

## **Original Research Article**

### **Staff Training Needs Assessment for Development of Employees at Alternative Learning and Adult Education and Vocational Training, Zanzibar**

#### **ABSTRACT**

The study's major goal was to look at the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education in Zanzibar's staff training needs assessment for employee development. This research was carried out in the Urban Western Region, at the Department of Alternative Learning in Stone Town, Unguja. The survey included 132 Zanzibar's Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education employees. A case study design was employed to enable the researcher to concentrate on gathering enough information in the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education. Collected data from questionnaires were analyzed through descriptive design to provide a deep understanding of the phenomena through frequency tables, while interviews data were analyzed through thematic analysis.

This study shows that all of the factors used for TNAs, such as training, sponsorship, time, and strategic planning, encourage the development of TNAs and staff performance. 45.2 percent of respondents strongly agreed that strategic planning promotes TNA and helps to improve employee performance. In the second objective, various TNA procedures were found to be friendly and familiar to the majority of employees; 57.3 percent of respondents strongly agreed that providing an incentive induction program is a foundation of TNA and employee performance, while several benefits were discovered within the department after an assessment of their training needs, such as career development or future orientation. Moreover, the study revealed that (55.6%) of respondents strongly agreed that TNA is capable enough to enhance the succession plan and staff performance at the department.

The study recommended that the government assist the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education with budget revisions, employment, sponsorship, and the provision of a training needs assessment specialist who can advise the department on how to reform TNA activity, as well as the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for the effective implementation of identified programs.

#### **Introduction**

Today's global business climate is increasingly competitive due to breakthroughs in science and technology. Updating and expanding human resource capabilities has proven to be a substantial challenge for both government and business. Human resource training and development must be prioritized if the organization wants to improve its performance successfully (URT, 2016). Training and development are well-known for improving staff performance and productivity. It

is known that they exist and function in a complex and dynamic environment all over the planet.

As a result, it encourages the organization to look for new ways to meet changing needs and close the gap between expectations and actual results. Improved capabilities, knowledge, and skills of talented employees have shown to be a critical source of competitive advantage in a global market. Employees must have the needed information, skills, and abilities to perform well, so adequate training programs that improve employee motivation and commitment are required (Amir & Amen, 2013).

Determining training requirements has become even more vital as the workplace has become more complicated—the organization's rapid transformation and technological advancement, among other things. The evaluation of training and development needs ensures that all organization members have the knowledge and skills to accomplish their jobs well, take on new responsibilities, and adapt to changing conditions. As the organization's responsibilities (ies) and service coverage expand, employee development becomes increasingly important (Mchele, 2016). The Department of Teachers Education (DTE) in Zanzibar conducts training needs assessments.

It is a government department under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Its main task is to research teachers' needs and develop in-service training for them based on the DTE's findings. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has participated in several in-service training, including the Zanzibar Improvement School Prospect (ZISP), Teachers Advancement Program (TAP), Tusome Pamoja (RTI), and Subject Zonal Cluster (RoGZ, 2018).

With the help of KOICA, the Ministry of Education strives to improve the quality of secondary education by improving the teaching and learning process to provide quality education to all children in Zanzibar. (RoGZ, 2018).

Training is assessed in the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education, focusing on training, methodology to be applied, several trainees, and setting a plan of action. In 2016, for example, a training needed assessment was done, which resulted in training 35 Alternative learning teachers' on how to professional review the Alternative Learning curriculum. After several debates on teachers' inability, in 2017, a training needs assessment was done for Alternative Learning Centers (ALCs), which resulted in training on capability building for 16 teachers. Also, in 2018 training needs assessment was done on the methodology applied for Alternative Learning and providing training for 85 teachers on new teaching methods. Likewise, in 2019 training needs assessment was done to develop 80 participants for training on reviewing new alternative learning textbooks. In addition, in 2019, training needs were identified for 140 literacy teachers in Zanzibar, focusing on methods used with adult learners (HRO-Department of Alternative learning, 2020).

## **Objective**

To explore the factors affecting training needs assessment in the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education in Zanzibar.

