THE ROLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES IN LIBYA

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ABSTRACT: Human resources (HR) can be developed at two stages: the first is the preparation stage, where the potential work force is provided with the necessary theoretical knowledge as well as practical application. The second stage is on-the-job training, where HR development is carried out through a group of technical operations on the job. Both the numerical (number of effective employees) and quality (effective employment) definitions of employment are related to the efforts exerted by the governments and different organisations to develop their HR. This paper focuses on the education and training systems (ETS) in the Libyan labour market and the expansion of those systems.

Key words: Human resource, education and training system, labour market, Libya.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the findings of a literature review undertake as part of a large research project, which has title aim as; to explore the key factors affecting the quality of the output of the Libyan Building and Construction Training Centres (BCTC) and propose a framework that could be used to improve the quality of the centres’ graduates to better fulfil the requirements of the labour market in Libya.

A chronological approach has been adopted to analyse related literature review to study the phenomenon under investigation in its historical dimension (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). This is to fulfil the requirements of the research which is relevant to the above mentioned aims. The purpose of the literature review is to satisfy the objectives of the research which are:

• Review the literature on construction industry training with particular reference to the Middle East and Libya.
• Investigate and identify the key factors affecting the quality of the graduates from the (BCTC) in Libya.
• Obtain an in-depth understanding of the current training programmes in the Libyan (BCTC)
• Find an appropriate research methodology to achieve the research aims and hence to answer the research questions.
• Develop a framework of the main factors affecting the quality of these training centres graduates

The technical, social and economic progress in the workplace today has made it a necessity to develop, expand and improve technical education and training in Libya. It has also become essential to unify its goals and systems in order for the youth to gain the technical skills and professional knowledge necessary to enhance the level of economic development and achieve the goals of individuals in raising their standards of living to match the great and speedy progress in the field of modern technology.

Unless occupational tasks are a result of stable and continuous occupational training that bases its goals on the needs of the job market, it will be useless. The process of building and preparing scientific, occupational and technically professional human
cadres that are capable of replacing foreign employees, must be carried out within a successful training programme that meets the needs of the Libyan job market; specially the need for a highly trained workforce (Al-Dweibi 2005), (Maatug 2004).

A chronological method has been adopted to analyse the related literature review to study the phenomenon under investigation in its historical dimension. This is to fulfil the requirement of the research which is relevant to the factors that affecting the quality of the output of the building and construction training centers in Libya.

2. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (HRD) AND EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Development is defined as those efforts that are based on pre-studied plans to coordinate between human and financial resources, with the aim of achieving the maximum levels of national and individual incomes, as well as higher standards of living and better quality of life (Abusada, 2005).

Development and management theories use numerous expressions to notify similar meanings. For example, the twentieth century has witnessed the creation of expressions like: ‘workforce’ or ‘manpower’ and ‘personnel’, to define the group of technical processes that are specially designed for the human element.

The Behavioural School has searched for a more inclusive and precise expression to define the humane characteristics of the managerial process and finally came up with ‘Human Resources’ (HR). This was mainly because of the importance of the human role in both the production and services processes, as well as the supremacy of the human capital over natural and financial capitals in the development process. As (HR) include all those individuals in the manpower who are capable of and desire to work, at both the national and organisational levels, it still aims to provide this work force with the necessary knowledge and technical abilities to enable it to perform its tasks.(Al-Geryani, 2005).

3. HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (HRD) AND ISSUES OF RECRUITMENT

The following model compares between HR development and recruitment:

![Diagram of HR Development and Recruitment]

- **Human Resources Development**
  - Preparing for Recruitment “HR preparation”
  - Effective Recruitment “HR Management”
  - The second phase is carried out through
  - The first phase is carried out through

* HR planning
* Job Analysis
* Job Analysis
* Training and development plans
* Job description
* Successful management
* Performance appraisal…etc

+ Education
+ Training

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The relation between HR development and recruitment can be summarised as follows:

3.1 First: Human Resources Development and Preparation for Recruitment:

This is the stage where the human workforce is put through an extensive and costly preparation process that includes educational and training programs. In general, the great part of this stage is paid for by the government, especially in Arab countries. It is nearly impossible to build a human capital; considered a basis for sustainable development, without special educational programmes and training programs for human resources (Al-Geryani, 2005).

