

TVET Trainers' Understanding of Engaging Instruction: Enriching Training Experience

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore TVET trainers' understanding of engaging instruction through enriching training experiences. Participants' engagement in the training process is a challenging task since it requires them to engage trainees while dealing with diversity and different backgrounds effectively. The contemporary training practices and approaches in the TVET sector call for trainers' attention towards maximising the participants' engagement and learning by means of applying learner-centric instructional methodologies and processes. In addition, competency-based training requires effective interaction between the trainer and participants. The role of feedback can not be undermined to achieve this goal. This research study signifies the importance of effective TVET training by examining TVET professionals' perspectives and their understanding of engaging instruction under three main themes: enriching training experience, trainer and participants' interaction, and the expected role of TVET trainers. Purposive sampling was used to collect data from 21 TVET trainers who are professionally engaged in TVET institutes in Lahore, Pakistan. Semi-structured interviews were applied as a data collection strategy for collecting the lived experiences and perspectives of TVET trainers. The analysis revealed that most trainers in the TVET sector believe that the training experience can be enriched provided there exists an effective interaction between the trainer and participants, and there is clarity on the expected role of trainers. Further suggestions and recommendations are proposed that are based on results.

KEYWORDS

Competency-based training, Engaging instructions, Learner-centric activity, Trainers and participants' Interaction, TVET

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education systems worldwide have been changed on a massive scale due to advanced technology, increased industries, and a knowledge economy (Sultangaliyeva, 2019). The traditional methods of teaching have been replaced with modern and improved technology. Currently, there is a dire need for a skilled and trained workforce capable of applying knowledge and skills in the professional environment of the workplace. The World Bank's Education sector strategy update (ESSU) highlights the importance of the educational sector with a significant focus on providing technical education and training students who would be capable of providing better function in the market; hence, they would be able to keep the environment competitive. Consequently, policymakers worldwide started promoting skills development education in Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) institutes. TVET not only provides students with knowledge of scientific subjects but also in different technological areas (Giap Weng, 2021). Ultimately, this would develop a workforce with demand-driven industry-specific skills among graduates to fulfill all economic sectors' essential needs (Guthrie, 2009).

Additionally, this type of technical education will inevitably create more employment opportunities because they are according to the current market demands (Hickman, 2006). During the industrial revolution of the 18th century, TVET appeared in Europe and North America. However, at that time, the sole purpose of TVET institutes was to provide skillful human capital that would fulfill the demands of different sectors of different industries (Guthrie, 2009). Years after World War II, officials were finally able to understand the importance of technical and vocational education for the economic development of the countries; these were primarily located in Africa and Asia. However, even after realising the importance of technical and vocational education, there exist multiple challenges to implementing the related policies and procedures. They were not considered compatible within the higher education system of the countries (Sultangaliyeva, 2019). In such a situation, the World Bank has played a significant role in promoting the technical and vocational education system through actively acquiring strong support for such programs. In the 1960s, the World Bank approved the first educational loan to promote TVET educational programs with 40% financing in Africa. Later in the 1980s, \$600 million were given for education, and 40% was given to promote TVET institutes in Pakistan. These financial investments furthered the vital consideration towards TVET as the critical aspect for labour planning in the country (Guthrie, 2009).



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A comprehensive understanding of the current World Bank's strategies emphasises the multiple magnitudes of TVET with added benefits to societies. These strategies significantly consider the notion of inclusiveness by enormously benefiting the physically challenged special people and involving the youth towards TVET programs (Guthrie, 2009). This emphasis was made by realising the problems from the increased number of the unemployed youth population. Moreover, this strategy would ultimately realise the importance of developing skillful workers for a knowledge economy (Guthrie, 2009).

This research will explore trainers' perceptions of enriching training experiences and contextualising learners' attitudes according to their socioeconomic status. The experiences of administrators, learners, and trainers develop a robust explanation of the phenomena to provide a mutual understanding of learner engagement. This research will help provide a rich knowledge of engaging learners through enriching training experiences and attempts to be a valuable resource for trainers searching for guidelines for engaging instructions, particularly in the context of the TVET sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

From the early years of the twentieth century, learning transformed by shifting from a positivist approach towards engaging instruction. However, in the early era of 1938, Lloyd-Jones and Smith explained to educate the learner by introducing different styles, differences in motivation, and other main differences that vary from human to human (Guthrie, 2009). In addition, the introduction of reflective learning by collaborating experience and previous knowledge with new, improved knowledge was also a part of this era. As a result, educational learning systems usually become learner-oriented by increasing learners' interest and motivation (George, 2021). These include five key elements: 1) introducing small group activities between learners and trainers, 2) using instructional media for knowledge sources, 3) giving importance to classroom participation, 4) building a solid platform for learners' engagement, and 5) availability of instructor for face-to-face interaction. These fundamental elements focus on greater learner engagement.

