

THE IMPACT OF SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMMES; ARE PARTICIPANTS TAUGHT TO BE PRODUCTIVE AND SELF-RELIANT.

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on investigating the impact of skills training programmes at the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia in helping participants become productive.

The findings revealed that most of instructions or teaching styles by the instructors encouraged productivity among the participants. However most of the learners needed close supervision by their instructors since skill training programmes are learner centred. Much emphasis is put on helping the learners to learn productive skills.

The findings also showed that the curricula taught are of a productive nature. The curricula offered focus on development and provide the basis for productivity.

The study recommended that more adequate evaluations of skills training offered must be done so as to enhance their capability to offer quality skills in line with the needs of the youths. Continuing evaluation provides the basis for improvement of planning and implementing of the programmes.

The study also recommended that for skills training to be effective there is need to provide participants with adequate training equipment. This training equipment should be suitable for productive work which will lead to development.

KEY WORDS: Impact of Skills training programmes.

INTRODUCTION

For a long time now non formal education which includes skills training programmes have been in existence in Zambia. The targets of these skills training programmes are out of schools youths and even those who have never been to school. In order for this innovation to be effective among the participants the programmes should be arranged in a way that they equip the participants to be productive. The curricula should be well planned and the learning environment should be favourable, so that the participants can engaged in quality training.

Skills training programmes in Zambia were introduced upon the creation of the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

The youth skills training programmes were started as a major action programme under which the youths especially school drop-outs were to be taught skills which would empower them to be productive and self-reliant, hence contribute to development. The Third National Development Plan (TNDP)(1979) states that the role of youth in national development has been recognized for a long time but the first definite attempt to provide for the development of youth was in the Second National development Plan (SNDP).

When the policy guidelines for the establishment of skills training centres was laid down it recommended that training schemes;

- I. Should take into account local economic needs and conditions in framing their programmes.
- II. Should aim at training young men and women as far as possible for self-employment.
- III. Must be simple, flexible, community based and managed and project oriented.

Many recommendations have been made in terms of youth development. In urban areas, community based programmes intended to train young people for income earning and productivity were to be undertaken. Skills in such fields as simple furniture making, repairs, painting and dress making were included in training programmes.

The skills training programmes were to be simple and designed especially to develop skills associated with economic activities, according to the Third National Development Plan (1979) centres were set up to enable a large number of unemployed youth learn skills connected to production.

The intention of the Ministry of Youth and Sports was to establish specific development programmes, which were to provide skills training programmes to the youths. The skills training programmes were to be organized with the support of other stakeholders that included non – governmental organizations, government ministries or department and some individuals.

OBJECTIVES

- a) To determine whether instruction or teaching styles by the instructors encourage productivity.
- b) To determine whether participants are satisfied with the programmes.
- c) To determine whether the skills training programmes curricula is of a productive nature.
- d) To determine whether the skills training programmes had improved productivity of the participants.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) To determine whether instruction or teaching styles by the instructors encourage productivity.
- b) To determine whether participants are satisfied with the programmes.

- c) To determine whether the skills training programmes curricula is of a productive nature.
- d) To determine whether the skills training programmes had improved productivity of the participants.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of the study can be used by various stakeholders such as the government, non-governmental organizations, churches and individuals in planning and implementing skills training programmes.

The study will create public awareness about the skills training programmes and the kind of impact they have on the participants who are involved in these programmes.

Literature Review

The first step in helping a number of young people obtain usable skills is that interested agencies both government and non-governmental organizations should try to up-grade the skills training curricula.

According to Hopper (1985) programmes organized by the government, voluntary association or community groups must have in common the explicitly aim to prepare out of school youth for a productive life.

Sheffield (1971) states that success non formal education leading to skills training are effective in design and teach relevant curricula. Furthermore, they make specific arrangements to ensure that the products of their training will be absorbed productively in the economy and that new skills learnt will be employed to increase productivity on the job. When these effective links between skills training and productivity have been made in developing curricula they increase the acceptability of the final products as well as their quality.

