



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN FORCE ACCOUNT IMPLEMENTATION IN TANGA CITY COUNCIL

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Abstract:

The correlation between force account project implementation and skills development among Local Government Authorities in Tanzania including the Tanga City Council (TCC) is scantily explored. This study aimed to evaluate the impact of force account implementation on skills development in TCC. There is no availability of empirical evidence of skills development from force account implementation in the study area. A convenience sampling technique was used to obtain sample size while a structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive statistics was applied to present the findings. The findings show that 96.2% of the labour forces employed under force account projects have acquired new skills in masonry (35.2%), plumbing (14.1%), carpentry (8.6%), electrical work (8.6%), and leadership (9.4%). The study finds that most labour forces acquired new skills and commonly masonry. The study recommended that policymakers and other stakeholders integrate the locally available labour force with reliable soft skills.

Keywords:

Skills Development, Force Account, Implementation, Tanga City Council

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Force account project implementation has emerged as a significant avenue for skills development particularly within the realm of construction (Heggie, 2022). In this context, indigenous workers are employed directly and indirectly which, in turn, elevates their practical skills (UNDP, 2024). Although the force account projects are designed to offer practical training and hands-on experience, existing literature suggests a disparity in outcomes based on participants' initial skill levels across regions worldwide. While some studies highlight the enhancement of pre-existing skills among more experienced individuals, there is limited information regarding the efficacy of these projects for those who start with minimal or relevant skills (Mwangungulu, 2023 & Hussain et al, 2020). This knowledge gap presents a critical area of exploration, especially in determining whether these projects are adequately equipped to support and upgrade skills acquisition for unskilled workers.

In Tanzania, the adoption of the force account method has seen a significant rise, particularly among various Local Government Authorities (LGAs) (Matto, 2021). As of 2021, LGAs executed a total number of 24,308 force account projects. Whether these projects upgraded the skills of the employed Indigenous labour force is the focus question of exploration. The force account projects undertaken in the country have yielded notable success stories, particularly in the construction of vital infrastructures such as classrooms, health centres and toilets for several primary schools in the Coast Region, including Mitengwe, Kitonga Mango, Boga and Mapoja (Matto, 2021). As a result, these projects have a significant effect on the local communities addressing critical human needs and

improving access to essential services. It is therefore of interest to evaluate the contribution of force account in skills development in Tanzania.

Force account implementation involves directly hiring local workers for construction and maintenance projects, particularly in regions with high unemployment rates (Mfugale, 2022). The implementation of force account projects was designed implicitly to provide workers with the opportunity to develop a variety of skills such as technical skills, team collaboration skills, problem-solving skills and administrative skills, especially for individuals lacking formal education or training (Waris et al., 2022). Acquiring new relevant skills and experience through force account projects improves individuals' prospects for future employment opportunities while also contributing to broader community development goals by investing in infrastructure and public facilities (Mbabazi and Mugurusi, 2016).

The report by the Controller and Auditor General (CAG) indicated that in 2022/2023, Tanga City Council (TCC) has implemented various construction projects particularly, in sectors such as education, healthcare, and community markets through force account (URT, 2024). In the financial year of 2023/24, TCC allocated a total of TZS 10 billion towards force accounts projects. However, nothing much has been done within the council to make the skilled development empirical evidence from force account projects available. It is within this scope, therefore, this study sought to analyse the effect of force account implementation on skills development in TCC, Tanzania.

1.2. Gap of the study

Force account implementation presents opportunities for direct employment and skill development, but there remains a gap in understanding its actual effect on skills enhancement among workers within the council's jurisdiction. Literature highlights the potential benefits of force account implementation on new skills development among workers in the construction sector (Macharia, Banzi, and Changalima, 2023; Matto, 2021; Mbabazi and Mugurusi, 2016). Nevertheless, there is less evidence on the effect of the use of force account on skills development among workers in various sectors in the country and specifically to TCC.

1.3. Scope of the study

The study evaluated the dynamics of force account implementation in TCC, focusing on understanding how force accounts are implemented within a distinct local context, shedding light on the effect of force account implementation on employment and skill development (Saire, 2023).

