

PERCEPTIONS OF APPRENTICES ON THE DUAL APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAMME IN BENIN: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Cosme Zinsou Odjo

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APPROVED BY

..... July 25, 2021

Prof. Guy Sourou Nouatin, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor

..... July 25, 2021

Prakash Kumar Paudel,

Dissertation Supervisor

..... July 25, 2021

Usha Bhandari, PhD

External Examiner

..... July 25, 2021

Assoc. Prof. Prakash Chandra Bhattarai, PhD

Head of Department/Research Committee Member

..... July 25, 2021

Prof. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, PhD

Dean/Chair of the Research Committee

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July 25, 2021

Cosme Zinsou Odjo,

Degree Candidate

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for the candidature of any other degree to any other university.

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July 25, 2021

Cosme Zinsou Odjo,

Degree Candidate

IN MEMORIUM

My wonderful late father Gbètomè Odjo, for all he has done for me before responding to God's call. May his soul rest in peace.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my lovely mother, Avocèhoué Djikpè, who has brought me up and ensured my whole education by her encouragement and prayers, which have been instrumental to the success of this 2-year programme at Kathmandu University School of Education, Hattiban, Nepal.

Similarly, this research work is dedicated to all the stakeholders of the Benin TVET sector for what they have been doing for the renovation and improvement of our TVET system.

AN ABSTRACT

Of the Dissertation of *Cosme Zinsou Odjo* for the degree of *Master in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (MTVET)* presented at Kathmandu University School of Education on July 25, 2021.

Title: *Perceptions of Apprentices on the Dual Apprenticeship Programme in Benin: A Narrative Inquiry*

Abstract Approved

.....
Prof. Guy Sourou Nouatin, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor

.....
Prakash Kumar Paudel,

Dissertation Supervisor

This study explores the perceptions and experiences of apprentices of the dual system in Benin. This system has been traditionally built up and with the TVET reforms in 2005, it has been formalized which led to the dual apprenticeship programme. Every year, thousands of apprentices are admitted to the programme. The dual apprenticeship programme combines educational institution's instruction and workplace training. Likewise, several similar practices exist around the world and the Benin dual apprenticeship model is partly inspired by the Swiss dual VET model according to our context and realities. However, some shortcomings are linked to the lack or insufficiency of training manuals and tools and the distribution of apprentices in training centres located very far from their homes. Those issues oblige some apprentices to drop out of the programme before their graduation. Even those who complete the programme do not have enough job opportunities. In light of such a situation, this study explored how

apprentices perceived and experienced the dual systems with their expectations of the programme in Benin. Based on the nature of the study, I used a narrative inquiry which helped me to use the framework under the interpretive paradigm to investigate the ways apprentices perceived and experienced the dual system through their stories. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I could not have physical interactions with my participants.

The study was conducted in Benin and my participants were purposefully selected until the data saturation. They (my participants) were interviewed online through WhatsApp audio calls and the information accumulated was analyzed and interpreted using the expectancy-value and social capital theories. The findings of the study show that apprentices choose the apprenticeship for various motivations such as passion, economic reasons or promising expectations. Likewise, my participants recognize the relevancy, usefulness and opportunities of this programme, which allows them to learn new knowledge using many new tools which they have never experienced before in their craft occupations. Similarly, after their graduation, apprentices' social networks have been broadened and they receive full consideration from their parents as well as their fellow master craftsmen. However, they have been facing some challenges such as the long distances between the vocational training centres and their homes, lack or insufficiency of training manuals, lack of training monitoring and evaluation, lack of financial resources to purchase the appropriate tools and set up their workshops after their graduation.

To overcome these challenges, the apprentices suggested the decentralization of training centres in all localities of the country, the extension of the programme to all craft occupations, the strengthening of training monitoring and impact evaluation, the

provision of sufficient training manuals, the authorization of master craftsmen who were trained in the traditional system and wish to graduate from the dual apprenticeship programme and the organization of a periodical skills development programme for the graduates. Finally, the implications of this study can help policy-makers and Benin TVET stakeholders to take provisions to come up with a new National Qualification Framework, create graduates' allowance fund, extend the dual system to other sectors such as commerce, hotels, restaurants, tourism, health, arts, fish farming and information and communication technology and recognize the CQP certificate in the formal education system and thus allow graduates to return to school for further education.

.....

July 25, 2021

Cosme Zinsou Odjo,

Degree Candidate

RESUME (IN FRENCH)

Du Mémoire de *Cosme Zinsou Odjo* pour le diplôme de *Master en Enseignement et Formation Techniques et Professionnels (MTVET)* présenté à Kathmandu University School of Education le 25 Juillet 2021.

Titre: *Perceptions des apprentis sur le programme d'apprentissage de type dual au Bénin : Une enquête narrative*

Cette étude explore les perceptions et les expériences des apprentis du système dual au Bénin. Ce système a été traditionnellement construit et avec les réformes de l'Enseignement et de la Formation Techniques et Professionnels (EFTP) en 2005, il a été formalisé, ce qui a conduit au programme d'apprentissage de type dual. Chaque année, des milliers d'apprentis sont admis au programme. Le programme d'apprentissage de type dual combine la formation dans un établissement d'enseignement et la formation en milieu de travail. De même, plusieurs pratiques similaires existent à travers le monde et le modèle béninois d'apprentissage de type dual s'inspire en partie du modèle suisse d'Enseignement et de la Formation Professionnels dual selon notre contexte et nos réalités. Cependant, quelques insuffisances sont liées au manque ou à l'insuffisance des manuels et outils de formation et à la répartition des apprentis dans les centres de formation situés très loin de leur domicile. Ces problèmes obligent certains apprentis à abandonner le programme avant l'obtention de leur diplôme. Même ceux qui terminent le programme n'ont pas assez d'opportunités d'emploi. A la lumière d'une telle situation, cette étude a exploré comment les apprentis perçoivent et expérimentent le system dual avec leurs attentes du programme au Bénin. Sur la base de la nature de l'étude, j'ai utilisé une enquête narrative qui m'a permis d'utiliser le cadre du paradigme interprétatif pour

enquêter sur les façons dont les apprentis percevaient et expérimentaient le système dual à travers leurs histoires. En raison de la pandémie de COVID-19, je n'ai pas pu avoir d'interactions physiques avec mes participants.

L'étude a été menée au Bénin et mes participants ont été sélectionnés de manière ciblée (à raison) jusqu'à la saturation des données. Ils (mes participants) ont été interviewés en ligne par le biais d'appels audio WhatsApp et les informations accumulées ont été analysées et interprétées à l'aide des théories de la valeur de l'espérance et du capital social. Les résultats de l'étude montrent que les apprentis choisissent l'apprentissage pour diverses motivations telles que la passion, des raisons économiques ou des attentes prometteuses. De plus, mes participants reconnaissent la pertinence, l'utilité et les opportunités de ce programme qui, leur permet d'acquérir de nouvelles connaissances en utilisant de nombreux nouveaux outils qu'ils n'ont jamais expérimentés auparavant dans leurs occupations artisanales. De surcroît, après l'obtention de leur diplôme, les réseaux sociaux des apprentis se sont élargis et ils reçoivent toute la considération de leurs parents ainsi que de leurs collègues maîtres artisans. Cependant, ils ont été confrontés à certains défis tels que les longues distances entre les centres de formation professionnelle et leur domicile, l'absence ou l'insuffisance de manuels de formation, le manque de suivi et d'évaluation de la formation, le manque de ressources financières pour acheter les outils appropriés et installer leurs ateliers après l'obtention de leur diplôme.

Pour surmonter ces défis, les apprentis ont suggéré la décentralisation des centres de formation dans toutes les localités du pays, l'extension du programme à tous les métiers de l'artisanat, le renforcement du suivi de la formation et de l'évaluation de

l'impact, la mise à disposition de manuels de formation en nombre suffisant, l'autorisation des maîtres artisans qui ont été formés dans le système traditionnel et qui souhaitent être diplômés du programme d'apprentissage de type dual et l'organisation d'un programme périodique de développement des compétences pour les diplômés. Enfin, les implications de cette étude peuvent aider les décideurs politiques et les parties prenantes de l'EFTP au Bénin à prendre des dispositions afin d'élaborer un nouveau cadre national de qualification, de créer un fonds d'allocation pour les diplômés, d'étendre le système dual à d'autres secteurs tels que le commerce, l'hôtellerie, la restauration, le tourisme, la santé, les arts, la pisciculture et les technologies de l'information et de la communication, et de reconnaître le certificat CQP dans le système d'éducation formelle, permettant ainsi aux diplômés de retourner à l'école pour poursuivre leur formation.

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25 Juillet 2021

Cosme Zinsou Odjo,
Candidat au Diplôme

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Cosme Zinsou Odjo,

Degree Candidate

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training/ <i>Centre Européen pour le Développement de la Formation Professionnelle</i>
CNAB	Benin National Confederation of Artisans/ <i>Confédération Nationale des Artisans du Bénin</i>
CQP	Vocational Qualification Certificate/ <i>Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle</i>
FODEFCA	Continuing Vocational Training and Apprenticeship Development Fund/ <i>Fonds de Développement de la Formation Professionnelle Continue et de l'Apprentissage</i>
ILO	International Labour Organization
INSAE	National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis/ <i>Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique</i>
LELAM	Linking Education and Labour Markets: Under what conditions can Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) improve the income of the youth?
MoSTEVT	Ministry of Secondary and Technical Education and Vocational Training
MTVET	Master of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
VTCs	Vocational Training Centres

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The informal economy is now Africa's largest employer and primary source of success in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The TVET system, however, is plagued by strained ties with the job market, a scarcity of skilled people, and insufficient training programmes. To cope with this situation, the acquisition of technical and professional skills has become a priority in most of the African countries, especially in Benin. This chapter reveals the importance of this research on the Benin dual apprenticeship programme in the context of African technical and vocational education. In writing this, I unfold my experiences on my journey into the world of TVET.

Then I discuss the dual apprenticeship programme on which my study is focused. Besides, I discuss the situation to investigate the reason why some of the apprentices drop out before graduation whereas some graduates have been shifting to several part-time jobs after their graduation. To reach the answers to these inquiries, I formulated a research objective of exploring the perceptions and experiences of apprentices on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. Furthermore, I described the importance of the study which brings together knowledge of apprentices, their understanding, experiences, and perceptions. Finally, I end this chapter with the delimitation of the study.

Background of the Study

I worked as an English Teacher for 7 years in both public and private secondary schools. I was also engaged as the senior supervisor at "Boscovite", a private youth organization that provides sensitization and vocational training session (preparation of

liquid soap, dairy products and some religious objects, etc.) to young people in my community. As my senior brother was the Municipal (district) President of the Artisans, I was inspired by his work and I got the opportunity to support and provide guidance to my community craftsmen's association. More specifically, I used to facilitate their graduation ceremonies and provide them with guidance and support for their group training, writing reports on meetings and preparing final certificates. I realized in the course of my work that the apprenticeship system was an important part of the Benin TVET sector and I wanted to know more about the apprenticeship. Then, I got an opportunity to participate in a survey in August 2018 in some Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) in Porto-Novo, the political capital city located in the South of Benin. I participated in the survey organized by the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences at the University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC), one of the 4 biggest public universities in Benin. The survey involved tailoring/sewing, hairdressing and photography VTCs in Porto-Novo city. During the survey, I interviewed apprentices and trainers of the dual apprenticeship and came to familiarize myself with the situation of the programme and its socio-economic impacts on graduates' livelihood. This strengthened my commitment to and my support to artisans. A year later, I got a scholarship to do a Master's Degree in TVET at Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED), Nepal. This stimulated my desire to better understand the issues related to the dual apprenticeship programme, which I see as a bridge to individual enhancement and skills development.

Skills development is a priority field and aims at addressing the youth unemployment issue globally. It helps to address and develop skills policies that meet labour market needs to promote decent work (Sparreboom & Powell, 2009). Aligning

with that, most of the countries such as Germany, Switzerland and Benin have been experimenting with the dual apprenticeship in different ways according to their respective contexts and realities. According to Wolter et al. (2011), apprenticeship is defined in most regions of the world at the upper layer as programs that combine both work-based training and real schooling and lead to certifications in a transitional skill, rather than just middle-skilled labour. It is therefore distinct from three activities for which it is often an alternative: full-time vocational education, standalone on-the-job training, and labour market programs (Wolter et al., 2011). It is also an opportunity to receive and provide specific knowledge and skills to young people (apprentices) to make them useful and skilful in the labour market (Ministry of Labour and Public Affairs [MoLPA], 2010).

This is a system in which students (apprentices) acquire the skills necessary for trade and business in a company by studying and working with experienced craftsmen. To accomplish this, the trainee, skilled worker, and training provider sign a formal law and act-based training agreement (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2012). Thus, the costs incurred are handled by all the actors involved. Likewise, one of the oldest and most common types of training is skilling at the intersection of work and education or between the worlds of training and work (Gessler, 2019). From these definitions, it appears that an apprenticeship aims to transmit the knowledge and skills necessary for the exercise of a profession, by alternating practical and theoretical training. It takes place in a company or a trade school. The apprenticeship finds a new impetus with a certificate entitled *Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle (CQP)* for dual training to the renovated traditional training in Benin (MoLPA, 2010).

In some countries like Germany, Switzerland and Benin, the central government has opted for the dual apprenticeship programme first to lower the unemployment rate in line with the labour market needs (Gessler, 2019). Particularly in Benin, dual apprenticeship has been adopted to enhance, formalize and modernize traditional apprenticeship in the country. Based on the importance of the system of apprenticeship training and professional integration, the government of Benin has been introducing some reforms since 2005 with a provision that was modified in 2010 (MoLPA, 2010). This provision shows that dual apprenticeship in Benin lasts generally three years. It takes place in two different places i.e. craft companies (artisan workshops/businesses) and public or private Vocational Training Centres. As explained by Nouatin et al. (2019), during these three years, the apprentices are trained in the vocational training centres once a week and for the remaining five days in the master craftsmen workshop. Hence, I have noticed that the dual apprenticeship programme has become a great opportunity to provide early school leavers with the required skills for better employability. Nowadays, when I look at the Benin dual apprenticeship, it appears that apprentices have been acquiring skills enabling them to improve their professional practice and increase their employability in the job market. However, they do not have an education-career pathway and they cannot comply with the labour market demands accordingly. Therefore, it is important to listen to them for a better understanding of how they have been experiencing the dual apprenticeship programme.

Statement of the Problem

Until recently, apprenticeship is considered as an alternative for those who drop out of school because most of the apprentices who have been leaving school earlier come

from households with fewer qualifications and are less likely to find paid employment than those who continue their education into their twenties (Kudrzycki et al., 2020). Likewise, Bankolé and Nouatin (2020) said that an apprenticeship is a good substitute for the majority of young people who leave school. As people do not have enough and adequate information about the apprenticeship programme, people said that it is only for school dropouts and those from low-income communities (Nouatin, 2021a). Further, a study by Moumouni et al. (2015) found that not only do apprentices choose an apprenticeship as an alternative, but they also consider that the craft occupations for which they are serving an apprenticeship are one of the occupations for the future. Afterwards, the preparation of youth for the job market through traditional apprenticeship led to the dual apprenticeship

Similarly, Neyt et al. (2018) found that apprenticeship, whether informal or formal, prepares young people for employment by allowing them to learn by doing. It can be understood that the apprenticeship generally connects training with the labour market and solves the problem of poor skills. It appears that apprenticeship fosters individual enhancement and early school leavers to return to post-school education and provides them with the chances of reintegrating into education, with particular emphasis on skills development through the dual apprenticeship programme. Thus, dual apprenticeship has been enhancing and improving the quality of production in craft businesses and workshops. However, it is important to point out that the Benin dual apprenticeship has some shortcomings linked to the lack or insufficiency of training manuals and tools and the distribution of apprentices in training centres located very far from their homes. Also, the long period that separates the selection test, the announcement of results and the

distribution of apprentices in the training centres need to be considered (David-Gnahoui & Ahouangnivo, 2017). Likewise, most of the apprentices cannot pay their financial contributions (10% of the overall fees) as required (David-Gnahoui & Akouété-Hounsinou, 2015). In light of these facts, it stands to reason that issues such as lack of awareness, lack of training manuals and tools, the existing long distance between the training centres and apprentices' homes, as well as and their limited financial means need to be addressed.

By contrast, European countries like Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland that apply dual apprenticeship, have recorded lower unemployment rates than others because the apprentices usually have a chance to get a job after their graduation (Strahm, 2006). Having said this, I must point out that in Benin, some of the trainees/apprentices drop out of the programme and those who have completed it (graduates) are not able to get their final certificates and few of them work either with their master craftsmen or shift to other jobs (Bankolé & Nouatin, 2020). Moreover, it appears that the dual apprenticeship programme is not permeable because apprentices do not have any education-career pathway after their graduation. It means that the dual apprenticeship certificate does not provide graduates with the opportunity for further study. Therefore, it is important to know how the apprentices are experiencing such a situation. How they perceive the dual programme with their expectations needs to be explored for the understanding of the programme in Benin.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of apprentices on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- 1- How do apprentices perceive and experience the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin?
- 2- What are their (apprentices') expectations of the dual apprenticeship programme in the years to come?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

The studies conducted by Smith and Kemmis (2013) and Euler (2013) found that there exist different models of dual apprenticeship around the world and these models depend on each country education system and realities. More interestingly, the German dual system has influenced most European countries' vocational training systems. However, there is tremendous interest in dual systems outside of Europe, and India, China, Russia, and Vietnam have already made plans to work with the German government (Euler, 2013). Similarly, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) Community Code of Handicrafts is a fundamental document that redefines apprenticeship and the structures responsible for it in respective member countries and which is binding on national legislation (David-Gnahoui & Ahouangnivo, 2017). Based on that, the Beninese government has adopted the dual apprenticeship in Benin according to the needs of the country. The modalities of this take into account an intensified collaboration between ministerial and associative actors and development partners.

Besides, the studies conducted on the Benin dual apprenticeship programme have explored several aspects of the programme. For example, Bankolé et al. (2020) investigated strategic actors and their roles, realizing that dual apprenticeship is a TVET

reform initiated by the Beninese government with external assistance in 2005. They mentioned that the programme involves many actors from the public and private sectors and the main actors are apprentices (trainees) but some actors/organizations involved don't play any role (Bankolé et al., 2020). Recently, another study was conducted by Bankolé and Nouatin (2021) on craftsmen's perceptions of the dual apprenticeship in Benin. They found that master craftsmen are satisfied with the programme due to the official certificates issued to apprentices after their graduation.

However, no study has been conducted to explore the apprentices and their understanding of the programme in Benin. Therefore, this research work is important because it offers new ideas on the Benin dual system in comparison to Swiss, German and Indian practices. It also presents the practical and lived experiences of apprentices before, during and after completing the programme. Further, this study is useful in the sense that it explored the apprentices' perceptions on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin and this was the point of departure from other studies previously conducted on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. Likewise, this study contributes directly or indirectly to TVET stakeholders as well as to dual apprenticeship actors at the national level. It also opens up public discussions among TVET providers, educators, planners, and especially dual apprenticeship stakeholders which ultimately help in formulating the upcoming TVET policy of the country for the achievement of educational goals.

