Training and Development a Key Strategic Driver to Change and Transformation. An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Training Program of the New Curriculum amidst COVID-19 Milieu in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program of the new curriculum teaching trajectory through the teachers' ecological lenses amidst COVID-19 setting. The study population sample (N=100) of teachers who are the recipients of the training program and expected implementers. Data were collected through the administered questionnaire distributed to the population sample on a 5 point Likert scale. The study will make use of a quantitative research design descriptive statistics. The study revealed that the training methods was effective, language usage, time frame, sitting arrangement, equipment and materials, though lack of training fees lack of incentives and food did not hamper the training program. The study concluded that the training and development as a key driver of strategic change management in the new educational curriculum was effective and proper training skills and methods enhanced the process teachers' performance will ultimately impact to students' academic achievements. The study therefore recommends that educational authorities continue to seek professional facilitators and provide further training on the new curriculum program, seek funding for the trainees, and motivate the trainees by choosing venues with proper equipment and ergonomics. Also the study recommends among others that trainers should be equipped with adequate knowledge of various online teaching platforms so that the training could be done virtually since the COVID-19 setting has become a common phenomenon. Another recommendation is that there should be a continuous assessment training program that can be divided into parts and more days set aside for the training duration since it is comprehensive, teachers, parents and learners as strategic partners should be afforded opportunity to suggest how the training program structure should be.

INTRODUCTION

The determination of this scholarship is to consider the effectiveness of the training program of the new curriculum teaching route in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe through the teachers' ecological lenses amidst COVID-19 setting. Over the past decades, the worldwide labor force has been incessantly progressing because of a number of factors. Progressively competitive business scenery, rising social complexity due to COVID-19 contagion and the digital revolution are re –shaping the synthesis of workforces. Meanwhile tenacious ambiguity, multigenerational workforce, and a shorter premium on reskilling vand up skilling. The swing to a digital, knowledge- based economy means that an effervescent workforce is more important than ever. Pragmatic enquiry recommends that a very significant percentage of market capitalization in public companies is based on intangible assets, skilled employees, exceptional leaders and knowledge. Effective establishments view training, learning and employee development as significant to their realization and well-

being. Inexorable act of business establishments is grounded on the capabilities to manage the balance between two conflicting objectives, the need for enduring improvement in leveraging existing skills and competencies through constant exploration. This is done by continuous renewal and revitalization of stratagem, organization and people. For change to get effected, an organization should alter or realign some aspect of their strategy, organization or culture, while returning others. In the interim conversion in contrast is the systematic, simultaneous and deliberate attack across many fronts that fundamentally alter the basic rhythm and character of an organization. The study attempts to answer the following question in order to ascertain the concerns of the study.

1. To what extent were teachers involved in the training, development and organizational change management process and their contribution considered, during the exercise?
2. Were the training methods, equipment and materials, strategic communication, feedback effectively enhanced as presented by the facilitators and reflective of their knowledge ability of the new curriculum subject and their use of constructivism?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will focus on the views by other scholars who have published their works in the area of training, development and strategic change management.

Training, Development and organizational change.

