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SYSTEM FOR EFFECTIVE WORK SKILL DEVELOPMENT  
AMONG NIGERIAN WOODWORK STUDENTS**

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**Volume No 1 Issue No.3 September 2012**

**[www.iresearcher.org](http://www.iresearcher.org)**

**ISSN 227-7471**

THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL "INTERNATIONAL RESEACHERS"

[www.iresearcher.org](http://www.iresearcher.org)

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# STRATEGIES FOR UTILIZING APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING SYSTEM FOR EFFECTIVE WORK SKILL DEVELOPMENT AMONG NIGERIAN WOODWORK STUDENTS

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## Abstracts

The study examined strategies for utilizing apprenticeship training system for effective work skill development among Nigeria woodwork students. The study employed a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 155 respondents made up of 105 Industrial Training Fund (ITF) personnel and 50 training managers in industries. Three research questions were answered and three null hypotheses tested. A questionnaire containing 33 items was designed using five point Likert scale for purpose of collecting data for the study. The instrument was validated by two lecturers from Department of Science and Technology Education, University of Lagos and a training manager from ITF. The reliability coefficient for the instrument was 0.81 using cronbach alpha reliability test. It was found out that apprentice training system could adopt dual system where apprentice spend 50-70% of their time in companies and the rest in formal vocational schools; content of skill set for apprentice program must be fully provided and taught by qualified employer/master craftsmen and master craftsmen who are to educate young apprentice must prove that he has an ethical way of living and civic qualities of a good citizen. It was recommended that Master craftsmen should be encouraged to mentors young apprentice to develop the right skills, attitude and knowledge and Seminars and conferences on the need for using apprentice apprenticeship training system for effective work skill development should be organized.

**Key words: Apprenticeship; Work skill Development; Woodwork; Training and Strategies**

## 1. Background of the Study

In every society knowledge is power, but as long the knowledge needed remained local and specific, it could be transferred directly from parent to child. In many countries, particularly in Nigeria so-called on-the-job training is still the predominant method of educating the youths (Okorie, 2000), The fundamental change in modes of education has come about as a result of changes in modes of production, rather than inheriting skills, it became more valuable to specialize and learn a particular trade, and such skills could only be learned from masters of that trade, who were not always the parents (Harnes, 2004). When skills and tools became the basis of life time careers, they also became an impetus for social organization. As a substitute for family training in which a father trained the son on the job, a more efficient system called apprenticeship come into existence. Apprenticeship is a system of training a new generation of practitioners of a skill; apprenticeship is among the most common method of vocational training in Nigeria today. Apprenticeship is an organised system for providing young people with the manipulative skills and technical knowledge needed for competent performance in skilled occupations (Gilo, 2000).

The concept of apprenticeship has become vital as many modern applicable trades now exist alongside those old trades that have survived despite changes in techniques and knowledge required. Both industry and private individuals make use of the apprenticeship system. Most of their training is done while working for an employer who helps the apprentices learn their trade, in exchange for their continuing labour for an agreed period after they become skilled. (Richard, 2005) Richard added that theoretical education may also be involved, informally by means of the workplace and/or by attending vocational centre while still being paid by the employer to improve their work skill. Apprenticeship according to Okorie (2000) is a procedure by which young person acquire skills necessary to be proficient in a trade, crafts, arts, or professional under tutelage of a master practitioner. The person

who is interested in a trade (apprentice) is sent to expert (master craftsmen) whom the people will serve and in the process learns the trade. Apprentice training also involves an experienced worker signing a contract to teach a broad range of skills he has to trainee. It is very valuable substitute for family training in which a father trains a son on-the-job. The period of training is often as long as five years.

By this method, the experienced worker receives the services of an apprentice. Apprentices are supervised in the work place where they work; they will develop skills in their normal daily activities, they will also do formal training by participating in one-on-one training with their work skills designated trainer. In majority of situations apprentice training is delivered in the work place for minimum of two hours per week, the training plan and delivery times will be decided in consultation with the employer, (the apprentice and master craftsmen) and training record is kept for each of the competencies and signed off by training supervisor and client manager on what the student has demonstrated competency of the skill. When the apprenticeship is ended, the former apprentice now is considered journeyman. The requirements to become a master craftsman are usually an education, education includes theoretical and practical training in the craft and also business and legal training, and includes the qualification to be allowed to train apprentices as well in the crafts in which the examination should be taken (a successfully completed apprenticeship and examination, and experience of at least 3 to 5 years as a journeyman. Only then can train courses for the (Master's examination) be followed. The duration of the courses depends on the craft and can take 4 to 6 years. The examination includes theoretical, practical and oral parts and takes 5 to 7 days (depending on the craft).

