

Technical and vocational education stakeholders' perceptions on professional skills acquired in private "Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS)" schools in Togo

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This study intends to analyze formal and implemented BTS curricula in Lomé (Togo). Data collection was achieved by means of questionnaires and interviews for exploring, in five private BTS schools, the perceptions of students, teachers and pedagogical directors, as well as the views of employed BTS graduates and their employers, regarding the quality and effectiveness of BTS programs. Results indicated that most curricula for BTS training were imported from foreign educational systems and implemented without any sectorial study regarding the needs of the labor market. This dysfunction was revealed through the degree of dissatisfaction expressed by the stakeholders surveyed. Our findings showed a lack of confidence in the quality of current BTS training programs by both the professional milieu and the students and employed graduates. In addition, the weak partnership existing between firms and BTS schools leads to difficulties in the finding, organizing and monitoring of internships. (*Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*, 2014, 15(4), 321-333)

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Traditionally, technical and vocational education (TVE) refers to studies in the areas of technology, applied sciences, agriculture, business studies, industrial studies and visual arts (Boateng, 2012). TVE skills are essential to generate job creation, employment and a productive economy (Heraty, Morley, & McCarthy, 2000; Boterf, 2006; Jakubowski, Patrinos, Porta & Jerzy, 2010). The governments of Sub-Saharan African countries are renewing efforts to promote technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with the belief that skill formation enhances productivity and sustains competitiveness in the global economy (Dasmani, 2011). Despite legislations enacted, TVE systems implemented in these countries face many challenges and are not always well aligned with the needs of the local labor market and economy (Szirmai, Gebreeyesus, Guadagno, & Verspagen, 2013). Within the context of Togo, since the 1990s, the expansion of private training providers became powerful in the TVE sector. Indeed, most of these private training providers are preparing students for the Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS) advanced vocational diploma (a two-year degree). It is to be noted that spatial location of training streams do not adequately correspond to the local socio-economic context (Ministère de la Fonction Publique et de la Reforme Administrative [MFPRA] & Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement [PNUD], 2012).

Approach to Set Up a Professionalizing Device in TVE Training System

According to Beckers, (2007, p. 221), a professionalizing device is an "articulated process which aims to build skills and identity components that can be mobilized in professional situations". That supposes close links between TVE and the world of work. The author asserts that:

"to insure the knowledge required to ply a trade, the goal and objectives of TVE are different from those of a general scientific training....[and] the process should include

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the views of employers, social partners and workers for the choice of skills expected from students in terms of training, and then guide the construction of devices to achieve these skills" (Becker, 2007, p. 222).

Indeed, two main objectives are devoted to the TVE system:

"to meet the needs of the labor market in terms of availability and upgrade the skills required to produce goods and services....[and] to make available to interested persons, especially young people who have completed a basic general education, opportunities to acquire expected skills and gain integration into the labor market" (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie [OIF], 2009a, p. 7).

The different phases that mark the setup of the TVE system can be grouped into three main blocks: 1) the design of the process, involves an assessment of the job market which leads to a sector study designed to paint a portrait of the socio-economic situation; this gives a global diagnosis of training needs; 2) the results of this assessment give information which helps to identify labor market segment providers of employment, with the corresponded trade and matching skills profiles; 3) the third step relates to the development of training repositories, which provide a coherent set of skills to acquire. It is designed using an approach that takes into account factors such as training needs, the work situation, goals, objectives and the means to carry out the training (Kettani, 2006, p.5; OIF, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d).

Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) Context in Togo

The implementation of TVE institutions in Togo dates from colonial times. During the German colonial period, TVE training was practiced by the administration, religious organizations and certain public or private companies. As many African governments have done, education authorities of Togo founded TVE institutions modeled after those of their former colonial powers (Goura, 2007, p. 7). Historically the German system started in 1901 when the government created an apprenticeship center in Lomé for a three year training program, so young pupils could learn the trades of blacksmith, locksmith, or carpentry. In 1901 they also established an agricultural school in Notsè for the three-year training of young farmers, and in 1911 a complementary training school was created in Lomé (Quashie & Komlan, 1986). First steps for the development of the French education system in Togo, were taken in 1922 and defined the organization of the school system in the French-speaking countries of West Africa. So, "the school system essentially consisted of three levels of education: elementary primary education, primary education, and high professional primary education" (Quashie & Komlan, 1986, p. 51).

