

Youth Awareness of The Metal Fabrication Informal Apprenticeship on Katima Mulilo Roadside in Garden Compound of Lusaka, Zambia

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ABSTRACT

The study explored youth awareness of the metal fabrication informal apprenticeships (MFIA) on Katima Mulilo roadside in Garden Compound of Lusaka (KAGCOL), Zambia. An intrinsic case study using interviews and participant observations for data collection. The study population included all out-of-school youth (OSY) and all metal fabrication artisans in KAGCOL. The sample comprised 40 participants; 20 OSY and 20 artisans; Graduate apprentices (GAP) and Master trainers/providers (PMC) in the MFIA of KAGCOL. The exploration of youth awareness of the MFIA on KAGCOL made the study objective while data analysis sought emerging themes from the findings. The findings of the study revealed that the OSY in KAGCOL have limited awareness of the MFIA due to limited information about the MFIA. The youth come to be aware of the MFIA through individual/personal inquiry (ies) and relational influence by parents, relatives and friends within kinship circles. Information on the MFIA is not given by the education system and advertisements. The dissemination is confined to affinity to the exclusion of the wider community. This contradicts the principles of informal apprenticeship which operates beyond household level. It falls short of the 21st century thinking on education and the school in particular as the nub of knowledge and avenue of its distribution to the larger community for sustainable development. The study concludes that non-involvement of the education system in the dispersion of knowledge about the MFIA on KAGCOL limits the youth awareness of this vibrant activity in the area. The study, therefore, recommends that information about the MFIA; a pre-requisite to economic emancipation of a community should be dispersed through the education system for inclusivity of OSY. The significance of the study is that issues of youth empowerment are better handled by the education system of a country for the benefit of the majority.

Key words: Awareness, informal apprenticeship, youth, information and education system

INTRODUCTION

The study examined youth awareness of the metal fabrication informal apprenticeship activities (MFIA) on Katima Mulilo roadside in Garden Compound of Lusaka Zambia (KAGCOL), thereafter referred to only as MFIA and KAGCOL respectively. It is an intrinsic case study design leveraging on the revelation that apprenticeship training takes place in Zambia where young people participate in different informal sector activities for their livelihoods (Ryan, 2015).

Background

The MFIA on KAGCOL is an old but valuable economic and pedagogic activity to residents and beyond. It contributes immensely to the construction industry in Lusaka, Zambia and beyond through the manufacturing of door and window frames, tank stands and other steel products. Mubita et al. (2017) refer to it as a signal to the genesis of informality in urban areas in Zambia under the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in the early 1990s. Out-of-school youth (OSY) and artisans work in open air on

KAGCOL to manufacture steel products for sale. Subsequently, young people there acquire skills in metal fabrication which they use for sustainable livelihoods.

The study explored youth awareness of the MFIA on KAGCOL; a cheap and accessible way of acquiring skills for young people (Argawal, 2013). Skills acquisition emanates from the involvement of the OSY in learning a trade using several strategies; as direct trainees and as job seekers. Both Argawal (2013) and Ryan (2015) report that youths in Zambia are engaged in informal apprenticeship as helpers and later learn the skills involved.

Sonnenberg (2012) remarks that skills development strategies often overlook the informal sector despite the fact that in developing countries, income-generating activities in the informal sector often far exceed those of the formal sector. Fazio, Fernández-Coto and Ripan (2016) observe that policy makers from Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are concerned about the youth labor market challenges their countries face and, as a result, are seeking potential solutions to increase their access to quality jobs by improving the skills of the youth and enabling positive employability pathways

Lee, 2012; Rowe et al, 2017; Saraswat, 2016 in Pirrion (2018) contend that many countries have resorted to employing apprenticeship to address their economic woes. In England, for example, apprenticeships are experiencing a revival and have been placed at the core of the Government's Vocational Education and Training (VET) policies so as to contribute to the future skill needs in a rapidly evolving economy. Lerman and Packer (2015) reveal that America faces increasing economic challenges. Slow economic growth, the stagnation of wages in middle-and low-wage jobs, and the decline of the two-parent family have all contributed to the problem. Young men, particularly those from low-and even middle-income families, are falling behind in school and experiencing large declines in job prospects. Their inability to earn a good salary and to find satisfying jobs with upward mobility likely contribute to the increase in female-headed families and delays in starting two-parent families