The literature studies submits that from the change models it can be argued that organizational change will be an ill-starred endeavor without the appropriate leadership, employee engagement, communication to and commitment of individuals. The running of these four variables in the change management progression play a pivotal role in the implementation if new ideas in establishments. Nohria and Ghoshal (1997) posit that "the competitive advantage of an upsurge in multinational organizations the dimensions to yield innovative value through accretion, transfer and assimilation of different kinds of knowledge, resources and capabilities along dispersed organizational units". The specific features of enterprise milieu (convolution, improbability, confines of skills and abilities) dictate them to hunt for novel management slants that fit in with the new challenges (Gorzen-Mitka & Okreglicka, 2014). Armstrong (2009) posits that "Training is the formal and systematic adjustment of comportment through erudition which transpires as a result of education, instruction, expansion and premeditated experience. Growth is cultivating individual routine in their current parts and arranging them for grander errands in their future". Meanwhile, Katz & Kahn (1978) maintain that "Training and development is pronounced as a preservation subsystem, envisioned to progress structural effectiveness by aggregate routinization and predictability of behavior". Klatt, Murdick & Schuster (1985) suggests that training is a systematic way of altering behavior to prepare an employee for a job or to improve the employee's performance on the present job, and development is preparing an employee for improving the conceptual, decision making and interpersonal skills in complex, in structured situation". Lussier, (1995) develops the understanding that "Training is a process of acquiring the skills necessary to perform a job and development is the ability to perform both present and future jobs". McLagan says "Training and development focuses on ascertaining, promising and enabling development, through strategic learning, the key proficiencies that empower individuals to accomplish present or future jobs" Kirkpatrick (2016) refers to training as the instruction of explicit familiarity and expertise essential to the individual's current occupation. The word development denotes to the progression of the individual and arrangements for higher-level jobs. Kleiman (2017) submits that training and development are prearranged learning involvements that imparts employees how to accomplish their present or future jobs effectively.

Strategic Communication and change management.

Strategic communication is central in effective change management and it is vital for the two parties' managerial and organizational success (Dawson, 1996; Kreitner & Kinick, 1995). The empirical picture that

is slowly emerging indicates that communication process and organizational change implementation are inextricably linked process" (Lewis, 1999). The integration communication strategy means that organizations as a brand in terms of its aims to create the image and also those that are part of it like employees. According to Schultz and Kitchen (2000) the integration of communication involves the relationship between management, employees, and the consumers in a pluralistic, interactive and long term manner. The communication is performed in both directions, interactive and with the purpose of mutual benefit. Communication strategy can be perceived as a mechanism to clarify the facts to various stakeholders of what is going to change, why, and what benefits they can expect to derive from the change (Kulvisaechana, 2001). A number of recent studies indicate that many organizational change initiatives fail due to shortcoming in the internal communication, (Leopoldi, R. 2002) Indeed insufficient communication generates confusion, uncertainty, rumors, and lack of awareness. Communication is a tool to build and establish awareness of the need to change, to generate desire to participate in the change, and support it. Some companies do not realize that without effective communication change is impossible and it bound to fail. A good leader, manager, or change agent, takes steps to ensure that the communication process is being carried out effectively, (Lewis, L, K 2000). Duck (1993) says everything managers say and don't say delivers a message.

One reason for deficiency of more effective approaches to change management is that managers are unable to communicate effectively. They must perceive that communication before, during and after change process is not a directive or one-way communication, (Lewis, L. K.2010) In fact it must be two way, providing both information to the employees and opportunities for the employees to express their concerns and opinions about the change. Communication intends to move employees in a structured way to accept and engage in the change as a team (Kulvisaechan, S 2001). Successful change management depends on teamwork and communication with the employees involved in the change process and leadership with a vision that will enable the process rather than dictate the process, (Koivula, J. 2009). Employees can only work effectively if they can participate in the organization and they can only participate if they are fully informed, (Mayhall, R, 2010). Transformation is impossible unless all the people in the organization are willing to help, often to the point of making short term sacrifices. They need to know the purpose of change first, they need to feel safe about their main concern, such job security, benefits, compensation, base pay, and job performance. Employees will not make sacrifices even if they are unhappy with the status quo unless they believe that useful change is possible. Without the credible communication the hearts and minds of the employees are never captured, (Nichols, F, 2010). Managing change is a process to make employee ready to accept change and to carry it out with enthusiasm and understanding the role of their actions in the unfolding drama of the companies' fortunes, and believe that it is worthwhile for them to play a part, (Ash, P, 2009).

Feedback and Leadership in change management.

