

Institutional Factors Influencing Access To County Vocational Education And Training Institutions In Makueni County, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of institutional factors on access to County Vocational Education and Training institutions in Makueni County, Kenya. The study was informed by the existence of a large number of youths in the County who have not enrolled in CVETIs hence leading to high population of idle youths with low or no relevant employable skills which contributes to increased dependency ratio, high unemployment rates, engagement in drug and substance abuse and other social-evils. The study sought to investigate whether, the career guidance services influence access to County Vocational Education and Training Institutions in Makueni County, Kenya. The study was guided by Human Capital Theory (HCT). The study employed descriptive research design. The study targeted 28 registered Public Vocational institutions in Makueni County. The study used stratified simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques to obtain a random sample of 21 managers, 87 instructors and 316 trainees drawn from 21 randomly selected Vocational institutions. Questionnaires, interview schedule and an observation check list were used to collect data. Data were processed and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative analysis used descriptive and inferential statistics computed using a computer programme (SPSS version 23 computer package). Descriptive statistics were generated and used in describing and discussing the research findings. Statistical tests were done using a T-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) at 95% Confidence Interval of the difference ($\alpha=0.05$). The finding of the study revealed that, vocational training courses have not kept the phase of advancing technology in the industry and they less meet the labour market requirements, hence not attracted prospective trainees who meet the minimum admission requirements. Based on this findings the study recommended that, there is need to re-plan the Vocational Education and Training curriculum in Kenya with the KCSE graduates in mind as opposed to their historical establishment as village youths polytechnics.

Key words: *Institutional factors, County vocational education and training institutions, access, prospective trainees.*

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I. Introduction.

The process of career decision making is a complex and an involving moment in one's life especially for the young population. It is a critical decision that basic education graduates need to make at the end of their compulsory basic education to decide between an academic or Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathway. Making an informed career decision is an important undertaking that creates an opportunity to acquire quality and relevant skills, knowledge and other attributes that enables a graduate to participate competitively in the knowledge economy and remain competitive in the 21st century labour market (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2013). A well thought education and training pathway based on the student's abilities and interest has a significant impact on one's career success, career progression, job satisfaction and efficient service delivery (Farid, 2019).

"Quality and affordable Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is one of the United Nations Sustainable Development agenda items for ensuring equal access to education and training for all by the year 2030 (United Nations, 2015)." This implies that the youthful population across the world should acquire quality and relevant employable skills, for employment in both formal and informal sectors, create job opportunities for others and promote entrepreneurial culture. In this regard, an all-inclusive education and training is a right. Every person regardless of gender, age, religion, disability or ethnic background has an equal opportunity to education and training as outlined by various Sustainable Development objectives (United

Nations, 2015). Nevertheless, as the fundamental right to accessing education and training is being recognized within educational reforms frameworks across the world, young people and adults still face difficulties in accessing TVET programmes (Garcia, Toledo, & Rodriguez, 2020). The significant recognition of the importance of TVET in international discourse and policies is yet to shape up the image of TVET when compared with the academic education track. The challenge is experienced more in the third world countries where it has been observed that the enrolment in TVET has not improved significantly as many basic education graduates continue to prefer the academic education track as their first choice. This has made TVET to have a low image and therefore making it a universal concern (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2018).