Furthermore, the knowledge gained from the research is helpful for me to shape my career as a professional in the field of the TVET sector in Benin. Similarly, this research enables TVET graduates to scrutinize and diagnose the difficulties and the problems they have faced and find out some solutions to address these issues along with

raising awareness on the usefulness of the Benin dual apprenticeship programme. Thus, this research provides TVET educators and trainees with fresh information so that they can positively impact younger generations in the way of reconsidering the dual apprenticeship programme as a powerful tool to contribute to social equity, inclusion and development. Similarly, at a time when there is a dearth of literature on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin academia, this research contributes to filling the gap to some extent as it adds to the existing literature in the dual apprenticeship programme. Besides, this work is useful for further research on the dual apprenticeship area. In other words, other researchers could also use this research for the sake of reference and to add information.

Delimitation and Limitations of the Study

Out of 175 existing occupations in the country, the dual apprenticeship programme has been started only in 13 craft occupations (Kérékou, 2020). Out of those 13 craft occupations, this study has taken research participants only from 4 craft occupations: hairdressing, plumbing, carpentry and sewing/tailoring. The rationale behind selecting these occupations is that the majority of the apprentices are enrolled in those craft occupations in the Republic of Benin (Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique [INSAE], 2016).

I believe that my participants have communicated all the necessary information during this study. However, due to the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, observation and physical interaction were impossible. Consequently, I was not able to gauge and observe participants' emotions and behaviours. I believe that physical interactions might have enriched my data.

Organization of the Study

I have organized and presented my overall study report in seven different chapters. My first chapter covers my research agenda, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the rationale and the significance of the study, the delimitation and limitations as well as the organization of the study. In chapter two, I have reviewed related literature on dual apprenticeship followed by the theoretical linkage of the study and eventually the research gap I identified for the study. Chapter three articulates my methodological considerations, where under the interpretive research framework, I employed a narrative inquiry in a qualitative approach. There, I have discussed my participants, my strategies for data collection and interpretation with some quality standards and ethical considerations.

Chapter four presents the themes of my study which are the perceptions and expectations of my participants on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin whereas chapter five addresses my understanding of the perceptions and expectations of my participants. It describes and explains how the dual apprenticeship programme is a great opportunity for the apprentices as well as other stakeholders and some of the difficulties that hamper it and which need to be addressed for the success of that wonderful programme in Benin. Chapter six is the final chapter which covers the insights, conclusion and implications of the study. There, the summary and conclusion of the research work are followed by an overview of the possible implications of this study for policymakers, dual apprenticeship stakeholders, and future researchers.

Chapter Summary

Overall, in this chapter, I have reflected upon my experience in the TVET especially in the Benin dual apprenticeship programme and the main reasons for my choice of the research topic and my research agenda. More specifically, I have described my first experiences during my research work on the socio-economic impact of vocational training and the importance of technical education in the socio-economic development of any country. Similarly, the chapter explores my understanding of dual apprenticeship in light of some researchers' work. Addressing the gap in academic studies (which I have discussed in detail in chapter two), this study is to explore the perceptions of apprentices on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. The findings from this study are likely to contribute to the improvement and the renovation of that wonderful programme in the Republic of Benin in West Africa.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with a critical review of relevant literature on dual apprenticeship. First, I explored the themes that I encountered during the process of my research and it is understood that dual apprenticeship is a global practice based on each country realities and context. Second, I arranged this chapter into seven sections: understanding of dual apprenticeship, apprentices and their perceptions, various practices of dual apprenticeship, Benin dual apprenticeship programme, legal provisions supporting Benin dual apprenticeship, the theoretical understanding of the dual apprenticeship, and the research gap.

Understanding of the Dual Apprenticeship System

All over the world, apprenticeship is one of the strategic ways of making young people knowledgeable and skillful in the world of work. As highlighted by Sharpe and Gibson (2005) as cited in Bhandari (2011), apprenticeship is somehow an opportunity to receive and provide specific knowledge and skills to young people (apprentices) to make them useful and skilful in the labour market. In the apprenticeship, apprentices not only learn skills in an academic setting but also in a practical work-based environment. This means that apprenticeship is a training and learning programme through which apprentices learn some skills to be utilized in the workplace. Similarly, Bhurtel (2012) defines apprenticeship as a training and learning system in which a learner is enrolled in an industry or a workshop for learning a craft or trade or occupation for a specific period in which s/he learns all necessary knowledge components and skills from a master

craftsperson or a mentor and is paid in return for the service s/he provides. From these definitions, an apprenticeship is a form of training and learning in which a young person learns a trade under the guidance of a master/boss. During the apprenticeship, instructors or trainers provide apprentices with some skills needed in the workplace. They are guided and taught either by the employer or the master or advanced learners from whom they get work experience with institution-based training (Ezenwakwelu et al., 2019). From Wolter et al. (2011), this training/learning model generally combines part-time formal education in which apprentices learn some theoretical knowledge related to their craft occupations with on-the-job qualification and skills.

Similarly, Søren and Eberhardt (2016) see apprenticeships as parts of formal education and training programmes that lead to a nationally recognised qualification. They mix classroom instruction with on-the-job training. From these definitions, it appears that apprenticeship training connects theoretical and practical skills for better productivity. Around the globe, the dual apprenticeship is a training programme whereby an apprentice in business spends a day or two a week in a professional training centre to acquire the theoretical and technical foundations as well as general knowledge of the profession s/he practices (Lasserre, 2014). It follows that the dual apprenticeship takes place in two different places namely the workshop or the craft company and the training centre and where apprentices learn theoretical and practical skills related to their respective occupations. The principle of duality stated that theory and practice, knowledge and skills, learning and working, are combined in a particular manner and where training alternates between the companies/workshops and the Vocational Education and Training institutions or training centres. In a nutshell, the dual

apprenticeship is a training and learning system that takes place in two separate places. It connects the classroom to the world of work by providing apprentices with adequate theoretical and practical knowledge to improve their performance and productivity.

Apprentices and Their Perceptions

As highlighted by Gessler (2019), apprenticeships are one of the oldest and most common types of training at the intersection of work and education or between the worlds of training and work. It is one of the work-based learning and training schemes. Before the apprenticeship is effective, apprentices are needed as they are essential actors in this training/learning system. According to Westermann (1914), as cited in ILO (2019), an apprentice is a young person who learns a profession or occupation while working for an experienced practitioner (sometimes known as a "master" in the past). Similarly, according to Jordan's Ministry of Labour (2005), an apprentice is a trainee who has a combination of work experience and formal capacity building to achieve intended learning objectives (UNESCO-UNEVOC, n.d.). Further, the Oxford English Dictionary as cited in Bhurtel (2012) defined an apprentice as a person who is learning about his or her job details and responsibilities from an employer who is reciprocally obligated to instruct him or her in a trade that is bound by a legal agreement while serving him/her for years. Therefore, an apprentice is a person who learns a trade or a craft occupation. S/he is a person who learns some occupational skills in an industry and a workshop under the guidance of a master craftsman. S/he is the one who in some cases earns while working but who must comply with the rules and regulations of the industry until the end of the apprenticeship period. It can be understood that an apprentice can be paid during his/her

training in the industry or company but it depends on each country's apprenticeship system.

Apprenticeship has played an important role since its founding and it is thus not a new strategy to build skills between the generations. As Decker (2019) emphasized, in Western history, apprenticeship is probably the oldest method of transferring knowledge since the Middle Ages, in which young people had the opportunity to learn with qualified workers for many years. Apprentices learn specialist crafts such as masonry, blacksmithing, and leather smithing through this programme, and master craftsmen or mentors gain more valuable support from their apprentices. To modernize the old apprenticeship system, many countries have adopted dual apprenticeships. Most young people have different reasons and/or motivations to take an apprenticeship based on their perceptions.

Around the globe, apprentices' perceptions vary from developing countries to developed countries. In most developing countries such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ghana and Ethiopia, young people perceive apprenticeship as an alternative for acquiring technical and entrepreneurial skills for self-employment through formal and informal training systems (Ezenwakwelu et al., 2019). In those countries, many young people prefer to undertake an apprenticeship rather than going to university. As far as developed countries are concerned, two sets of perceptions can be found out: those who choose to become apprentices have positive perceptions, whereas those who don't have a negative view (Ryan & Lőrinc, 2018). In these countries, some young people perceived apprenticeship as a poor occupation whereas others perceived it as an opportunity to enter the job market with the skills needed.

Apprenticeships are linked to low pay and bad work conditions, and they have a lower status than professional jobs for those who do not pursue vocational training (Decker, 2019). They believed that financial disadvantage, a poor business image, including the possibility of employers and coworkers being ill-treated, and the prospect of poor and dirty working conditions were the primary reasons for those young people not taking or considering an apprenticeship (Misko et al., 2006). Most of these perceptions appear to be based on information shared by parents, family, and friends about their unfortunate experiences as apprentices or master craftsmen. Thus young people rely on either prejudices or myths such as bad wages, harassment, dirty jobs and inappropriate hours (especially for master craftsmen) to dislike and reject apprenticeship. This prevents them from taking on an apprenticeship and they are not ready to join. Thus, the perceptions of that category of young people depend on what they heard from other people.

However, based on a strong focus on work, career aspirations and benefits, Misko et al. (2006) found that some students decided to take on an apprenticeship (for example, interest in the field, skills development, enjoyment, comfortable lifestyle). Likewise, they felt that the apprenticeship might suit them better and that learning outside of the classroom would prepare them for the real world of work. Despite the classroom-based element of apprenticeship (theoretical training), they have seen apprenticeship as an alternative (Brophy et al., 2013). Similarly, apprentices feel that the apprenticeship programme would enable them to improve skills they might not learn in a classroom, which they also viewed as being important for their futures, such as time management, problem-solving and communication skills (Misko et al., 2006). Further, the

apprenticeship offers young people a clear route into learning and work, and the development of vocational and non-technical skills to support the transition to adulthood and self-reliance. Positive and supported transitions are critical in developing young people's wellbeing and resilience (Brophy et al., 2013).

From their perceptions, it can be understood that apprenticeship offers them employed status, and the majority of them can be in continued employment with the same employer, although it is not possible to guarantee this. It appears that a few young people believe that apprenticeships are the emerging benchmark for empowerment and overall growth after their graduation (Ryan & Lrinc, 2018). Besides, many of the young people and parents perceived apprenticeship to be most viable or appropriate for manual labour occupations (Misko et al., 2006). Thus, only those craftsmen can say what apprenticeship is and its possible opportunities as well as challenges. All in all, it is important to mention that the review of this section helps to understand that apprentices' perceptions vary from one context to another. In developing countries, apprenticeship is seen as an alternative to self-employment and a way to join the labour market as quickly as possible. In developed countries, some see apprenticeships as a poor relation to a job, while others see it as an opportunity to learn and improve their skills that they might not learn in the classroom to meet the needs of the job market.

Various Practices of Dual Apprenticeship

In several countries, notably Germany, Austria, and Switzerland and in the German-speaking Community of Belgium, but also in other parts of the world, the dual apprenticeship programme combines training in a company and vocational education at a vocational school (Euler, 2013). The dual system draws its origins from Germanic culture

and, as a result, is found especially in countries of this tradition such as Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, the Czech Republic, and Austria (European Commission, 2015). There are various practices of dual apprenticeship around the world and I presented in the following paragraphs the experiences of Germany, Switzerland and India and compare and balance them with Benin's experience.

According to Euler (2013), apprenticeship is one of the German VET programmes which combines theoretical training in school with practical industry training. Tremblay and Le Bot (2000) noted that the system is based on three key principles: duality, craft primacy, and consensus because alternate training occurs between vocational schools and businesses, which provides a basic structure for the occupation's system. The German dual apprenticeship system has come under pressure in recent years to provide a sufficient number of apprenticeship positions in companies. It is renowned for maintaining its practice with a long history of dual apprenticeship instead of changing it through reforms in vocational training (Zwick, 2007). The modernization of the German dual apprenticeship system helps to establish a collaborative VET system between the public and private sectors (Deissinger & Hellwig, 2005). This VET framework includes all public and private institutions or activities that contribute to the formal or informal development of appropriate skills to trainees. It is institutional-based procedures and tripartite negotiations between public authorities, employers' organizations and trade unions (German Federal Employment Agency, 2019; Deissinger & Gonon, 2021). Furthermore, training under the dual system does not depend on the specific needs of training companies, but rather on the skills that learners require to perform their jobs. The German dual system is based on the close cooperation between the school system and

firms (Tremblay & Le Bot, 2000). To participate in the programme, a student must have a specific school leaving certificate and minimum age. Unlike in-company training, purely academic training is, as a rule, unpaid or with rare exceptions. The cost of school-based training is supported by the state and the costs of on-the-job training by a company that provides apprenticeships and welcomes trainees. Further, the German dual system has been contributing to the low rates of youth unemployment which decreased to 4.5% in March 2021 (Casey, 1986; Federal Statistical Office, 2021). It leads to over 500,000 new apprenticeship contracts every year (German Federal Employment Agency, 2019). After their graduation, most of the apprentices usually get a job with their employers who have trained them depending on their productivity or performance (German Federal Employment Agency, 2019; Mohrenweiser & Backes-Gellner, 2008).

It appears that the German dual apprenticeship is a joint programme between both public and private actors who share roles and responsibilities. The duration of the programme varies between 1 and 3 years and the applicant must fulfil some specified criteria. During the programme, the apprentices (students) learn theory and practice that prepare them particularly well for what companies expect of them. Likewise, they are provided with the skills needed in the labour market. After their graduation, they have the theoretical and practical skills, knowledge and attitudes to enter the labour market after the apprenticeship system.

Switzerland is one of the countries in Europe with a dual VET system in which school and work are integrated. The Swiss VET approach is built in a community-based structure where specific craft enterprises provide capacity building (Eido et al., 2017). Nearly 2/3 of young people in Switzerland choose to pursue a VET programme because

vocational training is an integral part of the Swiss education system (Hoffman & Schwartz, 2015). Recently, some national VET reforms such as the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act of 2002 (VPETA, SR 412.10) and Federal Ordinance of 2003 on Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPETO, SR 412.101) have been introduced and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is the responsible ministry (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training [CEDEFOP], 2017).

Nowadays, professional associations/companies and the government (confederation and cantons) are responsible for vocational training. As explained by Hoffman and Schwartz (2015), Swiss VET programmes combine theoretical and practical training in a company from 3 to 4 days a week. Once or twice a week an apprentice goes to vocational school to learn theoretical principles and skills which are subsequently applied in a paid apprenticeship in the company. The training is a three or four-year VET programme for Federal VET Diploma (apprenticeship), a two-year VET program for Federal VET Certificate and three or four-year VET program for the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (Eido et al., 2017). During this time, an apprentice is employed in a training company (all kinds of industries from small to large size) from whom s/he receives a salary (Juda, 2016). Whichever programme an apprentice chooses, it leads to an officially recognized diploma or certificate (Muehleemann & Wolter, 2006). The Swiss dual apprenticeship is 2-place training with sharing and collaborative roles and responsibilities between public and private stakeholders.

During the programme, apprentices acquire knowledge and skills both in a company and a vocational school. In the company, they learn practical professional skills

while they are actively involved in the production process of the company (Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education, 2008). Meanwhile, the vocational school provides apprentices with vocational knowledge, general knowledge and theoretical bases necessary to perform a job. Such a programme is beneficial for both companies and apprentices (Hoffman & Schwartz, 2015). Muehlemann and Wolter (2006) found that apprentices impact positively on companies' productivity and the apprenticeship facilitates the integration of young graduates in the job market and contributes to lowering their unemployment rate. Similarly, Søren and Eberhardt (2016) found out that apprenticeship is a key to providing young people with direct access to the labour market. After completing their apprenticeship, the Swiss graduates are qualified for further education at the tertiary level. Due to that, the proportion of apprentices continuing their education at the tertiary level has steadily risen over the last decade.

From the perspective of an individual educational career, apprenticeship training is therefore in no way a dead-end road (Markowitsch & Hefler, 2019). Swiss dual VET is viewed as a sustainable model for an education system for competence development using occupational standards. Thus, the quality of the training provided in Switzerland is recognized internationally as meeting the highest standards in the world (State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation [SERI], 2020). When we look at the Swiss dual VET system, it appears that it is both a learning opportunity for young people and a way to enter the job market with the possibility of continuing their higher education.

In addition to Switzerland and Germany, the Indian dual apprenticeship presents specific characteristics that deserve to be reviewed and compared to the Benin model. Nowadays, India is among the countries with the lowest proportion of trained youth in

the world (Mehrotra et al., 2014). According to ILO (2013), Indian National Apprenticeship is a training system in which an employer hires an apprentice and trains him or her systematically in the designated trade for a period specified by the Apprentices' Act. It started in 1959 voluntarily and every master craftsmen, builder, sculptor, and weaver usually had an apprentice to which the art of skill of the trade has passed on (ILO, 2013). But it has not achieved the expected outcomes. In 1961, the government established and effectively implemented a new apprenticeship program under the Apprentices Act. Since that time, the apprenticeship scheme has categorized four categories of apprentices, i.e. trade apprentices, graduate apprentices, technician apprentices and technician (vocational) apprentices (Directorate General of Employment and Training [DGET], 2018).

A training course consists of basic, practical, and relevant training as specified in the curriculum for individual businesses during their apprenticeships (Directorate General of Training, n.d.). ILO (2013) found that apprentices are granted a scholarship based on consumer prices and arrangements category-by-category as specified in the contract, which is reviewed by the government every two years and they are evaluated by the National Training Council's All India Trade Test after completing their training (AITT). Those who pass the AITT are awarded National Apprenticeship Certificates (NAC) which are recognized for employment under Government/Semi-Government departments/organizations (MOLE, 2009; Labor and Employment Ministry, 2009). Moreover, the Indian dual apprenticeship is partly based on the Swiss model and it involves public and private actors who each have a well-defined role (Pfister, 2012). It is considered as a key route to overcoming persisting skills gaps and pursuing inclusive

growth amid the demographic and structural economic transformation (Mehrotra et al., 2014). It can be understood that the Indian dual apprenticeship programme has become an integral part of the Indian education system and it is more flexible and inclusive. Likewise, it involves both public and private stakeholders. This cooperation is strong and contributes a lot to the success of their apprenticeship programme.

Benin Dual Apprenticeship

In Benin, the Ministry of Secondary and Technical Education and Vocational Training [MoSTEVT], (2019) identified three main categories of TVET programmes. This includes public and private educational programs, secondary and higher school TVET programs and professional development programs for institutions and companies. From these categories, there are 10 programmes and the dual apprenticeship is one of them (Nouatin et al, 2019). Before the introduction of the dual system, traditional apprenticeship was in place. It has developed for a long time in a family or caste system sheltered from intervention by both public stakeholders and development partners (MoSTEVT, 2019). Through this process, an apprentice is placed with a confirmed master and is instructed by initiation, imitation and repetition until mastery. The apprentice pays for his or her apprenticeship, which varies according to his/her age and conditions and is “released” during a solemn ceremony that determines his or her passage into the body of the masters (Atindehou, 2013).

