TOWARDS A HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING AND ADULT EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS ON ADULT EDUCATORS

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About SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG)

Established 3 Oct 2016

Statutory board under Ministry of Education

SSG Includes:

- Drive and coordinate SkillsFuture movement
- Build a robust CET system
Desired Outcomes in the Long Term

- A strong culture of lifelong learning supporting the pursuit of skills mastery
- Integrated, high-quality and responsive education and training system
- Employer recognition of skills and ownership of skills development
Overview of TAE Landscape Study

OBJECTIVES

1. Collect baseline information on Training & Adult Education (TAE) sector

2. Inform government policies and initiatives on TAE practices and TAE sector development

RQ1: Kinds of TAE providers and their key characteristics and business model

RQ2: TAE professionals and their profiles

RQ3: Beliefs and practices in designing, developing and delivering TAE programmes

RQ4: Challenges

RQ5: Perception of TAE-related policies and initiatives and impact on their practices and development
Participants

1. TAE Providers

Training organisations and companies that TAE professionals work in. They provide adult continuing education and training as main business, but exclude: enrichment or tutoring centres, music/art schools, private education institutions that offer pre-employment education and degree program, and sports training.

CEOs or Top Management Representatives:
- Associations & Professional Bodies’ Training Arms/ Functions
- Business Consulting Training Organisations
- Company Training Units
- Post Secondary Institutions such as polytechnic, ITE, Universities
- Private Education Institutes
- Public Sector Training Institutions such as Civil Service College
- WSQ Approved Training Organisations

2. TAE Professionals

**Adult Educators:**
Involved in direct activities of development and training for the continuing education and training of the workforce, which may include analysis, design, development, facilitation and assessment.

**Training Managers:**
Manage a training institution which includes the management of programmes, curriculum, assessment, training resources, manpower, learning systems, quality assurance, compliance and administration.

**Human Resource Developers:**
Involved in the design and conduct of research to inform practice and policy formulation, development and implementation of competency frameworks and models, courseware quality accreditation and audit and employment facilitation.
As analysis is still on-going, this presentation focuses on findings relating to adult educators only.

1. Adult Educators’ key roles and their profiles
2. Qualifications and skills of Adult Educators
3. Professional Development of Adult Educators
ADULT EDUCATORS (n=535)

Top Combinations for AEs with major role in “training facilitation”

- Assessment (53.4%, n=141)
- Curriculum development (42.8%, n=113)
- Training/learning needs analysis (26.9%, n=71)

70.8% of AEs performed multiple job roles

Functional Roles
## Types of Adult Educators (AEs)

### 2 Main Types of AEs, based on Level of Training Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of AE</th>
<th>Full-Timers 40.8% (n=218) + Freelancers 29.5% (n=158) = 70.3% (n=376)</th>
<th>Industry Practitioners 21.5% (n=115)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training Involvement</td>
<td>Training is <strong>Primary Role</strong></td>
<td>Training is <strong>Secondary Role</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Arrangement</td>
<td>Hold a <strong>Full-time</strong> position in a TAE company, including business owners or sole proprietors</td>
<td>Hold a part-time position or contracted as a <strong>Freelancer</strong> or adjunct in a TAE company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: There were 44 AEs were categorized as “others”: e.g., retired, currently not working but seeking for TAE related work, maternity leave, etc.
The TAE Organisations AEs Work in

These organizations provide a wide range of programmes, covering both private and public sector and stretch from PET (Pre-employment Training) to TAE.

More than 80% of the TAE organisations hire less than 50 employees. Majority are locally owned and a sizeable proportion have branches or representative offices in other countries outside Singapore.

