | 0.78 | 3.11 | 0.89 | 3.16 | A |

Findings from the data on Table 3 shows that six of the items presented had their weighted mean values ranged from 2.52-3.17. This values are above 2.50 indicating that the respondents agreed to the six items as regards the effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment. The table also showed that four items had their weighted mean values ranged from 2.19-2.27 showing that the respondents attested to the non effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment as regards the four items.

Research Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of NDE master trainers and graduates of skill acquisition centers on the effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

Table 4: z-test analysis of mean responses of respondents on the effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | \bar{X}_1 | SD ₁ | \bar{X}_2 | SD ₂ | \bar{X}_t | z-cal | Rem |
|-----|--|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------|-----|
| 11 | Competent graduates NDE center are given equipments & financial aids to start up their own business or practice the trade learned. | 2.51 | 1.2 | 2.53 | 1.23 | 2.52 | 0.67 | NS |
| 12 | NDE recruit competent graduates for some industries and organizations. | 2.15 | 0.55 | 2.26 | 0.74 | 2.21 | 0.81 | NS |
| 13 | NDE employ qualified master trainers to teach their trade. | 2.17 | 0.65 | 2.21 | 0.85 | 2.19 | 0.74 | NS |
| 14 | The training programme is structured on curriculum modules. | 2.40 | 1.23 | 2.13 | 1.11 | 2.27 | 0.75 | NS |
| 15 | NDE provides equipment, technical & financial supports to farmers to boost food production and empower the farming occupation. | 3.01 | 0.12 | 3.32 | 0.54 | 3.17 | 0.54 | NS |
| 16 | The training follows an orderly sequence of instruction. | 2.45 | 1.43 | 2.00 | 0.75 | 2.23 | 1.43 | NS |
| 17 | NDE exposes youths to employment opportunities through job awareness training. | 3.14 | 0.36 | 2.91 | 0.43 | 3.03 | 1.34 | NS |
| 18 | NDE train individuals in small scale entrepreneurship to enable them create their own job and mange it. | 3.32 | 1.21 | 2.56 | 1.32 | 2.94 | 0.38 | NS |
| 19 | The center trains youth in computer utilization & other information technology services. | 2.61 | 0.46 | 2.49 | 1.12 | 2.55 | 0.57 | NS |
| 20 | NDE do a follow up of graduate progress in professional practice after graduation. | 3.21 | 0.78 | 3.11 | 0.89 | 3.16 | 1.57 | NS |

The z-test analysis from Table 4 revealed that all the items had their z-calculated (z-cal) values less than the z-table (z-tab) value of ± 1.96 . This implies that there was no significant (NS) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment. Therefore we fail to reject the null hypothesis two.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of respondents on the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | \bar{X}_1 | SD ₁ | \bar{X}_2 | SD ₂ | \bar{X}_t | Rem |
|-----|--|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----|
| 21 | Irregular and delay in payment of salaries to NDE master trainers and stipend to trainers. | 3.09 | 0.36 | 3.10 | 0.70 | 3.10 | A |
| 22 | The small amount of salaries paid to NDE master trainers reduces motivation to teach skills. | 3.70 | 1.31 | 3.03 | 0.65 | 3.37 | A |
| 23 | Non existence of a standardized document to guide programme implementation, operation and certification. | 3.30 | 0.83 | 3.81 | 1.27 | 3.56 | A |
| 24 | Absent of a concrete and workable curriculum for teaching skills. | 3.28 | 0.32 | 3.05 | 0.81 | 3.17 | A |
| 25 | Poor technical and vocational education level of master trainers or facilitators. | 3.34 | 1.20 | 2.47 | 0.72 | 2.90 | A |
| 26 | Poor monitoring, supervision & pedagogical competence in terms of instructional delivery of skills. | 2.50 | 1.39 | 3.06 | 0.63 | 2.78 | A |
| 27 | Poor funding and misappropriation of NDE funds. | 3.01 | 1.29 | 3.75 | 0.74 | 3.38 | A |
| 28 | Erratic and inadequate electric power supply. | 3.10 | 0.75 | 2.71 | 0.11 | 2.91 | A |
| 29 | Poor administration and supervision of the NDE scheme. | 3.20 | 1.30 | 3.01 | 0.64 | 3.11 | A |
| 30 | Inadequate and poor training facilities at skill acquisition centers. | 3.41 | 0.45 | 3.36 | 0.81 | 3.39 | A |

