

Role of Industry in Employee Training and Education for Performance Improvement in Kenya – Prospects and Priorities

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Abstract

This paper highlights the origins, developments, prospects and priorities of industrial training in Kenya with emphasis on the role of industry in employee training and education for performance improvement in Kenya. Kenya has a National Industrial Training Authority (NITA), formerly known as Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) whose mandate is to promote the highest standards in the quality and efficiency of industrial training in Kenya and ensure adequate supply of properly trained manpower at all levels in industry. The introduction of the industrial training levy fund was expected to enhance the realization of the NITA mandate of assisting Kenya to improve its performance and become more productive and competitive in the global market. Though Kenya intends to create a globally competitive and adaptive human resource base to meet the requirements of an expanding industrial economy, this has been hampered by inadequate management and planning infrastructure in industrial training. Action research design and document analysis techniques were used for the purpose of the study. The current industrial training institutional set up and work ethic needs to change for Kenya to achieve quality results. This can be done through life-long training and education. Though Kenya's productivity level ranks low by international standards Vision 2030 provides an opportunity for significant productivity growth. Industrial training within employment learning has not been well institutionalized. Measures need to be taken to ensure that industrial training is deepened. Labour productivity has to be raised to international levels and opportunities for life-long learning enhanced. Collaboration between government, industry and training institutions has to be enhanced to address the human resource constraints that are being experienced in the rapidly expanding Kenyan economy. For Kenya to compete in the global economy, new policy directions on development of highly qualified yet flexible human resources have to be adopted.

Key words: *Industrial Training, Productivity Improvement, NITA*

Introduction

The role of industry in employee training and education is significant if Kenya expects to improve its performance to create a globally competitive and adaptive human resource base to meet the aspirations of the Constitution of Kenya of 2010 (Government of Kenya, 2010) and to meet the requirements of Kenya Vision 2030 (Ministry of Finance, 2007). It has been recognized that Kenya's main potential lies in its people – their creativity, work ethic, education and entrepreneurial and other skills. One of the main characteristics of some of the countries that have achieved major transformation in the last decades such as Taiwan and Chile (Ministry of Finance, 2007) was the high quality of their pool of technical, industrial and entrepreneurial

human resources. Kenya's global competitiveness will depend on the ability to create a human resource base that will be constantly subjected to retraining and access to technological learning within employment. These specific human resources play a major role in contributing not only to efficiency gains in existing economic activities, but also in diversifying economic sectors and activities in order to release productivity gains (Ministry of Finance, 2007). To ensure that there are consistent results, human resources have to be managed, rewarded and steered to develop global competitiveness, the capacity to utilize knowledge and information in design, production and marketing of traditional exports has to be enhanced. This can assist in capacity building to produce quality human resources in health care, education and training and improving work performance.

However, the key to success lies in proactive measures to ensure training of human resources in order to respond to changes that are triggered by global transformation. Kenya's ability to fully benefit from its existing human assets has been hampered by inadequate management and planning. The current institutional set-ups and work ethic must change in order for Kenya to achieve quality results. Mismatch between demand and supply must be corrected. This has contributed to factors such as the high cost of doing business. Despite the importance of employee training and education and the role it plays towards performance improvement and productivity, the various stakeholders like employers, industry, employees and government have not exploited the full potential of employee training and education (Ministry of Finance, 2007). Policy documents and frameworks indicate that a lot of work has been done but more ground still needs to be covered. This paper attempts to highlight the some of the progress made in the policy implementation of the Session Paper No. 2 of 2013 on National Industrial Training and Attachment (Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, 2013), the prospects and priorities in Kenya.

Literature Review

Industrial training in Kenya dates back to 1925 when the Native Industrial Training Depots (NITDs) were introduced by the colonial Government. In 1959, Industrial Training Ordinance was enacted to regulate apprentice and indentured learners in industry (www.nita.go.ke, 2015). In 1963, the Industrial Training Ordinance became the Industrial Training ACT, Cap 237 (Government of Kenya, 1971) which was amended in 1971 to establish the Training Levy Fund and the National Industrial Training Council (NITC) which had Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) as its secretariat. The DIT was in 2011 transformed into The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) which is a semi-independent Government agency with the National Industrial Training Board (NITB) replacing the National Industrial Training Council (NITC). The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) was created to replace the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT). NITA was established under the Industrial Training (Amendment) Act of 2011 (Government of Kenya, 2011). The mandate of NITA is to promote the highest standards in the quality and efficiency of industrial training in Kenya and ensure adequate supply of properly trained and competent human resources or manpower at all levels in industry in Kenya.

The National Industrial Training Authority has its headquarters in Nairobi and has five Industrial Training Centres (ITCs) at Kisumu (Kisumu Industrial Training Centre);

Mombasa, (Mombasa Industrial Training Centre); Athi River (Technology Development Centre); The Kenya Textile Training Institute (KTTI); and The National Industrial and Vocational Training Centre (NIVTC) both located at National Industrial Training Authority headquarters in Nairobi along Commercial Street. The ITCs host a number of industry oriented courses that target workers in the formal and informal sectors. The courses they offer include short and long programmes (proficiency courses, skill upgrading courses, artisan courses, and tailor made courses based on demand). The Centres provide full board accommodation, training rooms, workshops and recreational facilities.

