

CHALLENGES AFFECTING THE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING YOUTH POLYTECHNICS IN KIAMBU COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to identify the challenges affecting the technical and vocational education training youth polytechnics in Kiambu County. The study endeavors to determine the challenges, identify the problems that the polytechnics face while carrying out their learning activities, and determine the cause and possible solutions to these problems experienced by the technical and vocational education training polytechnics. The study has to discuss the study design, methodology and how the data will be collected and sampled. It also describe the research design that has to be used in the study; which has to be descriptive study, population to be studied and the sample whereby stratified sampling has been used in selecting the students and teachers who has to be included in the study. Data collection has to be through primary and secondary methods. The primary method has to involve the use of questionnaires which has both closed and open-ended questions. The questionnaire has to guide towards data collection and afterwards the percentages was to be computed. To ensure a fair distribution in the respondents, stratified random sampling procedure has been used to obtain the required sample from the returned questionnaires. And finally, using the findings of the study, the researcher has made a recommendation that has been used by the youth polytechnics in the public sector, other organizations and researchers by gaining background information in the same area.

Key Words: *technical, vocational, education training, youth polytechnics, Kiambu County*

Introduction

Youth Polytechnics are basic education institutions intended to offer primary school leavers opportunities to acquire quality skills and knowledge to make them employable while at the same time, providing avenues and paths for attaining higher education through technical and vocational education system. They also equip the youth with technical and entrepreneurial skills based on appropriate technology enabling them unleash their entrepreneurial capacity to fully exploit local community resources for employment creation.

Youth polytechnics are not mainstreamed in the national education and training system. Most youth polytechnics are ill prepared for training, as their physical facilities are run down and equipment are inadequate, absolute or not working. Their programmes do not allow for horizontal and upward mobility and are not market oriented. Quality assurance mechanism are lacking in the sector. Youth polytechnic graduates are not employable because they lack both appropriate skills for employment and they lack resources and entrepreneurial skills to start their own business.

Majority of instructors are inadequately trained or not trained at all in technical trades and pedagogy. Youth polytechnic staffs have no scheme of service and are paid extremely low wages and are not motivated .Most youth polytechnics are poorly funded due to poverty levels in the communities that support them or pay fees for the trainees and lack of government budgetary allocation.

Statement of the Problem

The growth of TVET is limited by the negative attitude by people that vocational part of it is to failures; Low government investment and funding towards TVET programmes unlike formal education e.g. secondary schools and universities; Level of poverty in rural areas affects the ability of community members to support TVET institutions and trainees; Inflexible and outdated curriculum, mismatch skills, inadequate learning resources, decline in teaching standard is a challenge faced by TVET in Kiambu County; Outdated equipment, poor instruction, lack of work experience, meaningful supervision and lack of research and development is a challenge faced by TVET in Kiambu county .

General Objective

The study focused on challenges affecting the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Polytechnics in Kiambu County.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the effects of financial constraints on the technical and vocational education and training youth polytechnics in Kiambu County.
2. To assess the influence of tools and equipment's on the technical and vocational education and training youth polytechnics in Kiambu County
3. To determine how the government's policy on education affects the technical and vocational education and training youth polytechnics in Kiambu County
4. To assess the influence of the curriculum on the technical and vocational education and training youth polytechnics in Kiambu County

Literature Review

Technical and Vocational Education and Training Youth Polytechnics

Technical, vocational education and training (TVET), has been used by several developed countries as an instrument of development. However, in Africa, TVET has been left to the periphery and its significance has not really been embraced. Studies show that, in Africa funding towards TVET is ad hoc and arbitral, TVET training centers have been neglected or overtaken by institutions concentrating on purely academic education. In addition people tend to view TVET in a negative way, as education and training meant for those who have failed in the society.

To enhance productivity, stimulate competitiveness, and bring about economic development, skill development is important. Technical vocational training and education is the provision of skills, knowledge, attitude, and values needed for the place of work. In contrast to general education, learning in TVET is centered on applied as opposed to academics, practical as opposed to theory, and skills as opposed to knowledge. TVET is meant to prepare learners for careers based on

Tools and Equipment's

A well-established TVET system should lead to the development of technologies that are tailored towards meeting the needs of the community. However, it must be accentuated that acquisition of skills is not sufficient to eliminate all the problems facing African economies. It is a prerequisite, but a lot more needs to be executed. Political instability, poor governance, poor economic policies and unequal distribution of income among other ills must be abolished if the significance of TVET is to be felt.

Government Policy

TVET is undergoing policy overhaul. This imply that the government is awakening the sector's development needs and seeks to realign it with the global social-economic direction; by making key recommendation that included:

1. Co-ordination, the development of a national skills and training strategy, incentives to strengthen involvement of industry in financing skills training.
2. Promotion of centre's of excellence and nurturing of creativity and innovation; and promotion of a national qualification framework to enhance multi-entry points between technical, non formal and formal academic education training.