Findings from Table 5 shows that all the items presented had their weighted mean values ranged from 2.78-3.56. This values are above 2.50 indicating that the respondents agreed to all the items identified as regards the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of NDE master trainers and graduates of skill acquisition centers on the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

Table 6: z-test analysis of mean responses of respondents on the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

| S/N | ITEM STATEMENT | \bar{X}_1 | SD ₁ | \bar{X}_2 | SD ₂ | \bar{X}_t | z-cal | Rem |
|-----|--|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-------|-----|
| 21 | Irregular and delay in payment of salaries to NDE master trainers and stipend to trainers. | 3.09 | 0.36 | 3.10 | 0.70 | 3.10 | 1.21 | NS |
| 22 | The small amount of salaries paid to NDE master trainers reduces motivation to teach skills. | 3.70 | 1.31 | 3.03 | 0.65 | 3.37 | 1.30 | NS |
| 23 | Non existence of a standardized document to guide programme implementation, operation and certification. | 3.30 | 0.83 | 3.81 | 1.27 | 3.56 | 0.60 | NS |
| 24 | Absent of a concrete and workable curriculum for teaching skills. | 3.28 | 0.32 | 3.05 | 0.81 | 3.17 | 0.80 | NS |
| 25 | Poor technical and vocational education level of master trainers or facilitators. | 3.34 | 1.20 | 2.47 | 0.72 | 2.90 | 0.69 | NS |
| 26 | Poor monitoring, supervision & pedagogical competence in terms of instructional delivery of skills. | 2.50 | 1.39 | 3.06 | 0.63 | 2.78 | 0.57 | NS |
| 27 | Poor funding and misappropriation of NDE funds. | 3.01 | 1.29 | 3.75 | 0.74 | 3.38 | 0.71 | NS |
| 28 | Erratic and inadequate electric power supply. | 3.10 | 0.75 | 2.71 | 0.11 | 2.91 | 1.48 | NS |
| 29 | Poor administration and supervision of the NDE scheme. | 3.20 | 1.30 | 3.01 | 0.64 | 3.11 | 1.42 | NS |
| 30 | Inadequate and poor training facilities at skill acquisition centers. | 3.41 | 0.45 | 3.36 | 0.81 | 3.39 | 0.68 | NS |

The z-test analysis from Table 6 revealed that all the items had their z-calculated (z-cal) values less than the z-table (z-tab) value of ± 1.96 . This implies that there was no significant (NS) difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment. Therefore we fail uphold the null hypothesis three.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data collected and analyzed, the following findings emerged:

1. Vocational programmes in basic maintenance, repairs and handling of tools, equipment and machines in various occupations are implemented in skill acquisition centers; but knowledge in the relevance of vocational skills in enhancing self employment as well as the causes of business failures are not inculcated into the trainees.
2. Skill acquisition centers are effective in training youths in basic vocational training, farming occupations and small scale business; but the effectiveness is bedeviled because the vocational

training programmes are not structured on curriculum modules and also lack orderly sequence of instruction.

3. Skill acquisition centers are faced with the following challenges: misappropriation of funds, delay in payment of wages, poor supervision/monitoring as well as non existence of a standardized document to guide programme implementation, operation and certification.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the extent of programme implementation in skill acquisition centers.
5. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.
6. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study as shown in Table 1 revealed that 80% of the listed items were found to be implemented in skill acquisition centers. The study also revealed non implementation as regards: inculcating in the trainees the relevance of vocational skills in enhancing self employment; and enlightening youths on the causes of business failures. The findings of the study is in agreement with the findings of Ekpenyong (2011) who in a survey of extent of programme implementation in National Directorate of Employment (NDE) scheme, found out that NDE has created various skill acquisition centers and implemented skill acquisition programmes with emphasis on self reliance and entrepreneurship. Some of the core schemes and programmes implemented include the: National Youth Employment Programme, small scale industries and Graduate Programme, Agricultural Sector Employment Programme, Special Public Works Programme, Youth Employment and Vocational Skills Development Programme, and Rural Employment Programme (Akintoye, 2008; and Ekpenyong, 2011). On the non inculcation of the trainees with the relevance of vocational skills in enhancing self employment; and non enlightening of youths on the causes of business failures, Adebisi & Oni, 2012) in a study on the assessment of relevance of the national directorate of employment training programmes to the needs of the trainees in Southwest Nigeria, found out that the non implementation of this two vital factors accounts for the reason why youths graduate from skill acquisition centers and are still unemployed. They ignorantly jump into any form of business investment and fail woefully and later loiter around the street waiting for government to provide the jobs that are not available.

