

Impact of Training on Writing Learning Outcomes: A Case Study from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract. The definition of academic study is varied and its outcomes are contradictory to conventional university functionality. Advocates of this point of view emphasize more on vocational training and education than higher education since it is believed that the former is more effective in providing learning outcomes as the training is largely based on competencies and skills of the student. The concept of vocational training comes from the need of basic education and the requirement of acquiring knowledge of writing and reading and linking it to the occupation so that it is easy for an adult to learn. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia believes in “education for all” whereby the government intends to provide education to every citizen of suitable age. Under this, the Kingdom has pledged to ensure almost 50 percent enhancements in the level of adult literacy. In order to achieve higher literacy the Kingdom has developed and implemented various educational and vocational training programmes. Keeping in line with this concept this paper will review the training initiatives and examine the effectiveness and coherence of these curriculums and its associated learning outcomes amongst the adult population.

1. Introductions

The government of Saudi Arabia exercises enormous efforts in the education sector and extends it to every nation in the Kingdom and is endeavouring to do its utmost in making education easily available to every one of its citizens, considering the significance of the quantitative and qualitative progress to the standard of the accessible education. The Eradication of Illiteracy Program was part of those concerns, where it established an organization accountable for the obliteration of illiteracy and providing adult education under the authority of the Administration of the Popular Culture, in 1954, is evidence of that concern (Ministry of Education 1). Education policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has faith in the theory, founded on religious and societal coefficient and in accordance with worldwide conformity and pronouncements, counting the Dakar Declaration (1), of equal chances for every citizen. Keen to execute the proposals of the Dakar Declaration, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made available its strategy for Education for All for the subsequently few years, for citizens of all regions of the nation, providing freedom for state sectors and civil society establishments to take part in the Education for All programmes

(Dakar Declaration 1). The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia is in tune with the nation's education policy aims. The Ministry has formatted a long-standing policy to tackle these proposals neutrally and methodically and in compliance with societal and financial norms, via the National Forum that hopes to offer fundamental schooling for every one by 2015.

This paper will review the efforts made in the field of vocational training and analyze its effectiveness in terms of writing learning outcomes in adult education by reviewing the developments in the adult literacy rate. This paper is first of its kind and thus there are limited or no existing literature available related to this subject. Most of the information has been obtained from the Kingdom's official correspondence and websites, Ministry of Education and UNESCO.

2. Education system in the Kingdom

The actual commencement for standard education in the Kingdom was in the year 1925 A.D. when the Department of the General Knowledge was instituted, where the learning advancement that incorporated the education phases and its varieties was initiated as King Abdul Aziz thought that progress fails to take place without the schooling, and in 1927 A.D. the organization of the Education Council functioned in corporation with the Department of the General Knowledge initiating the earliest educational structures for the nations to transform the old education schemes which relied on the religious institutions and incomplete educational institutions of the Turks and Hashemite, and in 1926 A.D., the starting of the Saudi Scientific Institute and the Expeditions Preparation School, happened in 1936A.D. and the Dar al-Tawheed was started in 1945 A.D., as the department announced several educational schemes.

In 1950 A.D. the General Administration of the Scientific Institutes was established, and the number of educational institutions that started during King Abdul Aziz's reign was (SACM 1):

- 312 Government Primary Schools
- 14 Private Primary Schools
- 11 Government Secondary Schools
- 4 Private Secondary Schools
- 1 Vocational School
- 8 Teacher Training Institutes and Colleges for educating teachers and faculty for Sharia
- 6 Schools for the education of English language
- 1 Evening school for training in typing

It is found that main factor of this phase was to establish the identity of the schools and in delineating its policy norms. In the beginning of 1970, the government of Saudi Arabia determined the allotment of monetary acclaims for the growth of the natural, human and financial resources in the Five Year Plans of the societal and financial growth that resulted in the hastening of the development of the various sectors of national economy (Al-Baadi 1).

The education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia can be broadly categorised in two divisions, namely higher and general education. All the vocational training institutes, education in colleges and universities have been categorized under higher education. Currently more than 90 percent of Saudi students are enrolled in public universities and schools. The education system from the start of elementary school at the age of six till the completion of first 12 years of education comes under the category of General education. Both public and private educational

institutions follow the same general educational policies, methods of instruction, and curricula (US-Saudi Arabian Business Council 1).

The Saudi Arabian financial system turned out to be significantly diverse in the economic base and the income sources. The improvement of manpower by raising the capability of the educational institutions, and a variety of educational ventures and vocational training and technical faculties with the focus on the category and the improvement of syllabus at all stages education and training, in order that they sustain the growth needs and the private sector requirements (Wiseman & Alromi 1).