## **Research Question**

What are the training needs assessment factors in the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education in Zanzibar?

## Methods

The research was based on a case study design that combined quantitative and qualitative methods (s). The research was carried out at the Alternative Learning and Adult Education Department in Zanzibar, located in Forodhani, Urban District, Urban West Region. The study included 132 members of the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education staff, including six (6) senior management staff and 124 members of various divisions within the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education. The survey included 130 Zanzibar's Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education personnel.

The Yamane Taro Technique was used to determine the study's sample size.

## Findings and Discussion

The following are the findings of the study:

First, Data Distribution and Normality

In order to ensure the study quality, the normality of data was checked to know how normal the distribution of data was through skewness and Kurtosis test. Table 1 summarizes the details

Table 1: Normality Test

Variable(s)	N	Mean	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Gender of respondents	124	1.54	-.164	.217	-2.006	.431
Age of respondents	124	2.19	-.247	.217	-.824	.431
Level of education	124	2.24	.006	.217	-.334	.431
working experience	124	2.28	-.572	.217	-1.318	.431
Training offered by Department	124	2.11	1.153	.217	.590	.431
Sponsorship offered by Department	124	2.22	.673	.217	-.243	.431
Freedom of choice	124	2.48	.565	.217	.085	.431
Valid N (listwise)	124					

Source: Field Data, 2020

Table 1 shows that skewness value by gender of respondents scored at -0.164 alpha, age of respondents was -0.247, level of education scored at 0.006 alpha, working experience scored at -0.572, training offered by department scored at 1.153 alpha, sponsorship scored at 0.673 while freedom of choice scored at 0.565 alpha. On the other hand, Kurtosis as a measure of normality

proved that data distribution was normally distributed when data scored at -2.006 alpha for the gender of respondents, -0.824 alpha for the age of respondents, -0.334 alpha for the level of education while working experience scored at -1.318 alpha. Other variables were training offered by department scored at 0.590 alpha, sponsorship offered by department scored at -0.243 alpha while freedom of choice in programs offered by department scored at 0.085 alpha. Both skewness and Kurtosis data scored in between  $\pm 2$ , which shows a normal distribution of the data according to Kim (2013); this distribution means that the finding would be of high quality and highly consistent.

## Second, Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

These were gender, age and education level as:

### Gender of Respondents

The respondents were asked the question to identify their gender and Table 2 presents the findings

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Variable(s)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid Male	57	46.0%
Valid Female	67	54.0%
Total	124	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2020

Table 2 shows that 57 (46.0%) of respondents were male while 67 (54.0%) were female, which means that training needs assessment as an activity is performed by a staff of different gender. Even though females dominate the activity, their domination could not violate the results of this study.

### Age of Respondents

The respondents were asked questions describing their age, and Table 3 presents the findings.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

Variable(s)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid		
18-30	19	15.3%
31-45	63	50.8%
46+	42	33.9%
Total	124	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2020

Table 3 shows that 19 (15.3%) of respondents aged between 18-30 years, 63 (50.8%) were aged between 31-45 years, and 42 (33.9%) of respondents were 46 years or above. The wellness of age distribution justified how much simple random sampling contributed to improving the quality of data and the unbiased behavior of the researcher during the selection of sample size for the study.

### Educational Level of Respondents

The respondents were asked questions regarding their educational level, and Table 4 presents the finding.

Table 4: Education Level of Respondents

Variable(s)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid		
primary - secondary (olevel)	8	6.5%
certificate-diploma	78	62.9%
Degree and above	38	30.6%
Total	124	100.0%

Source: Field Data, 2020

Table 4 shows that 8(6.5%) of respondents were primary-secondary (O-level), 78 (62.9 %) of respondents were certificate - diplomas, and 38 (30.6%) of respondents were degree and above. Most respondents have a certificate-diploma level of education, followed by respondents with degree level or above. The development resulted from this department's long-term training needs assessment and existing good human resources policies like training, promotion, and

succession planning. There was an excellent distribution in every level of education in this study, which means that the researcher was good enough when chosen for both study populations and the sampling technique(s). Thus it was possible because of the intention of the researcher to come up with a study without bias problem(s). This study would have reliable findings with an excellent distribution of respondents based on their academic backgrounds.

