

Education and Training Program to Change Consumer Attitudes towards Rural Water Service: A Transmission Learning Process

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ABSTRACT In South Africa, rural water service provision has faced challenges due to limited attention given to socio-behavioural aspects of consumer attitudes compared to technology and policies. Thus, it has become important to attend to and explore socio-behavioural aspects and interventions that could improve the situation. The present study measures consumer attitudes towards and knowledge of rural water service provision, after undergoing an education and training program. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Research principles were applied and the education and training program was delivered using transmission learning. Knowledge improvement of the participants was significant and there was considerable improvement in skills attainment. Improved knowledge showed a mean 0.5 before and mean of 0.8 afterwards with a Cronbach's alpha co-efficient of 0.6. The average p-value of the t-tests was 0.0032, reflecting great improvement in knowledge. The findings of this study informed that the knowledge improvement does not determine attitude change. Attitude change was not substantial, qualitative results confirmed that there is a difference between '*understanding*' and '*believing*'. Participants remained apprehensive about changing their values, beliefs, perceptions and experiences. In fact, there is a need for more research to explore what drives consumer perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. There is also a need for a wider learning process that could deal with the complexities in rural water service provision as well as attitude-behaviour changes.