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"Learners' Modernity" of Department of Education Nonformal Education Trainees in Palawan

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ABSTRACT

A study on assessment of perceived outcome of DepEd Nonformal Education training program on learners' modernity revealed that the training programs had contributed to overall modernity of highly trained and slightly trained respondents. Moreover, when three comparison groups that represented a continuum of training experiences - the not trained, slightly trained and highly trained respondents were interviewed along attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of modernity, the Wilcoxon Rank-Sum test revealed that slightly trained, highly trained and not trained groups differed significantly in active public participation, occupational and educational aspirations, and openness to new experience, readiness to accept social change, time valuation and technology valuation. Meanwhile, the three groups did not differ significantly in efficacy; a result attributed to the Filipino belief that God's help is the most important factor for the future of the Philippines. This study indicates that DepEd training programs geared towards rural development with its strong socio psychological components of values integration in functional literacy cum livelihood skills development have contributed to the modernization of outlook and personality of farmers who have been raised in traditional settings.

Keywords: nonformal education, Palawan, learner's modernity

INTRODUCTION

Nonformal education in the Philippines is firmly anchored on the new concept of development which focuses on the actualization of human potential as linchpin of development. It follows that the alleviation of poverty rests on the improvement of the socio economic status and the quality of life of the poor and calls for the total development of the human person. his family and community. This involves among others the sustainable development in the social, moral, spiritual, cultural and political well being of every person (DepEd Bureau of Nonformal Education Circular, 1998).

In his study on individual changes in six developing nations, Alex Inkeles observed that education surely is one of the most powerful means of inculcating modern attitudes, values, and behavior. He further stated that education still

remained a substantial independent cause of individual modernity. Dreeben (1998) also identified normative behaviors that are essential for citizenship, political participation and workplace pursuits in citizenship in modern societies. The norms he identified are independence, achievement, universals, and specificity. In defining the essentials of a successful path to modernity, Inkeles (2001) correctly notes the preeminent importance of such factors as rationality and technical competence and efficiency and flexible innovation. in making economic decisions. Population segments must be capable of modern thoughts and actions and improving such modern capabilities in response to education and media dissemination of information, thus he recommends an enriched environment to speed up individual improvement and thus national development as shown in the studies of Lucido (2000), Gautam (1998), Sage (1999), and Ovesni (2000) among others.

Thus, if the nonformal education program is to provide proof of its legitimacy and effectiveness, it should be in the basic changes it causes in the very nature of its recipients. Recognizing the need, the institution of Nonformal Education programs through trainings and various activities is the government's answer to the masses of Filipinos who have gone out of school for many reasons. The government recognized the fact that these people through Nonformal Education can propel our country towards modernization and inevitably better quality of life.

If by virtue of having more education. the personal character of an individual is decidedly more progressive, it is assumed that Nonformal Education imparts modernity and that the more training or sessions a learner attends, the higher would be his modernity. According to Cabag (1999), scholars found out that participation in agricultural and rural development programs is significantly related to the adoption of improved farm practices and/or changes in attitudes, values, and behavior of participants.

To promote the development of the whole person into an educated, self-reliant, self sufficient and to function effectively as a citizen of a society, the individual must be exposed to all opportunities of learning (Nonformal Education Bulletin, 1982). In other words, he must be modern enough to be responsive to the challenges of the developing community.

This study aimed to determine demographic characteristics of respondents; identify DepEd NFE trainings participated by respondents and determine if there are significant differences in modernity between not trained respondents and learners under DepEd NFE programs in terms of attitudinal and behavioral dimensions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The descriptive method was used in this study. Three groups of respondents who were more or less alike in several characteristics except for participation in training: represented a continuum of training experience; Group 1, the not trained; Group 2, the slightly trained; and Group 3, the highly trained. The Model of Analysis by Inkeles and Smith (1974) was used as basis in comparing the three groups of respondents.

Sampling Procedure

Stratified random sampling was employed to select the respondents. The towns of Palawan were ranked according to a set of criteria and six towns with similar characteristics were selected as the strata. These are Rizal, Brooke's Point and Narra in the south and Roxas, Taytay and San Vicente in the north of Palawan. Lists of learners/participants in DepEd projects and programs in each town were requested from DepEd personnel in charge of the NFE. These lists were used in the random selection of slightly trained and highly trained respondents. A list from the secretary of corresponding barangays was also requested for the selection of non-attendees as respondents.