Change" can be broadly defined as "to make something different" or "to start something new, become/make different (BusinessDictionary.com). Who starts change? The answer to this question is generally easy. Everyone who has a commitment in an organisation may trigger change. Organisational change is defined as "adoption of a new idea or behaviour or idea by an organization" (Sengupta, 2006). Organisational change is primarily structural in character and it is designed to bring about alterations in organisational structure, methods and processes. The term "leader" and "manager" are different from each other is generally accepted but the reason why they are understood differently cannot be stated clearly. Leading the change process means something above the management. A leader has to feel himself/herself as someone responsible from the ones managing the change process, (Burns, 2003). Edwin (2020) defines leadership values as principles or standards that are considered to be important or beneficial. According to Perry and Brad (2008) change requires not only good management but good and effective leadership, What is our vison for change: what or where do we want to be? For the Chief Executive this means developing a vision

of the future, crafting strategies to bring that vision into reality and ensuring that everybody in the organisation is mobilising their energies towards the same goal (Theakston 1999). This implies that leadership not only involves the chief executive but the whole team and head of the organisation, thus leadership is everyone's business (Lynch 2009 pp.600). Leadership is a vital ingredient in developing the purpose and strategy of organisations. Roger (2005) defines leadership as mobilization process undertaken by individuals who are using the power they draw from motives, values and access to resources in a context of competition and conflict in their persuit of goals. Stephen and Richards (2001) opines that Leadership is how leaders develop and facilitate the achievements of the mission and vision, develop values required for long term success and implement those via appropriate actions and behaviours.

Change may be planned, proactive and about creating the future, or it may be unplanned, reactive and about adaptation. Leaders have to create an environment that embraces change, not a threat but as an opportunity. While the challenge of change requires effective management, even more does it require outstanding leadership. The primary reasons why organisations are failing and losing money are insufficient" communications" and lack of leadership" (PMI report 2014). Change leadership requires recognition of the risks and dangers and equal parts of patience, persistence and resilience in the face of the fresh challenges. In addition, change leadership requires a strong process orientation. Approaching change as a process and knowing what actions to take at each critical stage of the process, help minimize risks and maximize your chances of success. Transition is not another word for change, although the words are used a though are the same. Change involves the emergence of a new situation and it is likely to be made up of one or more external events. Transition on the other hand, is the psychological reorientation that people go through as they come to terms with those events and the new situation. Change can take place very quickly. Transition is on a different frame, not directly calibrated with the change. Transition may take a long time, perhaps starting even before the change takes place and usually continuing long after it is complete (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004, 114).

Employee engagement

Employee engagement is viewed in literature as the operative and intellectual connection employees have for their organization. Kotter (2005) posits that there are eight steps model to employee engagement as critical in attaining change objectives, one of which is employee engagement as critical stages of implementation. Saks (2006) also suggests that job characteristics are key, thus perceived supervisor support, rewards and recognition and procedural justices as critical factors that could affect engagement levels. Organisational members feel safe in a work environments that are characterized by openness and supportiveness and these are critical in the implementation of change management. (Kotter, 2005). Managers should notice that employee engagement during change management is not an option or directive but critical (Lawson, 2003). They should give employees enough time to ask question, explain their concerns and opinions about change, and share their ideas. They, leaders should engage employees and help them understand how these changes will influence them personally in order to minimize their anxiety and stress, (Johanson, C. Heide, 2008). Employees can only work effectively if they can participate in the organization and they can only participate if they are fully informed and they need to know the purpose of change, (Mayhall, R. 2009). There are many reasons why organisations manage change, but these two are outstanding in engaging employees to the change agenda: to take full advantage of employees' productivity, make them ready to change and make sure they are engaged with change process, (Bridges, W, 2005). People often respond emotionally to harsh realities, difficult changes and tough situations that make them feel uncomfortable. They often express their discomfort indirectly and subtly, even unconsciously. If you are encountering a great deal of resistance, there is an important underlying issue you need to confront. Ignoring the emotional nature of resistance by focusing on the logic or data-fueled rational only strengthens the resistance, (Ugur Zel, 2016). Employee engagement in change management by leadership often supposes the leadership style it values in that particular organisation and develops the management and