Following independence, the new authorities established a small Technical and Vocational Education Training Directorate within the National Education Ministry. This Directorate was transformed into the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Training Education by the Decree No.84/165/PR of 13 September 1984. On 30 April 2002, Law No.2002-016 on the orientation of TVE sector was promulgated. Under this law, the TVE system's mission is to ensure the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, skills and practical abilities required in the exercise of a profession. Under Decree No.2008/090/PR promulgated on 29 July 2008, a new organization appeared and clearly defined the attributions of seven Directorates (Ministère de l'Enseignement Technique et de la Formation Professionnelle [METFP] & Unité de Recherche Démographique [URD], 2011). TVE at the tertiary level is provided by public and private post-secondary institutions which were created as the Togolese educational system. Under Decree No.2012-006/PR of 7 March 2012, OBTS and all the TVE post-secondary

institutions are required to report to the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. Today, the TVE training is largely provided by the almost 50 private promoters (METFP, 2010).

The Growth of the Higher Private Education Market in Response to Rising Demand

During the last decade, secondary education has grown at a rapid rate in Togo. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of students enrolled in high school final examinations (Baccalauréat) increased from 16,688 to 43,508, with an annual mean growth rate of 10.38%. For the same period, the number of Baccalauréat graduates increased from 4188 to 16,663 with an annual mean growth rate of 17.42% (Office de Baccalauréat, 2010). It is obvious that students finishing high school would seek to continue in higher education. This situation resulted in an increased demand for higher education, and public institutions were faced with a great increase in the number of students. Thus, between 2000 and 2010, enrolment of students in public universities and other higher education institutions increased from 14,711 to 53,094, with an annual mean growth rate of 18% (Plan Sectoriel de l'Éducation, 2010; Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche [MESR], 2013a). The demand unsatisfied by the public sector due to the obsolete state and limited capacity of its infrastructures and equipment, naturally creates a niche market for private providers. In 2000 students' enrolment numbers in higher private education sector reached 1,068 and by 2011 had reached 5,590 (UNESCO, 2013). This increase reflects the extent of the emergence of the private sector as an alternative to the public sector to solve the problem of unsatisfied higher education demand.

Private TVE is also experiencing an increase in the number of institutions as well as in the number of students, particularly at the post-secondary level. In 2000, only four higher private TVE institutions were recorded, but 2010 that number had reached 27 (MESR, 2013a). Most of them are preparing students for BTS diplomas. Analysis of 2010 data revealed that 3,226 (93.39%) out of a total of 3,454 students enrolled in BTS streams were trained by private schools. The majority of the training programs offered by them involve seven tertiary sectors: accounting and business management (28%); finance and banking (15%); corporate communication (14%); trade action and sale force (12%); assistant manager of small and medium-sized enterprises (9%); international trade (9%); and executive secretariat (8%), to the detriment of agriculture sector which nevertheless constitute 65% of the country's dominant activities (MAEP, 2012).

A report on the state of higher private education in Togo (MESR, 2008) emphasizes that most of the programs offered by these institutions are focused on the tertiary sector, regardless of its growth or viability. As observed by Kariuki (2007, p. 1): "In many cases, higher private education institutions are organized and managed just like businesses and are not taking into account a sustainable development context".

Education authorities of Togo seem to disapprove of the educational services supplied by private institutions at the BTS level. These concerns have been reported at the Council of Ministers held on 29 June 2009; the Minister in charge of higher education and research noting that:

"Currently, some unauthorized education institutions assign themselves university status and are preparing students in BTS, License, Master, and Doctorate programs. They are opening training streams without any matching efforts to the needs of the labor market. These institutions lack adequate structures to conduct research, which is a fundamental mission of higher education" (Conseil des Ministres, 2009).