Globally, TVET has significantly influenced the development of knowledge, skills, competencies and expertise necessary for development initiatives which are critical for sustainable societies and economies. To this end, the quality of skill development process determines the quality of the generated of human capital in terms of knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2020). Basically, the acquisition and effective application of these attributes results to sustainable economic development, enhances social mobility, national cohesion and development. The skills and knowledge that youthful population acquire must therefore be relevant to the current economy, meet their needs and aspirations (Otero, 2019). This implies that the soft skills and technical skills the young people acquire must be relevant to the current economy to enable the country to realize demographic dividend. TVET sector has been considered to be the foundation for any successful economy since it boosts the value of the products produced in an economy as indicated in the Global Education Report 2016 (UNESCO, 2016). Evidence based on a research carried by MacDonald, Nink, & Duggan (2014), on “the principles and strategies of a successful TVET programme” indicates that, an effective TVET sector in any country should be based on quality labour market information, industry demands and the employees’ needs mostly in key trades and occupations (MacDonald, Nink, & Duggan, 2014). With the adoption of TVET reforms in South Korea, her economic development since 1950s has been attributed to the establishment of skill development programme focusing on industrial trades and enhancing access to quality training opportunities to improve individual’s productivity (Chun & Kyu, 2012). The China policy framework, “Modern Vocational Education System Construction Plan (2014-2020),” creates opportunities for lifelong learning making vocational training more attractive which enhances career progression with open pathways for higher education and training. This has contributed to the production of quality TVET graduates whose capacities make them more competitive locally and internationally to promote the county’s productivity which has led to increase in her real income and improved standards of living (People’s Republic of China, 2018).

The socio-economic advancement of Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong, is attributed to the strategic mechanisms of linking the world of skill development and the world of work. This made training and skill development a priority to meet their economic aspirations and a close alignment between the vocational training system and labour markets, increased access, equity and quality to TVET programmes and the ability to maintain the links through time was considered essential (Gopinathan, 2011). Basically, Singapore’s TVET sector offers career-oriented education and training focusing on remaining relevant and responsive to industrial manpower demand which promotes public perception on importance and value of TVET. The Government of Singapore has highly invested in TVET to provide quality education and training which address the training needs of her population and ensuring that by ensuring that the acquired skills remain relevant to the job market (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2020). Its significant achievement in skills development has been necessitated by the equal participation of both the academia and the industry. The skills development is driven by various TVET strategies and policy documents which includes; Skills-future Singapore Agency Act 2016 (No 24 of 2016), Workforce Singapore Agency Act 2003, Industry Transformation Maps 2016 (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2020). In Australia, VET is directly linked to employment where the trainees are required to undertake apprenticeship throughout their training. This enables graduates to get employment opportunities immediately. The training is highly demand driven designed to meet both the immediate and long-term industrial requirements (MacDonald, Nink, & Duggan, 2014). The VET sector emphasizes on training graduates who are well equipped with employable skills with no need for on-the-job training. The industry in this case is highly involved to enhance market oriented training courses.

Through collaboration and coordination, the employers are involved in determination of the training needs to meet the industrial demand gaps while keeping pace with the changing technology and the rise of new sets of training skills (MacDonald, Nink, & Duggan, 2014). It is evident that, employers’ collaboration and coordination is essential for an industry driven training. In this regard, in a responsive VET sector, the employers determines the educational and training needs to address the unmet demand which is a dynamic process thus making it necessary to keep pace with the ever-changing technology. The upgrading and review of the VET packages in Australia is based on the industry skill requirements. The training courses are regularly revised to address the needs of the industry and prospective trainees seeking qualification opportunities. Through the Australian skills Quality Authority (ASQA), the training packages have been designed to address the trainees needs (delivering training experiences and qualifications that are relevant to employers and the

industry) that has resulted to the development of confidence in the Australia's training sector (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2018).

Education in Kenya is anchored on the Constitution of Kenya as a fundamental human right. This has informed policy provisions developed to address the constitutional requirements and direct national aspirations (Republic of Kenya, 2012). National aspirations and the critical role of education are articulated in the Kenya Vision 2030 which advocates for the link between training institutions and the job market in order to create stock of human capital with relevant skills, competencies, soft skills and attitudes essential in the work place (Republic of Kenya, 2014). The TVET sub-sector in Kenya, like any other sub-Saharan African country has witnessed institutional related challenges that may limit training opportunities for the youth to enable them cope with the dynamic labour market requirements, industrial and technological development.