At a micro level, competence seems to be a simple concept attained at an individual level. However, a bird-view analysis on this concept will reveal the hidden complexities associated with it, building up the overall societal understanding and attainment of national competencies responsible for enhancing national income and prosperous share in the labour market nationally and internationally (Guthrie, 2009).

The literature argues that competence is a broader concept rather than performing regular work tasks. Competency-Based Training (CBT) usually increases stress on work performance whose results are observable and measurable. However, the performance is evaluated from the constituents of the competence, personal skills, knowledge, and abilities that collectively drive performance (Schofield & McDonald, 2004). Eventually, the holistic view is greater than the sum of its parts.

Competence is, therefore, a 'confusing' and a 'fuzzy' term that reflects different unique concepts and their usages. On one side, CBT helps bridge the gap between education and job requirements, while on the other side, the definition of 'competence' fails to reflect the complexity of competence in work performances (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). According to Lum (1999), the assumption is that human capabilities can be adequately communicated through an unfounded language. Therefore, it must be known that the written competency standards are rough, and the actual competencies are reflected through the words used to describe them (Binti Paimin, et al., 2021). Thus, the words are not necessary as their means and extend through which they are understood.

The training package Development Handbook for Units of Competency defines competency as the capabilities of performing job-specific tasks according to the standards of performance expected in the working environment.

Competency needs to apply relevant skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to participate in the industry or an organisation. It covers all the aspects of the working environment and individual tasks. In addition, it requires applying related skills, knowledge, and unique abilities in a professional environment (Guthrie, 2009).

As discussed before, there exists variation and complexities in the phenomena of competency. Based on the uniqueness in the concept of the competency, the training package designed based on such competencies could be defined as Training, which is designed and delivered in a way that helps individuals demonstrate competencies related to the industry. This is not limited to a particular process or time for achievement.

A trainer needs to understand the constituents of good teaching and classroom management skills. It is vital to understand those concepts to help students learn in the classroom (Hickman, 2006). A professional trainer would blend necessary instructions with unique learning strategies to produce effective results. Similarly, technical and vocational education trainers should expose students to knowledge that would help them excel in their professional lives. The trainers must guide the learners and offering them good experiences. A trainer must try to create curiosity among the learners to help them discover the solutions to the given problems by finding the answers by themselves (Hickman, 2006). In other words, trainers must ask for innovative solutions from the learners by giving them different situations and providing them with the necessary tools. There is a need to design the curriculum to assist learners in achieving the goals they want to. The competency-based model is based on five essential elements:

1. Recognise, verify and announce the competencies in advance that is going to be acquired

2. Announce the SOP's of assessments and achievements
3. A specified programme for a particular skill or competency
4. The primary source of competency evaluation must be the performance of the competency; however, participant knowledge and attitude also can be part of the evaluation
5. The rate of achievement is specified for every competency programme (Anane, 2013)

Trainers usually want three basic things from the learners regarding the context they teach to them that include: 1) they want learners to think about the course that has been taught, 2) they want learners to remember what is taught to them, and 3) to understand the reasons hidden behind the content of the curriculum taught. In the relationship of thinking, learning, and understanding, learners can better remember the content they understand entirely. Therefore, learners must be taught the curriculum and make them able to think about its reasons. In this way, they would develop those competencies that are a part of the CBT strategy. However, in the technical and vocational education system, trainees lack the required competencies that move towards adopting a process of developing competencies through a competency-based education system (Mwashighadi, Kerre, & Kitainge, 2020).

When trainers start caring about learners and try to create a bond with them, engaging learners accelerates. Mostly, effective instruction comes when a trainer can develop strong interpersonal skills to make an effective classroom environment. Better understanding between learners and trainers helps learners to perform better (Pangeni, 2021). Moreover, learners must also possess strong interpersonal skills to impact the trainer-learner relationship for creating a supportive classroom environment. This strong learner-trainer relationship will also help learners excel in additional learning opportunities beyond the traditional classroom environment. The trainer's normal response to solve learners' problems also helps to achieve effective engagement. In TVET, trainers' interpersonal and communication skills and instant responses also encourage learners to engage in their studies to achieve high academic grades (Msibi, 2021). Positive emotions from the trainers help to create a positive environment that allows learners to solve their problems.