Findings of the study as shown in Table 3 revealed that 60% of the listed items were found to be effective in training youths for self employment in skill acquisition centers. The study further revealed non

effectiveness as regards: NDE recruiting competent graduates for some industries and organizations; NDE employing qualified master trainers to teach their trade; and the training programme having a structured curriculum modules and orderly sequence of instruction. The findings of the study is in conformity with the findings of Enuke and Mgbor (2005) who in a study on employer's assessment of tasks performed by graduate of Bida skill acquisition centres in Bida local government of Niger state, found out that the graduates performed tasks on use of tools, equipment and machines to carry out job skills, good work attitude and safety habits. Enuke and Mgbor stated that the graduates from Bida skill acquisition centres could perform the tasks because of effectiveness of the skill acquisition centers in training youths for the world of work. .This could also be attributed to the high quality of learning resources available at the Bida skill acquisition centres particularly. The high quality of learning resources is probably responsibly for the achievement of graduates on the performance skills demonstrated.

The findings of the study as shown in Table 5 revealed that 100% of the listed items were found to be among the challenges faced by skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment in Niger state. The findings show that skill acquisition centers are faced with the following challenges: misappropriation of funds, delay in payment of wages, poor supervision/monitoring as well as non existence of a standardized document to guide programme implementation, operation and certification, among others. The findings of the study is in agreement with the findings of Ofor (2001) who in a study on the evaluation of manpower requirement of the national directorate of employment in Abuja, Found out that the dearth of skilled manpower needed for the advancement in technologies, in various industries, has raised an urgent need to promote standardization of skills acquisition programmes at training centers in Nigeria. To buttress this, Ogbuanya, Bakare, and Igweh (2010), revealed that most telecommunication industries have continued to complain about not finding the right skills in the labor market to fill the job vacancies even with the large turnout of graduates both from both formal and informal TVET institutions at all levels of schooling every year. Ogbuanya, Bakare, and Igweh attested that, this is so because the skills acquired by the graduates from these institutions are not tailored-made to meet the necessary requirement of these industries or organizations. There is therefore the need for standardization of trainings in order to promote the availability of manpower with appropriate technical and vocational skills required to meet the various needs of industries. The study found no significant difference in the mean ratings of the responses of the respondents on the effectiveness of skill acquisition centers in training youths for self employment in Niger state. Hence the opinions of the respondents did not differ in majority of the items identified. Therefore we uphold the null hypotheses for the study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that while vocational programmes in basic maintenance, repairs and handling of tools, equipment and machines in various occupations are implemented in skill acquisition centers; the effectiveness of the centers is bedeviled by several challenges such as: misappropriation of funds, delay in payment of wages, poor supervision/monitoring as well as non existence of a standardized document to guide programme implementation, operation and certification. Also adequate knowledge in the relevance of vocational skills in enhancing self employment as well as the causes of business failures is not inculcated into the trainees. With regards to the findings of the study, it is glaring that the youths in Niger state need to embrace skill acquisition training programmes especially that of National Directorate of Employment (NDE) which have more learning resources to teaching practical work skills needed for self employment and poverty reduction. The NDE which is the approved skill acquisition center in Nigeria should intensify efforts to improve on the quality of training offered at vocational training centers to reflect the actual workplace to enable the trainees to practice their chosen trade upon graduation which will in turn prepare the youths to be self-reliant, self-employed and prevent them from being in financial difficulty after graduation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were given:

1. Inculcating in the trainees of skill acquisition centers, the adequate knowledge in the relevance of vocational skills in enhancing self employment as well as the causes of business failures.
2. Developing a concrete and workable curriculum for teaching vocational skills.
3. Proper supervision, monitoring and adequate funding of youth skills acquisition institutions, agency and training centers.
4. Standardizing NDE programme implementation, operation and certification.

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