leadership training for its employee needs. The social environment considers the social systems within which the employees work. Specifically, it includes the ethical and organisational culture, as well as the leadership style and general organisational climate. As management considers workers or employee engagement in change they should consider the social environment of that particular organisation. Change management approach should be fully integrated into the organisation's decision making, both informing employees and enabling strategic directions. It should be based on a realistic assessment of an organisation's history, readiness and capacity to change, (Rashad Yazdanifard, 2012). Employee engagement in change management will ensure that workers anxiety is avoided as it is another factor that they worry and imagine that they cannot conform to post change work environment. They fear they cannot adjust to their practices or adopt new ones in line with their existing ones mind-sets in order to meet a new bottom line targets. The engagement of employees in change management will ensure a smooth training program and cooperation. Workers generally will feel that they own the change program and they will ensure that it becomes a success in all the stages of its implementation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study attempts to answer the following question in order to ascertain the concerns of the study.

1. To what extent were teachers involved in the training, development and organizational change management process and their contribution considered, during the exercise?
2. Were the training methods, equipment and materials, strategic communication, feedback effectively enhanced by the facilitators and reflective of their knowledge ability of the new curriculum requirements and their use of constructivism?

The study utilised a quantitative research design descriptive statistics to investigate the population of the study and the schools selected to enhance proper data collection and analysis. The researcher chose this design because the study involved collection and analysis of opinions and responses of high school teachers in a given area. The study population sample was (N=100) of teachers in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The instrument that was used to elicit data for the study is structured research questionnaire and is divided into two parts. Part 1 deals with the background information of the respondents which encompasses such data as age, gender, marital status and work experience, while the Part 11 contains items on change management, strategic communication, feedback and leadership, training methods, equipment and materials. Twenty six questionnaire items were used and the responses are structured on a 5 point rating scale, and the structured rating type questionnaire is designed as follows; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (DA) Not Sure (NS) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The research instrument was administered through the circulation of a questionnaire after the new curriculum training workshop. The data analysis on this study was performed through a Social Science Statistical tool SPSS.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section intends to give a summary of the study results as presented by the descriptive statistics and the findings of the study.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Effectiveness_of_the_training_methods	100	2.83	4.83	4.1350	.40597
Strategic_communication	100	2.50	5.00	3.8550	.51392
Equipment_and_materials	100	3.60	4.80	4.1500	.29593

Feedback	100	2.40	4.40	3.4860	.38059
Short_term_and_long_term_goals	100	3.20	4.80	3.9400	.36237
Valid N (listwise)	100				

The table 1 above shows the descriptive statistics that summarizes the maximum value, the minimum value, the mean and the standard deviation. The variable "Effectiveness of the training method" according to the descriptive statistics a minimum value of 2.83, a maximum value of 4.83, Mean value of 4.1350 and a Standard Deviation of .40597 suggesting a positive average response and as for the "Strategic communication" minimum value of 2.50, maximum value of 5.00, Mean value of 3.8550 and Standard Deviation of .51392 was recorded. As for the variable "Equipment and Materials" the following values were recorded minimum value 3.60, maximum value 4.80, Mean value 4.1500 and Standard Deviation value of .29593 was recorded. The next variable "Feedback" suggests that a minimum value of 2.40, maximum of 4.40 value, Mean value of 3.4860 and Standard Deviation .38059 value. Lastly the variable "Short term and long term goals" recorded as thus minimum is 3.20, maximum 4.80 value, Mean value of 3.9400 and Standard Deviation of .36237 value.