Okada (2012) reports that youths across the world face serious challenges regarding skills and jobs, challenges fundamentally different from those their parents faced. In the globalized economy, competition has become intensified among firms and industries in developing and developed countries alike, requiring their workers to have higher levels of skills to enable them engage in innovation, improve the quality of products/services, and increase efficiency in their production processes or even to the point of improving the whole value chain process. Rapid technological change demands a greater intensity of knowledge and skills in producing, applying and diffusing technologies. Consequently, Okada observes that all these have changed the nature, contents, and types of skills that industry demands.

Adams (2013) contend that the nonfarm informal sector is a significant economic force and a major source of employment and earnings in Sub-Saharan Africa. Household enterprises account for most non farm employment in the region. He contends that with a rapidly growing and youthful work force and continued urbanization, this slice of the economy will continue to play a significant role for job creation and livelihoods in the future. Thus, strategies for poverty reduction in the region have to squarely address the constraints that hamper productivity in this sector—including the skills of the workforce. This makes it vital to know the youth awareness of the MFIA on KAGCOL where many youths and artisans get their livelihoods from by acquiring skills and or getting jobs. However, the Asian Development Bank (2008) in Okada (2012) discerns that the skills development systems in most developing countries are poorly equipped to meet these challenges and equip youth with the work skills they need. He further concedes that skills development is the most difficult sub-sector to organize and manage in the education sector, because it cuts across organizational boundaries, caters for diverse clients, and involves multiple delivery mechanisms, and its market characteristics keep changing. There has been increasing interest in apprenticeships both as a passage into employment and also in raising the skill levels of the workforce (OECD/ILO, 2017). The two organization further affirm that Apprenticeship is a widely practiced system of training aimed at skills

transfer from the master or expert to the learner; the apprentice. Apprenticeships and other work-based training opportunities are essential training pathways for improving the transition from school to work.

About 90% of apprenticeship training is done through job-on-training because it involves doing the job in the training process. Through apprenticeship, individuals and communities are empowered to improve their livelihoods using the skills acquired (Hayes, 2013). Argawal (2013) reiterates that informal apprenticeships are the most prominent means of acquiring skills by young persons in most developing countries, particularly those having a large informal economy. This includes Zambia with 80% of the workforce being in the informal sector (Ryan, 2015).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although the MFIA has been in existence for a long time on KAGCOL, there has been no significant information about youth awareness of it. This has affected youth involvement in the MFIA on KAGCOL leading to low acquisition of the metal fabrication skill among the youth in the area. This has also stalled interventions against poverty in the area. A reverse of this would increase youth awareness of the MFIA in KAGCOL leading to more youth acquiring skills in metal fabrication and actualize youth empowerment; through skills acquisition and entrepreneurship.

Study objective, purpose and significance

The objective of the study was to explore youth awareness of the MFIA on KAGCOL. The significance of this study includes that its findings might have policy implications for the authorities to equip the youth with appropriate skills to alleviate poverty at all levels. This might assist stakeholders to disseminate youth awareness of MFIA through appropriate channels to enhance the provision of skills training in the country and promote entrepreneurship to broaden the national economic base.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section deals with literature related to the study. It starts with the concept of awareness and later apprenticeship in general and finally specific studies on awareness and apprenticeship

What is awareness?

The Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2003) describes awareness as the knowledge one has about a phenomenon. It is the knowledge and understanding of a particular activity or subject. In this study the youth understanding and knowledge of the MFIA on Katima Mulilo roadside in Garden Compound of Lusaka is knowledge and understanding sought.