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in the following ways. First, the study assesses the effect of force account implementation on skills development in TCC. Second, the study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of force account implementation as a strategy for addressing unemployment and promoting skills development in urban areas of Tanzania, specifically in TCC. The findings from this study inform policymakers, administrators, development practitioners, and local authorities about the strengths of force account projects in upgrading skill development programs.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1. Human Capital Theory

The theory posits that formal education and training significantly enhance workforce skills and employability (Beker, 1975). Wedchayanon (1995) highlights that employees are valuable assets that should be developed alongside advanced technology. This theory emphasizes job training and skill improvement which reflects the study's aim.

2.2. Empirical Studies

Hussain (2020) highlighted that unskilled labourers adversely affect project performance. Corroborating this claim Almendarez (2013) emphasized the need for skilled and experienced workers to uplift Indigenous labour while using force account in project implementation. Similarly, Elmezain et al. (2021) underscored the importance of supervisors paying attention to labour skill requirements during hiring. Studies such as Fashina et al. (2021) and Osel-Asibey (2021) revealed that 67.2% of the construction workforce is unskilled in Ghana. The preference for labour-intensive methods among local contractors is driven by cost considerations (Grum et al., 2023). In Tanzania, Tekka (2017)

reported a lack of gender balance in the labour force and noted that most local skilled labour were men. Hence Maqbool (2024) revealed that a shortage of skilled labour affects negatively project execution (Maqbool et al., 2024). Staff competency is crucial for the success of the force account approach in construction (Enshassi et al., 2007). Training initiatives are beneficial, as local skilled labourers who received training reported improved management skills (Doerr and Novella, 2024). However, challenges persist, including inadequate procurement processes and a lack of understanding of public procurement procedures (Matto, 2021). These issues lead to cost overruns and project delays, exacerbated by poor communication, scope changes and insufficient allocations (Daoud et al., 2023). Notably, effective supplier skills emerged as the most influential factor, significantly contributing to the timely completion of the projects (Masi et al., 2013). The reviewed empirical studies highlighted the significance of skilled labour, training, and management in the force account method. However, a notable research gap exists in exploring the long-term impact of continuous skill development programmes on project deficiency which this study will focus on also.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1) investigations emphasize the importance of skill enhancement initiatives within force account project implementation, underscoring their contribution to workforce capacity building (Mbabazi and Mugurusi, 2016).