3.1.1 Education:

The education is the process through which a nation's human resources are provided with the necessary knowledge, in preparation for later recruitment. The education process is long and costly but essential at this primary stage for the decision of specialization in one branch of knowledge, or undertaking a certain venue of training. All these processes aim at building a qualified human capital that is capable through its participation in the production process, of creating the required and comprehensive development. The contemporary approach aims at raising the quality of education while reducing its costs, as well as, achieving the compliance between its outcomes with the demand of the job market.

3.1.2 Training

Is the parallel-to-education process of preparing and qualifying individuals within the limits of a defined period of time and technical preparation programs that are specially designed for those who nominated to join the job market according to its current and future needs and requirements? Training is one of the most important venues of human resources development, as both education and training are processes that can be performed by individuals throughout their lifetime, and if the training is strategic and perfect, the recruitment will be effective. (Al-Geryani, 2005).

3.2 Second: Human Resources Development for Effective Recruitment

At this stage, the main concern and focusing is about the organisational, psychological and social environments of the workforce. This through the analysis, of organisational and legislation of a suitable environment, which is allows human resources to perform its tasks and responsibilities within suitable and fitting work conditions that encourage creation, innovation and outstanding performance. Those efforts include:

3.2.1 Human Resource Planning:

The human resource planning (HRP) is the strategy of the country or the organisation to achieved sufficient numbers and qualified work force for invest and develop it. (HRP) is one of the most important planning activities in a country or an organisation, because it has a great effect through the role it plays in defining the training needs, as well a setting education and training policies o comply with the needs of the job market; a technically prepared and scientifically qualified workforce.
3.2.2 Comprehensive Organisational (CO)

CO is the long term organisational, including all organisational structures firms, and positions, as well as the firms’ activities and the distribution of specialisations inside it. Structuring aims at the overall organisation of the firm and raising the levels organisational effectiveness.

3.2.3 Job Analysis and Job Description:

Job analyses are concerned with analyzing jobs, collecting, documenting and analyzing information on job content, their technical, physical and intellectual requirements, as well as data on the job’s environment and surroundings. This process is carried out to set salary and wages plans, financial rewards, job evaluations and job positioning. Job Descriptions, on the other hand, are concerned with listing a job’s content, tasks, responsibilities and the minimum level of requirements necessary to occupy it. Job descriptions help achieve the ‘effective recruitment’ principle.

3.2.4 Recruitment:

The choice of employees is the direct result of educating and training efforts and the cumulative experience gained by employees. The recruitment process aims at choosing suitable members from the qualified workforce, who comply with the firm’s activities and work. (Abusada, 2005), (Al-Geryani, 2005).

4. THE REALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN LIBYA

Most students in Libya prefer to join the formal education process, which consists of high school and later university, rather than professional education and training, which is viewed as a lower venue of education. This is why high school drop-outs are the main source of students for professional education. Although the social situation in Libya and other Arab countries does not look favourably upon graduates of professional education and vocational training, the need for professional cadres in later years has led Arab societies including Libya to give more attention to professional education and training, to the extent of establishing specialised universities in this field. Nevertheless, it is still necessary to establish a strategy to further augment the attention given to professional education and attempt to remove the obstacles it faces and increase social awareness about it. (Al-rabieei.2004), (El-hawat1995)

4.1. Development of Education and Training System (EDS) in Libya

Throughout the Ottoman period learning centres were religious institutions that were located in only a small number of cities. Education was only available to a few individuals whose families recognised the value of education or had economic conditions that allowed the children to be spared from working (El-Fathaly and Palmer, 1980:27). Additionally, the quality of education available, and the length of time one could spend as a student, was limited. During the Italian occupation, religious education continued to be the major type available and severe economic conditions
prevented this already inadequate system of education from flourishing. There were also some secular schools opened in a few urban areas.