Nowadays, traditional apprenticeship which is one-place (workshop) training is recognized by the Certificat de Qualification aux Métiers (CQM). In the traditional system, apprentices are trained only in the workshop and they sit for a final examination organized by the MoSTEVT and those who pass receive the CQM certificate (Atindehou,

2013; Moumouni et al., 2015). Many initiatives (projects) were undertaken and culminated in 1998 with the creation of the Fonds de Développement de la Formation Continue et de l'Apprentissage (FODEFCA) (MoSTEVT, 2017a). While it was a question of giving a body and a name to the training which would thus be introduced into the landscape of Benin education, the ideal retained unanimously was that of the dual system (Bankolé, 2021). However, it was not entirely correct, given the realities of Benin, to designate this vocational training system with the same name as that in force in Germany, in Switzerland or Austria. It is on this point that, by compromise, the system was baptized "Vocational training by apprenticeship of the dual-type". The term "dual-type" highlighted the notion that it was inspired by the dual system without really being identical to it.

The Benin apprenticeship programme can be understood as an initial vocational training and learning system whose responsibilities are shared between public institutions, donor agencies and private sector organizations (MoSTEVT, 2017b). According to Bankolé et al. (2020), while private organizations participate in the programme implementation, public institutions and development partners are in charge of transferring competencies and mobilizing funds. As far as private actors are concerned, they are part of the implementation of the programme including apprentices' sensitization, enrolment, training and evaluation. The dual apprenticeship leads to the knowledge and the exercise of a trade/craft occupation and its training can relate to promising trades in all sectors of the national economy (Atindehou, 2013). Mainly, the dual apprenticeship programme aims at offering complete vocational qualification training to apprentices that is to say training an efficient workforce capable of entering

the job market and improving productivity in companies or workshops (MoSTEVT, 2017c). Vocational training by dual-type apprenticeship differs from purely academic training by two characteristics: most of the training takes place in companies or workshops and additional theoretical and practical training is provided by vocational training centres where theoretical and practical training are provided (MoSTEVT, 2019).

The main trainees of the Benin dual apprenticeship are apprentices under a 6-month old apprenticeship contract or equivalent. According to MoSTEVT (2017a), the dual apprenticeship programme is open only to three categories of people. The first category is the apprentices under a written apprenticeship contract according to the law after six months of experience in his/her workshop, company or business. The second category is the professional business called the holders of the *Certificat de Qualification aux Métiers (CQM)* earned after completing the renovated traditional apprenticeship. Instead of the CQM holders, those recognized by their peers as a professional having practised the trade for two years can get admission as well. The last category is those who do not hold the CQM but are certified by an employer or a professional association of their respective craft occupations (Bankolé & Nouatin, 2021). These are transitional arrangements of the effective ongoing implementation of the National Qualifications Framework with the *Validation des Acquis d'Expériences (VAE)* (MoSTEVT, 2017a).

Eligible candidates appear for an entrance test through which their reading, writing and calculating abilities in French, as well as their ability in the chosen occupation, are evaluated. After the candidate passes the entrance test, s/he is selected and appointed to the available VTCs according to the available budget (Bankolé, 2021). During the 3 years of training, they spend five (5) days in artisan business, workshop or

company and 1 day a week in the vocational training centres (MoSTEVT, 2017b). In the training centres, they learn theoretical and practical skills related to their respective occupations until their final examination followed by their graduation (MoSTEVT, 2019). The dual apprenticeship system appears as a teaching/learning programme during which apprentices learn theoretical and practical skills and knowledge specific to each profession. They have the opportunity to discover and use adapted tools never seen in their workshops. After completing this programme, they can either work on their own or be employed in related occupations (Decker, 2019). Looking at the functioning of Benin dual apprenticeship, it appears that the Benin dual system is partly inspired by the Swiss model with its specific application methods.

Legal Provisions Supporting Benin Dual Apprenticeship

The Benin education sector in general and the sub-sector of vocational training have a legislative and regulatory framework profile. Thus, there are many laws, legislative and regulatory acts that support the existence and functioning of the TVET system especially the dual apprenticeship in Benin. They have been adopted for consistency and major quality trends in this sub-sector (Moumouni et al., 2015). As in the formal education sector, a decree has been adopted to reorganize the main handicrafts regulatory body (Decree N° 90-351 of 23 November 1990). It established responsibilities, organization and functioning of the Superior Council of Handicrafts (*CSA*) in Benin (Government of Benin, 2005). From that decree, it can be noted that the Council is normally responsible for monitoring and coordinating the actions of the craft sector and the organization of craftsmen could not run since its inception. Then, under the impulse of the organizational restructuring project of the crafts sector (*ROSA*) in 2000, several

industries revitalization activities were conducted and data resulted in the establishment of the National Confederation of Artisans (CNAB) and the Interdepartmental Chamber of Trade (CIMB), the adoption of the national policy of handicraft development, the creation of a public-private partnership in the handicrafts sector (MoSTEVT, 2017b). It appears that the main authorities recognize and value the contribution and support of both public and private organizations. This led to some provisions to encourage and value the different actors' contributions.

Similarly, after the official recognition of the apprenticeship, the Benin government has taken a provision (Decree N°2005-117 of March 17, 2005) of Certification of Vocational Qualifications through the dual apprenticeship programme. Further, since 2005, the Government of Benin has created as part of the professionalization of crafts, two certificates: the "*Certificat de Qualification aux Metiers*" (CQM)" earned after completing the renovated traditional apprenticeship and the *Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle (CQP)*" issued after completing the dual apprenticeship programme. Besides, another decree was issued, always with the aim of professionalization of crafts (Decree N°2005-118 of March 17, 2005). It is concerned with the implementation and guidance of the dual-learning system in technical and vocational education in Benin (Adanhounzo, 2013). It presented the dual apprenticeship as initial vocational training in which responsibility is shared between the state institutions and private sector organizations.

Moreover, it is important to mention that contractually, the dual apprenticeship "is governed on the one hand, by a written contract between a company or a master craftsman and an apprentice, and secondly, by a written contract between the company,

master artisan, apprentice and vocational training centre. According to the Decree N°2005-118 of March 17, 2005, this training takes place in parallel in two places i.e. business/workshop that provides an especially practical training based on production to allow the learner to gain practical skills and get to know the reality of the private sector; and the vocational training centre to complete the training received in the workplace, in the theory of art and general culture. In a nutshell, these policy initiatives are aimed at short, medium and long term to provide skills training and comprehensive practical and theoretical artisans; form a powerful workforce able to fit into the labour market and improve the productivity and profitability of artisans. They also allow for the provision of comprehensive training and qualifications for apprentices. It can be understood that forming a performing workforce capable to take up jobs in the labour market and improving productivity and profitability are some outcomes of the aforementioned policies provisions.

Theoretical Understanding of Dual Apprenticeship

In Benin, some young people join the dual apprenticeship programme because of their economic issues whereas others join it to learn the required skills, knowledge and attitudes to enter into the labour market (Bhandari, 2011). Likewise, others join the programme because of a passion or because of the national certificate they earn from the government after their graduation (Bankolé & Nouatin, 2021). It appears then that most of the young people join the apprenticeship programme for various motivations. To understand the motivational factors that encourage those apprentices, I chose the expectancy-value theory which is a model of motivation which is used to understand and predict people's behaviour in the process of adopting innovations. It is proposed by

Wigfield (1994). This expectancy-value idea explained that a person's decision to do a particular task is based on the belief that there are advantages in executing the task and the belief that they can succeed. The expectancy of success and perceived value must be high. This idea explained that a person's perceived value and expectancy of success determine his/her intention to perform a given task. In other words, apprentices are likely to participate in the dual apprenticeship programme if the perceived value and the expectation of success are higher and if these values are perceived to offer more than the perceived costs and investment of the programme (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000).

Based on the idea of Wigfield (1994), the performance, perseverance and choice of completing the dual apprenticeship programme by apprentices are most directly predicted by their expectations of success in the programme and the subjective value they place on it (Wigfield, 1994). Their expectations and values themselves are most directly determined by other beliefs related to success, including apprentices' achievement goals, competencies and skills enhancement, livelihood improvement, personal patterns, and task-specific beliefs. Furthermore, the Wigfield principle serves as a framework for investigating why people prioritize values and interests. It investigates the differences in people's choices, even though they make an effort to do something (Wigfield, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Both expectations and values play a significant role in predicting future decisions, commitment, dedication and outcomes of an individual in the theory of expectation-value.

However, while using expectancy-value theory to understand the dual apprenticeship programme of Benin, I discovered that apprentices also have good social networks that can boost their accomplishments. From this point, I was not satisfied with

the expectancy-value idea because it does not talk about those social factors. Therefore, I associated Wigfield's idea with Bourdieu idea since the graduates' social capital is higher than that of those who didn't either complete or participate in the programme. As explained by Bourdieu (1980), social network and social capital are closely related concepts. The notion of social capital thus refers to the modalities of access and use of resources contained in social networks. In the field of sociology, there are three pioneering authors of social capital i.e. Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam. This focused on Bourdieu's idea because of his wide exploration, his work and his reputation in the field.

Bourdieu (2006) defined social capital as the sum of current or suspected resources linked to a sustained mutuality insight or systemic channel of socialization. It gives all members a pool of funds to pursue qualifications (Bourdieu, 1985). According to Bourdieu, three basic capital examples exist i.e. economic capital, which can be converted into monetary resources immediately and directly and is established in property rights; under certain conditions, cultural capital can be converted into economic capital and institutionalized as a skill in education; and social capital, which consists of social obligations that can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1985).

From this perspective, it appears that social capital represents the set of relationships of an individual. These relationships can be professional, family, friends and even virtual (on social networks). Along with economic capital, it constitutes one of the resources available to individuals to integrate into society (Bourdieu, 1980). Relating this to the dual apprenticeship, it can be noted that the apprentices who complete the programme are those with high social capital in terms of the use of available training

resources and diverse advantages. Similarly, it appears that my participants join the dual apprenticeship programme to be engaged in society by doing their respective jobs or occupations that are guided by their social capital. This includes family capital which denotes social networks of people and community resources that provide assistance and support. Hence, directly or indirectly, the society provided resistance to my participants achieving their apprenticeship dreams. Likewise, social capital makes apprentices aware of the benefits of the dual apprenticeship if they can perceive it well. Undoubtedly, these two theories help apprentices to shape their lives positively as well as fulfil their expectations and predictions accordingly.

Research Gap

While reviewing the aforementioned models of the dual VET, it appears that there are various research studies on Benin dual apprenticeship (Atindehou, 2013; Moumouni et al., 2015; Nouatin et al., 2019; Bankolé et al., 2020; Bankolé & Nouatin, 2021). But the existing research in Benin until now discusses the dual system as a whole; it focuses on learning from the perspective of the craftsmen or discusses the strategic actors and their roles, while the views and experiences of apprentices themselves are rarely discussed thus less documented. After exploring the existing literature, it can be understood that the Benin dual apprenticeship programme is a particular programme that takes place in vocational training centres and masters' workshops, companies, and firms. Moreover, it can be understood that the government and donors' partnership has been sharing experience, transferring competencies, and allocating financial resources to make it sustainable. Meanwhile, MoSTEVT (2017c) showed that the dual apprenticeship has become a major strategic issue because of the place it occupies in improving the quality

of the workforce in the craft sector and therefore of economic growth, but also for its role in promoting employment. As mentioned by Bankolé et al. (2020), many actors are involved in the Benin dual apprenticeship programme and only a few play a significant role and apprentices are silent actors as their voice is neither listened to nor taken into consideration.

Similarly, Bankolé and Nouatin (2020) highlighted various issues that prevent some apprentices from completing the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. Among those issues, is the distance between the vocational training centres and their location, the late publication of entrance test results and the implementation of training funding, and apprentices' financial contribution despite their admission to the selection test (government & FODEFCA 90% and apprentices 10%) (Bankolé & Nouatin, 2021). Comparing German, Swiss and Indian experiences to the Benin dual apprenticeship, it appears that there exists very limited literature on Benin dual apprenticeship whereas there is a lot of research on the dual apprenticeship programme around the world. Likewise, the experiences from the aforementioned countries showed that each country has a model based on some minimum international standards and requirements (Mohrenweiser & Backes-Gellner, 2008). For example, the development and implementation of dual vocational education are being rebuilt in both Germany and Switzerland, with the institutional framework for learning in both countries (Deissinger & Gonon, 2021). Similarly, the German and Swiss dual VET systems have different rules, primarily regarding how a company assigns tasks to its apprentices, as well as whether their activities have an economic value or do not lead to productive output (Dionisius et al., 2008).

Although the two systems are quite similar, trainees in Germany incur significant net expenses, whereas apprenticeship training in Switzerland generates an estimated revenue for firms during the training period (Backes-Gellner, 2014). Having said this, it can be reflected that all the apprenticeship models are industry or company-based. It means that the apprenticeship programme is possible only when there are industries or companies. Thus, apprenticeship will not be sustainable if there is no industry or company. For example, during this COVID-19 pandemic, most of the industries or companies have been obliged to close. Likewise, the majority of the apprenticeship programmes have been stopped or suspended because they cannot be done virtually. As apprenticeship training has gained increased attention worldwide due to record highs of youth unemployment, it is, therefore, important to think about the sustainability of the dual apprenticeship so that no matter what happens, it can continue smoothly.

Thus, it can be reported that in Switzerland, Germany and India, students who are enrolled in pre-vocational or vocational programs are enrolled in joint vocational programmes which combine both school and work-based elements. They also have multiple pathways post-apprenticeship including university, professional college, the workforce and more whereas in Benin, it is a dead-end and there is no further education pathway after the apprenticeship. If the apprenticeship is to be promoted among young people, it is important to develop a good understanding of the levels of satisfaction with the programme on the part of those participating in it and to identify the impact of the programme. Based on such a situation, researchers need to explore dual apprenticeship trainees and graduates' perceptions to identify the room for improvement and how to make the programme successful. It also seemed that there are some strategic policies and

planning that would empower the overall embodiment of the apprenticeship programme in Benin. Therefore, it seems that the dual apprenticeship makes graduates dependent since they are not able to open their own company, industry or vocational training centre after completing the programme. Further, this study worked on how apprentices perceive the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin because their perceptions stood as a powerful driving force for actions for the improvement and renovation of our dual apprenticeship programme. Thus, the different experiences of apprentices are a key area for this research.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, various pieces of literature related to dual apprenticeship have been reviewed. It is based on various studies conducted around the world to see how apprenticeship programmes, especially that of the dual apprenticeship, are different from developing to developed contexts. Besides the Benin dual apprenticeship programme, three practices from Switzerland, Germany and India were briefly presented. Likewise, the legal provisions related to the dual apprenticeship programme are highlighted to explain the contribution of the policy to the setting up of the programme in Benin. Similarly, the review of this literature was useful to match the context with my participants and to identify the gap that is addressed in this study. Further, I learnt that there are various practices of dual apprenticeship around the world that depend on the context and realities of each country. The dual apprenticeship is mostly an industry or company-based programme and this may hamper its sustainability in difficult periods when the industries and companies may be closed. Besides, I noticed that the Benin dual system is partly inspired by the Swiss model and there are some regulations and

legislative acts which define and organize the programme as well as the roles of the different actors involved. To contextualize the research questions with a theoretical stand, I reviewed the expectancy-value theory which addresses only the apprentices' expectations and motivations. As this single theory is not possible to address all the aspects of the research issue, I associated it with the social capital theory to cover the social aspects of the dual apprenticeship programme that cannot be covered by the expectancy-value theory.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the methodological procedures adopted to carry out this research study. I begin with an interpretive paradigm connected to philosophical considerations. Under the philosophical viewpoint, I discuss my ontological, epistemological and axiological standpoints. Similarly, I discuss narrative inquiry as an information generation process. Moreover, this chapter also focuses on the various procedures to generate information, the research participants and the procedures interpretation, analysis and discussion of generated information. Finally, I discuss how I maintained the quality standards to authenticate research and ethical considerations to maintain ethical consent among the research participants.

Philosophical Considerations

In this section, I describe my philosophical standpoints i.e. the nature of reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and the nature of values (axiology) and good ethics (Wertz et al., 2011). These paradigms represent my belief system to attach and understand a specific worldview (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). These philosophical worldviews helped to see the perceptions of apprentices in detail. Ontology is the study of being and the nature of reality (Cohen et al., 2018). Since every story is uniquely different in terms of reality it consists of I assume the nature of reality is multiple depending upon the socio-cultural and contextual situation of oneself and others (Spencer et al., 2020). So, my ontological position in this study is presented under

multiple realities through the stories of dual apprenticeship experiences inside and outside of the training and workshop setting.

Epistemology focuses on the origins and nature of knowledge, the construction of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the known (Spencer et al., 2020). In short, epistemology is the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Fenstermacher, 1994). In this research, my epistemological standpoint is generated through the interview of the participants that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. Throughout the research, an open line of communication, collaborative conversations, and trust with the participants has been maintained. Besides, axiology explains what, why and how values are constructed and followed in human life (Spencer et al., 2020). Human values are constructed and followed based on the norms, ethics and values in the given socio-cultural environment (Cohen et al., 2018). My subjectivity also controls the perceptions of apprentices' stories and I have a subjective relationship with my participants.

As my research investigates the perception of apprentices on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin, I have used qualitative research (de Vaus, 2007). This research design has helped me to explore and understand the meaning and perception that each apprentice has of the dual apprenticeship in Benin. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As a qualitative researcher, I contextualize and interpret the meaning of the apprentices' beliefs and perceptions on the dual apprenticeship in Benin (de Vaus, 2013). Furthermore, I also assume that the qualitative research approach generates new knowledge on the dual apprenticeship programme as understood and experienced by

other researchers and that new knowledge contributes to filling the gap to improve the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin.

Interpretive Research Paradigm

A research paradigm, in my opinion, is an integrated system of belief, worldview, or environment that defines what research is and how it is undertaken (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The interpretive paradigm focuses on action and, actions are only meaningful to us only when we ascertain the intentions of actors to share their experiences (Thorne, 2020). According to Stake (2010), the interpretive research design is an interdisciplinary approach that emphasizes human values and experiences which exists in literary, historical, anthropological, cultural and sociological areas. Such experiences of apprentices who are enrolled in dual apprenticeship programme are interpretive. Through this paradigm, apprentices create and understand reality. It distinguishes trainees based on their background, experiences, and expectations and, through socialization, contributes to the ongoing formation of reality in their wider social context (Wahyuni, 2012).

Further, interpretive researchers are with individuals and attempt to understand their interpretations of the world around them (Creswell, 2014). Based on this, I believe that there are multiple perspectives of apprentices' perceptions on the dual apprenticeship programme. So, the apprentices have their beliefs, understandings and perceptions on the dual apprenticeship programme. They acquire the expertise, knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences of their trainers and master craftsmen during the dual training. Many of our daily social interactions are built on shared experiences (Cohen et al., 2018). More importantly, I have understood that the interpretive paradigm helps me to explore

apprentices' perceptions, understanding, experiences, and involvement in the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin.

In the study, I explored apprentices' real-life experiences in their master craftsmen workshop before they join the dual apprenticeship. Therefore, their life experiences have become my study to be explored in an interpretive way. The relation between the interviewer and the interviewee was like a part of the interaction (Creswell, 2014). I played the role of a thinker for the integrity of its thinking. As Stake (2010) said, qualitative thinking brings multifarious experiences through perceptions of the apprentices to interpret their livelihood strategy. The interpretive paradigm allowed me to associate with apprentices enrolled in the dual apprenticeship programme for the enhancement of skills or competencies and job opportunities.