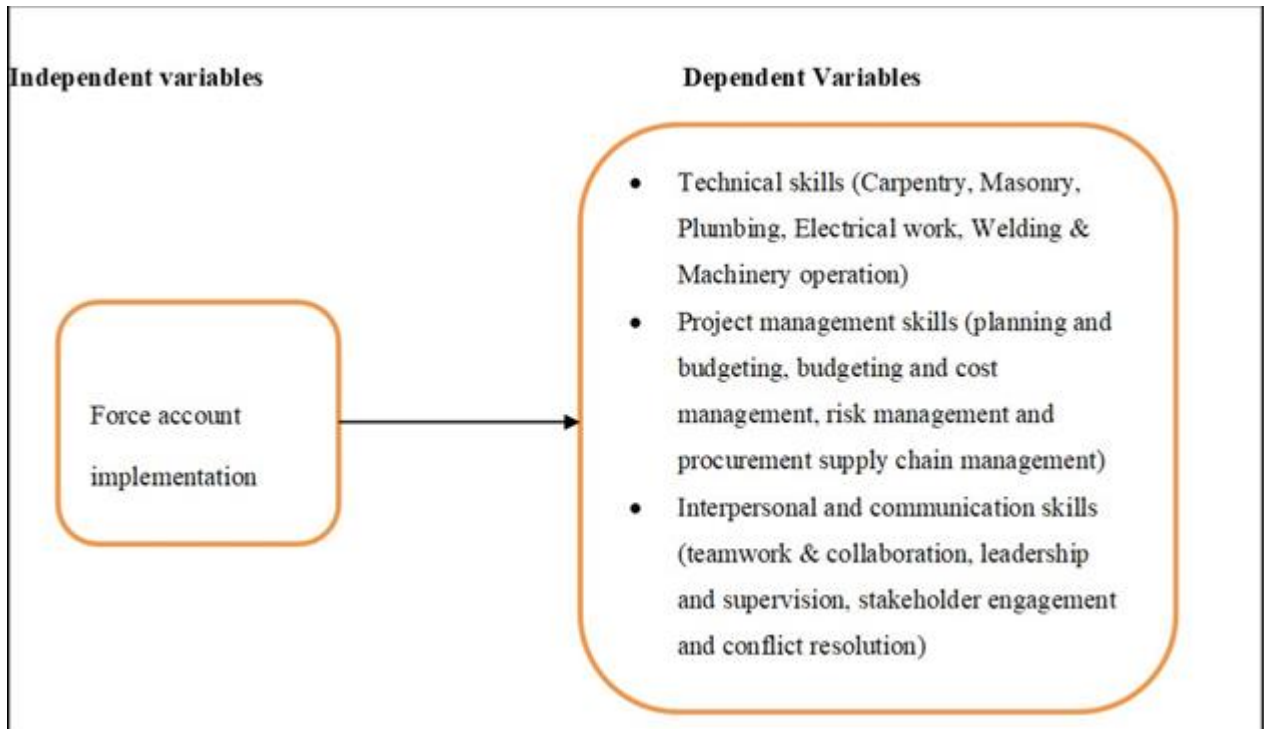


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of study

3. Methodology

3.1. Study area

This study was conducted at TCC, which is one of eleven administrative districts of the Tanga region in Tanzania. The TCC covers an area of 596.5 km² which includes the historic city of Tanga and the port of Tanga (Figure 2). According to the 2022 census, the district has a total population of 393,429 (NBS, 2022). TCC was a suitable study area due to its alignment with broader development goals and potential for generating insights applicable to similar contexts. Also, conducting the study at TCC reduced the cost and time of research as the researcher works in the council.

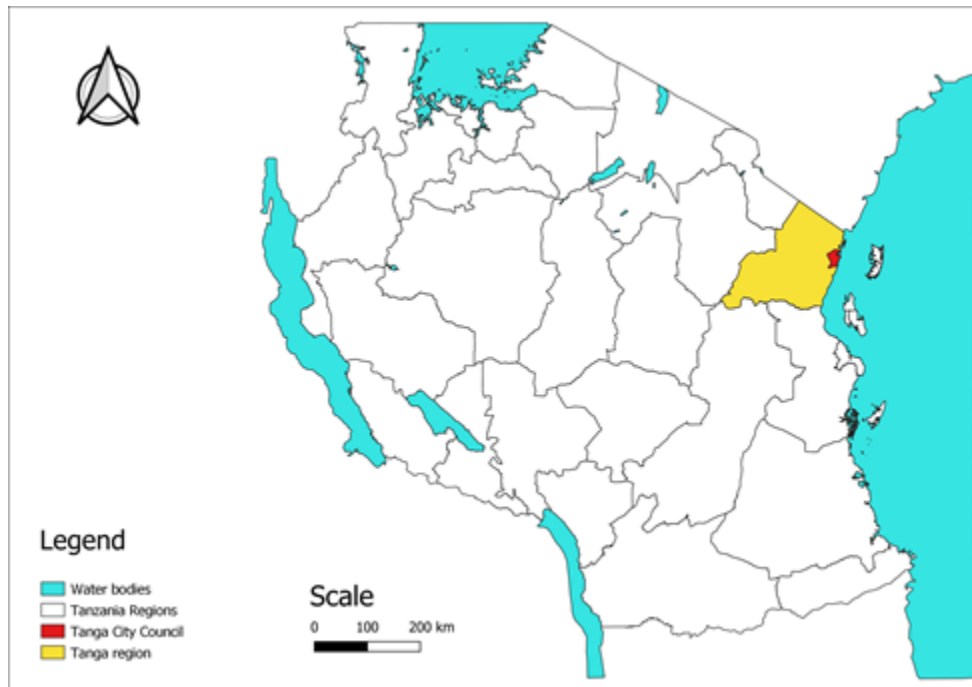


Figure 2: Shows the Study Site

3.2. Study design

This study adopted a case study research design due to its in-depth description and analysis of a singular situation and also, has contextual analysis by examining similar situations in other organizations (Matto, 2021). The quantitative research method was used to investigate the effect of force account on the skills development of projects undertaken by the TCC.