Additionally, the learning experiences do not happen from learners only. It requires the support of family members, trainers, peers, and the community that all affect the learner's emotions. The engaging learning experience is a set of learner-oriented, contextual, social, and comfortable environments and for achieving learners' engagement, and all these factors are vital for achieving high academic performance.

The instructional design quality checklist designed by the Australian Adult Learning Institute (UNESCO, 2020) gives important recommendations and guidelines for effective learning. These guidelines are essential for any learning program: blended, face-to-face, distance, and e-learning. The checklist recommends a clear picture of competency at the start and specifies what type of skills, knowledge, and competency are needed to obtain. After having a clear vision, trainers must develop SMART outcomes that include program outcomes and session outcomes. The entire learning session must be designed so that the learners should progress through the whole learning cycle. The learning program should address all the three-domain of learning: skills, knowledge, and attitude. The checklist also provides guidelines about the delivery method, and resources must be of different learning styles, including PowerPoints, charts, relevant music, reading material, and e-learning activities. Mostly, adult learners learn best when the learning is applied through real-life issues and examples. The learners' group must be target according to their background and knowledge, and an appropriate learning strategy is used according to it. It must be noted that learners' brains are not computers, and for the learning to occur, content must be reviewed at continuous intervals throughout the learning program (UNESCO, 2020).

There is an urgency required by the government and the public-private TVET institutes to take initiatives in such programmes to help grow and develop technical and vocational education in the country. There are several measures that the government and institutions can take in this regard. Introducing and implementing immediate steps for improving the service conditions of teachers, developing and establishing a national system of skills standardisation, testing, certification, accreditation of institutions and equivalence, developickng and implementing a monitoring and evaluation system to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of training programs are a few to name.

2.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To explore TVET trainers' understanding of enriching training experience for engaging instruction.
2. To explore TVET trainers' understanding of trainer's and participants' interaction' for engaging instruction.
3. To explore TVET trainers' understanding of expected trainers' competency.

2.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is TVET trainers' understanding of 'enriching training experience' for engaging instruction?
2. What is TVET trainers' understanding of 'trainer and participants' interaction' for engaging instruction?

3. What is TVET trainers' understanding of the expected trainers' competency?

3. METHODOLOGY

Research design is vital to any research. A research study that is poorly designed follows a poor execution, and thus such research results are insufficient findings (Bradshaw & Stratford, 2010). Conversely, the research planning and its different procedures ensure the rigour of that research and are therefore the primary concerns for qualitative researchers

A hermeneutic phenomenology research design was used in this study. Lydall, Pretorius, and Stuart (2005) state, "a fundamental tenet of hermeneutic phenomenology is that people seek to create meaning of their experience from the response sited within human consciousness" (p. 1). The researcher accessed the participants' world of the lived experience and their interpretations of these experiences using semi-structured interviews. Phenomenology is suited to education as it endeavours to reveal the meaning of human lived experience, and it is through this experience that practice is questioned.

Data were collected from 21 participants who have been working as trainers and other significant jobs in the TVET sector. Participants included 13 male and eight female trainers originating from the city of Lahore in the Punjab province of Pakistan. Ten participants represented the public sector, and 11 presented the private sector in TVET. The diversified experience ranged from 2 to 20 years of working in the industry. Almost all participants enjoy respectable job portfolios at senior management positions in the public and private sectors.

Less research in Pakistan highlights different factors associated with exploring a trainer's understanding of engaging instruction. Therefore, it was essential to gather the thoughts of the people who have been working in this sector for an extended period and are well aware of the different programs of their organisation. Therefore, it was planned to have a purposive sampling by targeting the trainers of other technical and vocational institutes working across the country.

In the current study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 respondents working in the TVET sector in different organisations in Lahore. Semi-structured interviews immensely helped maximise the data output and get enriched information catering to the needs of various thematic areas.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by considering the semi-structured interview's flexible nature and gathering respondents' points of view by getting rich, detailed answers. The interviews were taken online via Zoom, an online video recording app, due to the pandemic.

