

**THE READINESS OF VOCATIONAL COLLEGES IN MALAYSIA TO IMPLEMENT
APRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMED IN COLLABORATION
WITH INDUSTRY**

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ABSTRACT

Apprenticeship programme has been identified as the training system to be implemented by Malaysian Vocational Colleges (VC) as a means to rectify the problems faced by industries related to inadequate competencies among young workers. However, the readiness of VC to implement apprenticeship system in National Dual Training System (NDTS) mode is still not yet ascertained. It is important to determine the readiness level to ensure the effective implementation of the apprenticeship programme in collaboration with industry. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to identify the readiness level of VC with regard to the implementation of the apprenticeship programme. The sample of the study will consist of 32 VC that have agreed to implement the programme and the three industries that are piloting the programme. The instrument used in this study include a set of questionnaire, an observation checklist, an interview protocol and also the focus group questionnaire. Expected contribution from the study will include a readiness measure which can be used to evaluate other training institutions and a better understanding of the effectiveness of an apprenticeship programme in Vocational Colleges in Malaysia.

Keywords: *Apprenticeship programme, National Dual Training System, readiness, vocational colleges, Malaysia*

INTRODUCTION

Apprenticeship is an institution which for centuries, has successfully effected entry into working life for young people, and has also responsible for the maintenance of the skills based of many national economics. Although apprenticeship have become less demanding of both master and apprentice, they have survived in many countries over centuries (Lane, 1996)

The apprenticeship programme for training of skilled manpower provides a good example where close partnership between the training institutions and employers can be fostered. State of Maryland has defined the apprenticeship programme as:

“Apprenticeship is a voluntary, industry-driven programmed which is sponsored by employers, employer associations, and jointly by management and labor. An apprentice, as an employee, receives supervised, structured, on-the-job-training combined with related technical instruction in specific occupations”

Code of Maryland-Regulation 09.12.43 Labor and Employment Article, Annotated
Code of Maryland, Section 11-401.

Apprenticeship can be seen as the ultimate in co-operation between TVET providers and industry as they are based on combination of work and study. They provide appropriate skills for companies and also all-round to occupational and generic skills, as well as providing a tried and tested means of moving young people in to full time labor market (Erica Smitch & Roslin Brennan Kemmis, 2013).

In modern economics, apprenticeship are regarded as important ways of developing skills in the workforce along their perceived role in reducing youth unemployment. After a period of neglect, apprenticeship have recently returned to center-stage and they are beginning to take a more prominent role in the way that countries manage their educations, training and labour markets (Rauner & Smitch 2010). However, different countries have different expectations of apprenticeships and therefore regulate and manage their apprenticeship system in different ways (Smith, 2010) and thus it is difficult directly to compare systems or to transplant ideas from one country to another country.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shaping of the Malaysian Skills Training System

Based on a review of historical developments in the field of VET in Malaysia, from the 1956 Razak Report up to the Cabinet Report 1979 described above, Ahmad (2003) observed that the Malaysian VET System had progressively assumed a distinct structure, which was dominated by three different streams or pathways, distinguishable in terms of producing the country's workforce, namely (1) higher education (2) technical and vocational education, and (3) skills training. This observation highlighted that by the late 1970s, skills training had already emerged as a component of Malaysia's education and training system.

Ahmad (2003) also noted that the structure suffered from a lack of coordination whereby the polytechnics, community colleges, as well as technical and vocational schools came under the purview of the Ministry of Education, whilst skills training institutions came under other Federal Ministries (ibid, p.6). In justifying his investigation into the coordinating role of the National Vocational Training Council (NVTC), he argued that "the key to ensure the system works effectively" lies in the existence of an efficient and influential coordinating body such as the NVTC (ibid, p.31).

Collaboration & partnership

The English (U.K and U.S) defines collaboration as teamwork, partnership, group effort, association, alliance, relationship and cooperation. Montiel-Overall (2005) described the opinion of John-Steiner which categorized collaboration as a promising mode of human engagement but in order to become more than passing fad, a theoretical structure and framework is needed to guide individuals and groups towards successful collaboration. Likewise, collaboration can be viewed in three important interactive processes namely shared values, norms and structures (Wood and Gray, 1991). Alliances between the interested parties have become the key strategy to improve the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, equity and sustainability of training policies and systems (Sulaiman, Ramli and Norazizah, 2011)