3. Education for All (EFA)

The hard work assumed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the area of literacy and adult education aimed for the following (UNESCO 1):

- To end illiteracy within the goals and policies drawn by the plan
- To offer maximum care for educating adults in quantity and quality
- To develop a literacy curricula
- To seek to attract all illiterate people to the literacy and adult education centres
- To seek to decrease the drop-out rate among the literacy centres students, endeavouring to prepare opportunities for illiterates to continue their intermediate and secondary education and to develop the curricula of these schools so that they can achieve their objectives and aspirations.

The education sector in Saudi Arabia has seen a maintainable development in the EFA strategies and the execution of the expansion schemes. Official and non-official endeavours were strengthen for this reason. The time since Jomtien (UNESCO 1) is a very important phase in this sector. Actually, it saw the beginning of the didactic procedure in all its facets with particular interest given to the students as the axis of the didactic procedure. The other essentials of the didactic procedure have also seen an expansion that had impacts on the educational sector and that assisted in gaining several EFA standards (Lorfin & Govinda 1).

So as to attain these objectives, joint endeavours were embarked on to execute the essence of the educational strategy and the literacy policies. A motivated twenty-year literacy scheme was initiated for men and women. Several organizations contributed in to these endeavours that included the Ministry of Education, the General Presidency for Girls' Education, the Ministry of Defence and Aviation and the National Guards (UNESCO 1).

4. Vocational programmes under EFA

The plan of initiating a vocational component into the literacy curriculum took place basically from the illiterate individual's requirement for fundamental schooling, alphabetic literacy with the help of understanding of reading and writing, and the capability to do the four arithmetic procedures, and connecting this to a career the illiterate individual will do. Thus, the everyday requirements of such people will be assured and their public and occupational abilities augmented, whether in the livelihoods they really follow and for which they are proffered competence-raising programmes or pertaining to other professions to assist increase their earnings and rope them in with the neighbourhood commune as energetic, effectual and useful

members thereof (Al shaer 1). Vocational Training Programs were developed from the academic year 1992 (1412h) for post-intermediate phase in the areas of sewing, dress designing and housekeeping. The time frame was for three years, and they were offered a secondary certificate. Religious, societal, cultural and educational awareness courses were formatted to educate women in novel talents in this area so as to meet the students' requirements and the growth needs of the society also (Al shaer 1).

Almost all of the Kingdom's Vocational Training Centres and higher institutes of technical education are administered by the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training (GOTEVOT), together with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The Ministry of Education operates Vocational Secondary Schools, and numerous other government organizations run schools or training centres in their specific specialties. One can also find numerous private training centres catering to the requirements of the market (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia 1).

5. Vocational training by Ministry of Education the General Presidency for Girls

Following the spread of adult education and literacy policies in Saudi Arabia, the General Presidency for Girls' Education (GPGE) dedicated itself towards defining curricula and educational programmes for girls to eradicate illiteracy and teach adult females in compliance with the teachings of Islam (UNESCO 1). At the start of the academic year 1972-1973 (1392/1393h), it started five literacy schools where 1400 students were enrolled. These schools increased substantially every year and were established in all cities and villages (SACM 1). A unique management was founded for this kind of education; it was the Literacy and Female Adult Education Administration that had four functions to undertake: format a strategy and lay down its aims and human and technological requirements for the fight against illiteracy. Consequently the illiteracy rate among women reduced by the end of the academic year 1999 (1420h.) to 29.15 % (UNESCO 1).

The functions of GPGE were transferred to the Ministry of Education in early 2003 and GPGE was dissolved. The Ministry runs and regulates kindergartens along with general education (elementary, intermediate and secondary), colleges of education, teacher training, adult education and literacy, vocational training and education for women (UNESCO 1).

The endeavours taken by the Ministry of education were not restricted to eradicating spelling illiteracy but they further incorporated the fight against vocational illiteracy. They endeavoured to educate female students, mothers and housewives the talent and know-how connected to the areas of vocation for everyone. For this intent the subsequent accomplishment were achieved: training courses were started to prepare adult women to take up jobs in the public or private sectors in the areas of sewing and dress designing (Zuhur 1).

6. Old Women Vocational Program (OWVP)

On the basis of the executive statement of the Adults and Illiteracy Eradication Program at Redemption Houses (IEPRH), in the 2nd rule, clause (D): "Organization of a variety of educational programs that could help satisfy their cultural and socioeconomic requirements." (Ministry of Education 1).

To accomplish that, and due to the importance of cultural illiteracy eradication (IE) amongst female citizens, IEP divisions handle a number of vocational courses formatted especially for IE centres graduate women, and housewives targeting at (Ministry of Education 1) :

- Have individuals gain some vocations, and other day to day life skills also
- Popularizing of general culture among house wives for the advantage of elevating their scholarly, technical, and occupational standards
- Assisting trainee women surmount their every day family anxieties and difficulties they face

The courses are conducted during the academic year at both previous Women IE centres and at Qur'an Memorization schools. Additionally, General Education schools are used mostly during the summer vacation time. OWVP certificates are given to the apprentices only if they attend 80% of the entire course hours. 2089 women apprentices have benefitted from these courses in the academic year 2006 -2007 (Ministry of Education 1).