Narrative Inquiry Research Methods

The study of narratively understood experiences as a way of thinking about and studying experience is a relatively new qualitative methodology (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). According to Butina (2015), the narrative investigation is a type of qualitative study in which the story itself serves as rough data. As she states, this approach has been used in a variety of disciplines to learn about the storyteller's culture, history, identity, and way of life. Narrative approaches include direct research that takes into account human experience or research that generates data in a narrative format. More importantly, story investigation is a technique for perceiving and interpreting time, place, and interpersonal interactions with one's surroundings over time (Maxwell, 2012). I employed narrative inquiry as a research method because it can tap the social context and culture in which the dual apprenticeship takes place. As suggested by Clandinin and

Connelly (2000), there exist three places of narrative inquiry i.e. temporality, socially, and place. These are the dimensions that must be investigated to comprehend a narrative investigation and this research looks at the past, present, and future of people's places and things by focusing on temporal points (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Besides temporality, narrative tries to inquiry attend to both personal condition and social condition. The investigator's condition refers to his or her feelings, hopes, desires, and expressive reactions (Wells, 2011). The social dimension directs attention to the inquiry relationship between the researcher and participant's life, cultural, social, institutional and linguistic narratives. The location or sequence of the investigation and events takes into account the specific, concrete, physical and topological boundaries (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This commonplace assumes that all events take place someplace.

In other words, in the narrative inquiry, moving from the field to data to interim and final research texts is a cyclical and insightful process (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). It means that the data are collected and then analyzed by including the details of what I did, thought and felt while analyzing the data. This method of investigating apprentices' histories and experiences within the interpretive framework was guided by the interpretative paradigm relevant to my research (Jha, 2018). I explored apprentices' perceptions of the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin where those perceptions are reflected through experiences in this programme. For this purpose, I adapted the narrative inquiry approach of meaning-making as it is the inquiry into narratives of lived experiences (Webster & Mertova, 2007). It is a methodology, not just a theory (Clandinin, 2007). This includes the multiple voices of the researcher and participants.

Moreover, Creswell and Poth (2018) argued that narrative inquiry provides the researcher and participants with an opportunity for a meaningful retelling of life experiences.

Besides this, I found Satre's (1964) definition of narrative inquiry as cited in Webster & Mertova (2007) to understand the sense of this method in my study. It can be understood that people are always tellers of tales. According to the poetic quote, the narrative investigation approach would allow me to explore and present the voices and complexities of the apprentices' situational experiences (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Narrative inquiry as a research method helped me to explore the participants' life stories, holistic views and perceptions of the dual apprenticeship programme. This method helped me to reflect and construct the participants' understanding and shared experiences of the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin.

Study Site

This study was carried out by taking participants from Abomey-Calavi, Cotonou, Porto-Novo and Sèmè-Podji cities of the Republic of Benin.

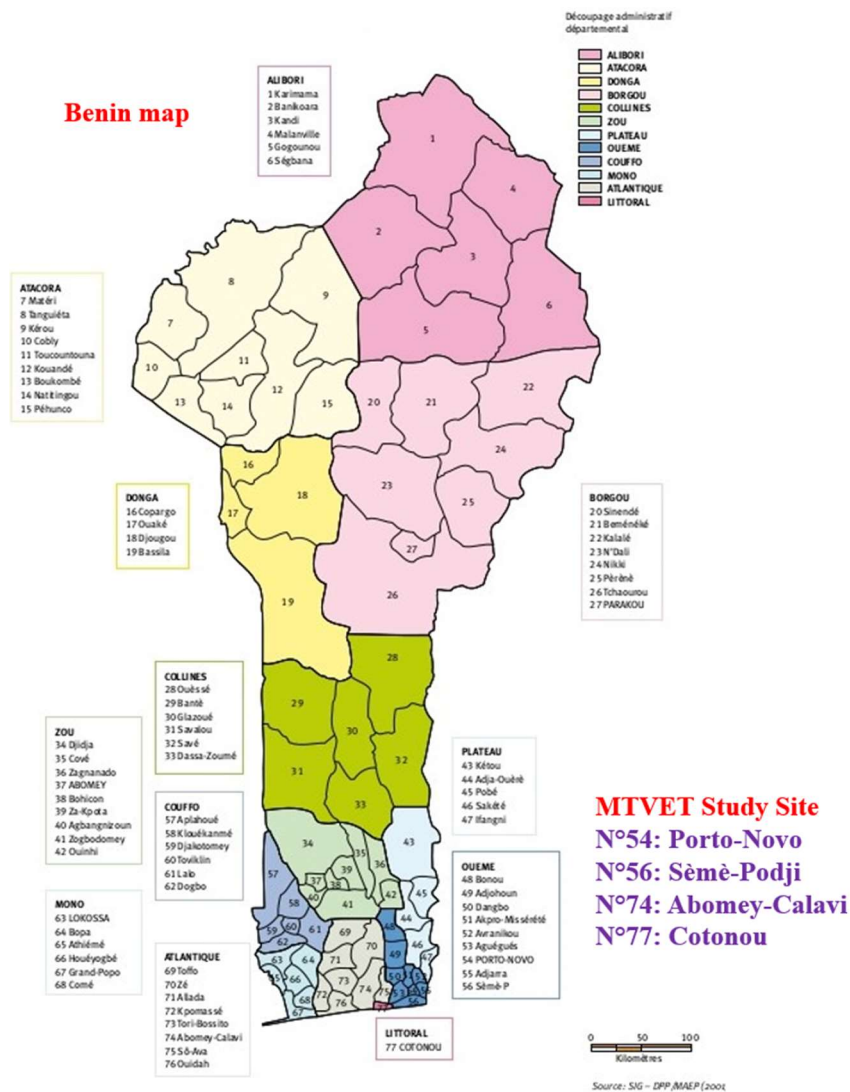


Figure 1: Geographic situation of Benin and delimitation of the study site
(Hounkponou, 2015)

I selected these cities because they are multi-ethnic cities, and many public and private dual apprenticeship actors especially apprentices are located/living there (Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique [INSAE], 2015). The cities are also considered as an appropriate research site of information because most of the economic activities and businesses have been running there (INSAE, 2016).

Selection of Participants

To select my research participants, I consulted with the Benin LELAM TVET-4INCOME team. The focus of my participants was the apprentices who have already completed (graduates) the dual programme. I considered the suggestions from the Benin LELAM TVET-4INCOME team to select the cities for my participants (Creswell, 2016). Then I communicated with the Vice-President of Benin National Artisans Association who collected my participants' contact details from their respective master craftsmen. Making it consistent with other interpretive studies, I purposefully selected participants as per their occupations and cities until the data saturation which means data satisfaction (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Indeed, during the data collection, I came to the point where no new information was obtained from additional data. So, I stopped collecting data because the same information was given by the participants; this shows that adequate data has been collected for detailed analysis (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

There are six storytellers in this research study and their pseudonyms are Champion, Audrey, Arthur, Gassius, Mayelle and Ayihouè. All of them are graduates of the dual apprenticeship programme. Champion lives in Porto-Novo. Currently, he has more than ten years of experience in tailoring/sewing. Audrey lives in Sèmè-Podji and she has been working as an accountant as well as a part-time seamstress for 5 years. As far as Arthur is concerned, he is a carpenter with 3 years' experience and he lives in Abomey-Calavi. Gassius also has 3 years' experience, as a plumber and he lives in Abomey-Calavi. Finally, Mayelle has more than 10 years of experience in hairdressing and she lives in Sèmè-Podji. Ayihouè is one of the most recent graduates of the dual

apprenticeship programme. He has nearly 2 years' experience in tailoring and he lives in Sèmè-Podji.

Irrespective of their working experiences, I chose them as my participants because they were reachable and the first who responded to my interview request and gave me their free time for the interview. Champion, Gassius and Mayelle have opened their workshop and they are enjoying their profession with their respective apprentices. Audrey has not yet started working properly as a seamstress because she holds a Master degree in accounting and she is working in an organization at our interview time, whereas Arthur is working with his friends. Likewise, Ayihouè is working in his sister's workshop since he cannot buy his tools and materials and open his workshop. Right after getting their WhatsApp numbers provided by their respective master craftsmen, I communicated with them and I set with each of them the time for the interview considering his/her availability.

Techniques for Collecting Stories

Observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual material are all examples of information sources in a research method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Among those four techniques that could be used to collect stories, I used remote (online) interviews through WhatsApp audio calls (Salmons, 2012). I designed a checklist made of open-ended questions. I also used documents and some audio-visual materials to collect data (Creswell, 2016). Before the interview, I agreed with each of my participants about the interview time. After that, I charged my mobile, bought an internet data pack in case of an electricity power cut and prepared hardware for the recording (Salmons, 2012). I sat at an appropriate and calm place in my room and I

tested all the technology. Then I did a mock interview some minutes before the interview time.

For interviewing, I used *Fongbe*, *Goungbe* and *Xwlagbe* (local languages and/or participants mother tongues) and French to reach further into participants' lives. These different languages helped me to explore cultural insights and lived experiences. For me, that approach was useful to collect stories as they helped me gain in-depth and detailed understanding, as well as provided me with the opportunity to explore and retell their stories. The interviews were put on speaker and recorded with another mobile recording system. As highlighted by Creswell and Creswell (2021), my participants were informed that their voices would be recorded and later, transcribed texts were read to them to verify their responses.

Information Generating Process

As I began my narrative journey to explore views, events, and understanding of my participants' perceptions of the dual apprenticeship programme, I was much more excited to hear about the turning points in their journey in the dual apprenticeship that they shared with me. I was very excited and amazed to see their curiosity and readiness to reflect their experiences and insightful stories reflections of their past to present. I was delighted when they openly shared their experiences and perceptions of the dual apprenticeship programme. In this process, I listened to their recorded audio calls several times and transcribed them first into French and later into English for a fair and detailed transcription because, besides the local languages, I also used French while interviewing some of my participants.

In the beginning, I introduced myself and explained briefly my research purpose to my participants and checked that they were ready to be my research participants. Then I took their consent for the recording and taking short notes considering privacy and confidentiality. We talked for about half an hour in each case. At the end of the interview, I thanked them and told them that I may need further information while transcribing and coding my data and they promised to respond whenever I texted them. After the interviews, I listened to the recording several times and transcribed the interviews. Then I met one of my supervisors at KUSOED and showed him the transcribed interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). He provided feedback and asked me to go for the second round of interviews which was not easy because my participants had not responded to my second interview request for more than a month. It was a big challenge for me because internet boundaries are more expensive in Benin than in Nepal and it was difficult to reach my participants for the second round of interviews but I found an alternative. I sent my cousin to them and when she met them, I called her and she gave her mobile to them for the second round of the interview to cover the missing and remaining information I needed as per my supervisor feedback.

To narrate their stories, I attempted to incorporate their voices and words. In doing so, each of the transcriptions was reviewed by listening to the recorded voices, and significant statements were marked and highlighted to generate the meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). After reviewing the transcripts and listening to the recorded interviews, I started analyzing similes and metaphors. Besides, my data was already in story form because the apprentices, as well as the graduates, narrated everything from the beginning of their apprenticeship to their present status in the dual apprenticeship programme. Then,

in the field of qualitative research, I went through the narrative investigation analysis procedure and discovered that there were no standard approaches or a list of methods generally recognized as narrative methods (Elliott, 2005). Besides, I was involved in reading the transcribed data and recorded interviews and categorized them, and organized them under headings of theme and content (Maxwell, 2012). Moreover, I uphold the narrative principles of methodology and also organized themes, which were analyzed through the holistic-content perspective identified by Lieblich et al. (1998).

In my research study, there is a story of the apprentices' perceptions and experiences on the dual apprenticeship programme and their opportunities as well as the challenges they identified for the programme. Their understanding and experiences were enhanced through different in and out resources. Therefore, I chose the holistic-content approach to find out the life story of the apprentices i.e. the following steps have been followed to analyze the data: coding, categorizing, theme-making, meaning-making procedure, and interpretation. In the coding process, I listened several times to the recorded audio, transcribed texts to verify and then categorized and highlighted the texts to put under different themes for analysis and interpretation. As I coded and categorized to put them under different themes, I made themes based on their narrative life, how they started the apprenticeship, how they are/were enrolled in the dual programme, how they learn and are trained, their challenges as well as the opportunities of the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin.

Further, I came up with two broader themes: apprentices/graduates and dual apprenticeship. After developing the broader themes, I listened again to the recorded audio and the transcribed texts and identified the inputs, processes and outcomes of the

dual training programme. I used the same strategy to put the narratives under sub-themes like perceptions of apprentices, opportunities, challenges and ways forward for the dual apprenticeship programme. Likewise, I re-listened to the recorded audio, re-read the interviews' transcripts and wrote mini-stories based on the broad themes I identified.

Interpretation and Meaning Making

The main point of each research is how the researcher generates the data and makes meaning. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), field texts are the source of data for narrative investigations and include interviews, conversations and diaries. In this study, my interview transcripts were the source of thought movements about the interview place, time and society. After the interview, I listened to the interview recording to review how the participants answered my questions and created a narrative space for each participant (Manankil-Rankin, 2016). Then, I played with the participants' stories, felt deep empathy for each one, felt in my body and woke up to their experience as if I were with her/him. To bring this embodied experience to life, I wrote a story for each participant using her/his own words (Manankil-Rankin, 2016). For me as a researcher, it is a way to relive each participant's experience.

Afterwards, I organized the information and categorized it into themes and sub-themes and repeatedly involved listening and writing so that I could verify. I analyzed and interpreted the provided data by incorporating their voices, opinions, and words. In this research, narrative inquiry helped to explore the complexity from a human-centred perspective like the perceptions of the apprentices (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Then I interpreted their words and opinions from their world view understanding the multiple

realities of the shared stories. Their stories helped me to understand, learn as well as explore past and present scenarios of the dual apprenticeship programme.

As I made different themes and sub-themes incorporating apprentices' perceptions, I listened to the recorded data and re-read the transcribed data to enhance my understanding and interpretation for meaning-making of their perceptions of the dual apprenticeship programme (Clandinin, 2007). As I started collecting stories, I was much more interested in my participants' work and life. I used a mobile audio recording system to record the interviews and they were earlier informed that their interviews would be recorded so they found it easier to share their narratives. Their stories reminded me of my experiences as an interviewer in August 2018 when I interacted with some apprentices about the socio-economic impact of the dual apprenticeship programme on their life. Their perceptions were so reflective that I didn't mind listening many times. Their opinions and understanding helped me to categorize different themes and sub-themes.

As I listened several times to the recorded audio, I felt that I was in the field and after this step, I transcribed it into English after French. After the transcription, interviews were coded thematically for interpretation and meaning-making (Clandinin, 2007). I used the four-step data analysis and procedure through making sense of the narratives, coding for themes, restructuring the narratives for a storyline and telling and retelling, living and reliving the stories as described by Kim (2016). With the incorporation of all these procedures in my research, I interpreted the data after the thematic review and meaning-making in the context of Benin. I understood the diversity of our culture associated with the training programme. The apprentices' perceptions were also associated with Benin

culture that they give high respect to their trainers, master craftsmen, as well as other stakeholders.

Quality Standards

Quality standards help to identify the quality of the research work that ensures its trustworthiness (Flick, 2007). It is always necessary to establish quality standards while carrying out educational research. Generally, the term trustworthiness refers to the quality of making one's research work trustworthy from different academic perspectives (Creswell & Miller, 2000). For this, as a researcher, I was involved for a prolonged period in the virtual field. I also considered maintaining a good relationship with my research participants as important. As Patton (2015) explained, I leaned on for an extended period showing some sort of belief among the participants; which helped me to get their real stories, opinions and issues based on my research questions to explore their perceptions and experiences on the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin (Patton, 2015). Therefore, the stories, issues and problems of my research participants are taken into account for the successful accomplishment of my research.

Further, I deliberately paid proper attention especially to the credibility, transferability, and dependability of my research along with the notion of my research participants (Maxwell, 2020). As explained by Korstjens and Moser (2018), the credibility of my research is ensured with these findings which are drawn from my participants' original data to ensure the credibility and the findings are transferable/applicable to any setting or context with other respondents. Through the discussion, I established that interpretations of the findings and implications are not my imagination but derived from the data and they are all supported by the data as received

from participants of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Considering the importance of the records, the transcript of oral and written stories of participants, and audio-visuals were maintained till the end, and even after my research project (Patton, 2015). As my study investigates my participants' points of view, I gave priority to their time, values, and socio-cultural contexts. My time with them was solely spent on taking interviews and listening to participants' perceptions, mainly focusing on livelihood aspects as well as their skills enhancement. During this time, I jotted down their concerns, motivation, satisfaction, perceptions, activities and expectations. Finally, my reflexivity in the field of TVET, of which I am a part, gave some knowledge of the participants including myself.

Ethical Considerations

As a qualitative researcher, throughout my research process, I was more concerned to uphold my professional standards of conduct through some moral rules and regulations known as ethics (Tolich & Tumilty, 2021). In terms of planning the writing of a proposal, researchers must forecast certain ethical concerns during their research (Maxwell, 2020). For this, I considered the overall welfare of my research participants (Maxwell, 2020). While doing my research, I internalized ethical considerations. To maintain ethical responsibilities, it is important to respect the site in which the research takes place. This respect should be shown by gaining permission before entering a site, by disturbing the site as little as possible during the study and gaining access through gatekeepers (Riessman, 2008). I took official approval from an authentic person at my University. After that approval, I contacted the leaders of Artisans in Benin, especially those from my study site, before getting into the field for data collection. They helped me to shortlist the participants. Once I contacted my research participants through

WhatsApp, I introduced myself and shared the purpose of my interview with them. Similarly, I took consent from the research participants, their master craftsmen and their professional associations for the interview and audio call recording. I was fully aware of the cultural norms and values, gender, caste, ethnicity, and other variations in terms of language and other concerns. In the same way, I did not ask my participants any personal questions (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Moreover, I avoided using discriminatory language or words based on gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, handicap, age, or other factors (Patton, 2015). I also paid attention to protect their right to privacy and confidentiality. The names of the people and places involved during the research process are also equally important to be considered. I ensured them that I will maintain their dignity, privacy and safety (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Further, as a researcher, I tried to free myself from biases with people's beliefs and faith. In this consideration, for the sake of confidentiality, using pseudonyms to represent participants. During the data analysis and draft building process, I was cautious that my participants' narrations were not misinterpreted (Tolich & Tumilty, 2021). To this, during the report writing process, I involved my participants in analyzing and interpreting data to verify its accuracy. Reciprocity was another consideration that was taken into account for this study. As suggested by Maxwell (2012), I acknowledged my participants for their time and efforts. Finally, I abode by the Kathmandu University Research committee guidelines while conducting the entire research work.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described the entire process of my research and research methodology. I discussed my research paradigm, philosophical considerations, and narrative inquiry. In narrative inquiry, I also discussed why I chose narrative inquiry to carry out this research. Similarly, I described my research site and how I selected my participants for this research. Likewise, I described the way of collecting stories and the apprentices' perceptions as information for generating meaning and knowledge. Besides, I discussed the process of data analysis, interpretation and meaning-making for the findings. Moreover, I discussed the quality standards and ethical considerations. While writing the methodology chapter, I developed my insights to research on where, how and why aspects. Through this chapter, I described my entire map of the research process. As I chose narrative inquiry which led to review the life and experiences of my participants, I also reviewed the entire process of my research. All this was done following all the norms and procedures of qualitative research in the wake of narrative inquiry as a method.