The responsibilities of NITA in the realization of its mandate as provided for in the Industrial Training (Amendment) Act of 2011 (GoK, NITA, 2015) includes; handling Management and Supervisory training; Apprenticeship Training; Craft, Technician (Skill-Upgrading); Indentured learners; National Industrial Attachment Programmes; Curriculum development; Trade testing and certification; Inspection of training providers; Administration of Industrial Training Levy Fund; and Administration of the Industrial Training Centres.

In order to ensure that industrial training and attachment are conducted in a coordinated manner the Session Paper No. 2 on Industrial Training and Attachment (Ministry of Labour Social Security and Services, 2013) was prepared to provide a solid comprehensive policy framework. The Session Paper therefore, provides prospects for the establishment of institutions, infrastructure and programmes for planning and implementation of industrial training and attachment. The session paper has taken into consideration regional and global trends towards recognition of qualifications across borders and beyond. The framework further provides for harmonization of guidelines for implementation of industrial training and attachment which brings out the prospects for the role of industry and other stakeholders in employee training and education for performance improvement in Kenya. For Kenya to create a competitive and technologically adaptive human capital to enhance the country's prospect of achieving middle level status economy of a globally competitive nation, all stakeholders both in the public and private sectors have to play their roles effectively.

Different stakeholders have responsibilities that they are expected to play in the implementation of Session Paper No. 2 on Industrial Training and Attachment (Ministry of Labour Social Security and Services, 2013). The Government of Kenya is responsible for: Approving of the Session Paper on industrial training and attachment; providing technical and financial support for the implementation of the Policy and; establishing a National Qualifications Authority. The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services has responsibility for: Providing policy direction on national industry training and attachment; overseeing the overall implementation of this Policy; development of national occupational qualification pathways; monitoring, evaluation, reporting, and review of the Policy and; review the Kenya National Occupational Classification Standard (KNOCS).

The National Industrial Training Board plays an oversight role in the national industrial training system as provided for in the Industrial Training (Amendment) Act, 2011, No. 34 (Government of Kenya, 2011). The NITB spearheads the implementation of Policy on Industrial Training and Attachment. The role of NITA as a Secretariat to NITB is to: Coordinate industrial training and attachment as provided for in Industrial Training (Amendment) Act, No 34, 2011

(Government of Kenya, 2011); spearhead the implementation of this Policy; monitor, evaluate, and report on the implementation of the Policy on Industrial Training and Attachment; ensure compliance with the Industrial Training (Amendment) Act, No 34, 2011; lobby for funds for implementation of the Policy; harmonize the legal and institutional framework for industrial training and attachment; spearhead and establish linkages between industry and training and research institutions; promote effective partnerships between public and private sectors to support industrial training; prepare and implement guidelines for coordination and supervision of industrial training and attachment; establish and maintain industrial training and attachment database; maintain a register of employers in Kenya; ensure appropriate standard setting, accreditation and quality assurance with respect to industrial training and; ensure there is adequate infrastructure and facilities for industrial training. This is in line with the efforts made by the Government of Kenya of continuously enhancing human capital development as indicated in the Second Kenya Medium Term Plan 2013-2017, (Ministry of Finance,2013).

Ministries, departments and public sector agencies are expected to: Set up industrial attachment coordinating units; raise awareness; train, assess and evaluate trainees on industrial attachment; conduct regular training needs assessments and; recognize prior learning and continuous education development. The County Industrial Training and Attachment Offices are expected to undertake the following roles: Coordination of industrial training and attachment at county level; awareness creation on industrial training and attachment; collection of data on industrial training and attachment; and collect labour market information (Ministry of Labour Social Security and Services, 2013).

The roles and responsibilities of employers/industry are: Facilitating employees and those on attachment; register and pay industrial training levy; conduct regular training needs assessment and develop annual training plans; train and assess trainees on industrial attachment; accreditation of experiential learning and; recognize prior learning and continuous education development. The responsibilities of the employees under the Industrial Attachment Policy are to: Participate in industrial training and attachment and; seek opportunities to continuously upgrade knowledge and skills (Ministry of Labour Social Security and Services, 2013).

According to the Ministry of Labour Social Security and Services (2013), the role and responsibilities of employers' organizations are to: Raise awareness on industrial training and attachment; promote skill upgrading and lifelong learning among the employees; assist in resource mobilization for industrial training and attachment and; recognize prior learning and continuous education development. The roles and responsibilities of workers organizations are to: Raise awareness on industrial training and attachment; promote skill upgrading and lifelong learning among the workers; assist in resource mobilization for industrial training and; recognize prior learning and continuous education development. Resources are crucial in ensuring that the industrial training and attachment policy is implemented successfully (United Nations, 2009).