3.3 Study population

The target population of this study included workers across various job roles around TCC such as labourers, local contractors, supervisors and managers enriching the understanding of the skills development of the force account implementation context in TCC.

3.4. Sampling and sample size

The convenience sampling technique was employed to obtain 133 respondents from local workers working in the force account project model (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016). The sample size of this study was 133 respondents (Table 1). The (Kirkwood and Sterne, 2003) formula was used to obtain the study sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n - The sample size

N – Study Population

Error estimate (e) = 5%

$$n = \frac{200}{1 + 200(0.05)^2} = 133$$

Table 1: Distribution of the study respondents

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Labourers	132	76.7
Local contractors	12	8.8
Supervisors	16	12.0
Managers	2	1.5
Total	133	100.0

3.5. Data collection

The structured questionnaires were used to collect data from 133 respondents. The closed-ended questions with predefined response options enabled the quantification and measurement skills that local workers gained during the force account project implementation (Boatman, 2015).

3.6. Data analysis

The collected quantitative data played a pivotal role in insights into the phenomena under investigation (Dehalwar et al., 2023). To ensure systematic and efficient analysis, the researchers utilized the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 as an analytical tool for quantitative data analysis (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021). The SPSS is a widely recognized and user-friendly software application designed for statistical analysis in the social sciences (Karamurugan & Govindarajan, 2023). Its versatile capabilities make it a valuable tool for researchers aiming to interpret and draw meaningful conclusions from their data (Kotronoulas et al., 2023). SPSS facilitated both data entry and analysis, streamlining the entire research process (Rahman & Muktadir, 2021). Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the collected data (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni, 2019). The analysis was used to obtain frequencies, and percentages, of categorical variables. The proportions between variables were observed and the significance was considered at $p < 0.05$. The results were presented in tables and figures which served as a structure format for organizing and displaying numerical information, making it easier for readers to comprehend patterns and trends of the data.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in guiding the conduct of research, as highlighted by (Resnik, 2020) In this study, ethical guidelines were followed to ensure the proper conduct of research. Before commencing the study, the researcher sought permission to conduct research, obtaining approval from the supervisor and TCC. Additionally, all participants were fully informed about the research objectives, procedures, and their rights to participate or withdraw from the study at any point in time. Confidentiality of the participants' information was observed, and measures were taken to protect the privacy and anonymity of respondents.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Characteristics of the study respondents

Most of the respondents, 91/133 (68.4%) were under 35 and most of the respondents were males 113/133 (85.0%). With regards to the employment status, the majority 123/133 (92.5%) were employed for a short time while most of the respondents 83/133 (62.4%) were unskilled labour, semi-skilled labour 37/133 (27.8%) and only 13/133 (9.8%) were skilled labour (Table 2).

Table 2: Characteristics of the study respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age group		
≤ 35	91	68.4
>35	42	31.6
Sex		
Male	113	85.0
Female	20	15.0
Employment status		
Full time	11	7.5
Part-time	123	92.5
Job type in force account project		
Skilled labour	13	9.8
Semi-skilled labour	37	27.8
Unskilled labour	83	62.4

The characteristics of the respondents offer valuable insights into the demographics and employment patterns within the group. The studies showed that the majority of participants were under 35 years old. This suggests a predominantly young workforce, that consists of broader demographic trends in many developing countries, where a significant portion of the population (ILO, 2013). Younger individuals may be more inclined to seek employment in short-term or precarious positions, as they are often in the early stages of their careers and may have fewer financial responsibilities or long-term job opportunities (Zhong and Xu, 2023). Notable respondents were males. This gender disparity could reflect the nature of the employment opportunities in the force account project, which may be more physically demanding or traditionally male-dominated, such as construction or manual labour (ILO, 2011). The underrepresentation of women could also point to broader social and cultural factors that limit female respondents in certain labour market sectors (Tobergte and Curtis, 2013). A significant majority of the respondents were employed for a short time, this indicates a high level of job insecurity (Castro-Castañeda et al., 2023). Short-term employment could be linked to the project-based nature of the work, where jobs are available only for the duration of specific projects (Vento, 2023). The study findings indicate that most respondents reported being unskilled labourers, with few identifying as semi-skilled or skilled labourers. This distribution suggests that the workforce involved in these projects is predominantly composed of individuals with limited formal training or specialized skills. This may reflect broader education and economic conditions, where access to training and education are limited, leading to a larger pool of unskilled labour (Hussain et al., 2020).