The training environment whose key components are; relevant training programmes, training facilities and equipment, competent trainers and career progression information are critical for labour market oriented training. Currently, in Kenya there is a high percentage of youth population who are legible for training in Vocational institutions as a result of mass Basic secondary education graduates whose performance is below the university entry requirements and other tertiary institutions (Ministry of Education, 2019). VET in Kenya is a devolved function of the County Government as outlined in chapter eleven (Devolved Government) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) in the fourth schedule of the Constitution (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Makueni County recognizes access to VET as an important avenue for creation of a well trained workforce for the County's sustainable social economic transformation (County Government of Makueni, 2016). Most of the youths in the County have not enrolled in CVETIs denying them to acquire employable skills. VET remains paramount to enable one make a step from being unemployable to employability. Most of them are idle. This has increased dependency on working population, led to high cases of unemployment, engagement in drugs and substance abuse and other social-evils. They are vulnerable and poorest in a total population of (26%). The youths are left with no option but to destroy their environment to survive. Access to CVETIs remains an issue of concern in Makueni County (County Government of Makueni, 2016).

Statement of the problem

As the fundamental right to accessing education and training is being recognized within educational reforms frameworks across the world, young people and adults still face difficulties in accessing TVET institutions. The significant recognition of the importance of TVET in international discourse and policies is yet to shape up the image of TVET as prospective trainees continue to prefer the academic education track as their first choice regardless of their inability to meet the minimum entry requirements. The challenge is experienced more by the third world countries whose investment in TVET sub-sector is significantly low. This has led TVET to have a low image, unattractive and therefore making it a universal concern. Currently, in Kenya there is a high percentage of youth population who are legible for training in Vocational institutions as a result of mass Basic Secondary education graduates whose performance is below the university entry requirements and other tertiary institutions.

The Government's efforts to devolve VET to Counties to enhance skills development, employment of affirmative action to increase enrolment of the high number of prospective trainees has not to a large extent increased access to CVET institutions whose enrolment has remained low both nationally and in Makueni County. The low enrolment is worrying prompting a question, what could be the cause to low enrolment? The idle unemployable youthful population increased dependency on the working population, led to high unemployment cases, engagement in drugs and substance abuse and other social-evils which is a major development challenge. These makes the youth more vulnerable hence they are left with no option but to destroy their environment to survive causing a continued environmental degradation. Little empirical evidence exists on whether institutional factors influence enrolment in CVETIs especially in Makueni County. In view of this gap, this study investigated the contribution of institutional factors on access to CVET institutions so as to re-strengthen the practical skills, knowledge, and improve the enrolment in County Vocational Education and Training institutions. TVET remains the first paramount step from being unemployable to employability.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of institutional factors on access to County Vocational Education and Training institutions in Makueni County.

1.4 Research objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives.

- i. To investigate the extent to which training programmes influence access to County Vocational Education and Training institutions in Makueni County, Kenya

1.5 Null hypotheses

In order to test the independent variables, a null hypotheses was developed.

H_03 . There is no significant relationship between training programmes and access to Vocational Education and Training institutions in Makueni County, Kenya

Theoretical framework

The study was based on the Human Capital Theory (HCT) whose origin can be traced to the work of Adam Smith in 1976. The theory affirms that, the well-being of a society is a function of financial capital, labour, natural resources as well as knowledge and skills of individuals. This theory predicts that increased knowledge and skill will yield improved economic outcomes for both individuals and societies, especially in modern societies, where it is widely held that knowledge and skill convey a greater economic and social premium than in the past. The study focuses on the conditions required to achieve the desired education and training outcomes. The theory fits in this study based on the evidence that, education and training is an investment whose relevance can be guaranteed in labour market driven institutions (Psachoropoulos & Woodhall, 1997). Using the theory, the study sought to investigate whether institutional factors have an influence on trainees' access to CVETIs