Skill development according to Olabiya (2009) is concerned with organizational activity aimed at bettering the performance of individuals and groups in industrial settings. Training a worker to get along well with authority and with people who entertain diverse points of view is one of the best guarantees of long-term success. Work skill development is a continual process used to align the needs and priorities of the organization with those of its workers to ensure it can meet its legislative, regulatory, service and production requirements and organizational objectives. Work skill development enables evidence based workforce development strategies. The modern concept of an internship is similar to an apprenticeship. Universities use apprenticeship schemes in their production of scholars: bachelors are promoted to masters and then produce a thesis under the supervision of a supervisor before the corporate body of the university recognizes the achievement of the standard of a doctorate. Another view of this system is of graduate students in the role of apprentices, post-doctoral as journeymen, and professors as masters. Also, industrial attachment is another concept where student (apprentice) is attached to an experience /professional in industries (master craftsman) who will equip them with necessary skills, attitude and knowledge that will be required to enter and succeed in choosing careers. A modified form of apprenticeship is required for before an engineer is licensed as a professional engineer. (Steven and Kaplan, 2007)

The period from eleven to eighteen years of age is one in which the youth is finding himself in the society and setting up standard which will largely determine his future conduct and career. For if he is allowed to drift during this period, or if placed in an unwholesome or degrading environment, he may become a dependent or an injurious member of the society. (Osuala, 1999), It is observed that most Nigerians experience is that our schools and colleges have remained too academic, with major emphasis upon pure knowledge and western cultural values and less stress on vocational training and practical skills. Nigerians youth needs not only theoretical knowledge but also how to apply that knowledge sufficiently to the solution of the problems of everyday life. The aims of apprentice training were to ensure an adequate training at all levels; to improve the quality and quantity of training; and to share the costs of training among employers. According to Okoro (1999) as Nigeria, formerly an agrarian society is gradually moving towards industrialization, people need skills in order to take up the jobs in industry and business that are now becoming available. Thus, a nation that promotes apprentice training promotes the ability of its youth to qualify and hold productive employment in vast changing economy, become useful, and responsible citizens. It is no doubt that effective apprenticeship trainings system will empower youth to be employers of labour, self reliant and wealth makers.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to find out the strategies for utilizing apprenticeship training system for effective work skill development among woodwork students. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

Appropriate techniques required for effective delivery of apprentice training system for effective skills development; alleviate constraints militating against the effectiveness of work skill development in youth in utilizing apprentice training system and ways of enhancing effective work skill development among youth through apprentice training system.

### 3. Research Questions

The following research questions are formulated go guide the study.

1. What are the appropriate techniques required for effective work skill development among youths in utilizing apprentice training system?
2. What are the factors that can alleviate constraints militating against the effectiveness of work skill development in youth in utilizing apprentice training system?
3. What are the conducts that can motivate effective work skill development among youths through apprentice training system?

### 4. Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05% level of significance guided this study.

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant mean difference between the responses of industrial training fund personnel and training managers on the appropriate techniques required for effective work skill development in youth in utilizing apprentice training system.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant mean difference between the responses of industrial training fund officer and training managers on the factors that can alleviate constraints militating against the effectiveness of work skill development in youth in utilizing apprentice training system.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant mean difference between the responses of industrial training fund personnel and training managers on the conducts that can motivate effective work skill development among youth through apprentice training system.