Partnership can exist in many forms: formal and informal, public or private, large or small, individual or organizational. The Merriam-Webster defines a partnership as "a relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities". The key words in the aforementioned definition are "cooperation" and "joint rights and responsibilities". In order for a partnership to be successful, both parties have to cooperate with one another and they have to share the successes and the challenges that occur the course of partnership (Helmy Abdullah, 2013)

Transformation Vocational Education (TVE) in Vocational Colleges (VC)

Based on statistics carried out in 2010, compared to the rest of the world, enrolment in TVET programmes in Malaysia, was relatively low (approximately 15%) whereas the average of countries involved in the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was 44% (Fletcher, 2012). This low enrolment is a cause for concern and is at the core of the vocational education transformation programme focusing on increasing TVET enrolment in schools as a means to provide a diversity of learners (as mentioned in a speech given by the Deputy Prime Minister on January 6th 2012 at an event to mark the launching of the vocational education transformation programme).

TVET participation in other countries has been associated with greater number of pupils completing their secondary education (Yoo Jeung Joy Nam, 2009) and is expected to make a significant contribution to combating the high drop out rate in Malaysia (MoE, 2010). Greater provisions have been made for further vocational education and skills-training pathways. The issue is how do they make certain that such investment is cost effective ?” spending money on training that does not stick or that is not relevant to individual needs is wasteful and produce a lack of skills for industries needs. Therefore, due to lack of researcher being done this matter, the reseacher who has experienced and involved in the system, feels strongly that the study has to be caried out to identify the significant factors in term of new task that contribute to the effectiveness of the apprenticeship in partnership VC and industry.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In implementing the NDTS, the teacher at training institutions shall understand the concept of work process knowledge. NOSS as a curriculum are develop based on work process knowledge for NDTS. The teacher or trainers also must know in technical know-how. That means to combine theory and practical in learning process at workplace and training institutions to be more competent and apply a variety of modern learning method. The concept of work process knowledge also have a relationship between work, learning on the job, organizational development, individual knowledge, collective knowledge and occupational competence, NDTS programme are combination of learning at workplace and institution and also must have a strong partnetship between industries in learning process. Therefore work process knowledge should be applied at training institution for the implementation of NDTS.

Some industry-training provider partnership have been mutually beneficial while others have not. The question is becoming not whether partnership are good, but how to make them work (McLaughlin, 2004). Creating a partnership between two entities that may have different goals can be challenging process. The company and training institutions have to work together to define the relationship, determine methods of collaboration, and establish shared goals, so both organisations can reap the benefits from partnership. The focus of this research is upon to VC and industry partnerships, an initiative to reform Transformation Vocational Education (TVE), Ministry of Education (MoE) especially in implementation apprenticeship programme in mode National Dual Training System (NDTS). As a part of the agenda modernisations of vocational education and training system for the purpose of achieving economic competitiveness and meet the industry needs, Technical and Vocational Education Divisions (TVED) has set about the new approach apprenticeship in collaboration between VC and industry.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Apprenticeship systems involve many components: employment, training in the workplace, training at training institutions and administrative system at diffrent level of government (Kemmis & Roslin, 2013). In this research, researcher will identify the level of readiness implementation an apprenticeship programme in collaboaration VC and industry.

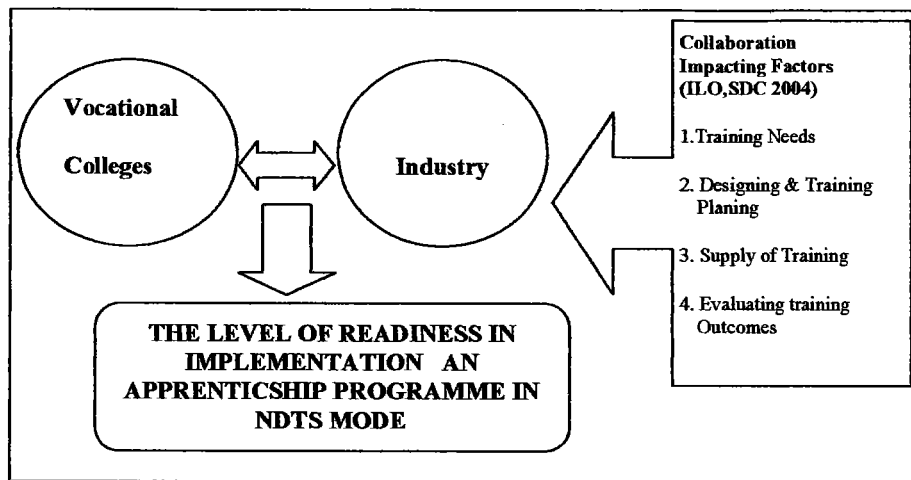


Figure 1 : Framework Concept

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to measure the readiness level of the Vocational Colleges for the implementation an apprenticeship programe in NDTs mode. The criteria to measure are base on the framework that identified from the literature review and also the guideline requirement for NDTs at training institution from Department Skill Development (DSD). Anyhow the element is not limited; another criterion will also be look as a guideline for Vocational Collges for the level of readiness in implementing the NDTs as an apprenticeship programe