The analysis of data proceeded in two steps, employing inductive and deductive two methodical procedures of qualitative data analysis:

1. meaning condensation and
2. theoretical interpretation of the interview text

First, 'meaning condensation' (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) of meanings and narratives found in interview transcripts was done. The meaning condensation provided an inductive reading of the data and a very early understanding of each participant's understanding. 'Meaning condensation' was used only as a preliminary way of identifying sorting out themes embedded in interview transcripts, providing a rewritten but shorter version of the interview, helping to maintain a whole picture of each participant. During the second phase, the theoretical interpretation of the interview text was conducted based on all thematic areas.

Second, a 'theoretically informed reading' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015) of the interview transcripts was done. This deductive analysis of the interview transcripts provided a nuanced understanding of participants' lived experiences and perspectives. This step in the data analysis was more like cross-case analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020).

4. FINDINGS

4.1. TRAINER AND PARTICIPANTS' INTERACTION

4.1.1. PERCEPTION ABOUT INTERACTION WITH PARTICIPANTS

Most participants agreed that the interaction of trainers with participants becomes important in setting their expectations about their prospective learning from the Training. They believed the first impression has to be specially focused and well prepared by the trainers. The majority of the trainers shared that they practically plan for an impressive self-introduction. They also shared that cordial interaction with the trainer in an amicable environment remains a motivating factor for training participants throughout the experience. One of the participants said:

"Not only the appearance but also the trainer's body language and confidence matter a lot. We have to be very calm and patient all the time. I never miss out on any opportunity to interact with participants. I try to remember their names and try to greet them every day with their names. These things matter. We should respect trainees, and my experiences suggest they always reciprocate. (Participant 8)"

Noticeably, a vast majority of female trainers were more conscious about this issue. Participant 12 shared, "Friendly interaction is important, but it has to be professional. There is a thin line between the two, and we have to be very careful." She

also suggested the whole training environment should be balanced, friendly, yet professional. Some female participants shared their challenges. One of them said:

“Being a female trainer, the biggest issue I face is acceptability. It takes a day or two to settle this issue. We have to have more knowledge and expertise comparing to male trainers; otherwise, participants start undermining. We have to be conscious about the way we dress up or our body language. There are ample chances of listening to religious debates, especially in the public sector. One has to be highly composed, determined, professional, and friendly too. (Participant 9)”

4.1.2. BEYOND CONVERSATIONS IN THE TRAINING ROOM

Most participants shared their experiences that the conversation between the Trainer and trainees is not confined to the lecture rooms. They viewed the continuous interaction as necessary for training exercises that have assessments or input from participants. For example, one of the participants said:

“Trainers are supposed to be acting as teachers and mentors towards their trainees, and they must be approachable. My standards of a successful trainer are the ease and comfort of trainees with which they could approach and converse with learners, whether during or after training hours. I am always available to my students and trainees. (Participant 6)”

Although the female participants agree with this opinion, they also felt the importance of interaction to clarify trainees' queries, yet they shared its downside. One of the participants shared her views:

“When we accept a training project, we are mentally prepared to be available to participant on WhatsApp or emails even after the training hours, but what bothers me most is people calling us during family hours. It could not be comforting for my family too. Since our numbers are with them because of WhatsApp groups, we can't escape this issue. I keep on reminding people to be considerate of it. (Participant 15)”

4.2. ROLE OF INFORMAL INTERACTION

Although most respondents thought informal interaction with trainees positively impacts the learning process, there was an equal weight in the argument of not getting too casual. For example, one of the participants shared:

“It depends on how informal you get. When you drift away from the topic, then it's not good. Sometimes informal interactivity clears trainees' queries, which is challenging to achieve through formal PowerPoints. However, the trainer's most important concern is that the objectives are met, and outcomes are achieved. The learning objectives and the purpose of the activity must not be compromised at any cost. (Participant 8)”

Participants shared that training sessions are not typical classroom lectures, and the relationship between Trainer and trainees required a decent level of informal interaction. For example, one of the participants said:

“Sometimes, informal interactions are most impactful. Besides the coverage of content or topic of training, it also helps remove barriers between trainers and trainees. Some participants could be too shy or introverted, and they felt comfortable when we approached them during tea breaks or lunches. I have seen people gaining confidence too. (Participant 5)”

Most participants shared the same views about utilising the breaks during the whole day of training sessions. For example, participant 13 said, “To me, tea or lunch breaks are also working times. These provide good opportunities for trainers to interact with participants and know them more”.