The study reveals that the values from the Likert scale determined the mean on average concerning what respondents suggested on "Effectiveness of the training method". On average almost all the respondents were on agreement on the training methods. The methods of training were effective based on the descriptive statistics. On average 3.5 mean on the variable "Strategic communication" 3.8 is closer to Likert scale value of 4 suggesting that most respondents were in agreement that this variable was effectively performed. Equipment and materials values recorded an average value of 4.15 and suggesting that equipment and materials were good and up to the respondent's expectations. The Likert value of 4 suggest an agreement and those respondents on "Feedback" 3.4 value is closer to 3 on the Likert scale which states that the respondents were "Not Sure" concerning this variable of feedback. Short term and long term goals variable respondents indicated that they were in favour of the variable, such that the mean approximation value is 3.94 which is closer to 4. Meaning that the respondents were in agreement concerning the short term and long term goals variable

Table 2. One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 4.13					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Effectiveness of the training methods	.123	99	.902	.00500	-.0756	.0856

1 Sample T" tests value=4.13 in the study on the "Effectiveness of the training method" variable related to the descriptive statistics determined through the use of T" test measures each and every variable in the Table 2 above giving the degrees of freedom (df) 99 for the case we learn of the effectiveness of the training method. The table above reveals Sig (2 tailed) that becomes our P value .902 with a mean difference of .00500 and a 95% confidence interval of the difference suggesting that the sig (2 tailed) is the P value that of 0.902 which is approximately greater than Alpha and thus we accept the Null hypothesis that states that the mean of the population is in agreement that the training method in the study is successful. The alternative hypothesis can be said to be "not in agreement either "Not Sure" or Not in agreement. In the above Table 2 the P value is 0.902 which is greater than Alpha 0.05 the researcher then picks the Null hypothesis which states that the P value is greater than Alpha and then as a result we fail to reject the Null hypothesis and conclude that the training methods were effective.

Table 3. One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 4.15					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Equipment and materials	.000	99	1.000	.00000	-.0587	.0587

1 Sample T" tests value= 4.15 in the study on the " Equipment and materials" variable related to the descriptive statistics determined through the use of T" test measures each and every variable in the Table 3 above giving the degrees of freedom (df) 99 for the case we learn of the "Equipment and materials". The table above reveals Sig (2 tailed) that becomes our P value 1.000 with a mean difference of .00000 and a 95% confidence interval of the difference suggesting that the sig (2 tailed) is the P value that of 1.000 which is approximately greater than Alpha and thus we accept the Null hypothesis that states that the mean of the population is in agreement that the training method in the study is successful. The alternative hypothesis can be said to be "not in agreement either "Not Sure" or Not in agreement. In the above Table 3 the P value is 1.000 which is greater than Alpha .00000 the researcher then picks the Null hypothesis which states that the P value is greater than Alpha and then as a result we fail to reject the Null hypothesis and conclude that the equipment and materials were effective.

Table 4. One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3.855					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Strategic_communication	.000	99	1.000	.00000	-.1020	.1020

1 Sample T" tests value = 3.855 in the study on the "Strategic communication" variable related to the descriptive statistics determined through the use of T" test measures each and every variable in the Table 2 above giving the degrees of freedom (df) 99 for the case we learn of the effectiveness of the training method. The table above reveals Sig (2 tailed) that becomes our P value 1.000 with a mean difference of .00000 and a 95% confidence interval of the difference suggesting that the sig (2 tailed) is the P value that of 1.000 which is approximately greater than Alpha and thus we accept the Null hypothesis that states that the mean of the population is in agreement that the training method in the study is successful. The alternative hypothesis can be said to be "not in agreement either "Not Sure" or Not in agreement. In the above Table 4 the P value is 1.000 which is greater than Alpha .00000 the researcher then picks the Null hypothesis which states that the P value is greater than Alpha and then as a result we fail to reject the Null hypothesis and conclude that the training methods were effective.

Table 5. One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3.486					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Feedback	.000	99	1.000	.00000	-.0755	.0755

1 Sample T" tests value =3.486 in the study of "Feedback" variable has a Mean difference of .00000 and a 95% confidence interval of the difference suggesting that the sig (2 tailed) is the P value that of 1.000 which is approximately greater than Alpha and thus we accept the Null hypothesis that states that the mean of the population is in agreement that the feedback variables method in the study is successful. The alternative hypothesis can be said to be "not in agreement either "Not Sure" or Not in agreement. In the above Table 5 the P value is 1.000 which is greater than Alpha 0.05 the researcher then picks the Null hypothesis which states that the P value is greater than Alpha and then as a result we fail to reject the Null hypothesis and conclude that the "Feedback" variable was effective.