It is important therefore that skills training programmes for youths be organized and planned in a way that they will be able to use the skills in a productive way. The training should not just be regard as short-term process concerned simply with equipping out of school youths who are the participants with particular skills. However the programmes should be committed to ensuring as far as possible that skills taught are relevant and can be applied in real productive working situations.

According to the commonwealth (1970) to assist in the application of productive skills that are acquired, an overall training programme may have to include elements of a social or cultural nature.

If skills training centres want to be more effective in producing productive participants there is need for the centres to be highly maintained. This includes acquiring equipment and materials which are generally regarded as essential for setting up a proper and productive training programme. Hopper (1985) states that centres should try to attract more qualified instructors or send them for training. Hence they can be able to impart productive skills to participants.

The value of skills training programmes should be examined. For a lot of out of school youths lack of skills appear to be principal stumbling block preventing them from gaining a foothold in the modern sector. Therefore, productive training would make up for this deficiency and would secure a better entry into the labour market.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

According to Merriam and Simpson (1995), a research design is a structure, plan or blue print which guides researchers in finding solutions to problems or answers to questions. In this study therefore, a descriptive research design was used. Descriptive research design helps or enables a researcher to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of a given phenomenon, population or area of study.

This study adopted a case study design with a logical sequence that connects the study's empirical data to its research questions and objectives, and ultimately its conclusion.

Data collection and Research Instruments

Data collection is the process of finding information for the research problems. It may involve administering a questionnaire, conducting an interview or a focus group discussion or observing what's going on among the subject of the study (Kumar, 1999:148).

The instrument that was used in the study was a questionnaire. Questionnaires are forms of inquiry which contain systematically compiled and organized series of questions (Holloway and Wheelers, 1996).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings showed that 48% of the participants said that the way skills are taught is very good. While 52% of the participants needed close supervision in order to be more productive. Skills training programmes are learner centred. Close supervision of the learners is needed and much emphasis is put on helping the participants to learn productive skills. In an earlier study by Grammeno (1983) emphasis was put on adequately training young people in skill to enable them compete with confidence for employment or successfully settle in productive activities.

Concerning whether participants are satisfied with the programmes it was discovered that 81% of the participants were very satisfied with the skills training programmes.

It was found that 100% of the participants revealed that the skills training curricula is of a productive nature. Skills training curricula are designed to combat the unproductive existence which young people experience once they have completed formal school. The curriculum offered is to focus on development and provide the basis for productivity. Sheffield (1971) states that it was found that successful skill training are effective in teaching relevant curricula and that skills learnt will be employed to increase productivity on the job.

It was revealed that 62% of the participants have become more productive while 38% of the participants felt that they have not become more productive. Skills training programmes must aim at increasing productivity of learners. The programmes must aim at increasing chances of learners to be self employed and earn income.

CONCLUSION

Skills training programmes are providing then participants with skill that they don't have. This would enable them take up specialized jobs or create their own employment. Skills training programmes have been found to improve the productivity levels of the youths. However more needs to be done to ensure that the curriculum is relevant and meets the needs of today's youths. Skills training programmes are very important in opening up opportunities for the youth in the informal sector which is an alternative to the formal sector

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study therefore made the following recommendations:

1. More adequate evaluation of skills training programmes offered must be done so as to enhance their capability to offer quality skills in line with the needs of the youths. Continuing evaluation provides the basis for improvement of planning and implementing of the programmes.
2. There is need for skills training instructors to closely supervise their students so as to enable them become productive.
3. For skills training to be effective there is need to provide participants with adequate training equipment. This equipment should be suitable for productive work.
4. There is need to organise seminars and refresher courses for instructors in order to equip them with new teaching approaches
5. There is need to use participatory research to re-identify the needs of the participants and the skills training centres.

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Are skills training programmes adequately preparing participant to be more productive	frequency	percentage
Yes	13	62
No	8	38
Total	21	100

Participants' opinions on how skills are taught	frequency	percentage
Very good	10	48
Good	11	52
poor	0	0
Very poor	0	0
Total	21	100