4.2.1. ROLE OF FEEDBACK IN INTERACTION

The majority of the participants highly favoured the phenomenon and process of feedback for healthy interaction with trainees. They shared that just like formative and summative assessments, feedback needs to be given regularly and towards the end of the activity too. They also emphasised, ‘like communication, feedback should also be a two-way process. One of the participants said:

“Feedback is critically important both on the part of the trainees as well as the Trainer. Not only because it allows them to plan their educational evaluation further; but it also lets the Trainer improve at every stage of the Training. Furthermore, it is also very effective in keeping a good balance of interaction between the Trainer and the trainees. I don't rely on formal ways only. I prefer getting feedback frequently and at day end, if not at the end of every session. (Participant 7)”

Although many participants shared their positive experiences about frequently exchanging feedback during their training activities, a negative sentiment also existed. For example, one of the participants shared:

“Feedback is undoubtedly essential, but the problem is that usually, people with more experience are reluctant to know about their weaker areas. They become even more hesitant if they are told what they lack. It gets difficult for a trainer from the private sector is training the public sector, senior professionals. We don't have much time to interact on a one-to-one basis, so I usually exaggerate the positive side. (Participant 11)”

4.3. THE PERSONAL STYLE OF INTERACTION WITH PARTICIPANTS

All participants shared their unique techniques and essential factors that they consider while interacting with their trainees. They shared that the audience matters most for setting their interaction styles. According to most participants, the TVET sector is not huge in Pakistan, and they frequently meet their trainees on multiple forums. Participants also emphasised that the interaction style should be trainees-centred. For example, one of the participants shared:

“Just like teachers change their interaction style with students, a trainer changes it as per the trainees' background and context. I believe it should be straightforward and comprehensive for trainees. The underlined idea is, it should be engaging them. Firstly, you should remember the desired training outcomes. Secondly, you must do justice with the ways through which you have plans to achieve these outcomes. (Participant 20)”

She also mentioned that trainers should be honest and respectful towards all participants, and only authentic training material should be used. Participants also shared that the interaction during Training seeds lifelong relationships with trainees as well. Quoting another participant:

“The trainer's interaction style builds the reputation, which stays longer than the duration of any training activity. Although I keep it friendly and informal, I always maintain the level of decency, and professionally covering the training is always at the top of my mind. Any training activity is a source of learning for both trainers and trainees. I feel evolved every time I am occupied in the training assignment. (Participant 6)”

4.4. ENRICHING TRAINING EXPERIENCE

4.4.1. DEFINING AN ENRICHING TRAINING EXPERIENCE

All participants shared their perceptions about how they define an enriching training experience for learners. They shared things and factors that a trainer needs to consider for maximising the training utilities for trainees. They all agreed on the importance of the concept, and they thought this phenomenon to be linked with the market reputation and commercial assessment of trainers. Participant 16 related the rich domestic and international exposure of trainers to be always a good factor. She stated, “The more a trainer has an exposure of domestic and international TVET practices, the more you have to share with trainees, and they always like knowing best practices.” Another participant focused on learning as the most critical factor for trainees to gain an enriched training experience. He said:

“I believe it is my responsibility to familiarise my trainees with contemporary practices and new sector knowledge. At the end of the day, participants would remember and cherish the new learning they get from practising when they return to their institutions. I ensure giving them a brief outline of what new they would learn at the end of Training to hook up with the process from the beginning. (Participant 21)”

Participants also believed the context and social background of learners to be considered while training the TVET teachers. They considered social inclusion to be also emphasised while training teachers. One of the participants shared:

“I think it requires constructing meaningful platforms for trainees to make things easier for them. Participants will enjoy it if complex phenomena are simplified for them. The whole learning experience has to be affordable as well. We should not expect our trainees to use expensive training resources. Learning should be hassle-free and stress-free, and we must not judge them. (Participant 20)”

She also mentioned that TVET teachers are usually unaware of many things, and trainers, especially from the private sector, must put them at ease to give them an enriched learning experience.