4.2. Skills development

4.2.1. Possession of skills before and during involving in the force account project

The study found that about 63.2% of respondents had already possessed some relevant skills before starting the project. Again, it was revealed that about 96.2% of respondents managed to develop their skills alongside the implementation of the force account. On the other hand, about 36.8% of respondents were enrolled in a project without the relevant skills. However, only a small fraction of 3.8% gained new skills through their involvement in the project. The findings are indicated in Figure 3.

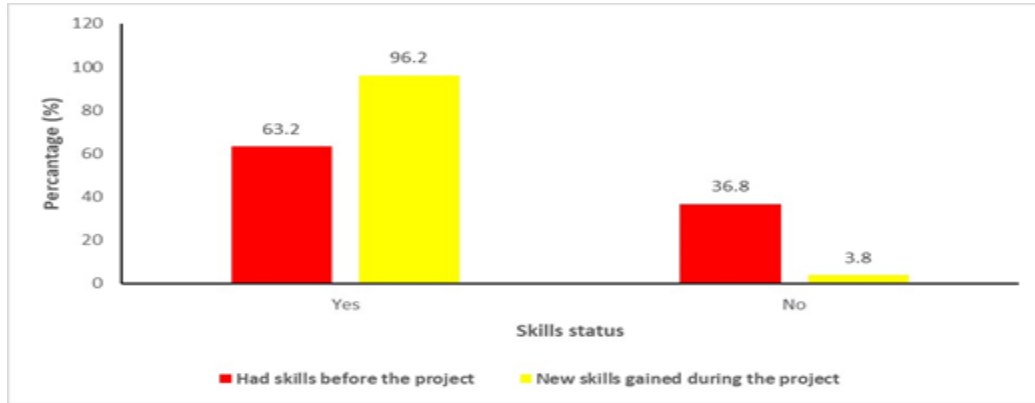


Figure 3: The red bar represents who had skills before the project while the yellow bars represent who gained new skills

The study provides valuable insights into the skills development outcomes associated with respondents in force account projects. These findings have implications for workforce development, particularly in the context of force account projects serving as a platform for enhancing existing skills and acquiring new ones. A significant majority of respondents entered the project with some relevant skills, and an overwhelming proportion of these individuals managed to further develop their skill sets through the project. This implies that force account projects are effective in enhancing existing skills, particularly for those who already possess a certain level of competence (Mwangungulu, 2023). On the other hand, few respondents started the project without relevant skills and only very few of them managed to acquire new skills. This suggests that while the project is highly beneficial for those with prior skills, it may not be as effective for unskilled individuals looking to acquire new competencies (Hussain et al., 2020). This could point to a need for targeted training programs within such projects to better support skill acquisition among unskilled workers (Crepon et al., 2023).

4.2.2. Newly gained skills

Moreover, Figure 4 highlights the new skills acquired by participants through their involvement in force account projects. The most newly gained skill with 35.2% of the respondents acquired masonry skills, making it the most prevalent new learned during the project. 14.1% of respondents learned to plumb, marking it as the second most common skill gained. Leadership and conflict resolution skills were 9.4% then, followed by electric work at 8.6% matching in percentage with carpentry. Teamwork newly gained skills were 7.8%, while machinery operator, planning and budgeting, risk management, and colouring gained new skills each was 1.6%.