### FIRM SIZE

- **1 - 9**: 45.8% (n=108)
- **10 - 49**: 36% (n=85)
- **50 - 99**: 9.7% (n=23)
- **100-199**: 3.0% (n=7)
- **≥ 200**: 5.5% (n=13)

### LOCAL OWNERSHIP

- **Local**: 93.6%
- **Overseas**: 6.4%

### INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

- **No**: 29.6%
- **Yes**: 70.4%

Many training providers fell into more than one category. We found 88 combinations and presented those with more than 5 TPs in this graph. 12 TAE centres in the Institutes for Higher Education (IHLs) were scatter across the groups.
Reasons for Joining the TAE Sector

1. **Passion for TAE**
   - 64.5%, n=345
   - 51.3%, n=59
   - 70.3%, n=111
   - 70.2%, n=153

2. **To expand and diversify skills & knowledge**
   - 40%, n=214
   - 45.2%, n=52
   - 42.4%, n=67
   - 35.3%, n=77

3. **Had the credentials / qualifications for TAE**
   - 32.5%, n=174
   - 33.9%, n=39
   - 38.6%, n=61
   - 28.0%, n=61

4. **Career switch**
   - 29.9%, n=160
   - 24.4%, n=28
   - 33.5%, n=53
   - 28.4%, n=62

5. **Flexible working hours**
   - 29.3%, n=157
   - 25.2%, n=29
   - 50.6%, n=80
   - 17.0%, n=37

6. **Good pay**
   - 12.5%, n=67
   - 8.7%, n=10
   - 13.9%, n=22
   - 15.1%, n=33

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1. Passion stood out to be the key reason why most AEs joined the TAE sector.

2. It seemed AEs view TAE as an open industry that offered opportunities for second career and work-life balance.

3. Good pay was not viewed as a big incentive.
Majority of the AEs were quite experienced, with more than 4/5 of them having working experience in other sectors or are currently still doing some industry related work. However, the currency of their domain knowledge may be a concern.

### TAE Work Experience by Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>&lt;2 years</th>
<th>2-4 years</th>
<th>5-9 years</th>
<th>&gt;=10 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34 yrs old</td>
<td>11.9%, n=59</td>
<td>31.6%, n=156</td>
<td>26.3%, n=130</td>
<td>30.2%, n=149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54 yrs old</td>
<td>15.5%, n=24</td>
<td>53.5%, n=83</td>
<td>13.1%, n=17</td>
<td>62.4%, n=93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-84 yrs old</td>
<td>31.0%, n=48</td>
<td>66.2%, n=86</td>
<td>20.8%, n=27</td>
<td>3.4%, n=5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Years in TAE sector (mean)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Full-Timers</th>
<th>Part-time / Freelancers</th>
<th>Industry Practitioners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years in TAE sector (mean)</td>
<td>7.7 years</td>
<td>7.7 years</td>
<td>8.4 years</td>
<td>6.7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of AE with Industry Experience</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualifications of AEs

Overall, AEs were highly educated and pedagogically qualified, in terms of academic and training qualifications obtained.

**HIGHEST QUALIFICATION ATTAINED**

- **Over 90% of AEs are PMEs**

**AE TRAINING QUALIFICATION* ATTAINED**

- 85% of AEs attained at least one training qualification.

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Note: *Training qualifications include Workplace Training Programme (WTP), the Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA), Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education (DACE); and the Specialist Diploma in Advanced Facilitation (SDAF) for training facilitators, or equivalent qualifications.

Other training qualifications include: Graduate diploma in teaching and development, IATA instructor certificate, Certified Workplace Learning Specialist, etc.

Trainer/Assessor & Curriculum Developer top combinations for those have more than 1 training qualification: ACTA + DACE, WTP + ACTA, ACTA + Others
Measuring AE Qualification Mismatch

Self-Reported Academic Qualifications and Requirement
- “If applying your job today, what would be the usual academic qualifications be required?”

Over-qualified
34.8%, n=166
Current education is higher than required by job

Well-matched
49.9%, n=238
Current education is the same as that required by job

Under-qualified
15.3%, n=73
Current education is lower than required by job

There were signs of over-education for the AEs. One possible consequence would be a waste of skills.

Self-Reported Training Qualifications and Requirement
- “If applying your job today, what would the usual training qualifications be required?”

WTP
83%, n=362
ACTA
76%, n=334
DACE
67%, n=294
SDAF
89%, n=391

8%, n=36
11%, n=50
7%, n=32
2%, n=9
9%, n=39
12%, n=53
25%, n=111
8%, n=37

Underqualified
Well-matched
Over-qualified
**AEs’ Self-reported Skills Proficiency**

**TOP SKilled Areas**
Consistent across all three groups of AEs, AEs appeared more proficient in generic skills and traditional classroom mode of training.