Table 6. One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3.94					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Short term and long term goals	.000	99	1.000	.00000	-.0719	.0719

1 Sample T" tests value =3.94 in the study on the " Short term and long term goals" variable related to the descriptive statistics determined through the use of T" test measures each and every variable in the Table 6 above giving the degrees of freedom (df) 99 for the case we learn of the "Short term and long term goals. The table above reveals Sig (2 tailed) that becomes our P value .1.000 with a mean difference of .00000 and a 95% confidence interval of the difference suggesting that the sig (2 tailed) is the P value that of 1.000 which is approximately greater than Alpha and thus we accept the Null hypothesis that states that the mean of the population is in agreement that the training method in the study is successful. The alternative hypothesis can be said to be "not in agreement either "Not Sure" or Not in agreement. In the above Table 6 the P value is 1.000 which is greater than Alpha .00000 the researcher then picks the Null hypothesis which states that the P value is greater than Alpha and then as a result we fail to reject the Null hypothesis and conclude that the "Short term and long term" variables were effective.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes with the fact that the training and development program of the new curriculum was effective under the COVID-19 milieu in Bulawayo. The respondents who are teachers in the study reveal that the training development was actual as exemplified by the P value 1.000 and the degree of freedom (df) being 99 in most research variables and the Null hypothesis of the study. However, there is a loud cry amongst the trainees in terms of the lack of financial incentives, food provision, for breakfast and lunch during the workshop as they claim they were made to fill the financial forms by the authorities in the Ministry of education to no avail and this was the only incongruity during the exercise. The study also concludes with the fact that this new curriculum training should be an ongoing exercise in order to evaluate the dynamics that may be brought by the socio-economic changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. The research question "to what extent were teachers involved in the training process and their contribution considered, during the exercise? In this study respondents who are teachers suggests that they were involved in the training process and their contribution respected as demonstrated by their overwhelming responses in the study on the effectiveness of the training methods, feedback and strategic communication variables. And most teachers at the beginning of the training thought that their teaching program was disturbed due to the new curriculum training program amidst COVID 19 environment. This study is intaderm with Jack Shaw, (2014) article "Rating Training" posits that training and development is important to both organizations and employees, yet it is often seen by workers and supervisors as extra work of no real value.

It interrupts the workflow. The variable short term and goals in this study suggests that respondents were able to picture the short term and long term goals of the training program. It is the immediately tangible evaluations that become most important in organizational systems in order to achieve its goals and objective through human capital development. Many organization change models (Lewin, 1951, Kotter, 1996. Peddle et al., 1998; Paton and McCalman, 2000) have prescribed the key stages involved in effective change management to improve employee's acceptance of change. The study concludes that the training and development in the new curriculum was successfully executed. The new curriculum of education in Zimbabwe is meant to stimulate teachers and learner's critical thinking about designing curricular and assessments that are more learner centred, inquiry oriented, cultural sensitive, community oriented and socially responsible educational ideology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

-The study therefore recommends that educational authorities in the Ministry should continue to seek professional facilitators and provide further training on the new curriculum program, seek funding for the trainees, and motivate the trainees by choosing venues with proper equipment and ergonomics.

– Also the study recommends among others that trainers should be equipped with adequate knowledge of various online teaching platforms so that the training could be done virtually since the COVID-19 setting has become a common phenomenon.

– Another recommendation from the study there should be a continuous assessment training program that can be divided into parts and more days set aside for the training duration since it is comprehensive, teachers, parents and learners as strategic partners should be afforded opportunity to suggest how the training program structure should be.

– The study also recommends that the variables interrogated in this study can also be taken as a panacea for national requirement for training and development in the future

Further study.

The study suggests that this study can be taken to other provinces in the country or increase the sample of study. Also the study of this nature should in the future consider other research methodologies such as qualitative and mixed methods paradigms as comprehensive conceptualization concepts.

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