Financial Constraints

The potential of TVET is also greatly limited by the low government investment towards this sector. Rao, (1996) observed that in most developing countries the ministries responsible for running and directing these centers are either not equipped to pay attention to this aspect or are pre-occupied with other sectors of education leaving the TVET at the mercy of market forces.

A study for the World Bank by (Ziderma, 2002) found out that virtually all training systems in Sub-Sahara Africa have to deal with the reality of diminishing government funding for public

sector training. Funding towards TVET programs is ad hoc and arbitral, leading to year after year variations and uncertainty.

One major constraint that TVET institutions face, is the limited budget and this becomes the core issue as to why these institutions are not able to employ trained trainers or instructors or teachers, support them in updating and upgrading their skills, purchase most appropriate training facilities, aid and technology for practical training and thus are not able to market themselves effectively.

Management of TVET institutions is also wanting. In Kenya, for instance, the management is spread across different ministries with for example the youth polytechnics under the ministry of youth affairs, the National Youth Service under the office of the president among others. According to the sessional paper No 1 of 2005, having the management of TVET institutions under different ministries makes coordination of activities and maintenance of training standards difficult, it leads to duplication of efforts, conflict of jurisdiction, underutilization of available training facilities, wasteful and unnecessary competition and costly irrelevant training programs (Ziderman, 2002).

Curriculum

The current TVET curriculum is weak and not flexible enough to meet the technological changes and diverse needs of different clients. Furthermore the quality of TVET graduates has declined in recent years due to poor instructional methods, outmoded/inadequate training equipment and lack of meaningful work experience and supervision during attachment. The graduates of TVET have experienced technology shock when they finally enter the job market.

Overview of Literature Review

Technical, vocational education and training (TVET), has been used by several developed countries as an instrument of development. However, in Africa, TVET has been left to the periphery and its significance has not really been embraced. Studies show that, in Africa funding towards TVET is ad hoc and arbitral, TVET training centers have been neglected or overtaken by institutions concentrating on purely academic education. In addition people tend to view TVET in a negative way, as education and training meant for those who have failed in the society.

To counter the impacts of globalization, every country must invest in human capital. Investing in training leads to acquisition of skills that raise labor productivity and allow widespread use of existing technology, in addition training allows promotion of new technological development. Globalization places a lot of pressure on not only the economies but also the enterprises and individuals to become competitive.

Higher level of skills is therefore a core factor in enhancing and enabling the necessary response. Training is therefore required continuously throughout working life to enhance employability of the individual and collectively the flexibility of the workforce. This means that training should equip people with skills and competences they require to be employable or to create their own jobs.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework helps simplify the proposed relationships between the variables in the study and show the same graphically or diagrammatically (Mugenda, 2003). The conceptual framework of the study was based on four independent variables namely; financial constraints, tools and equipment's, government policy as well as a defined curriculum.