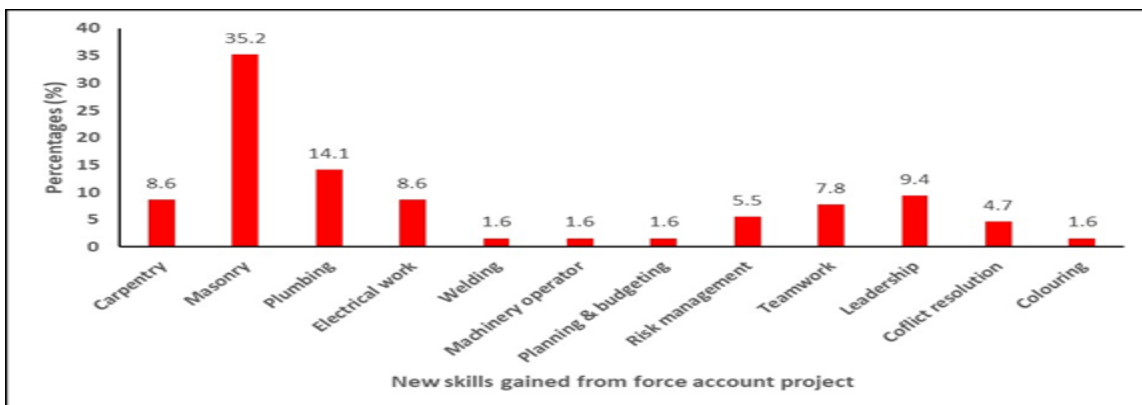


Figure 4: Shows type of new skills gained by study respondents due to working on the force account project

The study findings revealed that masonry was the most commonly acquired new skill followed by plumbing in the study area. This suggests that the force account projects may have a strong focus on construction-related tasks (Enshassi et al., 2007). Then plumbing follows as the second most newly gained skill but still a significant skill area, likely critical for infrastructure projects (Prabhashwara et al., 2022). Skills such as leadership, conflict resolution, electrical work, and carpentry acquired by smaller yet meaningful portions of participants indicate the projects' versatility and employability (Adham, 2023). The lower percentages for teamwork, machinery operation, planning and budgeting, risk management, and coloring suggest niche skill development, possibly due to fewer project opportunities in these sections' areas.

4.2.3. Effectiveness of the newly gained skills

Looking at whether respondents' newly gained skills were effective for their duties or future careers, the study came up with the findings as summarised in Figure 5. The effectiveness of the newly gained skills was ranked on a scale ranging from “Very effective” to “Very ineffective”, with corresponding percentages of who rated their new skills within each category. The majority, 67.4% of the respondents, ranked the newly gained skills as “Very effective”, while 28.0% of the respondents ranked their newly gained skills as “Effective”. A small percentage (3.0%) of the respondents ranked the effectiveness of their new skills as “Neutral”. Also, only (0.8%) ranked the skills as “Ineffective”, and an equally small percentage (0.8%) ranked them as “Very ineffective”.

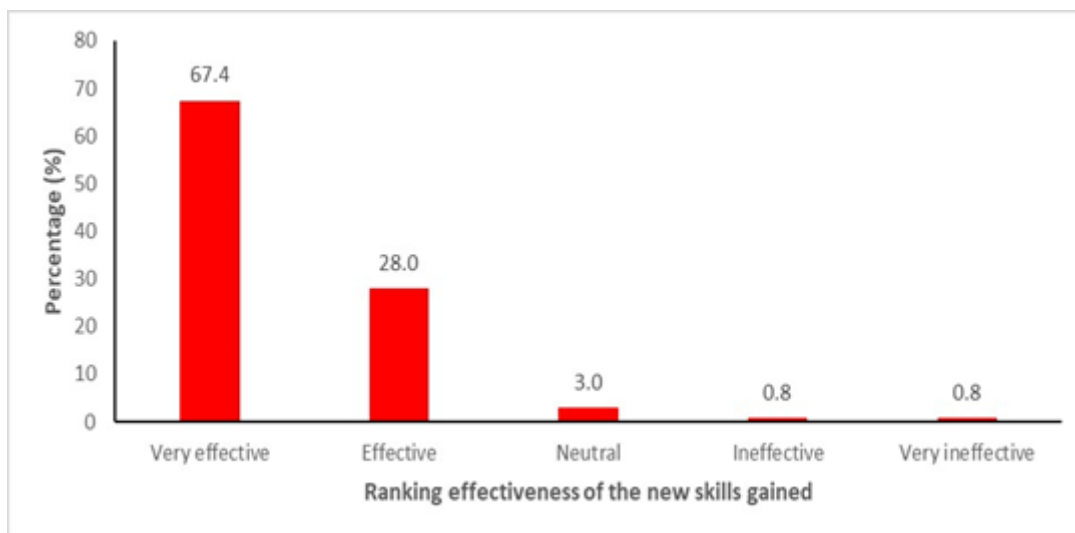


Figure 5: Shows levels of effectiveness of the newly gained skills

The effectiveness of the newly gained skills was rated highly by respondent with the majority of their skills as “Very effective”. This high level of perceived effectiveness suggests that the skills gained were relevant and practically applicable, thereby enhancing participants’ confidence in their new abilities (Khalil et al., 2023).