Thus, many questions have been raised about whether the TVE sector in Togo is suited to the real requirements of the productive system.

Purpose of the Study

This study focuses on analysis of formal and implemented BTS curricula in private higher education institutions, as well as the students, teachers, employed BTS graduates and workplace supervisors' perception of the skills acquired.

Objective of the Study

The present research seeks to analyze nine formal and implemented BTS curriculum to identify deficiencies limiting the acquisition of vocational skills.

Research Questions

- Are the training devices provided by private BTS institutions effective in helping students acquire needed vocational skills?
- How do teachers, students, employed BTS graduates and workplace supervisors perceive the effectiveness of BTS curricula to meet job market needs?

Hypothesis of the Study

Training devices used by private BTS institutions do not allow for effective development of vocational skills and abilities by the students.

METHOD

Population (Participants)

This study was conducted in the 2010-2011 academic year. The research population consisted of two subpopulations, namely: (A) the curricula developed and implemented in different streams of BTS; and (B) groups of stakeholders in the system of TVE who were involved in the development and implementation of these curricula.

In the first subpopulation (A), nine streams out of a total of 34 were sampled using the following statements:

- 1) the recent enrolment trends in these streams of training;
- 2) the large number of institutions that provide training in these streams;
- 3) domains which constitute challenges to the government;
- 4) the availability of formal curricula at the OBTS.

The streams selected were: Trade Action and Sale Force; Executive Secretariat; International Trade; Accounting and Business Management; Electronics; Electrical Engineering; Assistant Manager of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises; Enterprise Network Administrator; and Computer Application Developer.

The subpopulation (B) represents: 1) 30 local enterprises or government services which employ BTS graduates, chosen according to their high professional visibility; 2) 40 BTS graduates employed by these institutions; and 3) students in their second year of BTS study. The teachers were selected using the simple random sampling technique (Ahmed, 2009). Considering the data of 2010 about private schools in the METFP report (METFP, 2010), the tenth of the enrolments number of students and teachers planned for the investigation, corresponded to 270 students and 50 teachers. In accordance with the direction of the five participating private BTS schools in Lomé, questionnaires were administered to 325 students

and 55 teachers. Of the students, 258 answered with 223 valid responses, while 36 teachers answered the questionnaire.

Our research also planned two other groups of face-to-face individual interviews: (1) the governmental authorities in charge of the conception and evaluation of the BTS programs, (and available curricula were collected from them); (2) five large private BTS training institutions were chosen because of their large student enrolments numbers and the directors all had more than five years experience. The survey was designed to preserve the anonymity of the respondents and their respective institutions. Prior to the study, ethical approval was obtained through the university's research governance ("Université de Lomé") procedures.

Instrumentation

A framework was adapted according to the curriculum analysis model of De Ketele, Chastrette, Cros, Mettelin, & Thomas (1995, p. 191-195) to assess the BTS streams curricula selected for this study. A descriptive analysis was used to examine the different parts of the curriculum which concern: aims, goals, objectives, content, teaching approaches, and evaluation approaches; final profile of the BTS graduates; competences and duties a BTS graduate should develop to meet the requirements of his job; enrolment conditions; list of courses and objectives; internships during the training.

Two types of questionnaires were devised. The first one for teachers, students and employed BTS graduates. It focused on: relevance of BTS curricula to the needs of labor market; course content according to the expected competencies; teaching approaches used; availability of machinery/equipment/tools in terms of quality, quantity and time; evaluation approaches; organization of practical training in school environment; availability, duration of internships and the definition of their objectives; opportunities for professionals involved in the training; institutional cooperation between BTS establishments and the labor market. Respondents rated each item on a four-point scale and the resulting percentage values are displayed: "very satisfactory", "satisfactory", "unsatisfactory" and "very unsatisfactory". The second questionnaire was administered to human resource managers of enterprises or government services. Its purpose was to obtain statements about three points: relevance of BTS curricula to labor market needs; skills acquired by BTS graduates compared to expected competencies in workplace; opportunities for professionals involved in the training. For all items in the questionnaires, opportunity was offered to each respondent to argue his choice. A semi-structured interview guide was used with pedagogical directors to gather data about: curriculum design according to sectorial studies in respect to the needs of the labor market; opportunities given to professionals to get involved in curriculum development; professionals' participation in training activities; organization of internships.