II. Literature review

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) policy (2017), points out that, TVET and higher education institutions are yet to move beyond the provision of individual courses and specialist training to offer more Education for Sustainable Development, relevant content and learning practices (Ministry of Education, 2017). Kenya Vision 2030 has special interest on the role played by TVET sub – sector for the prosperity and growth of other sectors in the economy that contribute to the “country’s efforts to become a newly industrializing, middle – income country which is able to provide high quality life for its people”. To achieve this objective, the CVETIs training courses should be industry driven so as to produce well qualified CVET graduates needed for the social stability and economic progress. Kenya’s tertiary education has not significantly developed in the last 50 years to produce adequate skilled human capital for its social and economic take-off (Ministry of Education, 2019). This is based on the premise that, the relevance of vocational training courses guarantees a significant link between the learnt skills and the demands of the labour market. This makes it necessary for the Government to create an environment that encourages industrial and academia participation to inform the establishment of labour demand driven training courses to address the prevailing vocational training and industry mismatch which could be a critical contributor to the prevailing low enrolment rates in vocational institution, high levels of unemployment and others social instabilities (Republic of Kenya, 2012). A study carried out by Oduor et al 2017, in Nakuru County to assess the Youth polytechnic student’s perception of vocational training found out that, the demand for the Vocational Education and Training that meets the trainee’s expectations is determined by the relevance of the curriculum in place. A curriculum that focuses on practical lessons as opposed to theory, meets the work place requirements, prepare one for self-employment and able to provide additional soft skills like communication skills and life skills was found to have a major contribution on trainees expectations and needs which in the long run increases the enrolment in vocational education and training (Oduor, Kubutha, Tabuche, & Masese, 2017).

In recognition of the need for industrial attachment to enhance quality training and attractiveness of VET, the TVET Regulations in section 19 (1) states “an institution shall make necessary arrangements for having certain classroom sessions taken up by suitable faculty or experts from the respective industries and may from time to time arrange industrial attachment for the students” (Government of Kenya, 2015). This arrangement would make VET gain social acceptance and address the historical misconception which has made VET non-attractive as compared to the general education pathways. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Agenda 4 on Education, Target 4.3, seeks to ensure equal access for all men and women to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education by the year 2030. This is justified by the fact that the majority of countries across the world have appreciated the critical role played by technical, vocational education and training towards social-economic development (Oduor, Kubutha, Tabuche, & Masese, 2017). According to Ifeyinwa & Serumu (2016), the kind of curriculum in place has an influence on the attractiveness of Vocational training. In their study carried out in Nigeria to establish the constrains and remedy to quality vocational skill development they reported that, the low social recognition of vocational skill development in Nigerian vocational institutions which has translated to low enrolment was attributed to; poor staffing, inadequate and ill-equipped vocational education instructors, irregular review of the existing vocational training curriculum which was rated to be obsolete and irrelevant to meet the labour market requirements. Further, the curriculum had not been reviewed for more than 20 years which made the vocational training courses more irrelevant and non-attractive to prospective trainees (Ifeyinwa & Serumu, 2016). Based on the literature reviewed, this study sought to investigate whether, the relevance of training courses has an influence on access to public vocational education and training institutions in Makueni County which is an ASAL region in Kenya.

III. Research Methodology

Research design

This study employed descriptive research design. According to Kothari & Gaurav (2014), a descriptive research design is concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. The descriptive research design enable researcher to describe or present pictures of a phenomenon or phenomena under investigation (Kothari & Gaurav, 2014). The use of this design enabled the researcher to obtain needed information by interviewing, administering a questionnaire to the sampled subjects and making observations (Orodho, Khatete, & Mugiraneza, 2016). Using this design the researcher summarized the collected data in a way that provided the desired descriptive information to find answers to questions by analyzing without manipulating the variables that relate to the institutional factors influencing trainees' access to vocational education and training institutions.

Target population

Target population is the entire group of subjects from which a representative sample might be drawn. It consists of all the elements, items, individuals or objects from a set of data whose characteristics are being studied (Orodho, Khatete, & Mugiraneza, 2016). Population consists of whole set of data or information from the entire universe, which is considered to be the whole source of information. The study targeted the 28 registered public County Vocational Education and Training institutions in Makueni County. For this study, the target population comprised of 28 managers, 99 instructors and 3609 trainees. The target population was 3736.