### **To explore the factors for training needs assessment in the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education in Zanzibar.**

Five (5) interview questions were conducted to discover the common variables for TNA in this Department to improve the quality of this research. These inquiries focused on the department's training, sponsorship opportunities available, program freedom, the time required to apply for a needed program, and the availability of a strategic plan: Does the department continue to offer TNA for staff development?

The respondents were asked to defend whether or not their department is strategically delivering various types of training to improve the department's performance. In response to this question, all respondents agreed and praised the Department of Alternative Learning's efforts to offer various short strategic- and long-term training sessions for the department's employees to implement the training requirements assessment results.

Respondent's gratitude was motivated by procedures created by the ALCs department prior to the assessment, such as training monitoring and evaluation, and it did not happen by chance. It is also because training is offered after assessing their working abilities, capacities, competence, level of confidence, and final consequence. A department must maintain this excellent practice, which always results in a wide range of training alternatives for staff.

In a similar vein, Neelam (2014) investigated the effects of training needs assessment and development on employee performance and productivity in United Bank Limited in Pakistan and discovered that bank administrators interested in increasing their bank's productivity and efficiency choose training and development as a source of increasing their bank's performance and productivity. Specifically, RS1 said the following during the interview session:

*There are many benefits associated with TNA in the provision of various training through time to time seminars or workshops, ensuring high capacity and efficiency are amongst them*

During the same interview session, one respondent stated that, despite the availability of various types of training to support TNA, the activity still faced numerous problems, including a lack of funding from the central budget. Lack of funds for TNA could be the reason for some staff in the department to be in a dilemma situation whether there is any training offered after TNA. However, both questionnaire and interview findings confirmed the availability of many training opportunities resulting from TNA with limitations like the low budget.

Despite the stated challenges to TNA activity, types of training available or in performance, many efforts have been made in Zanzibar's alternative learning department to minimize or overcome the possible barrier, one of which is ensuring the participation of many stakeholders from various departments in the alternative learning department, as well as stakeholders from the Ministry of Education and Finance.

Thanks to these stakeholders, many financial, planning, and skills gaps were overcome, resulting in various training and triumphs. Do department-sponsored training programmes as a learning strategy?

The respondents were questioned if their department provides sponsorship opportunities following TNA to improve the department's performance. The majority of those polled thought their department offered sponsorship opportunities. This sponsorship opportunity is one of the factors considered in Training Needs Assessments, which also aid in staff development at the Department. There were several reasons for respondents to believe that sponsorship opportunity is the factor which contributes to the development of TNA and performance of employees in the Department, despite the scarcity of budget; among the reasons is Department of Alternative Learning has good cooperation with stakeholders like Africa Development Bank and Unicef to sponsor projects or to provide training to teachers for developing their skills.

In Tanzania, the literature demonstrates that employer incentives, such as announcements of training opportunities and consultations, increased training subsidies; and permission and promotion, positively impact worker abilities (Mndeme, 2011). However, in Zanzibar, this finding was not robust since, in the same survey, some respondents rejected the presence of sponsorship options provided by the department, citing various external factors such as funding and time constraints. During an interview, for example, RS3 said the following.

*Our department faced two main challenges in implementing sponsorship opportunities for most of our staff: the department has a very low budget and could not provide sponsorship opportunities to all. Second, when finance is available, time did not encourage managers in the department to implement the TNA specifically in providing enough sponsorship for the trainee.*

Another respondent (RS2) added that *I rate scarcity of budget as a major barrier that limits our department to grasp benefits associated with TNA, like training or sponsorship opportunities at the Department.*

The researcher thought these problems should have permanent solutions to enjoy benefits associated with TNA in the Department. The same proposal as Neelam (2014), who suggested that more sponsored possibilities for training and development be made available to employees in order for them to have a better professional life, obtain better positions in the firm, and improve their working performance.