Data Analysis

MS Excel 2020 and Sphinx Plus² (version 4.0, ERGOLE Informatique) were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Formal Curricula Analysis

Analysis of the final skills, general objectives, admission requirements, content, materials with time a schedule, and duration of internships of the curricula of nine BTS streams revealed that four of them, Executive Secretariat, International Trade, Trade Action and Sale

Force, Accounting and Business Management, were designed by the Ministry of Technical and Vocational Training. The others, Electronics, Electrical Engineering, Assistant Manager of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Enterprise Network Administrator, Computer Application Developer, are French programs implemented in the Togolese TVE system. None of the curricula state in their choice of goals that they have taken into account social, economic, cultural and religious aspects or needs according to the characteristics of the labor market. General objectives are pointed out in the curricula but no analysis can be performed regarding their relevance toward the goals, since the latter are not indicated anywhere. Furthermore, these objectives are not separated into different domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor). With the French program, they were formulated to bring concrete and measurable behaviors.

The first purpose of vocational training is different from that of a general scientific education. It is to build professional skills; therefore, the purpose should always be explicit (Beckers, 2007). According to this principle, the shortcomings of curricula we analyzed did not give them credibility with regard to the construction of professional skills and the development of a professional identity. In the case we studied, one can ask the following questions: What types of professionals do we want to train? What skills and identifying characteristics do we want to develop in them by the training device? The answer to these questions, as Beckers (2007, p. 221) suggests, involves a critical analysis of the trades and their priority goals in relation to the societal goals that it seems important to contribute.

The curricula analyzed are not presented following a standard curriculum design pattern. The objectives, teaching strategies, teaching materials or time schedule are not indicated. It is obvious that the program does not take into account local constraints in terms of time management in connection with the use of equipment, because most of curricula are imported. The programs are developed following a content-based approach. Nevertheless, the French programs mentioned basic skills expected of students in the listed disciplines.

In the curriculum development principles, the criteria guiding the selection of content included the needs of employers, the scientific and technological options in the country and the target population (De Ketele et al., 1995). To a large extent, the curricula examined were designed in the context of France, which is very different from Togo's socioeconomic environment, where the labor market is dominated by informal-sector employment (Kanté, 2002; Adams, de Silva & Razmara, 2013).

Teaching strategies and evaluation methods are not explained in the curricula, leading to free choice for each teacher to organize himself as he wishes. No means for evaluation were proposed. Only the official examinations' organization was indicated on the program descriptions: the disciplines selected for the writing phase, those selected for the oral phase, the coefficients and the duration of the tests.

Regarding admission criteria, no restriction, depending on the specialization, is made with respect to the entrance profile in the curricula studied. According to French documents, those who may be enrolled in BTS courses include the holders of Technician Baccalauréat, Technology Baccalauréat, Professional Baccalauréat or any other high education Baccalauréat. Mentioned in the curricula developed by the Togolese education authorities is this condition: "can be admitted in the BTS courses the holders of all series of Baccalauréat or an equivalent degree". Since the BTS sector is short-term technical training, the latitude given for enrollment of any Baccalauréat holder in any stream can lead to a relevant background problem regarding expected skills. For example, considering the Accounting

and Business Management stream, at the end of the two-year training, it would be difficult for students who obtained a Baccalauréat D or Baccalauréat A4 to be more competitive than a Baccalauréat G2 holder. But these arbitrary choices are often made in contempt of students' background vis-à-vis the specificity of the chosen BTS stream. Consequently, the rift between secondary education and post-secondary TVE appears to be prejudicial to the academic results of the students. Generally, there is lack of rigor with regard to the conditions of admission to higher private education. Originally, higher private education used to admit students who had been left out by public institutions due to lack of sufficient academic results. But the reality has somewhat evolved because the creation of public higher institutions is not following demographic growth. It is known that the type of Baccalauréat significantly affect the final specialty and skills that can be acquired in a post-secondary education (Béduwé, Fourcade, & Giret, 2009). Thus, students whose target is to continue in the TVE system must be prepared in precondition so as to understand the basic theoretical and professional knowledge required for the final specialty of their choice.