Awareness can be created in different ways and in light of the public it entails increasing knowledge to change the thinking and behaviour of the people. When one embarks on public awareness it entails increasing the knowledge of a phenomenon by a large number of people (Borawake, 2017). Wolfgang et al. (2015) identifies six types of awareness namely; Cultural, social, work place, location and Knowledge. Knowledge awareness deals with ability of a person to judge. This study sought reveal the type(s) of awareness the youth have about the MFIA on KAGCOL.

Definition and importance of Apprenticeship

Alhassan (2016) citing both ILO (2011) and Brockmann et al., 2010) explains that informal apprenticeship is based on a training agreement between an apprentice and a master Craftsperson. He describes apprenticeship as the process of learning new and valuable skills from a seasoned professional; it is viewed

as a way of bringing theoretical and practical knowledge together. Master craftsperson commits to training the apprentice in all the skills relevant to his or her trade over a period of time, thus between one and four years, while the apprentice commits to contributing productively to the work of the business. Training is integrated into the production process and apprentices learn by working alongside the experienced craftsperson.

Apprenticeship is organized differently in different parts of the world. In England, for example, apprenticeship training is part of the national qualification framework and is used to place learners into pathways (McGurk & Allen, 2016) and this demands awareness for one to select the appropriate pathways. Decker (2019) affirms that the education system, statutes or school career guidance and teachers serve this purpose of creating awareness among stakeholder.

UNESCO acknowledges the role and importance of apprenticeship in helping to alleviate human suffering around the globe as it is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments (UNESCO 2017). Traditional apprenticeships are an important way of acquiring transferable and job-specific skills (EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2012) in Sonnenberg (2012). Further, literature reveals Ghana and Senegal have long histories of traditional apprenticeship and that this form of skills training reaches more youth than formal technical and vocational training (Walther & Ewa, 2008).

Apprenticeship has become a serious developmental issue among European Union (EU) member States. It was therefore, resolved among member countries of the EU that there was a greater need to understand the relevance and the role of apprenticeships as part of collective skills formation, to improve their quality in line with the proposal for establishing a European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships, boost cross-country mobility of apprentices, and reflect on future developments of this traditional learning tool in the context of Industry. In this respect, the role of apprenticeship in the economic life of individual countries and regional organizations cannot be over emphasized. Several scholars and organisations affirm the pivotal role played by apprenticeship in skills development (Chankseliani, Kepp& Wilde, 2017, CEDEPOF, 2018, OECD/ILO, 2017 and Sonnenberg, 2012).

The UNFP (2018) reports that transitioning from primary to lower secondary grades (8 to 9) and to upper secondary grades (10 to 12) and tertiary (college or university) in Zambia is equally low. Transition rates from lower secondary to upper secondary school consistently remained below 50%, from 2009 to 2016, which means that less than half of those who completed lower secondary school transitioned to upper secondary education-most (more than half) dropped out. These youths and their counterparts with lower education qualifications need apprenticeship to uplift them in the informal sector. All such school leavers and dropouts need a system of training or type of jobs that can empower them with skills and an income for survival and apprenticeship has become accessible as it is readily available even in roadside sites like the MFIA on KAGCOL. As Argawal (2013) puts it that a large percentage of youth drop out of school and thus they are not eligible for admission to formal training programmes.

Apprenticeship has been an avenue for skills acquisition by the youth for a long time in Africa. West Africa has used apprenticeship to impart skills to the young generations at household and community levels for centuries. Youths are attached to experts or master trainers for a period to help them acquire different skills according to the needs of the individual or community. The learners observe the master trainers carry out their work and slowly through practice; they learn the trade or craft. In Nigeria, the Igbo tribe business acumen can be attributed to the work of apprenticeship which helps them to acquire skills and pass them from one generation to another (Obi, 2020). Citing Ejo-Orusa et al. (2019), Obi (2020) acknowledges that

apprenticeship among the Igbo people of Nigeria is a rational economic decision that uses cheap labour to build up human resources, while creating the opportunity of developing self-employed individuals. He describes apprenticeship as the act of learning business, trade or work under a master for a period of time.