METHODOLOGY

Population and Respondents

The population and respondents of this study focus on the 32 VC in Malaysia that has already agreed for the implementation of the NDTs programe. For begining three companies that has already run this programe Perusahaan Automobil Nasional (PROTON) in Shah Alam with VC Kajang, Malaysian Equisterian Management (MEM) in Serdang with VC Kajang and VC Sungai Buloh and Timber Product Finishing (TPF) in Batu Pahat with VC Batu Pahat and also institution that have implemented the dual system in Germany for the case study. The actual samples are the personnel who are involved in the program including instructor, coordinator and center manager institution and industry. The measurements are used based on the variable are identified from the study. Training also will be considered to show the satisfaction what the training institution provided.

Research Instrument

Methodology, the choices of combining quantitative and qualitative approaches were done because the researcher wanted to provide trainees persepective on their world of work and change that tool place (Kasim & Dzakiria, 2006). Futhermore, quantitative and qualitative methods now have beeb widely in emprical research (Kelle, 2005). The overall stategy was the survey of 45 trainee selected by the trainers though using a questionnaire to identified the sucesfull of partnership base on current situation. The method of data collection is expalined in details under the following topics. Therefore, methodology used in this study is arranged as follows.

RESERACH QUESTION

1.What are the real experiences with implementation of the NDTS between VC and three companies that already have?

The study will analyze the new and additional task required by investigated such as quality management, teacher readines, curricula, equipments and partnership between industries in the context of NDTS implementation.

2.What are new demands and required qualifications of the coaches and trainers in the implementing NDTS?

This study will analyze the qualifications and competency necessary to fulfill new task within the NDTS. The study will also make comparison between real experience of some expert coaches in the three companies that already implemented NDTS and the new demands and required qualification of trainers in companies that have not implementing NDTS. The new task will be described in detail in contrast to the traditional task of coaches and trainers before impelmentation of NDTS. The potential new task for the future coaches in impelementing NDTS are prepared based on therotical survey, desk reserach and literature review

3.What are the significant marks of the different levels of readiness?

The research will investigate the significant mark of the different level of readiness at training institution which is based on the dimension on the framework that will be investigated such as quality management, teacher readines, curricula, equipments and partnership between industries. When the critical success factor for the dimension is identified, rating will be given base on the level of readiness rating 1 to 4 as below:-

- i. Strong resistance against the reform. To refuse innovations and conserving status quo.
- ii. Partial willingness to accept elements. To integrate and combine the elements of innovation and traditional with the new elements and moderate modernization of the old system.
- iii. Readiness for innovation. To reform the complete system by transformation, obstacle are clearly defined, measure are carried out and evaluate successfully.
- iv. Strong support and active participation of the implementation to change the old system completely and radically

From the rating, the level of readiness at training institution will be measured and the research will answer and look what are the levels of readiness at training institution in implementing NDTS.

4. What are critical success factors for implementation of NDTS and the criteria for success by comparing the old and the new system?

Appropriate facilities and equipment with sufficiently wide-ranging operations, state-the-art curricula and very important is the competent and qualified instructors (NVTC Manual) and teacher ('train the trainer') are prerequisite for a succesful NDTS. Therefore monitoring involves reviewing the entire training process and maintaining appropriatie record at each of the four stages i) defining the training needs, ii) design and planning training, iii) supply of training, iv) evaluation of the training outcome (ILO, SDC, 2004) and the identification of further opportunities to improve the effectiveness at any stage and improving the training process are the main purpose which is to ensure that the training process, as part of the organization's quality system. According to Gasskov (2002, p.36), administrator of the vocational training institution should aim to improve the quality of service, reducing unit costs and increasing the

flexibility. In order to respond to the future market demand properly, the curricula, training standards and assessment techniques need to be updated continuously and qualified instructors have to be made available.

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