CHAPTER IV
PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF APPRENTICES OF DUAL
APPRENTICESHIP

This chapter deals with the perceptions and expectations of apprentices on the dual apprenticeship programme which I derived from the interview. In the study, there are six participants Champion, Audrey, Arthur, Gassius, Mayelle and Ayihouè. They have various experiences in the dual apprenticeship. More specifically, this chapter presents their introduction, stories and their perceptions on the dual apprenticeship programme and the challenges encountered during and after the programme. Along with their perceptions, I narrate how they want to see the dual apprenticeship programme in the years to come in Benin. This is presented using their respective pseudonyms and brought up their voice when necessary.

Champion as a Motivated Apprentice

Champion is a 34-year-old tailor who lives in Porto-Novo. Initially, apprenticeship was not an option, nor was the profession that would follow and a matter of passion. He wanted to pursue his career as an engineer and architect in the building and public works/construction sector but his parents didn't have any income-generating activity to buy the necessary equipment and support his studies in a technical school. Consequently, he decided to join the apprenticeship scheme in 2005 after completing the 10+2 class. His main focus was to earn his living and support his parents. It can be said that Champion joined the apprenticeship scheme because his expectancy of success and perceived value were high (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). As he said, he was from a middle-

class family and I was excited to know how he became an apprentice. He, therefore, chose the apprenticeship to enter the job market and earn a living. This is consistent with the view of Bankolé (2021) who argued that the apprenticeship system in sub-Saharan Africa generates employment for disadvantaged young people.

During his apprenticeship, Champion was receiving only practical training from his master craftsman in his workshop. Two years later, one of his brothers (a master craftsman) informed him about the dual apprenticeship programme, its benefits and the required selection criteria. He was informed that to get enrolled in the programme, an apprentice needs a minimum level of reading, writing and calculating skills. He met the entrance criteria and applied to join the scheme. His master craftsman was reluctant for him to enrol in the dual apprenticeship programme as he was neither informed about nor involved in the programme. After getting to know it well, he also informed his master. Then he participated and succeeded in the entrance test and got selected. He argued that if all the master craftsmen had known and had been involved in the programme, they would have motivated and encouraged all their apprentices' enrolment.

Champion's Understanding of Dual Apprenticeship

Champion defined dual apprenticeship as a training programme for apprentices who cannot continue schooling. After his success in the entrance test, he was appointed to a vocational training centre as per his craft occupation. There, he was trained with some sewing tools he had never seen in the workshop. Likewise, he learnt tailoring techniques from more than 2 trainers. As he was sharing his experiences, I was interested to know his perception of the dual apprenticeship. He said that he came to know the real meaning and content of dual apprenticeship after starting the programme. According to him, "*the*

dual apprenticeship is a training session during which I learn sewing and cutting skills in a training centre” (Champion, tailor, Porto-Novo, January 3rd, 2021). As he said, the dual apprenticeship is a training/learning programme during which trainees learn in a place different from their workshop. This is the second place of training where apprentices learn occupational skills. This place is the training centre which confirms the duality of training, unlike traditional apprenticeships. Bankolé and Nouatin (2020) found that the dual apprenticeship in Benin promotes active learning at VTC as well as skill development in skilled craftsmen's workshops or enterprises. As they said, the training session lasts 32 weeks per year for 3 years and most of the training providers are mainly private actors in VTC as well as in workshops.

Similarly, Champion said that he learnt skills and competencies related to tailoring. After his graduation, he got an official certificate called “*Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle (CQP)*” from the Ministry of Secondary and Technical Education and Vocational Training (MoSTEVT). A study by Walther (2007) found that at the end of the 3 years of the Benin dual apprenticeship programme, there is a final examination organized by the Department of Examinations and Competitions of the MoSTEVT and graduate students receive a professional qualification certificate (CQP certificate). This examination attests to a skills level equivalent to that of a skilled worker and the certificate allows graduates to enter the job market.

Dual Apprenticeship as a Wonderful Programme With a Parcel of Difficulties

Champion said that the dual apprenticeship programme was important and beneficial for apprentices. It was a great training opportunity for him and other

apprentices to upgrade their skills and competencies during and after the programme. He stressed:

The dual apprenticeship is a wonderful programme during which I learnt some techniques for measuring and sewing the client's loincloth fabric and I also used new tools and instruments which I had never used in the workshop. In my craft occupation, there exist some sewing tools such as seam ripper or seam ripper, darning egg, coloured spool, patchwork ruler, sewing parrot which I have never met in my workshop. (Champion, tailor, Porto-Novo, January 3rd, 2021)

From this quote, it can be seen that Champion recognizes that dual apprenticeship is training that provides apprentices with adequate skills, knowledge and attitudes related to their respective craft occupations. According to Walther (2007), trainees are taught with specific materials used in their craft occupations and learn general technical knowledge, sketching skills, and design. This shows that the Benin dual apprenticeship programme provides apprentices with the necessary skills to improve their professional practices. Thus, the dual apprenticeship programme has many advantages.

However, it is pointed out that Champion's friends and himself have been facing some difficulties during and after the programme. While interviewing, he didn't hesitate at all to share their difficulties. Openly, he said: *"To attend the training, we were sent to a VTC which is far from our home. For instance, my VTC is located 14 km away and the transportation cost is estimated at 1 USD"* (Champion, tailor, Porto-Novo, January 3rd, 2021). In his opinion, it appears that the majority of the apprentices are located far away from their respective VTCs and it is difficult for them to afford transport and food expenses. Bankolé and Nouatin (2020) found that apprentices should indeed attend

theoretical classes one day per week and work in their masters' workshops or enterprises four to five days per week. But it becomes very difficult or even complicated for young people under 20 to walk dozens of kilometres to access their training centres. Distance is a significant barrier for apprentices who are distributed throughout the VTC, which is located tens of kilometres from their homes, according to a study conducted by Bankolé (2021). They realized that apprentices are periodically grouped for two or three weeks of advanced training in locations far from the VTC.

Champion's Dream for the Dual Apprenticeship

Despite the challenges, Champion said the dual apprenticeship programme remains very interesting and useful for the apprentices. According to him, they have now a very good relationship with their master craftsmen who accepted their participation. Likewise, he stated that the dual apprenticeship is a wonderful programme. He is expecting more for the programme effectiveness and relevancy. While we were talking about his expectations, he pointed out: *“While joining the programme, I was expecting to receive my certificate in the training centre and get support/assistance from the government to open my workshop after my graduation”* (Champion, tailor, Porto-Novo, January 3rd, 2021). After completing the programme, he has not yet received his certificate to date. This means that after their graduation, some apprentices are not able to get their certificate easily even more than ten years later because they were afterwards told that they need to go to the Department of Examinations and Competitions in Porto-Novo, the capital city located in the South of Benin. In his study, Bankolé (2021) mentioned that distance is a factor negatively impacting the effectiveness and sustainability of the Benin dual system. As pointed out by Champion, even after opening

their workshop without any government support, they cannot purchase all the tools used in the VTC to work and perform accordingly. Those tools are quite expensive and he is working as if he didn't participate in any programme. Likewise, he thought he would enrol all his apprentices in the programme but since 2020, admission is not open in tailoring and he is so sad for that as his expectations will not be met. Therefore, it is important to take appropriate measures to address this thorny issue to achieve the objectives.

Audrey's Story as a Passionate Seamstress

Audrey is 25 years old. She is a seamstress and lives in Sèmè-Podji. She holds a Masters in Accounting. She is passionate about sewing and she has worked and supported her mother since her childhood. Due to her performance, her mother informed her about the dual apprenticeship and its benefits. Then, she agreed to join the scheme while she was studying for her first degree. She met the selection criteria and added that it helps to select the capable and deserving apprentices who need a minimum education background. As she said, she had never been an official apprentice before joining the dual apprenticeship programme, even though her mother is a trainer as well as a VTC holder. Further, she joined the dual apprenticeship programme after passing the selection process. From her explanation, she joined the dual apprenticeship because she was passionate about handicrafts. Likewise, the entry criterion of having six months' experience of official apprenticeship before joining the dual programme was not fulfilled but she was selected as she was one of the most qualified apprentices.

Audrey's Understanding of Dual Apprenticeship

Audrey highlighted that the dual apprenticeship was a great training programme and she is grateful to her mother who enrolled her in the programme. She said that some of her friends could not be selected because they didn't meet the selection criteria and the number of places was limited. Once she was selected after the entrance test, she was sent to sewing VTC. She said that she spent some time in the workshop and some in the training centre. During the programme, she learnt some sewing techniques and strategies such as how to draw and measure before cutting the loincloth fabric that was not used in the traditional system. Likewise, as she was well-informed about the programme, I was so interested to know her perceptions of the dual apprenticeship. In her opinion,

The dual apprenticeship is a programme during which apprentices spend 5 days/week in the master craftsmen workshop and 1 day/week in the VTCs. I learnt how to take the measurements with precision, how to make the traces, the cuts and especially the finishing techniques. (Audrey, Seamstress, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021)

According to her, the dual apprenticeship is both a theoretical and practical training programme. It lasts 3 years and takes place in two different places which are workshop and VTC. According to Walther (2008), apprentices spend one day per week in training centres and the other five days in their workshop for 32 weeks per year until the end of the three-year programme. However, it is noticeable that the alternation of the training is not applicable all over the country, especially in rural areas as well as in the disadvantaged communities. In a similar vein, Bankolé and Nouatin (2020) discovered that apprentices who live far from the VTC are grouped for two or three weeks of

advanced training during the three-year program. The realities of each zone must be considered, and plans must be made accordingly.

Similarly, Audrey said that she learnt how to take exact measures of customers' sizes before sewing their clothes. She also learnt how to become an outstanding master craftsman. This shows that the Benin dual system allows apprentices to acquire more skills that they use effectively in the workplace (Bankolé, 2021). Based on that, Audrey and other apprentices perceive the dual apprenticeship as an exceptional programme since apprentices learn many practical and theoretical skills in two places. This programme, therefore, aims not only to formalize traditional apprenticeship but also and above all to complete its missing aspects.

A Dual Apprenticeship as a Great Training Opportunity

Audrey found out that in Benin, the government trains and empowers apprentices irrespective of their craft occupations. She said that the programme is useful for enhancing and upgrading their skills, knowledge and attitudes in sewing. Interestingly, Audrey stressed that:

There exist some new tools and instruments such as seam ruler, small ruler, large Japanese ruler and gauge which I have never met in my workshop and most of the trainers are competent and motivating who are ready to support and answer all sort of questions from us. I also learnt how to become a good master craftsman in the future. (Audrey, Seamstress, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021)

She meant to say that the dual apprenticeship is a great opportunity to learn and improve craftsman's practices from competent, motivating and supportive trainers. It appears that in the Benin dual apprenticeship programme, master craftsmen are

responsible for practical training in their workshops while theoretical training is provided by knowledgeable trainers in vocational training centres where apprentices are provided with additional skills through theoretical and practical sessions. Similarly, the study by Nouatin et al. (2019) asserts that the trainers in VTC are professionally competent as the main TVET instructors or trainers. All of them are graduates from Benin Technical High School with either the Certificate of Professional Aptitude or Professional Baccalaureate. According to MoSTEVT (2017b), the profile of all trainers is even defined in the guidance documents for quality apprenticeship training. Thanks to this, apprentices get the opportunity to learn some sewing techniques and strategies to satisfy their clients and respond to the job market expectations in the field of craftsmanship. As illustrated by Atindehou (2013), the Benin dual apprenticeship programme provides apprentices with adequate skills, general culture and entrepreneurial techniques necessary for the development of their activities in the world of work. This inevitably boosts the performance and productivity of the informal sector and by extension the development of the national economy.

Issues Identified by Audrey

Although the programme is welcomed and appreciated by the trainees, Audrey said that she has been experiencing some issues in contradiction to the motivational information they got before the programme. Eagerly, she said:

My home is located 14 km far from the VTC and the transport cost is estimated at 1 USD for the public vehicle. It is true that we were given some money for transport but it was not sufficient to support the return transport fees. After the training, most of the graduates are still not able to open their workshop and some of them

have shifted to other part-time jobs hoping to earn money to buy their basic tools and start running their adequate business adequately. (Audrey, Seamstress, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021)

From her story, Audrey also faced the distance challenge while attending the dual training in her VTC. Similarly, it sounds that there is no training monitoring and impact evaluation after graduation. Such a situation obliges some apprentices to shift to other jobs until they get the necessary financial means to purchase the necessary tools to open their workshop. For this purpose, Bankolé (2021) found that it is very hard for CQP graduates from disadvantaged communities to enter the world of work right after their graduation since they are not able to purchase the required tools and find a better place to instal their workshop accordingly. In that condition, the sustainability of the programme is hampered and adequate measures need to be taken to address that issue.

Audrey's Expectations About the Dual Apprenticeship

Recognizing that no human work is perfect, Audrey thought that some arrangements need to be made to meet her expectations of the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. In regards to this, Audrey said:

When I joined the programme, I expected that after my graduation, the government would provide me with a graduate allowance. Additionally, I was looking for some periodic and complementary training to upgrade my skills & knowledge as new brands and designs have been created every day in my craft occupation. (Audrey, Seamstress, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021)

As she said, it seems that after their graduation, apprentices are not supported by the government in setting up their workshops. To achieve this, there should be a post-

training monitoring-evaluation system to find out the impacts of such a programme on all graduated apprentices. This would allow a comparison with those who did not take part in such a programme. However, the monitoring and evaluation system struggles because it is not done regularly as defined by the programme regulations. MoSTEVT (2017a) reported that monitoring-evaluation during training is not done because funds allocated to this are used for other activities. This hampers not only the quality of training but also its sustainability. In addition, skills-building training programs are useful for upgrading the skills and practices of graduates according to the dynamics of the world of work in the craft sector, particularly in sewing.

Moreover, after completing the programme Audrey realized that the government does not care about the graduates. Sadly, she said: *“I noted that the programme is limited only to the training of apprentices. Even the delivery of graduates’ certificates is not a concern for the government”* (Audrey, Seamstress, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021). It appears that the government is not interested in the impact of training on the graduates and apprentices are left to themselves. Regular monitoring and evaluation during and after the training will contribute to the improvement of that wonderful programme. It is desirable that the government facilitate and support the installation and setting up of workshops for graduate apprentices to know what the real impact of training is on their performance and productivity in the world of work and consequently their contribution to the national economy. This corroborates the results of Nouatin et al. (2020) which stipulate that all actors must be involved and each of them must play its role in achieving the objectives of the programme. By doing so, the government and all actors could make a plan for graduates post-training.

Arthur's Story: From School to Carpentry

Arthur is a 31-year-old carpenter. He was a student up to class 10 + 3 and got a baccalaureate (high school diploma) and lives in Abomey-Calavi. While he was studying, he used to work with his father, a carpenter until his death. Right after completing class 10 + 3, he was supposed to go to university but his mother could not afford alone all the expenses related to his higher education. Additionally, the university is located 27 km away from his home and there was nobody to pay his study expenses: accommodation, transport and food expenses. So, according to him, he had decided to become an apprentice carpenter because it was the unique and quick alternative for him to earn his living and support his elderly mother. From what he said, it seems that Arthur joined the apprenticeship scheme due to his economic status and the fact that higher education was inaccessible for him. To some extent, he also decided to join the apprenticeship scheme as he predicted his future achievement (Wigfield, 1994).

Almost one year later, while attending a local craft association meeting, the president informed him about the dual apprenticeship programme, its advantages as well as the entrance criteria. Without hesitating, he accepted and joined the programme with the permission of his master craftsman who is his relative. Further, Arthur pointed out that the entrance criteria were designed to limit the number of participants since all the apprentices couldn't meet those criteria. After joining, he got to know that the dual apprenticeship is a wonderful programme.

Arthur's Understanding of Dual Apprenticeship

After completing the dual apprenticeship programme, Arthur understood that it is different from traditional apprenticeship because apprentices learnt both theoretical and

practical skills as well as some safe practices. That training is conducted by qualified trainers in the vocational training centres. During the programme, he said that they generally spent 1 day in the VTC and another 5 days in a master craftsman's workshop and each apprentice was guided and followed till the completion of the programme. To support his view, he stressed:

I started the training from 2015 to 2018 but we had a special training agenda. We were trained for 2 to 3 days/week in the VTC and the remaining days in our master craftsman's workshop. After the completion of the programme, I received a national certificate as it were a formal school education and we are readily employable as the certificate is accepted everywhere for job application related to our craft occupation. (Arthur, carpenter, Abomey-Calavi, January 5th, 2021)

From his view, it is noticeable that during such a programme, he discovered some safe practices and some new carpentry tools such as the folding rule and the compass which helps in the tracing of arcs and circles. This shows the difference between dual training and traditional training where apprentices do not know the scientific names of the tools used in the workshops. In addition, it should be noted that CQP apprentices spend more days than expected in training centres since the training does not start at the same time in all VTCs. According to the findings of Nouatin and Bankolé (2020), the program does not begin for all batches at the same time. CQP students from the 2018 intake commenced their first level training in August 2019 at one VTC, while others began in September and October 2019 at another VTC. Eventually, some of the apprentices are usually sent to a VTC which is far from their home. In such conditions,

intensive training was organized for them as stressed by Bankolé (2021) and this can hamper the implementation of the official calendar.

Moreover, this situation could be explained by the fact that 1 day per week for training in training centres is insufficient in certain craft occupations. Considering the importance and the value of the training in these training centres, it is important to go to more than one day per week to allow the apprentices to acquire the necessary skills before their certification. As explained by David-Gnahoui and Ahouangnivo (2015), this situation is to some extent due to the time taken by the government to transfer to FODEFCA the annual financial resources allocated for the programme as soon as possible.

Dual Apprenticeship as an Outstanding Programme with Challenges

Arthur said that the dual apprenticeship is an outstanding training that provides apprentices with new skills and appreciated new tools and practices. During the programme, he got the opportunity to learn many things that traditional apprentices could not learn in their respective workshops. Proudly, he stated:

It is a programme which provides me with many tools such as many power tools or workshop tools for woodworking: sander, planer, band saw, scroll saw, circular saw, jigsaw, router, chain mortiser, circular framing saw, drill screwdriver, framing planer, impact wrench and how to use them without hurting myself in comparison to the traditional training provided in the workshop.

(Arthur, carpenter, Abomey-Calavi, January 5th, 2021)

As he stated, the dual apprenticeship is a training opportunity during which apprentices learn some skills and practices as per craft occupations. Additionally, he

learnt and used different carpentry tools like the square which allows drawing angles of 45° and 90°, the angle square (or double tab) which allows drawing diverse angles and the false square which makes it possible to trace all the angles. Unlike traditional training, these tools are associated with modern and safe carpentry techniques and they allow a good performance and productivity of the craftsmen. However, Arthur said that he has been experiencing some challenges. As he was talking, I was looking forward to finding out about these challenges. Then, he sadly said:

The main challenge was the distance from my location to the VTC because my home is located 34 km away from my home and the transportation cost is estimated at 6 USD. During the training, each apprentice could not practise all the time because of the insufficient training materials and tools. (Arthur, carpenter, Abomey-Calavi, January 5th, 2021)

Arthur appreciates the dual training and recognized that he has learnt many things after his participation but most of the VTCs are located far away from the location of the apprentices which has been difficult in his case. Similarly, the lack of training manuals, textbooks, and tools led to group work and short practical activities. As Bankole (2020) points out, apprentices are trained in VTC with modern tools and materials. However, these tools and materials are not sufficient in number and this prevents some apprentices from individual practice sessions. As a result, CQP trainees' skill acquisition is not sustainable due to a lack of supplies and work instruments. It is important to ensure that the teaching materials and tools correspond to the occupations in which apprentices are trained.