In Zambia, apprenticeship supports both traditional and modern societies. Mwanakatwe (2013) explains how the training of the youth was done according to gender by the elderly in society. The young accompany the elderly to do their daily chores and later begin to carry out the same tasks. Mukuni (2020) reveals that formal apprenticeship was part of the certification system in the Technical Education and Vocational Training (TEVT) programmes in the Trades Training Institutes at craft level. Trainees were required to do an apprenticeship by being attached to experienced industrialists for a period in order to qualify for certification after two years of college-based training. This made apprenticeship an integral part of the skills training programme and enabled a smooth transfer of skills across generations.

The seventh National development plan (7NDP) in Zambia recognizes the importance of apprenticeship in national development and acknowledges its role to increase access to skills training. The Government therefore, resolved to enhance implementation of the strategies that were commenced during the Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP) period which included work-place on-the-job training GRZ, 2016). Vision 2030 aspire to live a strong and dynamic middle-income industrial nation that provides opportunities for improving the wellbeing of all embodying values of social; economic justice underpinned by aspirations numbers K, M, P and S (GRZ,2006). Further, the government of the Republic of Zambia has acknowledged the importance of apprenticeship in addressing the myriad of problems facing the youth. Shamenda (2012) attributes Zambia's youth unemployment to the weak education system that doesn't support practical work- related skills.

Related studies on youth awareness of Apprenticeships

Some related studies on youth awareness have had mixed outcomes. The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF-FAC, n.d.) in a study entitled "Youth + Jobs = Better future; Youth Skilled trade employment Strategy,' found that there were many challenges in career awareness studies. The Forum discovered that the youth had limited information and knowledge about apprenticeship and skilled trade careers. It tackled this by organizing workshops to sensitize the youth about opportunities in apprenticeship. With sufficient information supplied, the youths came to understand apprenticeship and begun to appreciate it to levels of participating in its activities in many fora.

In the study by the Forum, the youth stance of choosing university education against apprenticeship in the post-secondary school pathways changed. The school counselors and parents who blocked youth understanding of apprenticeship were now seen as barriers to their cherished choices. With this turn of events, the youth became aware of apprenticeships and their merits. Even when other influencers were used, the students realized there were other opportunities other than university education following their exposure to apprenticeship. The term 'influencers' is borrowed from Ryan and Lorinc (2018) in their study; "What influences young people to choose their post-secondary pathways?" Parents, teachers, administrators and friends were all classified as influencers on youth decisions.

The students became disillusioned about university education being the best pathway for all. In the process they discovered other opportunities such as participating in the world skills ambassadors' competition. Some youth aspired to participate in Skills Canada competitions, emulating the World Skills ambassadors. Youth awareness in this respect opened more opportunities for the youth to actualize their potential. The youth also supported other ways of promoting career trades like; Career fairs, school assemblies, field trips, job shadowing, employer talks at schools and hands on-exposure. The youths wanted more apprenticeship information available at their schools to unlock the information on apprenticeship.

Tandoh (2015) did a study in Ghana which proposed the use of media to advertise a business brand in order to create awareness to the large community of customers. The outcome was that those who advertised more got more people to be aware of their brand. Advertising proved a viable way of increasing awareness in brand competition.

Kashefpakdel and Redhill (n.d.) did a study entitled; 'Teenage Apprenticeships; converting awareness to Recruitment.' The study was done under the Education and Employers Research against the background of low attendance at apprenticeships among the youth. The project explored the characteristics of schools and individuals who resist the trend and sought to distinguish schools which guide significant numbers of pupils into apprenticeships from those which do not? It was a 17year longitudinal study with the central question of how to distinguish young people who express an interest in apprenticeships in their mid-teens and go on to secure one from those who do not? The study used mixed study approach. The qualitative methods included interviews with employers to share their experiences of hiring from schools and colleges. Employers across different industries and of different sizes responded to the invitation using an online survey via Survey Monkey.