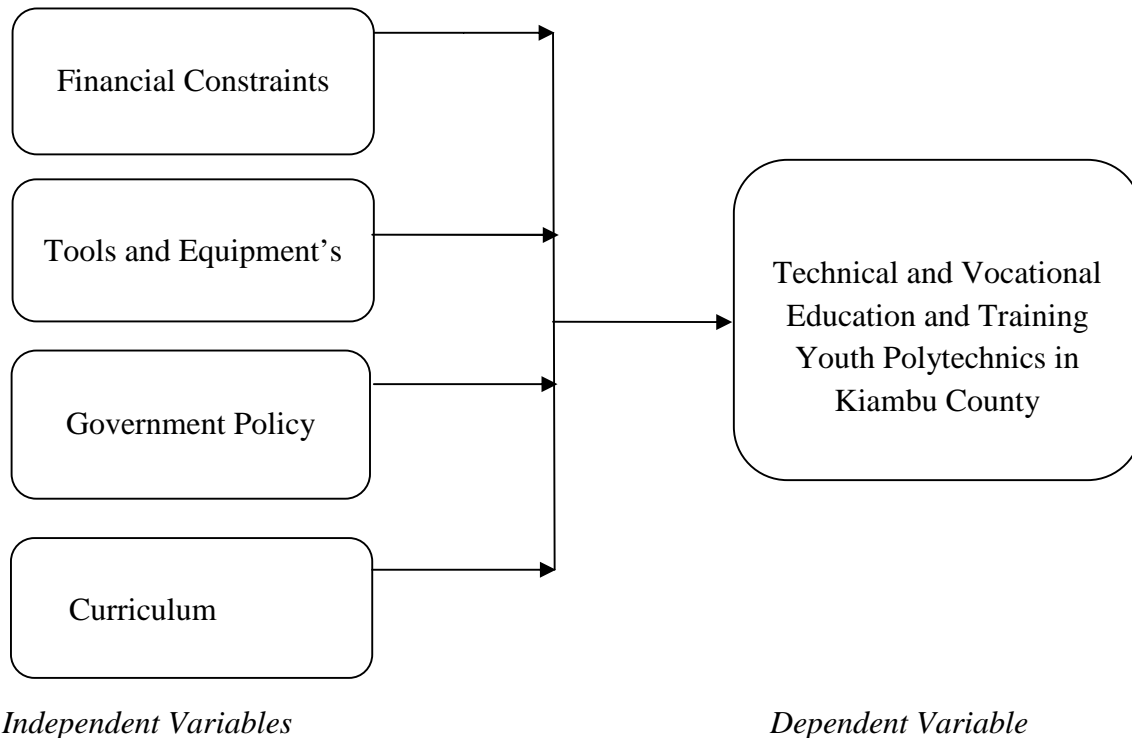


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study employed descriptive study. This method has a clear advantage of being effective way of collecting data from a large sample cheaply and faster; Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) notes that survey research is probably the best method available to researchers who are interested in collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population. This is a snap short review of the current situation, with an aim to build more analytical studies in future. Kothari (1990) describes descriptive research studies as those studies, which are concerned with describing characteristics to particular individuals or a group. Descriptive research is a process of collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the object of the study. It is in light of this observation that the researcher settled on the research design.

Target Population

Kiambu West in central province has 7 public youth polytechnics; Kamirithi, Karai, Muguga, Ndederu, Nyanduma, St. Bosco and Thogoto. The target population of the study were all the principals, teachers and the students in the public youth polytechnics in Central province, Kiambu West. There are 7 public youth polytechnics in Central province, Kiambu West with 7 principals, 200 teachers, and 1400 students,

Data Collection

Questionnaires were used as a data collection tool. The questionnaires are defined by Glen (2003) as any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers. Questionnaires were used because as explained by Lyon (2007); they are used to collect data about phenomena that is not directly observable such as inner experiences, opinions, values, interests, they are more convenient to use than direct observation when used for collecting data therefore the advantages of using questionnaires are as follows: can be given to large groups, respondents can complete the questionnaire at their own convenience, answer questions out of order, skip questions, take several sessions to answer the questions, and write in comments. The cost and time involved in using questionnaires is less than with interviews.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Analysis of data is a process of inspecting, cleaning, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of highlighting useful information, suggesting conclusions, supporting decision making, data analysis has multiple facets and approaches, encompassing diverse techniques under a given subject of study.

The researcher analyzed information in a systematic way in order to come up with conclusions as well as recommendations. The feedback that was obtained from the questionnaires was used to gather the data needed for the study. During data analysis, qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted. Data was edited, coded and classified to present the results of the data analysis in a systematic and clear way.

Summary of Research Findings

The main purpose of this study was to identify and examine the challenges affecting the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Polytechnics in Kiambu County. To achieve this, the research used research questions with the objective of determining:

The effects of financial constraints on the technical and vocational education and training youth polytechnics; identifying influence of tools and equipment's on the technical and vocational education and training youth polytechnics;

On the importance of funding from the government, this research revealed that the major financial constraint the polytechnics faced was the limited budget and that was the core issue as to why those institutions were not able to employ trained trainers, instructors or teachers, support

them in updating and upgrading their skills, purchase most appropriate training facilities, aid and technology for practical training and thus were not able to market themselves effectively.

Although the polytechnics had tools and equipment's to be used by the students, the principals indicated that the major challenge with those tools and equipment's is that most of them were out-dated and the ones which were broken down were never repaired.

Conclusions

Finally the respondents in this study highlighted different challenges faced by the youth polytechnics. Principals and teachers were of the view that reduced funding from the government; a weak curriculum and the government policy on education were the major challenges faced by the youth polytechnics. On the other hand, the students viewed the curriculum as shallow and the use of old and out-dated tools and equipment's which were never repaired or replaced; as the major challenges that they faced within their institution.

According to the teachers, the students were challenged with the tools and equipment's since most of the min use were broken, old and out-dated. This implied that the tools and equipment's posed a challenge on the students learning activities and even affected their competitiveness in the job market.

Public to be educated about the usefulness of youths polytechnics are not for failures but for educating youth in the importance of technical skills required for development. Most youth polytechnics are ill prepared for training, as their physical facilities are run down and equipment are inadequate, absolute or not working.

Recommendations

1. Polytechnic curriculum should be reviewed. finding implies that the curriculum was not flexible enough to meet the technological changes and diverse needs of different clients which in return affected the quality of TVET graduates which has since declined in recent years due to poor instructional methods defined in the curriculum. On the other hand, the curriculum was weak as it only emphasized exclusively on literacy, numeracy and the learning of foreign languages.
2. Polytechnics to be funded by the government to enable them provide the facilities required for proper learning of the students.
3. The government and donor agencies should increase the financial assistance to these institutions.

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