4.2.3. Proportions of newly gained skills by the study respondents

Table 3 presents the proportions of the newly gained skills among study respondents and their perceived effectiveness. The potential for future employment opportunities, and how these skills have been applied outside of the force account projects. The study found that the majority (95.5%) of the respondents indicated that they gained new skills through implementing force account and among them (97.0%) of the respondents believed that their newly gained skills were helpful for employment in the future. Also, more than 98.4% of the respondents who have used their new skills outside of the force account projects reported gaining new skills. Yet there was a statistically significant difference in whether the respondents have used their new skills outside of the projects ($p < 0.001$). The majority (97.7%) of respondents who used their new skills in new job opportunities reported gaining new skills and there was a statically significant difference in the places where respondents used their new skills ($p < 0.001$).

Table 3: Shows the proportions of newly gained skills by the study respondents

Variable	Newly gained skills		Total n (%)	P-value
	Yes n (%)	No (%)		
Effectiveness of the new skills				
Very effective	85 (95.5)	4 (4.5)	89 (67.4)	0.737
Effective	37 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	37 (28.0)	
Neutral	4 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (3.0)	
Ineffective	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	
Very ineffective	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	
New skills will help in future employment opportunities				
Yes	127 (97.0)	4 (3.0)	131 (99.2)	0.859
No	1 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	
Application of new skills outside of force account				
Yes	125 (98.4)	2 (1.6)	127 (96.2)	<0.001
No	3 (60.0)	2 (40.0)	5 (3.8)	
Places new skills used				
New job opportunities	85 (97.7)	2 (2.3)	87 (65.4)	<0.001
Community projects	33 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	33 (24.8)	
Personal projects	10 (76.9)	3 (23.1)	13 (9.8)	

Given the success rate, future iterations of the programme could focus on enhancing and expanding the skills taught, ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and continues to meet the participants' evolving needs (Munna and Kalam, 2021). It may also be beneficial to explore the specific types of skills gained and their direct impact on participants' professional or personal lives. Additionally, most participants believed that their new skills would be beneficial for future employment and may apply their newly gained skills outside of the force account project. This significant level of skill transferability underscores the practical value of the skills gained and suggests that the force account projects have had a lasting impact on participants' employability (Li, 2022).

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of force account implementation on skills development in Tanga City Council (TCC). The findings reveal that force account projects are effective in enhancing skills, particularly for those who already possess some level of competence. Respondents who were involved in various projects with relevant skills were able to further develop and refine these skills, demonstrating the projects' capacity to build on existing expertise. However, the limited skill acquisition among those who started without relevant skills indicates that the projects may not be as effective in providing new competencies to unskilled individuals. This disparity suggests a need for more targeted training programmes within these projects to better support skill development for those starting with fewer skills. Also, the study highlights masonry as the most commonly acquired skill, followed by plumbing, pointing to a strong emphasis on construction-related tasks within the projects. The high effectiveness rating for newly gained skills suggests that the training provided was relevant and practically applicable, boosting respondents' confidence in their new abilities. This positive feedback indicates that the skills acquired in the projects have practical value and can significantly enhance participants' employability.

6. Recommendations

The study highlights the importance of skill development within force account projects, particularly for unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The findings recommend improved targeted training programs while implementing projects under force account scenario which in turn showcases the enhancement of skill acquisition of unskilled workers. Also, policymakers should strengthen monitoring and evaluation to ensure equitable training among the indigenous

labour force. This is possible by rescheduling practical learning sessions for loyal and disciplined workers within the vocational training centers in TCC with special attention to gender. Furthermore, future research can shed more light by comparing skills acquired through force account project implementation and other types of public works or construction projects to determine which methods offer better skills development.

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