The responsibilities of industrial training providers are to: Align training curricula with the needs of the industry; train, assess, evaluate and certify trainees; assist employers to conduct Training Needs Assessment (TNA); implement accreditation and quality assurance standards and; recognize prior learning and continuous education development. The responsibilities of

universities and other training institutions are to: Align training curricula with the needs of the industry; train, assess, evaluate and certify trainees; assist employers to conduct training needs assessment; collaborate with NITA in the setting of standards, accreditation and quality assurance on industrial training; establish partnerships with industry to optimize utilization of training equipment and machinery; ensure there is adequate infrastructure and facilities for industrial training; ensure all trainees and trainers proceeding on industrial attachment have appropriate insurance cover and; recognize prior learning and continuous education development. Development partners are expected to provide technical and financial support (United Nations, 2009) in the implementation of industrial training and attachment initiatives (Ministry of Labour Social Security and Services 2013).

According to the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, (2013) Sessional Paper No. 3 of 2013 on National Productivity Policy, Kenya is faced with low productivity levels with a total factor productivity index of less than one unit. Consistent with this low productivity, the country's labour and capital productivity indices were 0.84 and 0.46 respectively in 2009. This contrasts with the benchmark of a productivity index of at least 5 for global competitiveness. The implication from this backdrop is that Kenya's competitiveness is low. For instance, Kenya's ranking on global competitiveness was 106 out of 144 in 2012-2013. Kenya was ranked behind Tunisia, South Africa, Mauritius, Egypt, Morocco, Namibia, Gambia, Algeria, Libya and Senegal in terms of global competitiveness. In the context of East Africa, Kenya is marginally ahead of Tanzania and Uganda while it lags far behind the South East Asian countries that it aspires to benchmark herself with.

Although, productivity has generally been equated to production; it is thought that it only benefits the employers; is applicable to blue collar job workers; that productivity improvement leads to loss of jobs; and is just a means of working harder. However, productivity is about efficiency in resource utilization in the production of quality goods and services. Productivity leads to increased production with available resources and also leads to job creation and retention, (Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, 2013).

Methodology

Action research design was adopted for the purpose of the current study. Action research was adopted due to its flexibility and spiral process that allows action (change, improvement) and research (understanding, knowledge) to be achieved at the same level (Dick, 2002). It is presumed that the understanding of aspects relating to industrial training can allow more informed change and at the same time be informed by that change. Those affected by the changes in the current study are the stakeholders in industrial training and need to be involved in the action research. Action research allows for a natural way of acting and researching at the same time.

This study was conducted between 2nd March, 2015 and 9th May, 2015 through action research design. The researcher reviewed literature through document analysis technique. The study sought to critically review literature on the role of industry in employee training and education for performance improvement in Kenya.

Findings

The priorities that have to be addressed by Kenya to enhance industrial training have been influenced by experiences of successful initiatives that have been undertaken through well grounded approaches. Studies carried out by the International Labour Organization have demonstrated that graduates' employability is constrained by the quality of training as well as by the oversupply in most popular basic industrial trades like welders, fitters, plumbers, electricians, masons etc. this results in high risks of unemployment.

The International Labour Organization, (2013) has also noted that few Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET) systems have provided training in basic entrepreneurial skills needed by self employed workers and small businesses. Lack of investment has held back the introduction of new training programs, training equipment and employment of capable human resources to provide effective instructions to trainees. The priorities that need to be enhanced to ensure that the industry plays its role effectively in employee training and education for superior performance improvement in Kenya include: Development of national education and training policies; Setting up a composition of local and national bodies, with employers and unions as well as other stakeholders' representatives to advice on policy implementation; Assessment and projections of industry and occupation specific demand for skills given the international markets and new products and technology development; Leading the process of development of occupational standards for trades and professions; Determining the ways of how the skills and competencies need to be assessed and certified, and; Advising on the types of equipment and technologies to be used by TVET institution.

Conclusions

The paper has discussed the context in which industry has to play a role in imparting the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies that workers should have for Kenya to be competitive and productive to achieve Kenya Vision 2030 and the aims of the constitution of 2010. The background of industrial training, process of life long learning in Kenya and the place of the National Industrial Training Authority has also been explored. The prospects for industrial training and attachment as envisaged in the Session Paper No. 2 of 2013 have been discussed. Some of the priorities for enhancing effective industrial raining and attachment like consistent industry and stakeholders' involvement have been proposed.

Though a lot of achievements have been made towards creating inclusive pathways for industry and community, there is still much to be done for the synergy and innovation to be tapped to drive socio-economic activities through Technical Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TVET). The policy framework on industrial training and attachment provides a framework in which interdisciplinary perspectives can provide

sustainable solutions to the much needed knowledge, skills and competencies for competitiveness. It is the recommendation of the research that future studies that include all TVET stakeholders on should be conducted to explore the challenges and opportunities for TVET in Kenya.

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