

The relevance of school education to the needs of industry in Swaziland

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ABSTRACT

Employers in Swaziland have often complained about the country's education system in that it does not provide the required knowledge, skills and attitudes that are needed by both public and private sector, and thus the need that it be reformed. The objectives of this study were:

- (a) To find out what employers understand by a relevant education system, and the skills, attitudes and behavior that they require from the graduates.
- (b) To find out if the schools and colleges in the country do provide such relevant education, and
- (c) If they do not (from the employer's perspective) find out where they were failing.

A researcher-designed questionnaire was used to collect information from the employers. A stratified random sampling procedure was used to select the industries that were included in the sample. A large number of the completed questionnaires, i.e. 72% came from parastatal organizations and private sector. The results were that only 9.4% of the employers said the education given was highly relevant, 65.6% said it was relevant, 3.1% did not know, and 21.9% said that it was not relevant. The employers indicated that the major weaknesses of the system were that it lacked practical and technical skills and that it did not provide the students with good attitudes towards work. On the positive side, most of the employers indicated that the schools were doing a good job in teaching academic subjects and communication skills.

The conclusion drawn from the findings of the study was that it was necessary that a forum should be created where employers and educators will meet and discuss what needs to be done to make the education system more relevant to the needs of industry. The study further points out the huge potential of using distance education the gaps in the education of the workers.

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