The policy of the colonial administration was to restrict the number of Libyans educated beyond the primary stage, and all teaching was conducted in Italian. The small number of Libyans who wanted to seek further education had to travel to Egypt, where they could continue mainly in Arabic literature and religious science, or to Italy to study in more secular fields. With the introduction of the British administration more emphasis was placed on secular education and vocational schools were established separate from religious educational institutions.

During the first decade of independence, severe economic problems, regional conflict of interests, and poor management of the available resources severely handicapped the development of a sound education system. The discovery of oil at the beginning of the 1960s brought a radical change in the Libyan economy and eliminated the economic obstacles to education. Since then, educational facilities have greatly expanded; schools have been built in rural and remote areas.

Evidently Libyan education programmes concentrated on preparing a large number of people to work in administrative posts in the public enterprises (PEs), as there was a significant amount of financial support allocated for this purpose. Unfortunately there was no proper coordination between these programmes and many important issues such as manpower planning and the country’s culture were ignored which influenced the degree of success in education development (Aghaia, 1997:34).

Another difficulty was related to the fact that the education system had paid more attention to the theoretical aspects of education than to the practical aspects (Deeb and Deeb, 1982:45). Moreover, the education system lacked adequate facilities, such as libraries and laboratories, especially in the middle level of education with regard to the science sections. According to Almdhie and Nyambegera, (2004:16) “even today the education system is designed according to the Western education system, and the source of curriculum techniques, facilities are mostly from western countries, especially in the oil industry. Training is complementary to the education system in Libya as it is in most countries.

Generally speaking, the education system in Libya, however, has not been oriented to be more responsive to the needs of development, especially in technical and managerial fields. Additionally the education and training system in Libya as in many other developing countries is unable to supply at the right time and in sufficient number the qualified persons needed for industrial development.

However gaps remain. Economic difficulties affect some of the population who live outside the modern urban sector, especially in less developed parts of the country. The economy continues to depend significantly on foreign labour, although at the same time unemployment is high. As Libya’s integration into the international economy continues, the need for improved labour competitiveness is certain to grow.

(Khalil, 2004)

4.2. The Structure of Education and Training System in Libya

The primary and secondary education system consists of nine years basic education, leading to the Basic Education Certificate, followed by four years of “intermediate” education. Intermediate level education extends from three to four years and comprises of a number types of secondary school. There are general secondary schools (Science and Arts sections); specialised secondary schools (in Economics, Biology, Arts and Media, Social Sciences and Engineering), teacher training institutes.
In specialised secondary schools studies last for four years. Secondary studies last for four years in technical education, three years in general secondary schools, and three to four years in Teacher Training institutions. Studies lead to the Secondary Education Certificate.

Higher education is offered in Universities, both general and specialised, and higher institutes. These include Teacher Training higher vocational institutes, polytechnic institutes; higher institutes for Technical, Industrial and Agricultural Sciences. Several higher institutes for Teacher Training were founded in 1997. New scientific institutions called Scientific Research Centres have been created in such fields as Health and Pharmacy, Education, the Environment and Basic Sciences. They are both educational and research institutions.

The National Authority for Scientific Research is responsible for higher education and research and the University People’s Committee, chaired by a Secretary, manages university education. Each Faculty also has a People’s Committee, chaired by the Dean and with heads of departments as members. Each university manages its administration and its budget. University-level education includes three major sections: university education (lasting four to seven years), university vocational and technical education (lasting three to five years), and advanced graduate studies.

Turning now to the training programmes in the country, during the nineteen sixties considerable attention was given to establishing occupational training programs in Libya. Students were assigned to workshops, production sites and factories to train on different trades. Later, 16 training centres were established in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, to train almost 2800 people in the years 1970-1971. In later years, the number of occupational training centres expanded to 69 in 1987. This encouraged the Libyan government to establish the Development and Occupational Training Association in 1988. By 1998-1999, the Association was supervising 558 training centres with 117,781 trainees. The Development and Occupational Training Program in Libya is composed of:

• **Basic Vocational Training Centres**
  Primarily intended for those members of the population who left education early or failing to complete nine grades of primary education. The period of training for this stage is two years, for the five main professions: construction, mechanical engineering of cars, welding, services and maintenance jobs. Within these five professions there are up to 34 specialisations.