Sample size and sampling procedure

The study used stratified simple random sampling to obtain a representative sample since the target population was not homogeneous. Using this technique, the population was stratified into three non-overlapping strata of the managers, instructors and trainees. Using simple random technique the subjects were selected from each stratum whose effect was to improve representativeness and reduce the sampling error. (Orodho, Khatete, & Mugiraneza, 2016). The sample size of the respondents was determined by use of Taro Yamani formula at 0.05 level of significance with a confidence coefficient of 95% as shown (Yamane, 1967). 21 managers, 87 instructors and 316 trainees were sampled. They were representing at 75%, 56.5% and 9.5 % respectively.

Data collection instruments

The researcher used interview schedule, observation check lists and questionnaires as the data collection instruments for this study. The researcher interviewed 12 managers who were purposively sampled and had been identified from document analysis at the County youth skill development and ICT offices. An observation schedule was used to enable the researcher to verify the information already collected from the informants. Three sets of questionnaires were constructed by the researcher to collect desired information from County Vocational Education and Training institutions managers, instructors and trainees.

Data collection procedure

The researcher was granted an approval by the University of Nairobi that issued a letter of full registration that enabled the researcher to approach the appropriate agencies in the country to seek permission to collect data. With this approval, the researcher first applied for a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher was licensed to conduct research in Makueni County for a period of one year from the date of license issuance (license No. NACOSTI/P/19/1152) as shown in appendix VII. Clearance from the County Commissioner in Makueni County was done on 19th September 2019 who issued a research authorization letter and on the said date an approval by the Chief Education Officer and ICT made. The document is attached as in appendix VIII.

3.10 Data analysis techniques

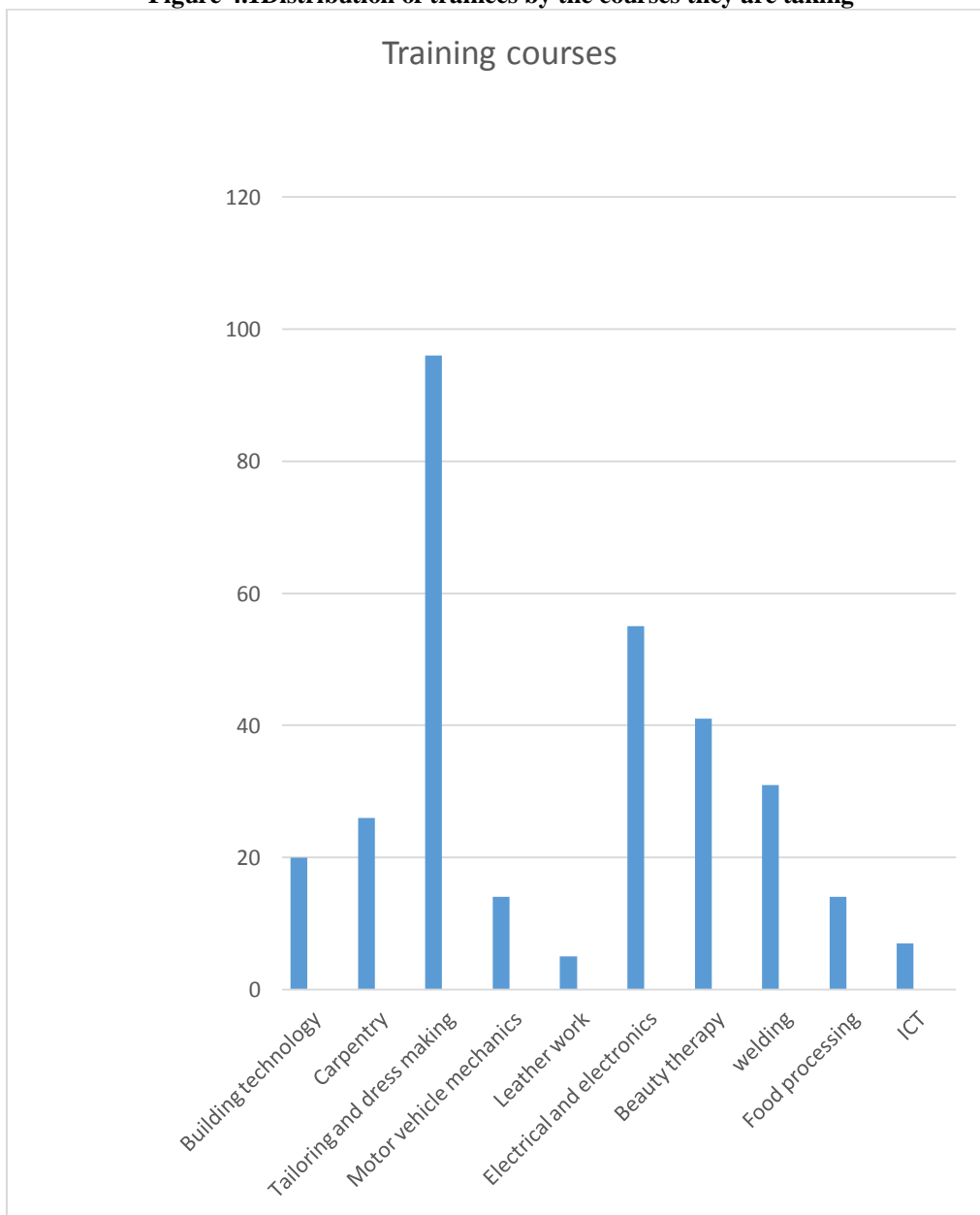
The researcher cleaned the raw data, coded the data, entered and then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM version 23. Descriptive statistics were generated and used in describing and discussing the research findings. The standard deviation was used to measure how the responses align with the mean and describe the degree of consistency within the responses. A statistical analysis for managers output – independent sample T-test for independent variables was done. The T-test was considered to be the most appropriate for this study since the standard deviation was unknown and the sample size for the managers was less than 30 ($n < 30$) (Orodho, Khatete, & Mugiraneza, 2016). The preliminary test for normality (homogeneity of variances/ equality of variance) was done using levene's test for equality. A statistical analysis for instructors and trainees output whose sample was greater than 30 ($n > 30$) was done using the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) as the preferred test on mean between two or more variables for association (Orodho, Khatete, & Mugiraneza, 2016). Quantitative data from interview and open ended items in the