Three groups of 8 respondents each (Group I - not trained respondents; Group 2-slightly trained learners and Group 3 - highly trained learners) were randomly selected from each town for a total of 144 respondents. Thus, Group I consists of 48 non-attendees of NFE programs henceforth called in this study as not trained respondents; Group 2 consists of 48 slightly trained learners, and Group 3 consists of 48 highly trained learners. Not trained respondents were those who have never attended any training under the DepEd NFE program. Slightly trained respondents were those who trained only once in any DepEd NFE Program from 1995 to 2000. Likewise, highly trained respondents were those who had participated in three trainings or more within 1995 to 2000.

Data Collection

The Interview Schedule developed for this particular study to measure modernity was patterned mainly from the Overall Modernity (OM) Scale of Inkeles (1974). Inkeles (1969) has successfully used the scale in a study of adult men in six counties. The Short Form 12 of the OM was tested in the Philippines by Flores (1977).

The instrument measured the following attitudinal-behavioral dimensions for which substantial inputs were provided by NFE training; active public participation; aspirations; planning valuation; readiness to accept social change; technology valuation and time valuation.

Meanwhile the "Individual Respondent's Level of Living Scale" adapted from Dabuet (1990) was used to determine the socio-economic level of respondents.

Data Analysis

Data analysis and interpretation was done at the State Polytechnic College of Palawan (now Western Philippine University).

The socioeconomic level of the respondents was determined on the basis of four items or indicators, namely: 1) ownership of house and lot, 2) type of house, 3) ownership of household possession, and 4) annual income. The Kruskall Wallis test was used to test the differences between mean scores of the three groups with regards to age, years of formal, schooling, and socio-economic level of respondents.

The Wilcoxon Rank-Sum (WRS) test of difference in means for two independent samples was used to determine whether there were significant differences in modernity between two comparison groups.

The overall modernity score was the sum of scores obtained by the respondents for the different modernity dimensions. The following Overall Modernity Scale was used to determine the modernity level of the respondents;

45 - 80 = most traditional
81 - 116 = more traditional
117-152 = moderate (somewhat modern)
153 - 188 = more modern
189-225 = most modem

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

All the respondents in the three comparison groups are males, rice farmers, and had closely similar socio-economic characteristics. The respondents ages range from *25* to 45 years old with a mean age of 36.06 years old, the most productive years of their life years of formal schooling ranged from 0 to 6 six years and most of them reached only Grade IV.

Indicators of socio-economic level of living included house and lot ownership, durability of house, household possession and annual income. The average income was PhP13, 500.00, an indicator that most of the participants were living below the threshold of poverty. Although socio-economic level of highly

trained respondents was categorized under high level of living while those of slightly trained and not trained respondents were under low level of living, they did not differ significantly in age, years of formal schooling, and socio-economic level.

Participation in DepEd NFE Training Programs

Each slightly trained respondents had attended only one of the Basic Literacy Classes cum livelihood skills and values formation. On the other hand, aside from Basic Literacy Classes, all highly trained respondents had attended three or more NFE training programs, which included Basic Literacy Classes. Other training/classes attended by highly trained respondents included literacy class on Math, Literacy class (Reading), Literacy class (Writing), basket weaving, electronics, farmers training, wood carving, paralegal seminar, welding technology and leadership training.

Modernity Differences

The WRS test revealed that there were highly significantly differences in modernity among the not trained, slightly trained and highly trained respondents. Specifically, the three groups differed significantly in almost all modernity dimensions such as active public participation (both attitudinal and behavioral) readiness to accept social change, openness to new experience, educational and occupational aspirations, openness to new experience, planning valuation, technology valuation, and time valuation (Table 1.). Although they did not differ significantly in efficacy, the highly trained still had the highest mean scores in this dimension.

The highly trained respondent differed significantly from the slightly trained respondent in some modernity dimensions such as active public participation (both attitudinal and behavioral), educational aspiration. readiness td social change, openness to new experience and technology valuation (behavioral dimension only). These results imply that exposure to more DepEd NFE training programs made the respondents more modern in the aforementioned dimensions.

The character of the slightly trained respondents approximates that of the highly trained especially in openness to new experience, technology valuation (attitudinal), efficacy, and time valuation.

As it emerged from this study, the character of the highly-trained farmer contrasted strongly from that of the never-trained in almost all dimensions except

Table 1. Modernity mean scores between comparison groups.