### 5. Research Methodology

The study employed a survey research design. It focused on the strategies for utilizing apprenticeship training system for effective work skill development among woodwork. The study was carried out in South-West Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 105 respondents which were made of 56 personnel from Industrial Training Fund,(ITF) Lagos and 50 training managers in industries in Lagos state, South-West Nigeria: No sampling was carried out since the number of respondents was small. Therefore, the entire population was used for the study. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured in line with research questions. The instrument consists of four sections: Section A sought information on the personal data of respondents. This section covers items 1-5; Section B deals with Research Question 1, which consists of 11 items that were used to determine the appropriate techniques required for effective work skill development among youths in utilizing apprentice training system. Section C deals with Research Question 2, the section consists of 11 items that were used to determine factors that can alleviate the constraints militating against the effectiveness of work skill development in youth in utilizing apprentice training system. Section D deals with Research Question 3, the section consists of 11 items that were used to determine the conducts that can motivate effective work skill development among woodwork students through apprentice training system. A Five-point rating scale was used. The instrument was evaluated for content and face validity by three experts. The experts include two lecturers from the department of Science and Technology Education, University of Lagos and a director from Industrial Training Fund Ojota, Lagos. However, the validated instrument was trial tested using cronbach alpha and 0.87 internal consistency coefficients were established.

**Table 1**

*Mean and t-test Analysis of the responses of respondents on appropriate techniques required for effective work skill through apprentice training program=106*

S/NO	Appropriate techniques required for effective work skills	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_G$	Remark	t-cal	Sig(2-tailed)
1	Maintain current, constant communication with nonprofits and other community organization involving in apprentice program.	3.81	3.75	3.79	Agree	.558	.578
2	Apprentice training program require industrial safety training standard for effective work skill development.	3.78	3.79	3.79	Agree	-.106	.915
3	Evaluation techniques adopted during apprentice training be made proportionate with the level of education and apprentice age.	3.58	3.57	3.59	Agree	.080	.936
4	Master craftsmen must prove he has professional qualifications needed to educate another person before assign him apprentice.	3.89	3.89	3.89	Agree	.159	.874
5	Assessment of community and industrial needs helps to refine the purpose of apprentice training program.	3.72	3.72	3.72	Agree	.058	.954
6	Depending on vocation, apprentice could be allowed to work for three to four days in a week in industry and spend one or two days at vocational schools.	3.71	3.69	3.70	Agree	.105	.917
7	ITF and other training agencies to provide training centers where master craftsman are to visit to expose to modern tools and equipment that will influence their program.	3.67	3.65	3.66	Agree	.294	.769
8	Training system could adopt dual system where apprentice spend 50-70% of their time in companies and the rest in formal vocational schools.	3.88	3.89	3.88	Agree	-.081	.936
9	The defined content and skill set of the apprentice program must be fully provided and taught by qualified	3.71	3.71	3.71	Agree	.001	.999

	employer/master craftsmen.						
10	Apprentice training requires standards training and certification for effective skills development.	3.82	3.77	3.80	Agree	.659	.511
11	There is need to provide security through apprentice serve as prerequisite for the admission to master craftsman.	3.67	3.62	3.65	Agree	.471	.638

Result as can be seen in the data presented in Table 1 above, revealed that the mean responses of Industrial Training Fund officer and training managers in industries are generally in agreement with all the items posed to determine the appropriate technique that can be used for developing effective work skills among woodwork students those items had their mean score ranges from 3.5 to 3.89, which include: maintain current, constant communication with nonprofits and other community organization involving in apprentice program, apprentice training program require industrial safety training standard for effective work skill development, evaluation techniques adopted during apprentice training be made proportionate with the level of education and apprentice age; master craftsmen must prove he has professional qualifications needed to educate another person before assign him apprentice; assessment of community and industrial needs helps to refine the purpose of apprentice training program; theoretical education may also be involved, informally by means of the workplace and/or by attending vocational centre while still being paid by the employer to improve their work skill.

Findings also reveal that apprentice could be allowed to work for three to four days in a week in industry and spend one or two days at vocational schools, ITF and other training agencies to provide training centers where master craftsman are to visit to expose to modern tools and equipment that will influence their program; training system could adopt dual system where apprentice spend 50-70% of their time in companies and the rest in formal vocational schools; content of skill set for apprentice program must be fully provided and taught by qualified employer/master craftsmen and there is need to provide security through apprentice serve as prerequisite for the admission to master craftsman.