Arthur's Expectations About the Dual Apprenticeship

According to Arthur, whenever there is a problem, it means that the solution already exists. Because of the challenges and difficulties encountered, Arthur noticed that his prior expectations were not met because after completing the dual apprenticeship, he became like someone who had never participated in such a programme. I was very interested in knowing his expectations, he said that: *"I was told that the programme was designed for literate apprentices and after my graduation, I will receive a national certificate and become an expert in the dual apprenticeship for the years to come"* (Arthur, carpenter, Abomey-Calavi, January 5th, 2021). It can be understood that Arthur's expectations have not been met because he has not got any news from the relevant authorities since his graduation. It seems as if all the information provided to the apprentices was to convince them and get them enrolled in the programme. This could disappoint those who participated in the programme and demotivate other apprentices who are keen to join.

Gassius' Story as a Failed Student to Motivated Plumber

Gassius is a 30-year-old plumber who lives in Sèmè-Podji. He dropped out of school after completing class 9. Further, he noticed that studying is not as easy as learning a skill because a student has to learn his/her lessons regularly and complete all his/her assignments daily and if s/he misses all this, s/he may fail and some even failed the national examination after many years of study. In his case, he said that he cannot handle such stressful situations and thought if he joined the apprenticeship he would be able to earn money and take care of himself as early as possible. More importantly, he said that he has some former classmates who are still students and others who later

dropped out but they did not have any qualification that could help them to earn their living. Besides, he shared that there exist fewer constraints in apprenticeship than formal education. After comparing himself to his former classmates, he decided to join the apprenticeship scheme for plumbing.

From his story, it seems that some apprentices join the apprenticeship when they realize that they cannot succeed in school or when they find school less promising. Gassius joined the apprenticeship because of the existing school activities. Similarly, it is very restrictive to study and whatever the climate (rain, sun, snow, freshness, heat, etc.), a student must complete all his/her homework and go to school. Likewise, one may fail at the end of the year regardless of one's hard efforts. Meanwhile, most of his former classmates who had joined the apprenticeship scheme earlier had been earning a living after 3 to 5 years. With deep analysis, he decided to join the apprenticeship scheme to quickly earn a living and fulfil his needs.

It sounds like Gassius decided to join the apprenticeship because he perceived the value of it and he was expecting a lot from it. As illustrated by Wigfield (1994), Gassius decided to join the apprenticeship because he believed that it has some advantages and he also believed that he can succeed there. Once he started the apprenticeship, he was informed of the dual type programme by his master craftsman who presented him the programme, its advantages and the selection criteria.

Gassius' Understanding of Dual Apprenticeship

Having been informed about the dual programme, Gassius found the selection criteria well-designed because they were trained in French and it would be difficult for those who do not have minimum reading, writing and speaking skills in French.

Therefore, he passed the entrance test and was selected for the programme further, he was sent to “Agbokou” Technical School of Porto-Novo. As expected, he was sharing his understanding and I was so excited to know more about his experiences throughout the programme. Then he said: *“During the dual programme, I was trained for five years from 2013 to 2018 instead of 3 years in a VTC and my master craftsman workshop”* (Gassius, plumber, Sèmè-Podji, January 11th, 2021). From his understanding, the dual apprenticeship is a very interesting programme that enables apprentices to be equipped with the craft knowledge for a minimum of 3 years in both workshop and VTC. As found by Tremblay and Le Bot (2000), dual apprenticeship is an alternative training between vocational schools and companies. This shows that the duality of the training is assured by vocational schools and companies. Looking at the Benin dual system, it appears that the duality of training is assured by vocational training and master's craftsmen workshop; which implies that the implementation part is mostly handled by private actors and crafts associations. It denotes that the duration of the programme depends on the craft occupations as well as the VTCs where they are appointed. It can be seen that in some countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Chile, Costa Rica and Nepal (Euler, 2013; Rojas et al., 2019; Camacho-Calvo et al., 2019; Bolli et al., 2019) theoretical and practical training is done in TVET schools and institutes while in Benin, it is assured by the vocational training centres that mostly belong to the private actors (Moumouni et al., 2015).

Dual Apprenticeship as a Solution Beyond Problems

Gassius had common reasons like Champion and Arthur and personal interest to choose and join the dual apprenticeship programme. After completing the programme,

his perceptions are related to what he had heard and experienced. In his opinion, the dual programme is a solution to self-employment. Proudly, Gassius said:

In my craft occupation, we usually learn theory in the technical school during the training and we practise in the field of construction for 2 days. The remaining 4 days, I spent with my master craftsman. I have some textbooks and manuals I can refer to while working in the field. Even after the training, I can revise and re-learn those notions at home and wherever I am. I also learnt how to work with some additional tools and instruments never used with my master craftsmen.
(Gassius, plumber, Sèmè-Podji, February 1st, 2021)

As he said, the dual apprenticeship programme is a great opportunity for the apprentices who depended so far on the will of the master craftsmen. This programme came as a solution to the shortcomings of the traditional apprenticeship. This is so because, among the tools used, some are not even used, known or met by the apprentices in their workshops. This shows that the Benin dual system is providing apprentices with new skills, knowledge and attitudes through the new technologies to foster their performance as well as their productivity in the world of work as pointed out by Nouatin et al. (2020). More importantly, Gassius, who dropped out of school because of school overload activities, followed the training successfully without any complaint. This could sufficiently show the importance, flexibility as well as relevancy of TVET in this 21st century. If the education system could incorporate theoretical and practical training at all levels, dual apprenticeship will be one of the best solutions for the individual enhancement and economic development of any country. However, Gassius, like some apprentices, face a distance issue. That is to say, his VTC is very far from his home and

that made it difficult for him. Luckily, his parents were there to support him. It is therefore important to take appropriate measures to facilitate the training for all those who could no longer receive the support of their parents and have to struggle alone.

Gassius' Expectations About the Dual Apprenticeship

To meet apprentices' expectations, Gassius found it necessary to look for solutions. Within the framework of the dual apprenticeship, the graduates usually receive some information and after completing, they found out whether or not their expectations had been met for a better future of the programme. Before joining the dual programme, he heard that he would get a certificate from the government and become an expert in his craft occupation. Then he decided to participate in the programme which he completed from 2013 to 2018. It seems that day after day, the master craftsmen are truly imbued and involved in the programme unlike what was thought at the very beginning of the programme where only the trainers and the VTCs owners were informed and involved in the system.

Based on that I asked Gassius his expectations about the programme. Excited, he said:

In the beginning, I heard that I will be trained in a close training centre but after my selection, they sent me to a technical school located 10km away from my city. Additionally, I was expecting only technical skills but I learnt some strategies to manage my business. (Gassius, plumber, Sèmè-Podji, February 17th, 2021)

From his expectations, the dual apprenticeship is recognized as an excellent training programme adapted to the crafts sector because the training received even goes beyond what is expected by the apprentices. This is what Bankolé (2021) illustrated when

he said that in addition to the acquisition of skills, apprentices learn business management which allows them to make daily or weekly inventories in the workshop to estimate the benefits of productions or services and make possible projections. This means that beyond the difficulties faced by apprentices, the Benin dual system is well perceived by them. The concerned authorities need to take adequate measures to meet apprentices and/or graduates' expectations during and after the programme.

Mayelle's Story: From a Housemaid to a Hairdresser

Mayelle is a 30-year-old hairdresser and she lives in Sèmè-Podji. She dropped out of school after completing class 5. She left school because of financial problems. She lost her father in her childhood and her mother could not afford her education expenses. So, she left school and wanted to join the apprenticeship scheme but before that, she helped her mother in her trade business. Further, her mother was not able to afford the apprenticeship cost. Then she started some odd jobs such as washing dishes in restaurants and washing clothes from house to house to save money for her apprenticeship training. She also served as a housemaid for more than one year and after saving sufficient money, she joined the apprenticeship training in a hairdressing workshop. As she explained, this means that she joined the apprenticeship scheme because of economic reasons since she was fatherless and her mother could not afford her education expenses.

After joining the apprenticeship, her master craftsman informed her that there was a new apprenticeship programme financed by the government and they were looking for apprentices who would be trained free of cost. Looking at her economic situation, she was so excited because she could not believe that the government could support her training after completing only class 5. Further, she asked about the selection criteria and

how to be selected and her master craftsman told her that since she can read, write and calculate in French, she found the programme suitable for her. It seems that at the beginning of the programme, apprentices were informed either by master craftsmen, VTCs owners or the trainers and most of the apprentices who applied got selected. It raises the problem of sensitization and equal information to all the apprentices. Though she fulfilled all the minimum selection criteria, she thought that the selection criteria was selective. She sadly stressed: *“Although some fellow apprentices were also interested in the programme, the selection criteria did not allow them to participate because they did not have the opportunity to go to school until class 5”* (Mayelle, hairdresser, Sèmè-Podji, February 16th, 2021). As she said, Mayelle experienced the selected criteria as a discrimination strategy which excluded some of her friends who were interested in the programme but had not completed class 5 like her. After her selection, she was sent to the VTC from 2007 to 2010. It appears that Mayelle joined the dual apprenticeship programme because she expected that it would help her to get some professional skills to enter the world of work. This supports Bankolé (2021) who found that Benin dual system contributes to skills development, skills transfer and job performance. In other words, graduates of dual apprenticeship have significantly acquired theoretical instructions and practical knowledge during their training.

Mayelle’s Understanding of Dual Apprenticeship

Mayelle heard at the beginning of her training that the dual apprenticeship programme provides apprentices with practical and theoretical skills related to their craft occupation. Likewise, after starting the training she found out more about the content and benefits of the programme. Having said this, I was looking forward to finding out her

perceptions of the programme. Then, she said that the programme is more than what she was told before her selection and it was beyond her expectations. Happily, she reported that:

The dual apprenticeship is a training programme organized by FODEFCA in the VTC as well as the master craftsmen workshop. During the training, the assessments and examinations are conducted by the different trainers. I learnt the French name of some tools such as hairdressing comb, hairdressing scissors, curlers, hair styling rollers, curling iron, straightening iron, hairdryer, helmet dryer which is different from how we usually called them in the workshop”
(Mayelle, hairdresser, Sèmè-Podji, February 16th, 2021)

Mayelle perceived the dual apprenticeship as a national training programme during which apprentices learn theoretical and practical skills. That training is conducted by skilful and qualified trainers in the VTC. Nouatin et al. (2020), points out that in Benin, the Fund for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training and Apprenticeship (FODEFCA) is the responsible actor for the Benin dual system and therefore ensures the reception and management of resources for financing and promoting continuing vocational training and apprenticeship. Likewise, Atindehou (2013) found that the (FODEFCA) which, today under the authority of MoSTEVT, provides 90% co-financing of the training costs of apprentices through a grant after their selection.

Further, it appears that apprentices are trained by trainers who monitor and guide each of them until the completion of the programme. Additionally, those who graduated from the programme have much more knowledge and they know how to care for the hair

of each of their clients, unlike those who are trained only in the workshop in the traditional model. Thus, it sounds as if the enrolled apprentices get the opportunity to learn several theoretical and practical skills from qualified trainers better than those who stay in the workshop and learn only practical skills from a unique master craftsman.

Dual Apprenticeship as a Learning Opportunity With Few Difficulties

Mayelle understood that the dual apprenticeship programme is wonderful because it has some rules and regulations that guide all the training. It is like formal education and whoever completes it receives a national certificate provided by the government and such a certificate can be used to apply for a job all over the world. She found out that the programme offers socio-professional opportunities for apprentices or graduates. Based on that, she proudly said:

The dual apprenticeship programme provides apprentices with new strategies and practices such as brushing, straightening, burning, oxidation colouring, hair colouring and bleaching, stripping, lock of hair, styling and shampooing. That training was an important occasion in my life because it values and strengthens my commitment to my professional association where my colleagues usually refer to me for experience sharing and apprentices' sensitization or training. (Mayelle, hairdresser, Sèmè-Podji, February 16th, 2021)

From her statement, it seems as if it is a wonderful programme for her because she learnt some additional skills and attitudes never taught in the workshop. As she discovered the difference between several useful hair products, this programme helped her to improve her practices in the workshop. Similarly, she can easily present and describe the programme to other apprentices and master craftsmen. Thus, it appears that

the dual apprenticeship programme offers some social recognition and value to the graduates. As illustrated by Bourdieu (1980), it appears that after completing the programme, Mayelle has high training social capital due to the way she uses her gained knowledge as well as diverse advantages she got from the training. Through her engagement in her professional association, she is likely to contribute to the change in society by working in her occupation (Bourdieu, 1985).

Furthermore, it is noticeable that despite the opportunity of the dual apprenticeship, Mayelle has been experiencing some difficulties that may hamper the effectiveness of the dual apprenticeship. She sadly said: *“After my graduation, besides the distance issue, the main challenge I’m facing is related to the place of installation, equipping our workshop with the tools and instruments used during that wonderful programme”* (Mayelle, hairdresser, Sèmè-Podji, February 16th, 2021). After listening to her perception, it seems that one of the main difficulties faced by Mayelle during the training was the distance between the VTC and their home. After completing the programme, she has difficulties with the place of installation and financial resources to purchase the adequate tools used during the training. This prevents the graduates from opening and equipping their workshop accordingly. Through Bankolé (2021) who found that graduated apprentices who have successfully settled down their workshop develop a competency-based approach to train their apprentices and stand out in the competition of the labour market, it can be understood that all graduated apprentices are not able to set up their workshop after their graduation. This shows how important it is to know the impact of this programme on them and their future in the world of work.

Mayelle's Expectations About the Dual Apprenticeship

Despite the various challenges of the dual programme, Mayelle's expectations were far from being met. She then found it important to search for adequate measures to overcome and promote the dual apprenticeship programme. As she was saying, I was eager to know her expectations about the programme. Strongly, she stressed:

Before joining the programme, my master craftsman told me that after my graduation I would become a trainer and with the certificate earned, the government would recruit me. Additionally, she told me that the workshops would soon be replaced by training centres. After completing the programme, I am disappointed that all my expectations have not been met but at least I have my CQP certificate which makes me proud today to have participated in the programme. (Mayelle, hairdresser, Sèmè-Podji, February 16th, 2021)

In her opinion, it appears that several promises were made to apprentices before their admission to the programme. This motivated the participation of several apprentices who in the end are both disappointed because of these false promises but also satisfied at having taken part in the programme. For example, Mayelle said that she is very sad because she had invested a lot of her time and resources and she is still expecting recruitment from the government after her graduation. But she does not regret her participation especially because of the certificate she earned. So, each graduate has reasons to be happy after his/her participation in the dual apprenticeship programme. All this will determine the effectiveness of the programme, the advantages and benefits of which are known and appreciated by all. Indeed, Mayelle's expectations are not all met, but she recognizes the usefulness of the dual system and is delighted to have taken part in

it. As pointed out by Atindehou (2013), the Benin dual system is relevant and all the actors involved appreciate it a lot.

Ayihouè's Story as a Tailor with Promising Expectations

Ayihouè is a 20-year-old tailor. He lives in Sèmè-Podji and he was a student up to class 7. After completing class 7, he realized that vocational training is better than general education in which people usually invest a lot of money but the return is not sometimes up to the investment. The main reason for him is that one of his brothers who left school for vocational training bought land and built his own house. He also bought a car whereas his uncle of the same age is still studying for a PhD at university while living with his parents. He meant to say that it is easier for his brother to earn his living while his uncle (a PhD scholar) always asks for support from other relatives. As he has said, either people go to school or learn occupational skills, the most important thing is money after health. Based on that assumption, he decided to become an apprentice in his brother's workshop. He dropped out of school and went for apprenticeship training because, in his opinion, vocational education is better and more effective than general education. It can be noted that Ayihouè associated her expectations and the socio-professional advantages of the dual apprenticeship programme to decide to be trained (Walther, 2007). This implies that he already saw the promising programme and also counted on the social value that it would give him (Bourdieu, 2006). Based on that, he joined the apprenticeship in the sewing (tailoring) craft occupation from his relative.

After joining the apprenticeship, his master craftsman (brother) informed him about the dual apprenticeship programme and its benefits. Ayihouè was told that it is national training where apprentices learn modern techniques in tailoring and after his

graduation, he would be able to work or find a job wherever he goes, even outside of the country. Full of hope, he decided to participate in the programme whose entrance criteria are made to select the deserved candidates. This shows that having been informed about the dual apprenticeship and its advantages, Ayihouè found the entrance criteria helpful in the recruitment of qualified trainees/apprentices.

Ayihouè's Understanding of Dual Apprenticeship

After his admission following the entrance test, he was sent to a VTC and started the training from 2017 to 2019. Later, he came to understand deeply the dual apprenticeship programme and its outcomes. He said that the programme reinforced his relationship with his master craftsman. Having said this, I was eager to know his understanding of the programme. Proudly, he said:

The dual apprenticeship programme is a training that happens mostly in a vocational training centre and a workshop. There I learnt how to make the general shape of a garment, piece of clothing, hat or other headwear.

Additionally, I learnt the three modern ways of cutting and sewing shirts mainly the regular cut, the semi-slim cut and the slim cut. (Ayihouè, tailor, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021)

From his explanation, the dual apprenticeship is a theoretical and practical training programme. It is a 2-place programme during which the apprentices learn new knowledge, skills and attitudes according to their craft occupations. Likewise, during the training, apprentices are trained with some modern techniques and strategies never used in their workshop. This programme is therefore an opportunity for apprentices to discover

and learn some modern techniques that allow them to perfectly accomplish their profession according to the demands and needs of their clients.

A study by Atindehou (2013) illustrates that the dual apprenticeship programme is a systematic initial training of fixed duration and its responsibilities are shared between public and private organizations as well as development partners. This training takes place at the same time in two places, including the company or workshop and VTC. In the workshop, apprentices learn practical training based on production and in the vocational training centre, they learn the theory of the craft occupations, general culture and business management (MoSTEVT, 2019). After their graduation, apprentices have the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to run their business.

Dual Apprenticeship as a Learning Opportunity Beyond Difficulties

Ayihouè found the dual apprenticeship programme as a learning opportunity for the Benin craft sector. Based on this he constantly praises the merits and advantages of that rich programme. He said that this programme corrects the shortcomings of traditional apprenticeship and allows early school dropouts to learn in similar conditions as the school. Eagerly, he said that: *“The dual apprenticeship is a programme led by trainers who are competent and committed throughout the training”* (Ayihouè, tailor, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021). As he said, during the dual programme, apprentices are trained by skilled and qualified trainers to upgrade their practices and boost their employability after earning a national certificate provided by the MoSTEVT through the Department of Examinations and Competitions. Besides, the training was led by qualified and experienced trainers in each of the craft occupations. This even encouraged some apprentices to complete the programme despite the difficulties encountered. As stated by

Walther (2007), training is provided by experienced trainers who are available to give the best of themselves to achieve the objectives of the programme. These trainers are mostly graduates of technical high schools. With their dedication and commitment, apprentices learn the expected skills allowing them to be competitive in the world of work.