4.4.2. INSTRUCTIONS FOR ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS

Most participants focused on the importance of instructions that they design and discuss with their trainees, usually at the beginning of the session, to engage them in the learning process and retain their attention during the process. Interestingly, different trainers have their styles of communicating these instructions. Some believed these instructions to be carefully drafted, keeping in mind trainees' background and subject knowledge. On the other hand, a prominent number of trainers believed these should be taken more casually for engaging them. For example, one of the participants shared:

“The trainer has the main job to set a scene, and the beginning has to be impressive. We are dealing with adults, so I don't go with too strict rules. I engage trainees to decide the training rules in the group, and I keep on writing these on the flipchart so it stays in front of them. At the same time, the environment must not be too informal. I try to keep the balance while creating and implementing these instructions. (Participant 15)”

Another participant added:

“Although we do set the housekeeping rules in consent with the trainees but honestly speaking, I don't take these too seriously. My trainees can quickly move into the training room, but a line has to be drawn. I am not too fond of mobile phone usage. I think it's an insult for the Trainer when participants do not give attention. However, I follow a democratic process, and I go with the majority. (Participant 6)”

He also mentioned that instructions related to assessments are taken very carefully, and regardless of the informal or friendly environment, trainees also take serious note of these instructions, whether formative or summative assessments.

4.4.3. ROLE OF DIVERSITY IN ENRICHING TRAINING EXPERIENCE

Almost all participants agreed on the impact of diversity among trainees on their performance in Training. They registered their experiences of dealing with diversity among trainees based on age, experience, gender, urban & rural division, affiliation with the public or private sector, and educational background. They also generally agreed that diversity among the participants becomes a reason for trainers to plan and execute training activities differently. For example, participant 2 said, “In my perspective, diversity is quite an enabling factor. However, things could go uncertain, so one has to be very careful”. Out of various factors responsible for trainees' diversity, most participants considered age groups more dominating and impactful. One of the participants shared her experience about this phenomenon and said:

“I have usually experienced participants above 50 years to be a little lazy and less enthusiastic about learning. Especially, those who have a few years to go before retirement are the ones who are sometimes least interested, and engaging them is the actual challenge for me or any other trainer. (Participant 17)”

One participant shared the experience of dealing with the gender issue for her Training for preparing domestic workers. She learned that it is hard for men to accept their counterparts knowing more than them. She said:

“The issue of diversity gets little challenging when trainees with lesser education are there in the presence of our social stigmas too. In my recent Training of preparing domestic workers, I had to intervene time and again to get everyone to collaborate with each other. Men found it hard to accept females with a better understanding of the subject. Some refused to work in groups with female participants. I think the demographics and psychographics of participants matter too. (Participant 19)”

However, she shared that she was able to handle the situation after the first day. According to her, the norming and storming parts happen on the first day, but usually, participants start behaving appropriately once they start knowing each other, and the Trainer should effectively supervise the whole process.

4.4.4. ENGAGING PARTICIPANTS WITH DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL BACKGROUNDS

The majority of the participants seemed comfortable handling trainees who possess different religious and political backgrounds. However, a couple of respondents also shared their rough experiences of unwanted heated arguments among the audience over their political affiliations, yet they could intervene to stop the discussion at once. The majority of the participants stated that religion is the most sensitive issue, and it sometimes consumes more than required time in the public sector. Participants usually want to have the recitation from the Holy book at the beginning of every session. One participant shared she had to allow ‘Naat’ (praises for the Prophet Muhammad PBUH) because people could find it objectionable if they weren't allowed. Another participant said:

“We don't even touch the political things. As far religions, usually, examples are cited from the religious stories of Islam, but usually, these are good practices or quotations and acceptable to all. If I have Christian trainees in the room, I try to create a balance by giving some examples from their religion. (Participant 18)”

Another participant shared his experience of dealing with minority trainees in his recent training sessions. He said:

“I think that religious or political affiliations are not concerned with the training. For me, everyone in the room is only my trainees. In one recent session, a girl said she is Christian and wants to become a nun and not get married. The comment aroused inquisitiveness among Muslim participants. I smelled what this would lead to and immediately intervened. But I made sure the female Christian participant did not encounter any judgment during my session. (Participant 3)”

He also stated that everyone has a belief system, and being trainers, we should respect it and encourage and promote the culture of co-existence and peace.