The findings showed a lack of information and guidance in schools about apprenticeships as only 15% of parents reported that they or their children had received any information on alternatives to university education from their teachers. This conclusion was proven true when parents who were opposed to apprenticeships having the same status as university degrees, were convinced to change. More information about apprenticeships, and related career options, was cited as the best way of convincing them that apprenticeships are a good career option.

The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (n.d) further contends that youths with limited experience and networking contacts often struggle to find work. In England, for example, apprenticeship training is part of the national qualification framework and is used to place learners into pathways (McGurk & Allen, 2016). It, therefore, demands awareness for one to select the appropriate pathway. The education system, statutes or school career guidance serve this purpose of creating awareness in stakeholders.

Brent Pardon (2017) did a study on 'Youth Apprenticeship in America; connecting high school students to apprenticeship,' which examined the concept of youth apprenticeship in America in comparison with the one in Europe. After high school the youth in America are free to follow an education pathway of one's choice which takes them to university or college degree and diploma respectively while some can pursue a high school diploma which leads to the labour market. However, it has been noted that the university and college pathways are more popular than the labour market pathway and high school graduates have to answer the question, ' "So, what are you doing next year?"' from different stakeholders as they reach the end of their high school career.

The findings by Parton reveal that apprenticeship among American youth has been well received but many people are not aware of it due to lack of information. During the focus group discussions, it was found that some parents, especially the elderly, equate apprenticeship to blue-collar work or trade. The Young parents and students tended to see apprenticeship as more of a process or way to learn than associated with any kind of job or person. The final outcome was that the youth came to appreciate apprenticeship which they lacked information about until education lifted the lid of ignorance by the parents and teachers.

The study shows the significance of parental and school influence in the provision of apprenticeship among the youth in England. Several recommendations made all show the involvement of parents and the school in the creation of awareness of apprenticeship among the youth.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study was a case design encompassing all OSY, in Garden Compound of Lusaka with an estimated youth population of over 45,000 (CSO, 2010). The sample population comprised 40 participants in two categories OSY participating (POSY) and non-participating (NPOSY) and artisans also in two categories of Graduate apprentices (GAP) and Provider/master trainers/ craftsmen (PMC). Ten participants from each group were interviewed and participant observations were made by the researcher through several visits to the site. The interviews were conducted at the participants' work-place during working time, making it a convenient sampling technique, except for the NPOSY who were ordinary members of KAGCOL community. The data was analyzed by identifying emerging themes on the subject matter.

Study area

This study was done in Garden Compound one of the old unplanned settlements located to the north of the city of Lusaka Central Business District (CBD). It is traversed by Katima Mulilo Road; a detour from the city of Lusaka CBD for heavy traffic from the Eastern part of the country.

Artisans and craftsmen dealing in metal fabrication have occupied the sides Katima Mulilo Road where youths acquire skills. The heaviest concentration of these activities is a two kilometer stretch between the Four-way Crossroad near Garden police station and the Railway Road crossing before the Great North road junction in Chaisa/Emmasdale area. The study was done here to find out youth awareness of the MFIA on Katima Mulilo Roadside in Garden Compound of Lusaka

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that youth limited awareness of the MFIA on KAGCOL through individual/personal inquiries and by the influence of parents, relatives and friends. Further, the youth awareness reflects the location, work place and social aspects of their environment. This implies that they have knowledge of the MFIA from sources that are closely related and with which they interact socially in workplace locations. The statements by participants below illustrate this clearly.

I am aware of a lot of activities happening in the roadside of Katima Mulilo. I always pass through and I see those things (NPOSY 5, 2020).

I am aware because I do see those activities (NPOSY 8, 2020).

I am aware by seeing and friends come to tell me about it (NPOSY6,2020)

All the three NPOSY 5 NPOSY 8 and NPOSY 6 are members of the community and therefore, interact with others culminating into their social and knowledge awareness of the MFIA. Though all have a social environment where they interact with other people they have not made any reference to the workplace awareness of the MFIA because they are not participants in the MFIA.

I came to know this place on my own almost three years ago (POSY 3, 2020).