Moreover, Ayihouè said that despite the opportunities and benefits of the dual apprenticeship programme, he experienced some difficulties. The main difficulty of Ayihouè was the distance because the VTC was located in Sèmè-Kraké at 24 km away from his home and it was difficult for him to pay his transport costs estimated at 2.5 USD.

Additionally, he said: *“I was informed that I would receive a scholarship and the government would pay the total training cost but during the training, I was asked to pay 10% of the training cost”* (Ayihouè, tailor, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021). This shows that the common challenge for most of the trainees is the distance between their location (home) and the VTCs and the transport fees they received is not sufficient to cover the exact expenses. Similarly, it seems that apprentices were not informed of their financial contribution to the programme. This explains their astonishment when the trainers deduct this from their transport costs. In fact, According to MoSTEVT (2017a), FODEFCA provides 90% of the training costs of each apprentice and the remaining 10% should be paid by the apprentices and their parents. However, most of them are not able to afford the 10% cost (Nouatin et al., 2020). It is a worrying situation when one already knows the conditions under which most of them joined the apprenticeship and by extension the training programme (Atindehou, 2013). They were even informed before their selection that it is a scholarship and that is what motivated most of them. Thus, it is necessary to

inform and raise awareness on all aspects of the programme so that all stakeholders will have the same information. By doing so, everyone becomes aware of their responsibilities and obligations for the success of the programme.

Ayihouè's Expectations of Dual Apprenticeship

As we know, we very often receive initial information about something. Little by little, we form our ideas about it. Ayihouè like other apprentices received various information about the Benin dual apprenticeship. Based on that, he decided to join the dual apprenticeship programme with a lot of expectations. He said that he was eager to join the programme due to the information received from his master craftsman. Being very interested in sharing his expectations, he said in a disappointed tone: *"I was told that after completing the programme, they told me that the programme is designed for educated apprentices but it was hard for some of my fellows to participate in the training"* (Ayihouè, tailor, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021). As he said, apprentices get to know whether everything their master craftsmen told them is true or not. This explains the importance and accuracy of the information that must be provided to apprentices during the sensitization and admission phase. It appears that the education level of some apprentices is not as expected. For the same purpose, according to Bankolé and Nouatin (2020), apprentices in dual training do not have the same level of literacy because their basic level of reading has declined since they left school a few years before entering. Similarly, Walther (2007) noted that despite the difficulties identified, the motivation of apprentices remains unshakeable because they are almost all motivated by the formal certificate and social validation of the skills of craftsmen.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented apprentices' perceptions and their expectations about the dual apprenticeship programme. More importantly, I presented the experiences of my six research participants in the form of stories. I discussed how the storytellers Champion, Audrey, Arthur, Gassius, Mayelle, and Ayihouè perceived and understood the dual apprenticeship programme. Based on their narratives, I developed four themes that discussed their understanding, perceptions, challenges or issues as well as their suggestions for a successful dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. Similarly, in this chapter, I discussed how participants were informed and motivated about the dual programme and their stories from the training to their graduation. All in all, I narrated in this chapter their experiences on what they shared about the dual apprenticeship programme, their understanding, their opportunities, the challenges they were facing, and how the dual apprenticeship programme could be improved in Benin.

CHAPTER V

UNDERSTANDING APPRENTICES' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF DUAL APPRENTICESHIP

This chapter explores and critically interprets apprentices' perceptions and expectations related to the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. The participants provided their understanding and experiences and this chapter documents the shared lived experiences, perceptions and expectations. Likewise, I discuss the reasons why apprentices joined the dual apprenticeship programme and their understanding and experiences followed by the importance and challenges of Benin dual apprenticeship. Further, I present some way forward that will contribute to the effectiveness and success of the programme in Benin.

Apprenticeship for Youth: Taking a Cue From Master Craftsmen

The dual apprenticeship programme in Benin began traditionally and a craftsman provides young people, either relatives or not, with required work-based skills. In this system, an apprentice is placed with a craft master and is instructed by initiation, imitation and repetition until mastery (Marchand, 2008). With the 2005 reform in the Benin TVET system, traditional apprenticeship has been renovated and led to the dual apprenticeship programme which aims to modernize and formalize the traditional apprenticeship according to the needs of the job market (MoSTEVT, 2017a). From that moment on, master craftsmen, handicraft associations and the public authorities have been working for the participation of apprentices, in particular those who meet the selection criteria. The results of this study found that to join the programme, apprentices

are informed and motivated by the different actors involved in the programme. Five of my participants i.e. Champion, Arthur, Gassius, Mayelle, and Ayihouè said that they were motivated by their master craftsmen whereas Audrey was motivated by a training centre holder and director. This shows that several actors including master craftsmen, directors of training centres and professional associations are involved in the programme and each has different levels of responsibilities. As highlighted by Misko et al. (2007), apprentices joined the apprenticeship because of many reasons and motivations such as economic status, employment, and education and career development benefits. Audrey joined the programme with passion because she has been practising tailoring since her childhood although she was a Bachelor degree student. Likewise, Champion, Arthur and Mayelle joined the apprenticeship because of economic reasons as they were not able to afford their school expenses. Similarly, Ayihouè and Gassius joined the programme because they believed it would benefit them in the future based on the information they received from their master craftsmen. Ayihouè has joined the apprenticeship because, in his opinion, vocational education is better and effective than general education. In addition, Gassius thought that it is easy to earn his living after learning an occupation while it is hard to study and become jobless.

It seems that in the beginning, my six apprentices were officially informed either by master craftsmen or training centres holders and they joined the programme by passion, due to economic reasons and future expectations. They have different motivations and based on that they choose to participate in the programme. Three participants joined the programme due to their economic status. Likewise, two apprentices joined the dual apprenticeship programme by hopeful future benefits and one

joined by passion. This shows that my six apprentices joined the dual apprenticeship programme for three main reasons such as economy, passion and promising expectations. This explains their involvement and commitment from the beginning to the completion of the training. All the same, Bankolé and Nouatin (2021) noted that apprentices who enrol in the program are driven by curiosity, explicit knowledge, and the formal certificate they receive from the government after graduation. It sounds that beyond the reasons mentioned by my participants, many other reasons motivate apprentices to join the programme. More importantly, they (apprentices) are motivated either by financial difficulties or by possible material, financial and intellectual advantages that they will gain after their graduation. Because of these reasons and motivations, the ideas of Wigfield and Eccles find their full meaning and help to understand the factors that motivate apprentices to opt for the dual apprenticeship programme (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). According to Wigfield (1994), the decision of the apprentices to join the dual programme is based on the belief that there are benefits and they can succeed in that programme. In other words, my six participants chose to participate in the dual apprenticeship programme because they recognized its value and their expectations for success were higher.

After joining the programme, apprentices have an understanding of the programme and each of them has expressed it vividly. This means that apprentices got the right information before participating in the programme. As said by five participants, the dual apprenticeship programme lasts generally 3 years and takes place in 2 different settings i.e. vocational training centres and master craftsmen workshops. During those 3 years, apprentices spend 5 days/week in the workshops and 1 day/week in their respective

VTCs. Furthermore, the data showed that Arthur visited his VTC more than 1 day/week.

Interestingly, he said:

I started the training from 2015 to 2018 but we had a special training agenda. We were trained for 2 to 3 days/week in the VTC and the remaining days in our master craftsman's workshop. After the completion of the programme, I received a national certificate as it were a formal school education and we are readily employable as the certificate is accepted everywhere for job application related to our craft occupation. (Arthur, carpenter, Abomey-Calavi, January 5th, 2021)

To side with him, Champion stated that during the programme everything happens with exactitude, new tools never seen so far in the workshop and they can ask all sort of questions to the trainers. Likewise, Audrey said that traditional apprenticeship is mainly practical training and without any training on mastership. Comparing to the traditional apprenticeship, it sounds that the dual apprenticeship is different because, during training, apprentices learnt many practical and theoretical skills especially the names of their working tools in French and how to use them accordingly to improve their practices.

Further, it was then found that with the support of the trainers and the VTCs owners, there is a special training agenda for some craft occupations. Thus, one participant spent more time in his vocational training centres than expected according to the existing syllabus and the desire to cover all the contents related to his craft occupations. Hence, it sounds that the duration of the programme varies from one occupation to another as what has been doing for formal education. As found by (Prak & Wallis, 2020), the completion of the dual apprenticeship programme does not need 3

years in all occupations because, in some occupations, apprentices usually complete their training before 3 years. Likewise, (Moumouni et al., 2015) also noted that the number of days in the training centres depends on the syllabus of each occupation and this leads some apprentices to later complete their training in their centres. So, the duration of the programme varies from one occupation to another by taking into account their respective syllabus. The completion of the syllabus allows the transmission of all the expected and required skills to the participants before the final examination which happens at the end of the 3-year programme. That examination is carried out according to a schedule defined by the concerned authorities. When they succeed, they graduate and earn an official certificate provided by the government through the MoSTEVT which opens the door to the job market and consecrates their entry into the ranks of master craftsmen in their respective craft occupations. This is different from the traditional apprenticeship through which apprentices are trained only in a workshop and the duration of their training is at least 5 years because everything depends on the will of the master craftsmen. In the end, they are graduated during a solemn ceremony which helps them to enter the master craftsmen board and association and their certificates are provided by the respective master craftsmen.

Pertinence of Benin Dual Apprenticeship

The dual apprenticeship in Benin is settled to increase and improve the industries or businesses productivity (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2012). My six participants said that dual apprenticeship is a theoretical and practical training that happens in two different places i.e. vocational training centres (VTCs) and the master craftsmen workshop. It is a useful programme where they got new skills, knowledge and

competencies according to their respective craft occupations. The dual apprenticeship programme has become more helpful for the apprentices because many public and private stakeholders are ready to support the programme and there are some laws and regulatory acts taken by the concerned authorities to regulate the organisation from the entrance test to the implementation of the programme. Those provisions dealt with the trainers' selection or recognition, training as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the programme (Nouatin et al., 2019). This programme can be seen as training during which apprentices are taught with some manuals and resourceful materials as if they were in school. For instance, Gassius said that:

I learnt some theoretical and practical skills based on some textbooks and manuals and I can refer to those manuals while working in the field. I also learnt how to work with some tools never used with our master craftsmen. (Gassius, plumber, Sèmè-Podji, February 1st, 2021)

All the same, Rojas et al. (2019) found that the dual system is a training programme that provides the possibility of obtaining work experience from a company. Likewise, Nouatin et al. (2020) said that in the dual apprenticeship programme, apprentices gain theoretical and practical skills that help them improve and increase their productivity in the workplace. It sounds that the dual apprenticeship programme provides the participants with the required skills as well as some working experience for future job opportunities. Besides, apprentices are trained in the vocational training centres which are equipped with updated tools and technologies. During that training, they are taught theoretical knowledge of their craft occupations with structured, formalized and standardized curricula. By the end of the three years that lasts the programme, their

competencies are recognized officially and socially through the *Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle (CQP)*. Thus, it is undeniable that the programme is appreciated by all participants who did not hesitate to compare it to a traditional apprenticeship. From the apprentices' view, it can be noted that the dual training is led by more than two trainers and it takes place in well-equipped vocational training centres. Interestingly, Ayihouè said: *"The dual apprenticeship is a programme led by trainers who are competent and committed throughout the training"* (Ayihouè, tailor, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021). Similarly, Arthur stated that the programme is like a formal school with more than two trainers and the graduates receive a national certificate from the government. Following him, Mayelle affirmed that apprentices in a week spend at least 1 day per week in VTCs and 5 days in their workshop to learn theoretical and practical skills from several trainers whereas, in the workshop, they spend the whole week learning only practical skills from a single master craftsman.

From their point of view, it appears that all apprentices recognize the existence of both programmes but the majority of them pointed out the difference between the two programmes while mentioning that the dual apprenticeship programme is better compared to the traditional one. This meant that they are satisfied with the training materials, trainers and tools or equipment in the respective VTCs. This provides trained apprentices with the assets and skills they need to be useful and equipped in the job market according to their occupations. Interestingly, Neyt et al. (2018) said that nowadays the dual apprenticeship programme plays a key role in youth employment. Therefore, it differs from classical training by two characteristics such as the co-responsibility of the company/workshop with which the apprentice has signed a contract

of apprenticeship and VTCs which is registered in the dual apprenticeship programme and provide him with additional training. It also appears that even the master craftsmen can take advantage of the programme through their apprentices' productivity. As they must work with them during their training, they also benefit from the training received by their apprentices in the vocational training centres. This guarantees the quality and relevance of the training given to the apprentices. Further, Camacho-Calvo et al. (2019) define apprenticeship as a programme that provides training to young people with low chances of employability or too young people at risk of unemployment. It appears that the completion of the dual apprenticeship programme changes the social status of the participants. It is an opportunity for the graduates' integration into the labour market and poverty mitigation (Camacho-Calvo et al., 2019). Further, I came to know that some social factors exist behind the programme because, after their graduation, apprentices have good social networks and their social considerations become higher than before. Thus, apprentices joined the programme to increase their social capital such as family capital which denotes social networks of people and community resources that provide assistance and support them (Bourdieu, 1985). While and after completing the programme, it seems that social capital make apprentices aware of the benefits of the dual apprenticeship. Meanwhile, my participants joined the dual apprenticeship programme to engage change in society by doing their respected jobs or occupations (Bourdieu, 1980). The concerned authorities of dual apprenticeship need to take adequate measures to ensure the quality of the training for the achievement of the programme' outcomes.

Challenges of Benin Dual Apprenticeship

While sharing their perceptions, my participants were also interested to talk about the issues and gaps of the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. All my six participants mentioned the difficulties related to the distance between the training centres and their homes which implies expenses for transport. Among my participants, Champion who lives 14 km away from the VTC said that it was quite difficult for him to attend the training until his graduation. He said that they were given half of the deserved transport cost and after complaining the trainers and the VTC director told them that the remaining amount was their contribution to the final examination fees. Further, Ayihouè said that each of them received 1 USD from the trainers but they signed payment sheets/slips where it was written 2.5 USD for transport. Arthur sadly said:

The main challenge was the distance from my location to the VTC because my home is located 34 km far away from my home and the transportation cost is estimated at 6 USD. During the training, each apprentice could not practise all the time because of the insufficient training materials and tools. (Arthur, carpenter, Abomey-Calavi, January 5th, 2021)

In their opinion, it can be noted that all my six apprentices have faced financial difficulties related to the travel while participating in the programme. According to the participants, their trainers and VTCs directors had taken unacceptable and blameworthy decisions because the government cannot allow paying an amount lower than that which is mentioned on the payment sheets. There is no follow-up in terms of the management of transport allowance given to apprentices. It also appears that the existing training centres are insufficient in number and located either far from the home or from the towns of

apprentices, which did not facilitate their enjoyment and participation in the training. Thus, it is very difficult for an apprentice at this age to cover such a distance every day because he is exposed to the risks of accidents, fatigue, etc. Furthermore, David-Gnahoui & Ahouangnivo (2015) said that Benin dual apprenticeship has been faced a financial challenge. They found that the funding is inefficient and is practically the basis of most of the dysfunctions observed in the programme.

More importantly, this situation generates some problems such as the delay in the recruitment and distribution of apprentices in the centres, the training of trainers and the supervision of the training as well as the limitation of the programme to 13 craft occupations (Nouatin et al., 2020). For instance, the entrance tests and the selection of apprentices for the dual apprenticeship training always depend on the availability of the funding and the budgetary resources of the Direction of Technical and Vocational Education and Training. This situation happens because the government always relies on donor agencies before running the programme (Nouatin et al., 2019). Further, (Bankolé, 2021) found that from 2016 to October 2018, there was no entrance test for the programme because, in April 2016, the Benin government suspended enrollment in the dual apprenticeship programme to evaluate FODEFCA through an institutional and organizational audit. The admission exam was held in November 2018 following the audit. Similarly, there is a long beat period between the entrance test (since September 2020 till now, no result for 2020 Batch), the announcement of the results and the distribution of admitted apprentices in the vocational training centres. This leads to some changes in the way the dual apprenticeship is organized in Benin. Due to the lack of financial resources, instead of one day in a VTC for 3 years, apprentices are going soon

to spend two or three months at the end of their training period in a VTC for the theoretical training (Nouatin, 2021b).

Furthermore, the delay in the publication of the 2020 entrance test result might be due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions as it is not safe and secure to gather apprentices in the VTCs. This pandemic has made it possible to experience the non-sustainability of dual learning, which is purely a system based on industries and companies. According to ILO (2021), the covid-19 outbreak, as well as the accompanying lockdown and physical separation measures, have severely disrupted and harmed the education sector, particularly the TVET subsector. This does not enable the offer of apprenticeship placements in enterprises. It sounds that the dual apprenticeship is interrupted because of the health crisis. To better prepare for such a future situation, relevant authorities should devise an innovative strategy to continue with the acquisition of practical skills and the organization of work-based learning, as these are significant parts of technical and vocational education success (Aggarwal, 2020). It is an international situation that challenges all the authorities and specialists in vocational training so that they reflect on the possibilities for the continuity of training whatever the situations and restrictions due to possible pandemics and health crises.

In comparison with countries of the same economic level such as Nepal and India, it appears that the missing element in Benin is the non-existence of texts defining and governing the financing of vocational training, in particular dual apprenticeship (Bolli et al., 2019; Mehrotra et al., 2014). In this case, even the goodwill of the donor agencies comes up against the requirements of the cooperation programme. When we analyze the realities of some middle-income countries such as Chile and Costa Rica, it can be easily

seen that the financing of the dual apprenticeship programme is almost completely supported by the state and the good collaboration between all public and private actors make it possible to resolve certain financial difficulties (Rojas et al., 2019; Camacho-Calvo et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to redefine the financing system of the Benin TVET system, especially its dual apprenticeship programme to make it more sustainable and efficient in the short and medium-term even without the financial support of the donor agencies.

Moreover, Ayihouè mentioned that some of his fellows had difficulties in assimilation and comprehension during the training. He said that the training manuals were hard to understand and they were not able to follow the speed of the training. Interestingly, they were supported by the trainers till the completion of the programme. It can be seen that considering only reading, writing and calculating skills and 14 years old as entrance criteria are not sufficient to recruit qualified trainees for the programme. It shows that the consideration of a low educational background to select the participants need to be rethought. Meanwhile, Bankolé and Nouatin (2021) found that apprentices do not have the same level of literacy to complete the training well simply because Some apprentices are unable to maintain basic literacy skills for several years after dropping out of school before beginning the programme. Thus, the academic level (grade 5-6) required for dual apprenticeship candidates is low. With the new education programme and its requirements in Benin, many students complete their primary studies (class 6) without being able to read and write accordingly in French. To them are added those who dropped out of school years later before joining the apprenticeship. Thus, the apprentices have all the difficulties to follow the lessons in the training centres. This constitutes real problems

for the trainers who are obliged to waste enough time for their understanding. Likewise, other apprentices of a higher academic level do not have the choice to follow the pace of the trainers without being sure that they are learning with this slowness. Hence, the academic level retained among the selection criteria must be revised upwards to allow active and effective participation of all selected apprentices. It will provide trainers with the possibility to deliver their training and complete the syllabus within the time limit set for the programme.