4.4.5. PERSONAL STYLE FOR ENRICHING TRAINING EXPERIENCE:

Participants shared their unique techniques and favourite methods to enrich the training experience for their trainees. A lot of varied ways were shared by participants. However, they all believed that trainers develop their signature styles over time, and they keep on further improving these. One participant stated:

“I always make sure my training session to be a fine combination of the theory and the practical part. This has always been my pet practice for years, and it has always worked for me. Depending on the length of Training, I have arranged field trips and industrial visits for my trainees. I always encourage TVET teachers to do the same for our students too. (Participant 1)”

Another participant shared his style. He said:

“My experiences have taught me to be very particular about clarifying the objectives of my session to my audience. I do not compromise on it. Even if it requires some more time, I will do it, no matter if it's unpaid. As a trainer, we must proceed every project most ethically and sustainably. This involves the handling of various resources, adding value by including related videos, and, most of all, it requires dedication. (Participant 13)”

Participant 16 said, “I chose storytelling. I usually share my personal experiences as well as cultural and historical stories to create the connect”. She believed the western trainers are now using storytelling for participants’ engagement, whereas the Eastern culture is rich with motivational historical and contemporary success stories, and trainers should use this method more often.

4.4.6. THE EXPECTED ROLE OF TVET TEACHERS

All participants expressed their views about portraying the vital role of teachers in the TVET sector of Pakistan. Participant 10 stated, “There are three important pillars in any education sector: Infrastructure, Curriculum, and Teachers.” Considering the backdrop of TVET, the role becomes more glorified as well as challenging. According to most participants, the teacher’s role gets more challenging in TVET since teachers have to be competent in both theory and practice and an effective balance between the two explains the teachers’ performance. One of the participants said:

“The most demanding aspect is how well the teacher balances both the theoretical part of Training and the practical application of the concept. And since machines and technology are constantly upgraded, how is it possible for a TVET teacher to deliver without getting updated regularly. (Participant 13)”

A vast majority of participants believed Continuous Professional Development (CPD) answered many questions about teachers' required skills and capacity building. Most of them also thought training and development activities needed to be subject specialised instead of offering generic pedagogical Training. Quoting one of the participants:

“I don't work with conventional teachers. We work with technically experienced people mostly at supervisory levels, and ‘transfer of skills’ becomes an issue with them at times. For decades, those who have hands-on experience always find it hard to listen to the lecture or learn the theory part. The problem becomes acute in the public sector. (Participant 21)”

5. DISCUSSION

Multiple practice opportunities are generated by using ABL in the learning space. While using the current framework can add multiple skills and benefits to the daily routines. This can help trainers focus on trainees' motivation and satisfaction, which alleviates the quality and quantity of success in the education sector. For these reasons and much other integrated learning or activity-based intervention enhances trainee engagement (Ozen & Ergenekon, 2011). Activity-based Training is crucial dependent on active teacher-student interaction, and it fits the most on the canvas of the technical and vocational education sector. TVET professionals are more accustomed to practical and physical exercises, and instead of engaging them in theoretically entangled knowledge-based concepts, the Trainer has to prefer involving participants in practical and activity-based learning. It also supports our context of TVET up to a deeper level because our teachers are well acquainted with the practical aspects due to lesser interest in reading, researching, language issues, or simply the overall interest level. Simulations and industrially influenced workstations, if used during the Training, have the potential to get even better learning outcomes. This concept further adds to the value of TVET training interventions since it could better deal with trainees' hesitation towards training assignments and home tasks. TVET trainers could revitalise the phenomenon of engaging participants in community work using well-crafted activity-based learning.

Teacher-student relationships play a crucial role in the quality of teaching and learning. Daily interpersonal interactions in the training venue are the building blocks of trainer-learner relationships. Studies suggest a better classroom environment with greater teacher-student interaction than having one-way communication (Pennings et al., 2018). The value-laden relationship and interaction between trainer and trainees arise to be the dominating learning from findings of questions of the fourth section, i.e., trainer and participants' interaction. The interaction and attention of the trainer can even motivate a slow learner or an uninterested student (Leder, 1987). The prospective number of uninterested training participants seems to be highly witnessed by TVET trainers, and therefore, a well-planned and creatively thought interaction style and associated manners could be highly enabling for trainers. There needs a swift and smooth interaction that stays throughout the training course, and it puts the larger responsibility on the trainers part. They have to develop interesting ideas and thoughts that ignite the trainees' interest in the subject. With productive and fruitful conversations that inspire trainees, trainers can attain more than expected training outcomes. It calls for a lifestyle and not just the couple of hours of the Trainer's presence in front of trainees. With the rapid usage of social media, it is now even easier for participants to track the general and work-based philosophies or traits that the Trainer possesses. Young trainee's interactions with teachers predict social and academic success. Trainers having a friendly relationship with the trainee can reduce fear, shyness and develop confidence among trainees to alleviate their participation and performance (Rudasill & Rimm-Kaufman, 2009).