I use Personal inquiry by workers. There are so many people who come looking for

Work. We recruit those that are serious with work (PMC 4, 2020). POSY 3 and PMC 4 illustrate the work place awareness mentioned by Wolfgang et al. (2015).The participants discovered in the MFIA work place. Further, PMC 4 is found in this location as an employer. This also supports the workplace and location types

of awareness identified by Wolfgang et al. (2015) earlier.

My father brought me to this place (POSY 2 2020)

I was brought as a child. Came looking for a job in order to learn the job (POSY6, 2020)

A family member introduced me to this place (POSY)

I came to this place through a friend. I was looking for a job (POSY 9)

They are brought/recommended by parents and guardians. I only tell neighbours that I want some men to help with work then I get more than I need (PMC 7 2020).

The last group of POSY2 POSY6, POSY9 and PMC 7 demonstrate a social type of awareness having been introduced to the MFIA by influencers; parents, guardians, family member and friends. These also qualify for cultural and knowledge awareness where the influencers might have used their cultural endowment, practices and knowledge of apprenticeship to introduce their wards.

The results of this study do not support the dominant role that the educational system had in bringing participants from ignorance to awareness of apprenticeship in the reviewed studies (CAF-_FAC, (n.d). Kashefpakdel and Redhill (n.d.) and Pardon (2017). This variation underscores the earlier finding that education circulates information wider than the family circles.

In the literature reviewed parents and the school systems worked together to realize quick and sustainable outcomes in youth awareness while in the present study, the parents and other relatives are influencers without involving the school system which yielded limited awareness. Contrary to this, those who became aware of apprenticeships in the reviewed studies had no limits to their awareness and they even used it to participate in other for a (CAF, n.d). The school system carries information wide and far very quickly using its networks. It is an agent of change respected by all stakeholders including teachers, parents, administrators and the community at large. This makes the school a better agent to create youth awareness in the MFIA on KAGCOL in order to attain sustainable development in the area.

The dependence on the Individual/personal inquiries and relational influencers by the youth for information on the MFIA is responsible for their limited awareness of the MFIA on KAGCOL. In the manner it is, information is confined to kinship; the hallmark of traditional apprenticeship which fails to transfer skills and knowledge to the wider community. According to Argawal (2013: 3), it is difficult for apprentices to move around due to a lack of acknowledgement for the skills they have learned.

The MFIA is done outside the home of the master trainer and trainees are non-resident in the master's homestead which divorces the practice from traditional apprenticeship and is in tandem with Wolfgang et al (2015 and the Situated Learning Theory by Wenger and Lave (1991). The MFIA is located in a specific place visited by participants who see and become aware of it. Ryan (2015) confirms that informal apprenticeship was taking place in Lusaka which includes the MFIA on KAGCOL. Such visible activities to outsiders slide out of traditional apprenticeship.

However, the non-utilization of the education system in the information dissemination about the MFIA limits youth knowledge of it hence their limited awareness of the MFIA. School influenced awareness becomes public knowledge enough to create wider youth awareness of the MFIA in the area of study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study therefore, concludes that youth awareness of the MFIA on KAGCOL is limited due to lack of information. Education is not one of the avenues used to disseminate information to the wider community. In the 21st century, the education system nurtures the child much better than parents, relatives and friends hence its centrality to youth awareness of opportunities surrounding them like the MFIA on KAGCOL cannot be over emphasized. The study further concludes that in the 21st century, apprenticeship in all its forms has become a fundamental mode of training which must be made visible to all, especially the young people through the education system which is their easiest and most influential platform.

In respect of the above, the study recommends that;

1. youth awareness of the MFIA on KAGCOL be done through the education system for wider inclusivity of youths in need of skills training and jobs.
2. Parents and other influencers should work with the education system to enhance youth awareness of MFIA in KAGCOL in order to engage the youth in sustainable activities.
3. modern and youth friendly media should be used to enhance youth awareness of MFIA on KAGCOL for inclusion of many youths in skills training and informal employment.

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