In addition, other apprentices expressed their concern about the lack or insufficiency of training materials or manuals. As Audrey said, there is a lack of training tools and materials and they were obliged to work in groups with 2/3 trainers for the entire VTC (20-30 apprentices). Additionally, Ayihouè said: *“I was also told that training manuals and tools are available for each apprentice but during the training, we were obliged to work sometimes in groups”* (Ayihouè, tailor, Sèmè-Podji, January 6th, 2021). It can be drawn that the non-availability or the insufficient of learners’ manuals or textbooks forced them to work in groups during which each apprentice often did not have the chance to apply and learn easily. Moreover, David-Gnahoui and Ahouangnivo (2017) said that the resources provided for the training manuals are allocated to other uses and it did not allow to measure the progress of the participants. As found by Bankolé and Nouatin (2021), the dual apprenticeship helps people develop skills in Benin, but it is not sustainable because master craftsmen's workshops lack supplies and equipment. In this condition, the programme will always have difficulty in achieving the objectives set because no training is possible without sufficient training manuals for both apprentices

and trainers. The concerned authorities must therefore take adequate steps to settle this problem of textbooks and manuals.

Besides, according to the participants, the high cost of certification is also a challenge that needs to be met to make this dual apprenticeship programme a crucial means for strengthening the skills of young people and bringing qualified human resources to the labour market. David-Gnahoui and Ahouangnivo (2017) and Bankolé and Nouatin (2020) found that all the apprentices who want to participate in the programme will not be able to do so because of the means invested by the government and the development partners. This is because the more apprentices they selected, the more investment and transport costs increase as well as the number of training centres and trainers. Lastly, four participants stated that they have not been able to get their certificates after their graduation because of certain constraints. This includes the unique place of the issue which is located in the capital city of the country and their time constraints to travel. In the same way, three participants are not able to open their workshop because they do not have enough money to buy the required tools as well as to hire and equip the workshop accordingly. This led one of them to shift to another job to save money and later open her workshop. In addition, Champion's master craftsman was reluctant to his enrolment in the dual system at the beginning. It sounds that some master craftsmen thought that allowing their apprentices' participation in the programme is an alternative way for them to encourage and reinforce their potential competitors with the skills demanded by the current world of work.

Avenues for Improvement

In some low-income countries, the dual apprenticeship programme is the best opportunity to promote self-employment, increase productivity and enhance craftspeople skills (Moumouni et al., 2015). Through this study, apprentices unanimously recognize the relevancy as well as the efficiency of the Benin dual apprenticeship. They said that the programme helps to address the current issue of mismatch between training and the needs of the job market in the handicraft sector. Likewise, Bankolé and Nouatin (2021) found the high success rate of candidates for the dual apprenticeship exams can be taken as a sign of the internal efficiency of the programme which set up its way despite some issues and gaps. To overcome the difficulties encountered during and after their graduation, it should be noted that my six participants proposed some rooms for improvement that could contribute to the success and sustainability of the programme in Benin. One of the improvement measures of the programme is the extension of dual apprenticeship to other occupations to give the chance to other apprentices who wish to be trained in the dual system. This extension will bring apprentices closer to training centres and reduce expenses related to transport costs. Thus, these costs would serve to better equip the centres with manuals and training tools to achieve the desired objectives of the programme.

Likewise, Champion pleaded not only for the extension of the programme to other occupations but also and above all for the resumption of the programme in tailoring/sewing because, in the latest recruitment, they were not taken into account. Similarly, Gassius has observed that some master craftsmen want also to join the programme and he said that it would be great if the government could allow their

participation. From the narratives above, it seems that the programme takes into account only 13 occupations out of the hundreds in the craft sector in Benin. This shows that the last annealing did not take into account all the 13 occupations initially involved in the programme. The sustainability of the programme will therefore be desired in the coming years. Thus, it can be understood to gradually extend that this programme so that all other occupations can benefit from it (Bankolé, 2021).

Similarly, to address the issue of distance between the VTCs and apprentices' homes, it is essential to build, equip and multiply the VTCs in all localities of the country. As the apprentices said, this will reduce transport-related expenses both at their level and at the government level. For instance, Gassius said that his home is 34 km far away from the VTC and the transport cost is estimated at 6 USD which is a similar case in most of the apprentices who live in rural areas. Then, it is necessary to create or support the creation of vocational training centres in the different districts of each local municipality. This will help to appoint the selected apprentices to the nearest training centres. It will also facilitate the admission of many apprentices who wish to participate in the programme.

Besides, the concerned authorities could also allow those who do not pass the selection tests to participate by paying the registration and training fees themselves as it happens in formal education (Bankolé, 2021). Further, the government should allow apprentices whose parents are ready to support their training cost to have access to the dual training programme after they failed in the entrance tests or even though they did not participate in the tests to have access to the programme by paying the required fees because of the limited public financial resources. This will make the programme better

known to everyone and increase its impact and visibility among the population who until now think that the apprenticeship is intended for school dropouts and vulnerable and underprivileged people.

Moreover, Audrey said that training monitoring and impact evaluation are very important to measure the effectiveness as well as the impact of the dual apprenticeship programme. Champion aligning with her said that monitoring and evaluation are very important to know whether the expected goals are being achieved or not. As we know, monitoring and evaluation help to know the progress made through a realistic plan. They are more efficient ways to measure the results of the programme and its impact on the primary beneficiaries, which are the apprentices. Looking at what apprentices have been experiencing after the completion of the programme in Benin, it was found that some had opened their workshop and started their business whereas others are working either with their master craftsmen or friends with or without getting their certificates. About the reluctance of some master craftsmen to enrol their apprentices in the dual apprenticeship programme, the concerned authorities need to provide orientation to all the (prospective) master craftsmen and train those who are involved in the supervision and mentoring of apprentices when they are at their workshop. Also,

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the narratives of the apprentices that how they perceived and experienced the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. Likewise, I developed four themes that explore apprentices' perceptions and expectations on the dual programme. In the first theme, I discussed motivation and understanding. It appears that my participants joined apprenticeship due to economic reasons and different motivations

as well as expectations. Similarly, in the second theme, I discussed the relevancy of the dual programme. It seems that the dual apprenticeship programme is relevant as it contributes to the apprentices' skills enhancement as employability. Further, the third theme focused on the challenges of the Benin dual apprenticeship programme. It focuses on the way apprentices' struggle while attending the training in their respective vocational training centres until their graduation. The last theme discussed some rooms for improvement of the programme in Benin. It displays the future expectations of the research participants.

The findings of the research showed that not only do my participants have the same understanding of the dual apprenticeship programme but they also have different experiences due to their respective socio-economic backgrounds. They have some commonalities in history, meaning, opportunities and challenges of the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin. These findings were discussed based on the research purpose, the research questions, the literature review, and the meaning-making procedure. The findings were discussed using the different ideas identified from the literature and expectancy-value and social capital theories. These findings and experiences of the apprentices will contribute to the improvement and renovation of the dual apprenticeship programme of Benin.

CHAPTER VI

INSIGHTS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents the overall journey of this study. In this chapter, I briefly discussed the insights that I gained in this venture and reflected on my entire process of this endeavour with the ultimate joy of having written this research work. This study aimed to explore the perceptions of apprentices on the dual apprenticeship in Benin. More specifically, it aimed to explore their understanding, expectations and experiences. I present the insights from the study by analyzing the answers to the research questions. The derived insights are not generalized but are significant to improve the Benin dual apprenticeship.

Insights

In this study, I envisioned several steps of analysis and interpretation of the collected data which geared my insights to think, reflect, analyze and understand the perceptions as well as expectations of the apprentices on the dual system in Benin. This system is traditionally built up and with the TVET reforms in 2005, it has been renovated and led to the dual apprenticeship programme in 13 craft occupations. I came to know that the traditional apprenticeship has been formalized and modernized according to the demand in the job market. This system is partly inspired by the Swiss and German models but is not identical to them as they are an integral part of their respective education systems. They are more flexible and inclusive and they involve both public and private actors with strong cooperation. The Benin dual system involves not only public and private actors but also donor agencies. Likewise, it appears that the dual system is

beneficial for each of the actors when they respect the pre-established agreements. This shows that strong cooperation contributes a lot to the success of the system. Similarly, I gained that the dual apprenticeship programme has a long and dynamic history and since its introduction, it has been contributing to the enhancement of the skills of individuals and also the development of the national economy. I understood that for all of the 13 craft occupations that are involved in the programme, the quality of training has improved markedly with the regular training of a growing number of trainers involved in both vocational training and technical reinforcement. However, it is noticeable that Benin dual system takes place in VTC and craftsmen workshop whereas Swiss, German and Indian dual systems combine both school and work-based elements in industry or company. In the aforementioned countries, there exist also multiple pathways post-apprenticeship including university, professional college, the workforce and more whereas in Benin, the dual system is a dead-end and there is no further education pathway after the apprenticeship.

In this study, apprentices' different experiences are a key area for this research. The narratives of the participants were the beliefs, stories and lived experiences for me to understand and interpret their perceptions. Their stories were the best experience for me to review the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin and to explore their perceptions. Based on that, this research has followed two research questions: the first one was "How do apprentices perceive and experience the dual apprenticeship programme in Benin?" and the second one was "What are their (apprentices') expectations of the dual apprenticeship programme in the years to come?". With the nature of the study I performed, I have used a narrative inquiry which provided me with a rich framework

through which I investigated the ways apprentices perceived the programme through their stories under the interpretive paradigm (Webster & Mertova, 2007). The overall process was done by collecting information which was further backed up by qualitative methods like using remote (online) interviews. After accumulating information needed to address my research questions, I had organized them in such a way that they look like narrative inquiries. For that, I did an extensive literature review and followed the rubrics of narrative writing from the data collection to the analysis and discussion of the findings.

The results of the study show that apprentices in my study were informed either by their master craftsmen or the VTC holders and the trainers. I have developed my insights that apprentices who joined the programme have different motivations which led them to join the dual system by passion, economic reasons and future expectations. Likewise, they have different but complementary understandings. They consider the dual apprenticeship programme as an alternative or a passion for young people. My participants perceived the dual apprenticeship programme as relevant and useful. In their view, it is an opportunity to learn new skills, knowledge and attitudes with new tools and instruments related to their respective craft occupations. Furthermore, apprentices shared that they have been struggling a lot with long-distance between training centres, the lack or insufficiency of training manuals, lack of monitoring and evaluation, and financial difficulties during and after their dual apprenticeship training as found by (Konnon & Loukpe, 2017). This shows that the dual apprenticeship makes graduates dependents since they are not able to open their own company, industries or vocational training centres after completing the programme. Thus, if the apprenticeship is to be promoted among young people, it is important to develop a good understanding of the levels of

satisfaction with the programme on the part of those participating in it and to identify the impact of the programme.

Moreover, I came to know that the training programmes should be adapted, adjusted and improved following the workplace changes and innovation by organizing regular and rigorous controls, inspections and evaluations at each step of the process. Further, graduates need support to buy the tools used in the training centres. Besides, the authorities may send graduates' certificates to the VTCs or local municipalities after their graduation. And additional skills development training needs to be organized from time to time, which will help the graduates to upgrade their skills and knowledge according to the dynamic of the workplace. In a nutshell, it can be understood that German and Swiss apprenticeship models are industry or company-based. It means that the apprenticeship programme is possible and sustainable only when there are industries or companies. For instance, during this COVID-19 pandemic, most of the industries or companies are obliged to close. Hence, the majority of the apprenticeship programmes are stopped or suspended due to the pandemic. Since the apprenticeship programme has become a worldwide solution to reduce the youth unemployment rate, it is important to think about the sustainability of the dual apprenticeship so that no matter what happens, it can continue smoothly and accordingly.

Conclusions

The Benin dual apprenticeship programme is a 3-year programme where apprentices spend 1 day/week in a VTC and 5 days/week in the workshop to learn both theoretical and practical skills related to their respective craft occupations. Apprentices are among the main actors involved in the Benin dual system whose responsibilities are

shared between public and private organizations or institutions and development partners. This study focuses on perceptions and expectations of apprentices on the dual apprenticeship programme. The results found that apprentices have different motivations and understanding of the Benin dual apprenticeship programme which presents many opportunities as well as challenges for different actors, especially for apprentices. With all the findings and discussions, it is found that apprentices' motivations are likely linked with their understanding as well as their expectations about the programme. They decided to join the programme because of diverse motivations such as passion, economic reasons or promising expectations. Likewise, they understood that the dual apprenticeship is a relevant training programme that contributes a lot to the enhancement of their skills as well as industries or workshop productivity.

Similarly, it is found that the dual apprenticeship programme is a great learning opportunity for all apprentices. Among these opportunities, there are theoretical and practical training received in training centres, the discovery and use of new tools or working instruments, the availability of qualified trainers, the national certificate issued by the government through MoSTEVT, the social capital and thus the value of the graduates. However, all the expectations of dual apprenticeship training in Benin have not yet been met because of some challenges such as the entrance criteria, the actors' roles, the distance between the trainees' home and their respective VTCs, lack of the training manuals or tools, some issues related to the place of installation, purchasing the adequate tools used during the training, opening and equipping their workshop to be regulated and done based on some adequate measures that other countries like Germany, Switzerland and India have been implementing.

To ensure its efficiency and sustainability for the upcoming years, the multiplication or decentralization of training centres in all localities of the country, the provision of sufficient training manuals and tools, the authorization of master craftsmen who were trained in the traditional system and wish to graduate from the dual apprenticeship programme, the regular monitoring and evaluation, the assistance to graduates for their installation and the organization of a periodical skills development programme for the graduates are needed. This could even reduce the costs invested in the programme either by the apprentices or by the government. These saved costs could help to either equip the training centres or extend the programme to other craft occupations or even increase the number of trainees recruited in the occupations where demand is high. So, with the observations, a recommendation can be forwarded to concerned authorities and actors that think something different for the trainees and graduates whose expectations have not yet been met like my participants for the renovation or improvement of the dual apprenticeship programme in the country. Finally, it is important to mention that the global apprenticeship model cannot be purely implemented in Benin as it is because the Benin context and realities are different. Hence, the government can create some standardized conditions such as increasing entrepreneurship, investing in middle-size enterprises, recognizing informal skills, engaging both public and private organizations, and many more for the success of our dual apprenticeship programme.

Implications

This study found that the Benin dual system has a good mechanism allowing the achievement of the objectives but it is hampered by some challenges such as the lack of

training manuals, the lack of monitoring-evaluation of the training, the distribution of apprentices in the training centres located far away from their homes, the difficulty of some trainees in attending the training properly due to their level of study, and the inability of graduates to undertake or open their workshops after their graduation. The research implications can be redeemed from various angles and it will be very useful for the relevant stakeholders to develop different strategies for the Benin dual apprenticeship programme. First of all, Benin relevant authorities and policy-makers can design a new National Qualification Framework for the country. This will help to organize and classify all educational qualifications according to predefined levels of knowledge, skills and attitudes, whether they are obtained through formal, non-formal or informal learning.

Similarly, a job guarantee is one of the main issues which hamper the sustainability of the programme. It would be great if the master craftsmen turn their workshops into middle-size companies or industries or micro-enterprises with a huge investment. This would allow them to increase their productivity, expand their customers and businesses so that they could pay the apprentices during their training and offer them some job opportunities after their graduation. Likewise, the dual apprenticeship stakeholders and policy-makers can take provisions for graduates' allowance. This will make the graduates capable enough to lead a sustainable life that can transform them into full-fledged artisans capable of standing out in this competitive labour market.

Similarly, to ensure the quality, to meet the graduates' expectations and for the sustainability of the programme, the government can extend the dual system to other sectors such as commerce, hotels, restaurants, tourism, health, arts, fish farming and information and communication technology. Furthermore, rather than continuing with the

same strategy, my study can contribute to the development and formation of plans and policies to create an education-career pathway by recognizing CQP certificate in the formal education system and allowing graduates to return to school for further education. Finally, I would like to point out that my study is only on the perceptions of apprentices on the dual apprenticeship programme including their motivations, understanding, challenges and expectations. Likewise, I couldn't have physical interactions with my participants during this study because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Further researchers can explore the issue in the face to face mode. They can also go beyond that and conduct further research on other relevant issues of the Benin dual apprenticeship programme. For example, they can study whether the aforementioned expectations of the Benin dual apprenticeship are met or not.

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APPENDIX

Online (Remote) Interviews Checklist

1. Participant identity: Name, age city, and craft occupation
2. What is your educational level?
3. Why do you choose the apprenticeship?
4. How did you know about the dual apprenticeship programme?
5. Were you an apprentice/holder of CQM/Professional business before joining the dual apprenticeship programme?
6. Who decided your participation in the CQP programme? Why?
7. How do you perceive the entrance criteria?
8. What were/are your perceptions before, during and after the dual apprenticeship programme?
9. What do you understand by the dual apprenticeship or CQP programme?
10. Are you aware of the duality of the training for the CQP certificate?
11. In which zone do you live in Abomey-Calavi/Cotonou/Porto-Novo/Sèmè-Podji/?
Where do you take apprenticeship training in a workshop? And where is the vocational training centre located?
12. What is the estimated distance and transportation cost from your location to the vocational training centre?
13. How is your relationship with your master craftsman before, during and after the programme?
14. How do you perceive the dual apprenticeship in comparison to the traditional apprenticeship?

15. What is your current profession?
16. What are the challenges you encountered during the training? (Transport/distance, theoretical & practical training materials, instruments, final evaluation, certificate)?
17. What can you suggest for the dual apprenticeship programme improvement?
18. What are your future challenges after the training completion (place for installation, materials and labour force for installation, others)?

Glossary

- **Apprenticeship:** System of training that usually combines on-the-job training and work experience with institution-based training. It can be regulated by law or by custom (ILO, 2006).
- **Dual VET system:** Programmes that combine school- or college- and work-based education. Both components are substantial (i.e go beyond a single internship or occasional class), although the work-based part usually occupies 50% of the programme time or more (UNESCO, 2011). The dual VET is then 2-place education and training which combine classroom instruction and workplace training. Here, it is a training/learning system that takes place in an educational institution or training centre and in the workplace where trainees spend some days/week accordingly.
- **Dual system:** Education or training combining periods in an educational institution or training centre and the workplace. The alternate scheme can take place on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Depending on the country and applicable status, participants may be contractually linked to the employer and/or

receive a remuneration (CEDEFOP, 2008). Mostly, it is used for the dual apprenticeship system. All over the world, this designation is refined and redefined according to each country realities and context.

- **Dual VET-Apprenticeship:** It is the designation of the dual apprenticeship system in most European countries such as Germany, Switzerland and other countries whose system is inspired by theirs. It is the system that combines both classroom learning and on-the-job training (Naidu et al., 2020).
- **Dual apprenticeship:** Training and learning system that takes place in two separate places. It connects the classroom to the world of work by providing apprentices with adequate theoretical and practical knowledge to improve their performance and productivity. This terminology is used to name the Benin dual apprenticeship system which is partly inspired by Swiss and German models without being identical to it. It is not called dual VET apprenticeship because it is not purely the same dual apprenticeship system elsewhere (Nouatin et al., 2019). That is why it is called in French dual-type apprenticeship.