**Table 2**

*Mean and t-test Analysis of the responses of respondents on constraints militating against effectiveness of work skill development in youths utilizing apprentice training system. N=106*

S/NO	Constraints militating against effective work skills	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_G$	Remark	t-cal	Sig(2-tailed)
1	Rapid change/quick turn over in technology make apprentice training program obsolete in a few years.	3.81	3.75	3.79	Agree	.558	.578
2	Many youths undergo apprentice program exhibit low literacy or educational level.	3.78	3.79	3.79	Agree	-.106	.915
3	Skill gaps exist between what apprentice requires and what master craftsman offers during their apprentice years.	3.58	3.57	3.59	Agree	.080	.936
4	Most master craftsman who are to develop young apprentice are lacking prove that they has an ethical way of living and civic qualities of a good citizen.	3.89	3.89	3.89	Agree	.159	.874

5	Insufficient supervision of apprentice by supervisors and master craftsman during work skill program.	3.72	3.72	3.72	Agree	.058	.954
6	Apprentice lack sufficient information on industries that can accept them for effective work skills development.	3.71	3.69	3.70	Agree	.105	.917
7	The precise skills and theory to be taught on apprenticeships are not strictly regulated.	3.67	3.65	3.66	Agree	.294	.769
8	Most apprentices are not having opportunities/expose to operate modern tool, materials and equipment.	3.88	3.89	3.88	Agree	-.081	.936
9	Most apprentice program since it is not moderated has been having haphazard experience.	3.71	3.71	3.71	Agree	.001	.999
10	An adverse financial situation can be a hindrance to apprentice program towards effective work skills development.	3.82	3.77	3.80	Agree	.659	.511
11	Feeling of insecurity by apprentice whether they can establish their shop or get paid employment after training.	3.67	3.62	3.65	Agree	.471	.638

Table 2 above shows the mean responses of respondents on constraints militating against effectiveness of work skill development among woodwork students utilizing apprentice training system, the respondents indicated from the findings those constraints which include: Rapid change/quick turn over in technology make apprentice training program obsolete in a few years, many youths undergo apprentice program exhibit low literacy or educational level; skill gaps exist between what apprentice requires and what master craftsman offers during their apprentice years; most master craftsman who are to develop young apprentice are lacking prove that they has an ethical way of living and civic qualities of a good citizen; insufficient supervision of apprentice by supervisors and master craftsman during work skill program

Findings also indicate that the precise skills and theory to be taught on apprenticeships are not strictly regulated; most apprentices are not having opportunities/expose to operate modern tool, materials and equipment. most apprentice program is not moderated has been having haphazard experience; an adverse financial situation hinder apprentice program towards effective work skills development, feeling of insecurity by apprentice whether they can establish their shop or get paid employment after training also serve as constraints. those items had their mean score ranges from 3.5to 3.89,



**Table 3**

*Mean and t-test Analysis of the responses of respondents on conducts that can motivate effective of work skill development in woodwork students utilizing apprentice training system. N=106*

S/NO	Conducts that can motivate effective work skill development	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_G$	Remark	t-cal	Sig(2-tailed)
1	Master craftsmen who are to educate young apprentice must prove that he has an ethical way of living and civic qualities of a good citizen.	3.81	3.75	3.79	Agree	.558	.578
2	Apprentice program should be made flexible, so that they can change in line with market or workforce challenges.	3.78	3.79	3.79	Agree	-.106	.915
3	Crafts training through apprentice program require standard and certification for works skill development.	3.58	3.57	3.59	Agree	.080	.936
4	ITF and other training agencies should be empowered to publish training recommendations, which will contain full details of tasks to learn.	3.89	3.89	3.89	Agree	.159	.874
5	Apprenticeships training should be motivated through networks and partnership between interested apprentices and other service provider.	3.72	3.72	3.72	Agree	.058	.954
6	Master craftsmen should be encouraged to mentors young apprentice to develop the right skills, attitude and knowledge.	3.71	3.69	3.70	Agree	.105	.917
7	ITF, NDE and other training agencies should be empowered to formalize apprentice training that will greatly improve quality training.	3.67	3.65	3.66	Agree	.294	.769
8	Apprentice training should be offered in a way that will give access to higher education in post secondary schools.	3.88	3.89	3.88	Agree	-.081	.936
9	Apprentice training should be made to involve teaching of basic skills like reading as well as giving instruction in specialized tasks.	3.71	3.71	3.71	Agree	.001	.999
10	Apprentice program should be properly operated to meet society and industrial needs.	3.82	3.77	3.80	Agree	.659	.511
11	The standard and vocational courses to offer by apprentice during training should be made available to master craftsmen and apprentice.	3.67	3.62	3.65	Agree	.471	.638