Analysis of the formal curricula studied revealed a significant similarity between different streams. Three of the nine streams studied, namely Trade Action and Sale Force (TASF), International Trade (IT), and Accounting and Business Management (ABM), present, with a few exceptions, almost identical general and vocational disciplines, with the same number of hours. For example, TASF and IT differed by two subjects (at the exclusion of each other). Marketing and Sales included the following unique disciplines: Merchandising-Distribution and Sales Management; and IT provides the disciplines hereafter: International Taxation and International Trade Techniques. The same observation is made when considering the Computer Application Developer (CAD) and the Enterprise Network Administrator (ENA) streams where the slight difference consists in the number of hours allocated to the following disciplines: Application Development and Software Engineering (a four-hour difference) and Logical and Physical Architecture of Computer Systems (a two-hour difference). One of the consequences of this rising similarity in the training offered is that the professional milieu are faced with a plethora of grades and diplomas without being able to objectively assess their quality (Goura, 2007, p. 99).

Different Stakeholders Perception about Implemented Curricula

a. Private BTS institutions pedagogical directors views

The investigation with pedagogical directors of private BTS institutions focused the existence of sectorial studies on the implemented BTS streams, which can be used as a basis for developing training repositories. It appears through the interview data that there are no sectorial studies showing the description of economic sectors with their relevant jobs, alongside their evolution context and skill needs. Without socioeconomic diagnosis and related training needs, it would be illusory to think that BTS programs can meet the needs of the local labor market. In addition, opportunities are not given to professionals to get involved in curriculum development. However, they intervene as teachers in private BTS institutions. In this regard, two major problems were reported by pedagogical directors concerning the organization of classes, namely: firstly, the time table planned does not often match the free time of the professionals. These prefer to intervene out of service hours (12:00 – 14:00 hours or after 18:00 hours), which, in general, does not gain the consent of the students. Secondly, most of the field professionals teaching in private BTS institutions are not satisfied with the hourly wage per hour.

In the organization of internships, interviews reveal that finding a training site is left to the students, except for some efforts by some institutions to indicate potential companies or firms. The weakness of formal partnerships between training institutions and companies was also recognized.

b. Perception of students, employed BTS graduates and teachers regarding implemented curricula

Of the 223 students who responded to the questionnaire, 125 (56%) were male and, over 57% were in the 20–24 years old age group. The Baccalauréat D holders were dominant (27.35%) followed by those holding a Baccalauréat A4 (19.73%) and a Baccalauréat G2 (18.39%).

Over 41% of teachers responding to the questionnaire were in the 30–39 years old age range. Their academic profile goes from BAC+2 graduate to doctorate level. Only 8% are doctorate graduates, and those having obtained *Maîtrise*, *Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA)*, *Master* or *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées (DESS)* constitute the larger part (66%). It must be noted that 61.11% of teachers were part-time instructors, and 41.67% had 5 to 9 years teaching experience. A large majority (over 83%) have not received pedagogical training. Over 33% among them overlap in at least three BTS institutions.

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the course content vis-à-vis expected competencies: 49.78%, 70% and 61.11% respectively for students, employed BTS graduates and teachers. Of the teachers, 66% declared they were satisfied about the teaching approach while only about half of the students and employed graduates were. Most of the respondents were significantly satisfied regarding the evaluation approaches (54.71% to 65%). The training problem mostly was concerned with the practical application and internship organization, both which returned a high percentage of unsatisfactory and very unsatisfactory responses.