• **Intermediate Vocational Training Centres**
  Intended primarily for students who have completed the intermediate education stage by completed and passed the ninth grade. The period of training for this stage is three years, and includes 40 specializations in the following professions: electricity and electronics, mechanics, administration and finance, engineering, public construction and tourism.

• **Advanced Occupational Training Centres**
  Students at these centres include students who have graduated from senior (high) school. The period of training at this stage is two to three years and includes several specialisations. Centres are divided between those which specialise in training for certain specific professions; administration, finance, computing (software and hardware), electrical, mechanical, industrial safety engineering, the other centres provide general training.

• **Trainers’ Centres**
  These are divided into two levels: a) centres for intermediate trainers; those who specialize in teaching at the basic and intermediate stages of occupational training and,
b) centres for advanced trainers; those who specialize in teaching at the advanced stages of occupational training (Aki A.A. and Al-Bishti A., 1994); (Statistic Book;1999), (Libya (1969-1999), (El-Hawat 1995).

Despite, the ETS has expansion of even though development spending has decreased since the beginning of the 1980s. The share of education and training in Libya’s national economy has increased noticeably; participation rates have increased from 30% of the total Libyan population in 1990 to 35.1% in 1999. The number of educational institutions has expanded and the educational and training infrastructure has developed on a large scale. The number of registered students has grown from 1,431,000 in the school year of 1990/91 to 1,719,000 in 1998/99, expressing an annual increase of 2.5% in this period.

The following table shows the number of students joining educational and training institutes, giving an idea on the number of new entrants into the job market:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational &amp; Training Levels</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Universities &amp; Higher Education Institution</td>
<td>164938</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Teachers Training</td>
<td>23919</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Secondary Education</td>
<td>80702</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Intermediate Vocational Training Centres</td>
<td>109074</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Basic Vocational Training Centres</td>
<td>22490</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 E &amp; T Institution Under other Sectors supervision</td>
<td>16817</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>417940</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Sharif, 2000).

5. THE UTILISATION OF EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES MODEL

The level of education and training outcomes can be judged from the level of their utility in covering the needs of different economic activities; including specialised elements like the technical, administrative, skilled and semi-skilled workforce. The high level of outcome also reflects the extent of correlation between financial and human resources planning and consequently, the level of coordination between the requirements of the labour market and the outcomes of both the education and training processes.

Numerous evidence assert that the massive investments and resources that were allocated for the Education and Training Sector in Libya throughout the past three decades, reached an average of 6.3% of total national output. Those resources are still not enough to improve quality as a major component the efforts exerted to expand the education and training processes. This denotes the inefficiency of the investment process, especially when comparing expenses to the expected revenues from education and training. The inefficiency is clearly demonstrated in the decreasing internal efficiency of education and training; denoted by rising rates of drop-out and failures, as well as low levels of epistemic realization and deteriorated creative and analytical skills (Human Development Report, 1999).

The National Report on Human Development in Libya points at two of the most negative effects on the education and training processes in Libya; deteriorating levels of teachers' training and outdated curriculum that do not match the new horizons of knowledge and information technology revolution. These factors contribute to the incompetent returns from education and training, which asserts the need for coordination between the quantitative expansion principle and quality control.
Consequences of maintaining the same pattern include more disparity between the outcomes of the education and training process on one side, and the requirements of the job market and level of development on the other, as well as, the reduction of the work productivity, and decrease economic and social returns from education and training, moreover increase in rates of unemployment among youth (Sharif, 2000).

