

Chapter IX

Trainees' Views Regarding Emphasis and Adequacy for Work of Institution-Based Automotive Training in Kenya and State of Victoria, Australia

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ABSTRACT

The foundation for a productive, efficient and effective workforce is high quality and relevant training and ideally, educators, policy makers and the industry practitioners should agree on what should be included in training programs. This chapter discusses views of automotive trainees about whether or not they believed their training was directed appropriately towards work within the automotive industry of the future. Data was collected from automotive trainees located in Kenya and Australia. Data was obtained by use of questionnaires and analyzed with both quantitative and qualitative foci. The questions asked regarded the emphasis of training, the content of training, the facilities in training and coping with technological change in the workplace. Data were discussed according to three themes on generic skills, adequacy of training to work requirements and training facilities. In both countries, it was found that there is a need for more realignment of training offering to the future industry requirements. It is recommended that a consultative approach should be used in the training programs design with a view to reducing the gap between industry requirements and training offerings.

INTRODUCTION

Trainees are the key stakeholders of all education and training programs they partake for their career development. Stakeholders are defined as individuals or organizations that stand to gain or lose from the success or failure respectively of a system (Nuseibeh & Easterbrook, 2000). Career development is a lifelong process and a determinant of educational attainment that leads to occupational attainment (Maldonado & Farmer, 2007). It is achieved through education and training participation. Education and training aims at preparing people for the various roles and responsibilities in life. It targets bringing out the powers, capacities and inherent potentials of the learners. To achieve these monumental tasks, education and training process depends on systematically organized set of programs of induction in the ways and activities of the society in which the education and training is taking place. The society in turn depends on the forces of the greater world which are influenced by the global trends. In the process of designing the training programs no single group of stakeholders can adequately perform the task. As a result, there is need for collaboration of the many stakeholders and groups. Trainees are key stakeholders considered in this chapter. Other stakeholders include parents, lecturers and teachers at the individual level; and training providers; the government and employers at the corporate level (Fairlay, 1998; Finlay, 1998).

This chapter reports views that automotive trainees in Kenya and Victoria, Australia had about automotive courses they were pursuing. The research specifically targeted the retail, service and repair (R S&R) sector of the automotive industry. It looked at the issue of vocational relevance in the training of mechanics in the context of changing world and emergent working conditions. It was a two case comparative research aimed at advancing reciprocal lessons between Kenya and Australia.

Kenya was chosen due to its strategic positioning in East Africa and the fact that it has had several reforms towards making education and training more responsive to the future requirements. Australia was chosen because it is an exemplary example in the all inclusive training programs development. It is a success story for the Competency Based Training (CBT) with inputs from the educators and the industry. Three main themes are discussed in this chapter. They are whether the training promotes the acquisition of generic (transferable) skills, whether training is adequate for meeting workplace challenges and whether the facilities at the training institutions compare favorably to the facilities at the workplace.

The rationale for this chapter is that policies in Vocational Education and Training (VET) are linked to national aspirations and achievement in economic growth (Young, 1998, International Labour Organization 'ILO', 2003). In addition, due to the forces of globalisation, no single country can solve its work related problems without reference to the rest of the world (Robinson, 2000; Rojewski, 2003). This being the case then, what is required are education and training systems that are responsive to the changing nature of work since knowledge is the only meaningful resource today (Drucker, 1993). It is education and training in which the pursuant learns to settle at different working conditions by meeting set standards and promoting the goals of that particular establishment. In today's world, learning is a central component to organizational efficiency and effectiveness. It also influences competitiveness. Actually, both developed and developing countries view VET as a leader in providing responsiveness to changes in the global economy. The required responsiveness can only be meaningfully achieved if all the views of all stakeholders are included in the design, implementation and evaluation of the programs. Thus, views of trainees, who are at the centre of all programs, are important in gauging the program's success.

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