Modernity Dimensions	Group			Group			Group		
	Not Trained (n=48)	Slightly Trained (n=48)	P	Not Trained (n=48)	Highly Trained (n=48)	P	Slightly Trained (n=48)	Highly Trained (n=48)	P
Purely Attitudinal Items									
Active Public Participation	03.87	04.89	.003**	03.87	05.79	.000**	04.89	05.79	.024*
Aspirations									
Educational	12.45	13.08	.071ns	12.85	13.83	.000**	13.08	13.83	.009**
Occupational	01.60	02.21	.064ns	01.60	02.54	.002**	02.21	02.54	.255ns
Efficacy	15.33	15.45	.705ns	15.33	16.37	.284ns	15.45	16.37	.105ns
Openness to New Experiences	14.58	15.08	.784ns	14.58	17.50	.039*	15.08	17.50	.007**
Planning Valuation	06.83	07.83	.041*	06.83	08.16	.006**	07.83	08.16	.674ns
Readiness to Social Change	19.97	21.83	.050*	19.98	24.33	.000**	21.83	24.33	.012*
Technology Valuation	14.22	16.89	.000**	14.23	16.87	.000**	16.89	16.87	.878ns
Time Valuation	09.87	12.50	.000**	9.875	11.98	.000**	11.50	11.98	.130ns
Behavior-Information Items									
Active Public Participation	10.08	12.21	.003**	10.08	15.87	.000**	12.21	15.87	.000**
Technology Valuation	20.05	22.25	.033*	20.05	27.21	.000**	22.25	27.21	.000**
OVERALL MODERNITY SCORE	121	143.25	.000**	121	160.47	.000**	143.25	160.47	.000**
Adjectival Rating	Somewhat Modern	Somewhat Modern		Somewhat Modern	More Modern		Moderate	More Modern	

Legend: P - Probability
ns - Not Significant
* - Significant
** - Highly Significant

in efficacy in the sense that the former took active involvement in public affairs, and ready for new ideas and experiences. As a citizen, the highly trained respondent manifested more degree of concern in the resolution of some public issues arising not only from his dignity and rights of persons dependent on or subordinate to him. He tended to use formal rules as a basis for running thing

Openness to new experience was manifested by respondents' willingness to meet new people and to move to a new place. This was also suggested in his desire to be the first to try new birth control methods.

That the trained respondent valued planning was shown in his preference for planning moves in advance and in his belief that the man who plans ahead encounters less problems and difficulties. Moreover, his readiness for social change was shown by his respect for the dignity and rights of persons dependent on or subordinate to him. He tended to use formal rules as basis for running things. Moreover, he had an admirable sense of time and could be expected to work according to time schedules.

A highly trained respondent valued technology and applied it if circumstances allow it. Results of this study had shown that he had gained considerable knowledge and skills on modern farming.

The WRS test of differences in means for two independent samples showed that differences in overall modernity mean score among three comparison groups are significant at $\alpha = .01$ level indicating that the amount of training had positively affected modernity of the respondents. The findings of this study that participation in DepEd trainings helped raise the farmer's public awareness and involvement, made him more open and ready to social and technological changes, emboldened his resolve to meet challenges and improved his lot in life indicated that DepEd NEE programs had made respondents more modern in their outlook of life.

Recommendations

On account of the significant findings and conclusions of the research, the following are recommended for improvement of DepEd NFE training programs:

1. Intensification of values education program through participatory approach. DepEd NEE implementers should push for identification of desirable traditional Filipino values and enhancement blended with the needs of a changing society for appropriate work ethics, increased productivity, and self-discipline

2. Strengthening of the existing linkages and forging development institutions to operate together to supplant strongly embedded not only in the learner's personality community new alliances among rural unwanted values and behavior but also in the culture of his

3. Strengthening of partnership between school and LGU's to foster vigorous support by the government through allocation of appropriations especially for much needed infrastructure, equipment and personnel in the local and provincial budget.

4. Integration of learning experiences into training programs which teach values of efficacy and openness to new experiences

5. Scope of training should include clientele's influential microenvironment- his wife and children so that, together they could acquire the modern attitudes and behavior necessary for better quality of life.

6. Training site should be made more accessible and more consideration should be given on the traditional culture of tribal groups of Palawan and their migration patterns before establishing the training site.

7. Conduct of other studies using other measures or indicators of modernity including their positive and negative effect of environment concerns.

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