6. ANALYSING THE STRUCTURE OF THE LABOUR MARKET

The inflexibility of the production system and the link between its processes and the foreign industries has helped weaken national abilities to adapt with the developing essential processes like research, innovation, training and education (Al-Rabieei F.K., 2004). The following table shows the nature of the transformation that took place in the structure of the workforce in the Libyan economy.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>18.49</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.43</td>
<td>12.24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>22.52</td>
<td>15.42</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>32.27</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>46.6</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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From the table above it can be notice the amount and speed of conversion from the Agricultural Sector to the Service Sector. During the decade 1970-1980, the agricultural sector's contribution to the number of workers in the country decreased by 10% (from 29.1% in 1970 to 19.7% in 1980) to an increase in the Building and Construction Sector (11.3% in 1970 to 22.5% in 1980). But later, employment rates plummeted due to a decrease in investment in the Building and Construction Sector, which led to low rates of employment; 15.42% in 1990, 14% in 1995 and 9.6% in 2000. On the other hand, employment increased in the Services Sector from 32.27% in 1980 to 36.1% in 1990 to 46.6% in 2000.

The Libyan’s economy has recently wetness a noticeable increase in the labour market particularly the females as shown in figure 1.

Figure one depicts the participation in the labour market from 1974 – 2001 by both males and females the percentage of males has been increased from 65.8 in year 1995 to 66.4 in year 2001 while the participation of the females increased from 15.7 in year 1995 to 23.8 in year 2001 and that has been reflected on the increase of the ratio of the total participation to the population from 41.2 to 45.4 in the same period.
We can therefore conclude that the large outputs of the education and training systems in Libya; especially those from social sciences faculties, teachers institutions and basic and middle professional training centres, have contributed to the escalation of a phenomenon of imbalance in the job market. As the growing numbers of graduates from administrative, financial and agricultural specializations helped expansion of the unproductive state, they aided in the transformation of disguised unemployment from the Agricultural Sector to the Services Sector which relatively assisted towards the deterioration of other production activities. (Wadiee2005)

7. STRUCTURE OF THE MANPOWER

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<td>11.5</td>
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<td>1.91</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>22.52</td>
<td>15.42</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>33.3</td>
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<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AlRabei F.K, 2004 pp.8

Available education statistics for the years 92/1993 – 94/1995 indicate a fast growth in the number of high education graduates. This is shown in the following table:
Table 4: Development of the output of EDS in Libya from year 92/1993 to 94/1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
<td>6183</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>8273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Training</td>
<td>8975</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>9214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate E &amp; V T Institution</td>
<td>17729</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>20556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Vocational Training Centres</td>
<td>7082</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>8712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>39969</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>46755</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Sharif, 2000).

Statistics show that the rate of joining educational and training institutions which prepare their graduates for direct entry into the job market, has grown with an annual rate of 10.5%, four times more than the growth rate of school participation. It is not the graduates only who act the demand for the employment, but there are the drop-outs from the educational and training system and the veterans from the army.

This fast development in the numbers of education and training graduates is a direct result of the numerical and quality expansions in the education and training systems. Several social and objective factors, such as the high growth in population throughout the past two decades, have also affected the rise in education participation, as it created a bias towards the younger categories. That is why the quality aspect of the education and training process should be made to match the expanding numerical aspect, in order to achieve social advancement and economic development.

8. CONCLUSION

Human resources can be developed at two stages: the first is the preparation stage, where the potential manpower is provided with the necessary theoretical knowledge as well as practical application. It is also necessary at this stage to identify job contents and gain enough skills for the job. The second stage is on-the-job training, where HR development is carried out through a group of technical operations on the job. On-the-job training mainly aims at increasing levels of performance, honing employee skills and talents, as well as creating a suitable psychological and humane environment for employees. Both the numerical (number of effective employees) and quality (effective employment) definitions of employment are related to the efforts exerted by the governments and different organisations to develop their HR. As the efforts to develop HR increase, they are reflected in employment rates; laying one of the most essential basis for sustainable development, building a strong human capital.

Nevertheless, theoretical and empirical studies pose a number of questions on the role of education and training in alleviating the employment and job market problem. The ‘Human Capital’ school supports the hypothesis: education and training should increase employability.

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