**Does the department promote learners to consider time for application?**

The respondents were asked to state how factor like an appropriate time for TNA helps to improve the employees' performance in the department:

The majority of respondents thought that time influences TNA and improves staff performance in the department. They were backed up by Asrar (2012), who discovered that the process of needs assessment identifies more than one training need; the training manager, working with management, prioritizes the training based on the urgency of the need (timeliness), implying that considering time appropriateness was a factor in the success of TNA and banking organizations around the world. Specifically, results from the same interview confirmed that consideration made by the department on applicants who submit their studying interests or admissions earlier after TNA encourages them to apply on training or development courses on time.

For example, RS2 emphasized that the department considered much on time when staff submitted their applications and prioritized them.

In addition to this factor, RS1 explain this factor clearly when he said:

*Capturing many impacts on TNA for our organization, the department needs to know what kinds of Training are required for our staff time to ensure available financial resources were utilized effectively.*

Time and financial constraints, according to Mazhisham et al. (2019), impeded the role of training needs assessment in finding performance gaps and failure to discover the gap between existing performance and required abilities.

### **How does freedom of programme choice considered by staff in the department during TNA process?**

The respondents were asked to describe how factor-like freedom of choice influences TNA, which helps to improve the employees' performance in the department, and they responded as:

“... among the most intrested issue in this department is that, we are given enough freedom to choose the programmes of our intrest. Here both short-term training and long term one are determined by ourselves”

During an interview, respondents stated their department gave them adequate freedom, and TNA was influenced by factors like giving personnel in the department the latitude to choose program of their choice that was submitted for evaluation. This disagreement was influenced by the large number of employees who were offered the opportunity to improve their academic backgrounds, work experience, and nature of their jobs. These variables contribute to their department's low awareness of freedom of choice, TNA, and targeted performance.

## **What is the contribution of the strategic plan to TNA?**

The respondents were asked to state how factor like the availability of a good strategic plan promotes TNA, which helps to improve the employees' performance in the department who respond as:

All respondents admitted that including TNA in the department strategic plan influences its development and performance of staff and that TNA is rooted in the department's strategic plan. For example, RS3 was firmly insisting when he said:

*“all kinds of training are found on the department's strategic plan and implemented effectively.”*

This finding is similar to that of Vinesh (2014), who looked at the role of training and development in the development of an organization in India and provided insights into how to align training policy and programs with an organizational performance by involving line managers in the process of setting goals and planning training programs.

The Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education has made several efforts to ensure that more training, sponsorship opportunities, a good strategic plan, short courses, and seminars are available in the Department, facilitating TNA development, learning processes, and employee performance.

Despite several alternatives to support the needs of staff in selecting or applying for available learning opportunities or monitoring process used to identify gaps, such as acceptance of staff choice, freedom to staff application in the course of their interest, there were some weak points on clarity of the procedures used to identify gaps or staff to attain for training. Efforts were taken to sustain the development of TNAs since it has several contributions, especially in succession plans, career development, and building of the future of DTE and Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.

## **Recommendations**

The following are the recommendations that need to be considered to fill the gaps:

- i. The government should consider effectively developing some factors like budget, employment, and sponsorship; budget sealing should be the same as the proposed budget for better implementation of the projects. There should also be the development of a recruitment system that more staff with Adult skills need to be employed. There should be a widening scope mechanism to get more sponsorship opportunities to facilitate the learning process.
- ii. The Government should support the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education in developing a comprehensive strategic plan that can be applied for effective implementation of identified programs.
- iii. Researcher found that more benefits can be obtained when the Government supports the Department of Alternative Learning and Adult Education in providing Specialists on training needs assessment who can consult the department to reform TNA activity. Also,

the researcher found that when more facilities like computers, internet, or development of buildings used for training were granted by the Government or donors, more contributions would be grasped in TNAs.

### **Area for Further Study**

Researcher recommends that more studies should be done evaluating the procedures used in Training needs assessment in the Public Organisation of Zanzibar.

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