questionnaire were organized according to themes, coded and integrated with data from closed ended questions for frequencies and percentages. The analyzed data was presented through a pie chart, bar graph and tabular representation of descriptive statistics tables for each variable.

IV. Research Findings and Discussions

The study sought to investigate the distribution of trainees by the training courses they have registered for in the various areas of specialization. A questionnaire item was constructed to collect the required data. The questionnaire yielded the responses analyzed in Figure 4.1

Figure 4.1 Distribution of trainees by the courses they are taking



The data in Figure 4.1 revealed that, tailoring and dress making, electrical and electronics were the most popular training courses in the sampled CVETIs. Beauty therapy, welding and carpentry were less popular courses. Unpopular courses in these institutions were found to be; leather work, ICT, food processing, and motor vehicle mechanics. The findings of the study imply that, the demand for Vocational Education and Training courses is likely to be courses-specific whereby the young population seem to prefer certain vocational training courses to others. The narrowed training curriculum compromises the variety of alternative training options for the prospective trainees to make a choice which could increase enrolment in such institutions. The study sought to investigate the distribution of trainees by gender on the training courses they have registered for

in the various areas of specialization. A questionnaire item was constructed to collect the required data. The questionnaire yielded the responses analyzed in Table 4.17

4.4 Analysis of research objectives

This study aimed at achieving four objectives. To help achieve this objectives, four null hypothesis were formulated. The objectives have been paraphrased to form themes for analysis.