Result as can be seen in the data presented in Table 3 above shows the mean responses of respondents on the conducts that can motivate effective work skill development among woodwork students through apprentice training system, respondents identified that master craftsmen who are to educate young apprentice must prove that he has an ethical way of living and civic qualities of a good citizen; apprentice program should be made flexible, so that they can change in line with market or workforce challenges; crafts training through apprentice program require standard and certification for works skill development, ITF and other training agencies should be empowered to publish training recommendations, which will contain full details of tasks to learn.

Findings also indicate that apprenticeships training should be motivated through networks and partnership between interested apprentices and other service provider; master craftsmen should be encouraged to mentors young apprentice to develop the right skills, attitude and knowledge. The study further revealed conducts of ITF, NDE and other training agencies should be empowered to formalize apprentice training that will greatly improve quality training and apprentice training should be offered in a way that will give access to higher education in post secondary schools, apprentice training should be made to involve teaching of basic skills as well as giving instruction in specialized tasks, apprentice program should be properly operated to meet society and industrial needs and the standard and vocational courses to offer by apprentice during training should be made available to master craftsmen and apprentice.

## 6. Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are substantiated by some conceptual framework of scholars with precedence to research questions and purpose of study.

Result as can be seen in the data presented in Table 1 above, revealed that the mean responses of Industrial Training Fund officer and training managers in industries are generally in agreement with all the items posed to determine the appropriate technique that can be used for developing effective work skills among woodwork students which include: maintain current, constant communication with nonprofits and other community organization involving in apprentice program; apprentice training program require industrial safety training standard for effective work skill development; evaluation techniques adopted during apprentice training be made proportionate with the level of education and apprentice age; master craftsmen must prove he has professional qualifications needed to educate another person before assign him apprentice; assessment of community and industrial needs helps to refine the purpose of apprentice training program. In line with the findings, Okorie (2000) and Richard (2005) explained that theoretical education may also be involved, informally by means of the workplace and/or by attending vocational centre while still being paid by the employer to improve their work skill. Findings also reveal that apprentice could be allowed to work for three to four days in a week in industry and spend one or two days at vocational schools; ITF and other training agencies to provide training centers where master craftsman are to visit to expose to modern tools and equipment that will influence their program. Robert (2000) and Giloth (2000) are in support of the findings, they pointed that raining system could adopt dual system where apprentice spend 50-70% of their time in companies and the rest in formal vocational schools, and content of skill set for apprentice program must be fully provided and taught by qualified employer/master craftsmen they added that there is need to provide security through apprentice serve as prerequisite for the admission to master craftsman. The result in Table 1 shows that all the items had their calculated significant (2-tailed) values greater than 0.05. This implied that there was no significant mean difference between the responses of respondents on the appropriate techniques required for effective work skill development in youth in utilizing apprentice training system.

By an analysis to table 2 which provide answer in determining the constraints militating against effectiveness of work skill development among woodwork students utilizing apprentice training system, the respondents indicated from the findings those constraints which include: Rapid change/quick turn over in technology make apprentice training program obsolete in a few years, many youths undergo apprentice program exhibit low literacy or educational level; skill gaps exist between what apprentice requires and what master craftsman offers during their apprentice years; most master craftsman who are to develop young apprentice are lacking prove that they has an ethical way of living and civic qualities of a good citizen; these were in agreement with Steven and Kaplan (2007) who emphasized insufficient supervision of apprentice by supervisors and master craftsman during work skill program and that the precise skills and theory to be taught on apprenticeships are not strictly regulated they added most apprentices are not having opportunities/expose to operate modern tool, materials and equipment. Findings also revealed that most apprentice program since it is not moderated has been having haphazard experience; an adverse financial situation hinder apprentice program towards effective work skills development. Thus, the findings were in agreement with Ogwo and Oranu (2006) who observed that feeling of insecurity by

apprentice whether they can establish their shop or get paid employment after training also serve as constraints. The result in Table 2 shows that all the items had their calculated significant (2-tailed) values greater than 0.05. This implied that there was no significant mean difference between the responses of respondents on the constraints militating against the effectiveness of work skill development in youth in utilizing apprentice training system.