The main observations made by students in surveys are summarized in the following quotes. Student A stated that "The training curricula do not allow us to acquire the skills expected by the labor market. Those curricula are theoretical rather than practical, far from the realities of the workplace", while student B suggested that "the program is overloaded, and this does not allow teachers to focus on specialization subjects". Student C commented that:

Training institutions lack machineries, tools and equipment (and where present, machinery is often old and bears little resemblance to that currently used by industry, or is useless but not repaired on time, ... (and) the time schedule is poorly managed and should be rethought to solve the problem of professional teachers who fill students' hours of rest.

And, student D indicated that:

Training institutions do not have a well-organized process for assigning internships to students. Most of them only give recommendation letters to students. The latter negotiate their internships individually and the institutions merely approve their applications. Because of poorly defined objectives during internships, companies sometimes use students as mere mailman or photocopy clerks.

TABLE 1: Perception of students, employed BTS graduates and teachers regarding implemented curricula (percentage of responses)

Items rated	Very satisfactory			Satisfactory			Unsatisfactory			Very unsatisfactory		
	Students	Employed BTS graduates	Teachers	Students	Employed BTS graduates	Teachers	Students	Employed BTS graduates	Teachers	Students	Employed BTS graduates	Teachers
Course content compared to the expected competencies in the labor market	11.7	0	11.1	49.8	70	61.1	34.5	30	27.8	4.0	0	0
Teaching approaches used	8.3	0	11.1	48.8	52.5	66.7	37.2	32.5	22.2	5.8	15	0
Availability of machinery/equipment/tools in terms of quality, quantity and time	11.2	5	27.8	29.1	25	33.3	42.2	35	30.6	17.5	35	8.3
Evaluation approaches	13.0	7.5	25.5	54.7	65	67.2	24.2	22.5	7.3	8.1	5	0
Organization of practical application in school environment	8.1	0	16.7	31.4	35	41.6	40.8	35	27.8	19.7	30	14
Availability, duration of in-firm internships and definition of their objectives	3.1	0	19.4	11.2	10	25.0	77.6	60	44.5	8.1	30	11.1
In-firm internships management	5.8	0	13.9	17.5	20	33.3	43.1	70	52.8	33.6	10	0

The teaching methods that achieve most effectiveness in the TVE system may include case studies, cooperative and individual projects, guest speakers, role play, debates, simulations, surveys and critical-thinking exercises (Sithole, 2010). These teaching methods are not prescribed in the curricula analyzed; so, to find out whether they belonged in the teachers' pedagogical practices, participants were asked to give indication about four methods. Their responses were summarized in Table 2. Thus, regarding teaching methods, company visits, simulations, case studies and cooperative or individual projects approach were indicated. It emerges from the answers that case studies are used significantly more than the other methods. All of BTS graduate participants (100%) and 83.3% of teachers claim practicing case studies. Regarding simulations, only 20% and 13.90% of graduates and students in training respectively assert that this method is used. Less than a quarter of student participants confirm they make company visits (23.7%). Cooperative or Individual training projects approach show as the least used strategy pointed out by respondents: teachers (33.3%), students (22.0%) and graduates (15%). Similar findings were made by Sithole (2010) in his study on Business Studies instruction in Botswana, where interactive strategies such as simulation games and case studies are used most of the time by only 18% and 14% of respondents respectively.

Results of this study suggest influences of traditional education on the TVE system, which still follows the traditional educational model, to the point where experiments and practice courses are almost nowhere to be found in most of the institutions. Since students at training institutions mainly learn basic theoretical knowledge, with few practice opportunities, they have not much chance to develop practical operational skills (Zhang, 2009). In addition, TVE institutions require workshops, tools, equipment, and materials. Vocational technical subjects require more instruction and practical time than arts and science education to satisfy their practical goals. All these make vocational technical education more expensive than other types of education (Boateng, 2012). As illustrated by the results of our investigation, Ikechukwu and Najimu (2012) also formulate criticism toward Nigerian TVE in these terms: "on the ground that it has not been able to produce practical competent graduates who are equipped with problem-solving abilities, a result of poor and inadequate training material in the Technical Vocational Tertiary Institutions".