4.4.1 The extent to which relevance of training courses have influenced access to C V E T Is in Makueni County.

Objective 1. To investigate the extent to which relevance of training courses influenced access to C V E T Is in Makueni County. The first objective of this study was to assess whether the relevance of the education and training courses has an influence on trainees’ access CVETIs. This was based on the fundamental concern that, expected training outcomes are critical in any training system that values the production of competent workforce for the prevailing technological and highly competitive economy. An effort was made to establish whether the quality and relevance of the training courses offered by the county vocational education and training institutions had an influence on their enrolment. The questionnaires yielded data on the influence of quality and relevance on access to CVETIs as in Tables 4.18. For purposes of in-depth analysis, the responses for managers, instructors and trainees were presented in one table and analyzed as one whole

Table 4.18 Response on relevance of training courses and access to CVETIs

Respondent	YES			NO		
	Frequency	%	valid percent	frequency %	valid percent	
Managers	16	76.2	76.2	5	23.8	23.8
Instructors	71	81.6	81.6	16	18.4	18.4
Trainees 236	75.6	75.6		76	24.4	24.4

From Table 4.18 it can be concluded that the majority of the respondent revealed that the relevance of the training courses has influenced access to CVETIs. This implies that the respondents had an opinion that, relevant courses which meets the job market requirements, the trainees’ direct needs and other education and training stakeholders expectations improves their confidence and builds trust in them. The study established that, the optimized realization of the ultimate purpose of vocational training basically measured in terms of the vocational graduate’s capacities, influences the vocational graduates’ progressive training within and across trade tests facilitating life-long training.

4.4.2 Responses on the relevance of vocational training courses and access to CVETIs

The analysis and the discussion of the research findings includes responses to open ended questions, documentary analysis and short interview reports. The first item presented aimed to find out whether the training courses offered influenced access to CVETIs. This item was presented to managers, instructors and the trainees. The assumption was that the respondents in this study were in a position to provide reliable information about the employability of the trainees once they graduate without necessarily undergoing retraining before or after employment. To ascertain whether the training courses had an influence on access to county vocational education and training institutions, questionnaire items for managers, instructors and trainees were constructed to capture the information. The captured data from the field are recorded the Table 4.19

Table 4.19 Managers' responses on relevance of vocational training courses

Statement	Mean	SDev	SA %	A %	N.S %	D %	SD %
The courses offered Meets labour market needs.	3.1429	1.19523	4.8	38.1	4.8	42.9	9.5
The courses offered have attracted more trainees	3.4762	1.03049	4.8	19.0	4.8	66.7	4.8
The courses offered meets the trainees needs	2.3333	1.06458	14.3	61.9	4.8	14.3	4.8
the courses offered	2.4762	0.98077	4.8	66.7	9.5	14.3	4.8

equips the trainees with technical skills for self-employment	3.6190	0.92066	4.8	9.5	9.5	71.4	4.8
Vocational education and training has been given prominence at lower levels of schooling	3.6190	1.20317	9.5	9.5	9.5	52.4	19.0
Vocational education has gained high social acceptance.							

Key for the mean

Strongly agree 1.0 - 1.7, Agree 1.8 - 2.5 Not sure 2.6 - 3.3

Disagree 3.4 - 4.1, Strongly disagree 4.2 - 5.0.

The descriptive statistics results shown in Table 4.19 reveal that managers disagreed agree at 42.9 percent that the courses offered meets labour market needs, 38.1 percent of them agreed, 9.5 percent strongly disagreed while those who strongly agreed and not sure both at 4.8 percent. The item had a mean rating of 3.1429 and standard deviation of 1.19523. This is an implication that majority of the respondents feel that the courses offered does not meet the labour market needs. The descriptive statistics results also indicate that respondents disagree at 66.7 percent that the courses offered has attracted more trainees, 19.0 percent of them agreed, while those who strongly agreed, strongly disagreed and not sure were represented at 4.8 percent. The item had a mean of 3.4762 and a standard deviation of 1.03049. Therefore, the descriptive statistics results making a conclusion that most of the respondents do not agree that the courses offered has attracted more trainees.