7. Other Vocational institutes and Programmes

Within the model of "Education for All", the Ministry has formatted a ground-breaking program known as, "Town and Village without Illiteracy" that endeavours to announce towns and governorates without alphabetic illiteracy. It was executed in Medina, where it marked 9,750 cases of female illiteracy and is being executed in Mecca, where it marked almost 32,032 cases, and the Governorate of Shaqrā', marked 622 such cases (Al shaer 1).

National development policy strongly emphasises on the significance of vocational training and technical education in Saudi Arabia. Numerous programs in commercial, industrial, agricultural and vocational training have been developed in order to help in preparing highly skilled Saudi workers. The focus of these vocational and technical training is to increase national productivity and match pace with the global business world (SACM 1).

Military vocational training program is a novel training approach that is a combination of both military and technical training in a single program. The focus of this training program is to build a highly skilled, disciplined and trained young work force for the national labour market. The yearly capacity of this program is 10,000 trainees and a set of 15 weeks training sessions are conducted thrice in a year, that includes basic technical skill, military and technical training programs (Al-Ghafis 15).

The program pertains to eradicating of alphabetic and societal illiteracy amongst female adults and in helping them gain talents and assist them to advance into industrious employment. It was executed in Jeddah in 2006, and was subsequently executed in 2007, in other districts and governorates. One can also witness specialized development courses that include operating different short term vocational training programmes to fulfil the requirements of women and make them eligible to turn out to be active members of the family and society, 97% female literacy rate was also registered (UNICEF 1).

These courses are executed according to the requirements of every district and as either Vocational Development Programmes or Adult Literacy Programmes via vocational improvement. Beside there are numerous courses incorporated which are offered by the Ports

Authority, the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training, the Saudi Electricity Company, the Saudi Arabian Airlines and Saudi Telecom (Mellahi 329-344).

These courses are gaining rising attention from both youngsters and adults owing to the quick progress the Kingdom is witnessing, the wide-ranging revival in all organizational, financial, manufacturing and farming sectors and the requirement to build a precisely qualified and trained labour force competent of encounter the needs and wants of maintainable societal development plans (WES 1).

8. Impact of vocational training and Learning Outcomes

Education for All in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has seen noteworthy developments, resulting in the widening and growth of the field and rendering adult education a functional educational area where endeavours are taken to augment knowledge and enhance talents, attitudes and practice connected with its courses (Ministry of Education 1).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has given particular notice to adult education, thinking it has a main part in the growth plans that were started in 1970. In its widest interpretation, illiteracy – alphabetic, societal and functional – is one of the chief hurdles to maintainable growth plans and a materialization of technical, governmental and societal backwardness (Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia 1). Therefore via the utilization of rigorous didactic and occupational courses, adult learners both male and female turn out to be sufficiently competent to constructively take on their families and social responsibilities.

Saudi Arabia has witnessed quick strides in raising its literacy rate, with 96 % of the Kingdom's residents being acknowledged as literate (Arab News 1). As per Al-Modairis, 21 Adult Education Centres have been started in different parts of the province where 600 individuals are being educated. This is besides 72 Adult Women Literacy Centres, where 1,550 women are likely to enrol. According to the latest statement of UNICEF (2013) total adult literacy rate attained by the Kingdom is 87%.

9. Conclusion

The kingdom has been concentrating on mainstream gender parity and supporting women's schooling in the country and also on overall educational strategic growth. The education system has been turning out a huge number of job-seeking women graduates that the financial system of the nation requires. It is further reinforcing the general education scheme for girls at the primary, secondary and college levels, and enhancing women's admission to premium education, so that Saudi women's involvement in the workforce will augment and more job openings will be offered for them.

Spending in adult education, particularly for women, has been vital to Saudi Arabia's growth, as it enhanced the nation's societal and cultural growth. Adult education is connected with crucial methods of human resource development, like decreasing population growth and mortality rates, enhancing health and nutrition, and rising literacy rates.

It is obvious that the Supreme Council of Education, assigned by the government, has endeavoured to augment the level of higher education and advancing the excellence of Saudi

education, together with vocational and technical training for adults and better vocational training for women whilst getting them ready to venture into the labour market.

To the best of my knowledge this paper is a maiden attempt to cover this subject hence it can be helpful in assisting future studies related to the evaluation of effectiveness of the vocational training programmes in Saudi Arabia. The endeavours by the ministry has witnessed an expansion pertaining to adult literacy rate, as a result adult education institutes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia must increase and branch out. Furthermore it must build up plans to observe these educational and training courses so as to develop an education system that will establish the notion of Education for All.

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