Finding out the conducts that can motivate effective work skill development among woodwork students through apprentice training system, was presented in table 3. The respondents identified those conducts that can motivate effective work skill development to include: master craftsmen who are to educate young apprentice must prove that he has an ethical way of living and civic qualities of a good citizen; apprentice program should be made flexible, so that they can change in line with market or workforce challenges; crafts training through apprentice program require standard and certification for works skill development, ITF and other training agencies should be empowered to publish training recommendations, which will contain full details of tasks to learn. The findings were in agreement with Osuala (1999) and Gudmund (2004) who emphasized that apprenticeships training should be motivated through networks and partnership between interested apprentices and other service provider, Osuala stressed further that master craftsmen should be encouraged to mentors young apprentice to develop the right skills, attitude and knowledge. The study further revealed conducts to ITF, NDE and other training agencies should be empowered to formalize apprentice training that will greatly improve quality training and apprentice training should be offered in a way that will give access to higher education in post secondary schools, apprentice training should be made to involve teaching of basic skills as well as giving instruction in specialized tasks, apprentice program should be properly operated to meet society and industrial needs. The findings were supported by Okorie (2001) and Olabiyi (2004) who stressed that the standard and vocational courses to offer by apprentice during training should be made available to master craftsmen and apprentice. The result in Table 3 shows that all the items had their calculated significant (2-tailed) values greater than 0.05. This implied that there was no significant mean difference between the responses of respondents on the conducts that can motivate effective work skill development among woodwork students through apprentice training system,

## 7. Major Findings

On the basis of the data collected and analyzed, the following are the findings of the study.

1. The majority of respondents are generally in agreement over the maintain current, constant communication with nonprofits and other community organization involving in apprentice program; apprentice training system could adopt dual system where apprentice spend 50-70% of their time in companies and the rest in formal vocational schools, and content of skill set for apprentice program must be fully provided and taught by qualified employer/master craftsmen.
2. The constraints militating against effectiveness of work skill development among woodwork students utilizing apprentice training system, the respondents indicated from the findings those constraints which include: Rapid change/quick turn over in technology make apprentice training program obsolete in a few years; most master craftsman who are to develop work skill in woodwork students are lacking prove that they has an ethical way of living and civic qualities of a good citizen; and that the precise skills and theory to be taught on apprenticeships are not strictly regulated.
3. The conducts that can motivate effective work skill development among woodwork students through apprentice training system are: apprentice program should be made flexible, so that they can change in line with market or workforce challenges; master craftsmen should be encouraged to mentors young apprentice to develop the right skills, attitude and knowledge.

## 8. Conclusion

The study was to determine the strategies for utilizing apprenticeship training system for effective work skill development among woodwork students. The study has identified the appropriate techniques required for effective work skill development among woodwork students in utilizing apprentice training system, factors that can alleviate constraints militating against the effectiveness of work skill development in woodwork students utilizing apprentice training system and the conducts that can motivate effective work skill development among through apprentice training system. It is hoped that if all the suggested conducts that can motivate work skills are taken into consideration apprenticeship training programme will be efficient and woodwork students also will develop the necessary work skill required and make their contribution to society.

## 9. Recommendations

1. ITF and other training agencies should be empowered to publish training recommendations, which will contain full details of tasks to learn.
2. Content of skill set for apprentice program must be fully provided and taught by qualified employer/master craftsmen.
3. Apprentices (woodwork students) should have opportunities/expose to operate modern tool, materials and equipment required for use in industries.
4. Master craftsmen should be encouraged to mentors young apprentice to develop the right skills, attitude and knowledge
5. Seminars and conferences on the need for using apprentice apprenticeship training system for effective work skill development should be organized. These will sensitize the general public to make use of apprentice programme and invest in technical education and woodwork in particular.

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