The most commonly incriminated factor by participants in this study relates to internships. Internships allow students to absorb the social and occupational conditions of their chosen specializations via a first contact with the business world, and to add hands-on experience to the primarily theoretical training they receive in their institutions (Groenewald, 2007; Daniau & Bélanger, 2008; Dubé, 2010). The two milieu reinforce and complement each other to produce trainees who are better qualified and better able to adapt to the business world. The results of our study slightly emphasized that the internship approach faces many obstacles in Togo. There is a wide gap between the demand for work-experience programs and the supply capacity of enterprises. In practice, it is generally impossible to provide internships for all, due to the limited availability of internships. The fact of having neglected Togolese economic realities has a particularly prejudicial effect at a social level: it leads to the absence of any education/training policy concerning the activity of micro-enterprises in the craft industry (called the informal sector) which can be restructured and be used wisely to welcome students looking for internship. These micro-enterprises can be real incubators of technological innovations. Their endogenous mode of training was for a long time ignored or scorned, even though these craft industries contribute in a large measure to national production. Their needs in complementary theoretical knowledge, closely associated to the

gestures of the profession, are considerable, and TVE must, sooner rather than later, address them. The lack of interest shown to date can be put down to the adoption of the initial French model, which undervalued practical handcraft know-how (Atchoarena & Dulluc, 2002).

TABLE 2: Use of the same pedagogical methods (percentage of responses)

Teaching methods	Teachers	Students	Employed BTS graduates
Company visits	58.3	23.7	20.0
Simulations	41.7	13.9	20.0
Case studies	83.3	65.9	100.0
Cooperative or individual projects approach	33.3	22.0	15.0

c. Employers perception of implemented curricula

As illustrated in Table 3, eighty percent of professionals expressed their dissatisfaction regarding implemented BTS curricula compared to the needs of the labor market. A large majority of respondents were unsatisfied (73% and 60% respectively), about the skills acquired by BTS graduates especially labor market expectations, and opportunities for professionals involved in the training process. In summary then, employers believe that students' theoretical knowledge is not well understood and their practical abilities are not up to standard. This may result in BTS training being a way for students to gain a diploma of little use while the private BTS institutions are run as a business, rather than a educational institution which teaches theory and practical skills.

In previous study, employers emphasized that training provided by TVE system is too theoretical (METFP & URD, 2011).

TABLE 3: Employers' views toward implemented BTS curricula (percentage of responses)

Items rated	Very satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory
Relevance of BTS curricula to labor market needs	0	20	80	0
Skills acquired by BTS graduates compared to expected competencies in workplace	0	27	73	0
Opportunities for professionals involved in the training	0	13	60	27

CONCLUSION

The proliferation of private BTS schools raised concerns about their inability to provide skills required by the labor market. The results of this study, which focused on analysis of curricula, revealed that BTS programs were largely inspired by the French educational model, and were not developed according to the classical approach that is used in the professionalizing device. A significant similarity between many of the streams was recorded, and they were characterized by a heavy emphasis on theoretical knowledge. The stakeholders surveyed expressed a lack of confidence in the professional skills developed by students. Currently, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research is empowered to develop texts related to monitoring and assessment of private higher education (MESR, 2013b). Further studies are necessary to determine effective contextualization strategies for enhancing the TVE system in Togo.

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The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education publishes peer-reviewed original research, topical issues, and best practice articles from throughout the world dealing with Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Work Integrated Learning/Education (WIL).

In this Journal, Co-op/WIL is defined as an educational approach that uses relevant work-based projects that form an integrated and assessed part of an academic program of study (e.g., work placements, internships, practicum). These programs should have clear linkages with, or add to, the knowledge and skill base of the academic program. These programs can be described by a variety of names, such as work-based learning, workplace learning, professional training, industry-based learning, engaged industry learning, career and technical education, internships, experiential education, experiential learning, vocational education and training, fieldwork education, and service learning.

The Journal's main aim is to allow specialists working in these areas to disseminate their findings and share their knowledge for the benefit of institutions, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that will lead to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of co-op/WIL, and promote further research.

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