On the other hand, decency and formality must be kept in mind while interacting and sustaining any communication channel other than the training hours. Participants should also be trained and taught the dos and don'ts of not disturbing trainers' home lives and family times. It becomes more critical for female trainers to hinder participants from not being available practically all the time. A healthier interaction between the trainer and training participants promises to employ the utilities and benefits of the process of feedback during the whole training activity (Guthrie, 2009).

In the current scenario, the implementation of Competency-Based Training is also an important aspect that needs to be carefully given attention. It must include attention to the learner's needs and styles, providing the time required for the learner to acquire and repeatedly perform or demonstrate the expected competencies (knowledge, skills, behaviours). CBT can be pursued through various teaching approaches. For that, the curricula need to be evidence-based, and outcome-focused and all teaching strategies need to be matched to the learning domain that includes psychomotor, cognitive, and affective aspects of learning. CBT remains predicated upon industry needs, and those wishing for a more liberal or academic education can no longer find it within the TVET sector (Rudasill & Rimm-Kaufman, 2009). It is highly claimable that the learner-centric approach towards instructions and methodologies lay the concrete foundations for effectively implementing the CBT approach.

The current education and training system has an onus and expectations for academics to provide inclusive, validating, and affirming learning environments and experiences. Existing curriculum structures and pedagogical approaches favour the dominant non-ethnically diverse learner. Managing diversity among participants incorporates cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity. Effective diversity management appears to be a dominating area to be focused on. Reflecting on the participants' answers to various questions of the fifth section, titled: Enriching training experience. Better interaction and experiential learning will help the instructor engage diverse students by incorporating their experiences (Jabbar & Mirza, 2019). Diversity management is the latest technique that plays a significant role in improving the stability of the HEIs by accommodating diverse students. This enhances the responsiveness of the institutes, enhances community interactions resulting in better relations, expands creativity of the institutes, and serves the requirements of the diverse clients (Lumadi, 2008).

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. This study did not include the perspectives of industry representatives, which are undoubtedly significant stakeholders. Any future investigation of the topic can further enrich the findings.
2. Future research studies can be designed to explore the gaps between the TVET training practices and participants' engagement in Pakistan compared to the international practices. This could serve to open new opportunities and further evolution for our TVET sector.
3. Researchers interested in the intricacies of training assessments of both types, formative and summative, may want to dig into the investigation of TVET training assessments used by trainers to engage instruction.
4. Other researchers may want to investigate further those aspects of the training interventions in the TVET sector, which engendered and encouraged the issues discussed in this study. One possibility is to examine the post-training evaluation in assessing the sustainability of learning and its application on the ground.
5. The use of semi-structured interviews proved helpful in gaining insights into the current circumstances of the pandemic and the availability of participants to conduct online sessions. However, future studies may consider face-to-face research methods and observations gathered during the training sessions to add more value to such research topics.
6. A bigger sample size with a comparatively much more significant number of responses can be collected if any future research is conducted using the quantitative research methodology.
7. There is room for future research studies to highlight the perceptions and experiences of female trainers in detail. The present number of female trainers is undoubtedly not too impressive despite their excellent presence in the vocational sector. It will be helpful to identify the factors in encouraging more females.
8. Future research of the same issue of TVET trainers understanding engaging instruction can also be done on specific trade/subject areas. Each trade has its associated characteristics that trainers need to signify while engaging in instruction, and any such study based on particular subject areas can be very interesting.

7. CONCLUSION

A significant difference between the conventional TVET practices and the newly acquired competency-based learning culture primarily focuses more on attitude building, and therefore, trainers cannot ignore the perspective of focusing more on positively affecting participants' attitudes. The most fashionable ideas and global perspectives of sustainability, green TVET, or inclusive TVET closely demand attaining the right attitude towards addressing these. From these research findings, Pakistan's TVET sector critically needs to prioritise the building of attitude among professionals. Trainers have found this difficult since it takes far more time to cultivate a mindset among participants that reflects global trends and discussions and promotes and strengthens the Pakistani TVET accordingly. Therefore, policymakers and decision-making authorities need to create a rational connection among various training interventions. A strategic thought process can significantly help evolve the TVET fraternity with the global perspective to produce acceptable and employable graduates worldwide. Sitting in the camp of highly populous countries with a majority of young youth populations, Pakistan does not afford to ignore the expectations and requirements of global employers. Thus, the KSA approach allows trainers to follow a strategic direction and means to achieve the destination.

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