- **Subject fields** (mean=4)
- **Teamwork** (mean=3.9)
- **Communication** (mean=3.9)
- **Problem-solving** (mean=3.9)
- **Facilitation (Classroom)** (mean=3.8)

**LEAST SKilled Areas**
Consistent across all three groups of AEs, AEs appeared least proficient in tech-enabled learning, entrepreneurship and learning analytics.

1 = Not proficient, 2 = Somewhat proficient, 3 = Proficient, 4 = Slightly more proficient than required, 5 = Much more proficient than required.

**MOSt IMPORTANT AREAS**
The top important skills were similar to the skills that AEs were most proficient in.

- **Communication** (85.7%, n=402)
- **Subject fields** (85.5%, n=401)
- **Leadership** (78.3%, n=367)
- **Problem-solving** (81.9%, n=384)
- **Industry Expertise** (81.4%, n=382)

**LEAST IMPORTANT AREAS**
The skills reported as least important or not applicable were also the areas that AEs were least proficient in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Most Important Areas</th>
<th>Least Important Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>25.8%, n=121</td>
<td>23.2%, n=109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment (Tech-enabled Learning)</td>
<td>25.8%, n=121</td>
<td>23.2%, n=109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum (Tech-enabled Learning)</td>
<td>24.9%, n=117</td>
<td>18.8%, n=88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Analytics</td>
<td>22.6%, n=106</td>
<td>19.0%, n=89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation (Tech-enabled Learning)</td>
<td>21.9%, n=111</td>
<td>16.8%, n=79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Not proficient
- Somewhat proficient
- Proficient
- Slightly more proficient than required
- Much more proficient than required
- NA
Measuring Skills Mismatch

Self-Reported Skills Proficiency and Requirement

“Do you feel that you have the skills to cope with more demanding duties than those you are required to perform in your current job?”

- **Under-utilised**: 64.7%, n=346
  - Unable to cope with my existing duties
- **Well-matched**: 32%, n=171
  - Able to cope with my existing duties but not beyond
- **Under-skilled**: 3.4%, n=18
  - Able to cope with more demanding duties than I currently have

- **AEs reported under-utilized in their domain knowledge, generic skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork.**
- **Better work design is needed to fully utilise their skills and capabilities.**
Moving Forward: AE Development Matrix

Support for Developing AEs:
- 86% of the developing AEs require support on pedagogy expertise
- Intervention is needed if we were to move these developing AEs to be strong in both domain and pedagogy.
  - Top areas of continuous professional development needed by developing AEs are: curriculum development for blended learning and tech-enabled learning and pedagogy in general; yet a sizable proportion (40%) of them do not have any plan for CPD in these areas.
  - Top barriers for professional development are: expensive / unaffordable programmes, conflicts with work schedule, and no incentives such as no promotion opportunities for participation.
Summary

- Over 70% of TAE professionals performed multiple roles in their work.

- Adult Educators seemed to be qualified in both academic qualifications and training qualifications. At least 2/3 were well-matched in their training qualification requirements.

- AEs’ were quite passionate about working in the TAE sector.

- At this moment, AEs in general seem to be proficient in both domain and pedagogy competencies. However, domain currency could be at risk in the long run as 2/3 of the AEs are not currently working in the industry. Gaps may widen between the pedagogically more proficient and less proficient groups.

- AEs’ least skilled areas remained in tech-enable learning.

- Intervention is needed to move the developing AEs to be strong in both pedagogy and domain areas.
Research to Inform TAE Policy and Development

Findings are useful inputs to policy makers to inform the review and development of TAE related policies and initiatives, and roll out well calibrated interventions where necessary. Results also provide information on the design of necessary professional development programmes for the Adult Educators.

- Support development of the TAE Skills Framework
- Provide monitoring indicators for the TAE Industry Transformation Map
- Inform capability development and professionalization of Adult Educators
Invitation to Feedback and Exchange

- Do you have any questions or feedback to the findings presented?
- How different or similar are the profiles of Adult Educators in your contexts/countries?
- What are the methods used in similar studies conducted in your/other contexts/countries?

We are happy to explore possible opportunities to conduct comparative studies / cross analysis.
THANK YOU

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