The descriptive analysis results shown in Table 4.19 indicate that 61.9 percent of the respondents agree that the courses offered meets the trainee’s needs, 14.3 percent represented both those who strongly agreed and disagreed respectively. Those who strongly disagreed were represented by 4.8 percent which the same percent was representing the informants who were not sure. The item had a mean of 2.3333 and a standard deviation of 1.06458. Therefore, most of the informants indicated that the courses offered do meet the trainee’s needs. The results indicate that respondents at 66.7 percent of informants agreed that the courses offered equips the trainees with technical skills necessary for self-employment, 14.3 percent disagreed, 9.5 percent were not sure while those who strongly disagreed and strongly agreed were both represented at 4.8 percent. The item had a mean of 2.4762 and a standard deviation of 0.98077. This is an indication that majority of the respondents feel that the courses offered do equip the trainees with technical skills necessary for self-employment. The results indicate that informants at 71.6 percent disagreed that vocational education and training has been given prominence at lower levels of schooling, 9.5 percent represented those who agreed and not sure, those who strongly disagreed and strongly agreed were both represented at 4.8 percent. The item had a mean rating of 3.6190 and a standard deviation of 0.92066. This is an indication that majority of the respondents feel that vocational education and training has not been given prominence at lower levels of schooling. The descriptive statistics results also indicate that respondents disagree at 52.4 percent vocational education has gained high social acceptance, 19.0 percent strongly disagreed while those who strongly agreed, agreed and not sure were all represented at 9.5 percent. The item had a mean of 3.6190 and a standard deviation of 1.20317. Therefore, the descriptive statistics results making a conclusion that most of the respondents feel that vocational education has not gained high social acceptance.

Table 4.20 Instructors' responses on relevance of vocational training courses.

Statement	Mean	SDev	SA %	A %	N.S %	D %	SD %
The courses offered meets labour market needs	3.0115	1.1860	2.3	50.6	2.3	33.3	11.5
The courses offered has attracted more trainees	4.0230	0.62834	0.0	4.6	4.6	74.7	16.1
The courses offered meets the trainee’s needs	2.2069	0.86452	8.0	79.3	1.1	6.9	4.6
The courses offered equips the trainees with technical skills necessary for	2.22990	0.75792	4.6	81.6	1.1	11.5	1.1

self-employment								
Vocational education and training has been given prominence at lower levels of schooling	3.7701	0.77311	2.3	8.0	5.7	78.2	5.7	
Vocational education has gained high social acceptance.	3.5172	0.88741	3.4	12.6	16.1	64.4	3.4	
Valid N= 87								

Key for the mean

Strongly agree 1.0 - 1.7, Agree 1.8 - 2.5 Not sure 2.6 - 3.3
 Disagree 3.4 - 4.1, Strongly disagree 4.2 - 5.0.

The descriptive statistics results shown in Table 4.20 reveal that instructors agree at 50.6 percent that the courses offered meets labour market needs, 33.3 percent of them disagreed, 11.5 percent strongly disagreed while those who strongly agreed and not sure both at 2.3 percent. The item had a mean rating of 3.0115 and standard deviation of 1.1860. This is an implication that majority of the respondents feel that the courses offered meets labour market needs. The descriptive statistics results also indicate that respondents disagree at 74.7 percent that the courses offered has attracted more trainees, 16.1 percent of them strongly disagreed, while those who agreed and not sure both represented at 4.6 percent. The item had a mean of 4.0230 and a standard deviation of 0.62834. Therefore, the descriptive statistics results making a conclusion that most of the respondents do not agree that the courses offered has attracted more trainees.

The descriptive analysis results shown in Table 4.20 indicate that 79.3 percent of the respondents agree that the courses offered meets the trainee’s needs, 8.0 percent strongly agreed. Those disagreed as represented by 6.9 percent, 4.6 percent representing those who strongly disagreed while 1.1 percent of the informants were not sure. The item had a mean of 2.2069 and a standard deviation of 0.86452. Therefore, most of the informants indicated that the courses offered do not meet the trainee’s needs. The results indicate that respondents at 81.6 percent of informants agreed that the courses offered equips the trainees with technical skills necessary for self-employment, 11.5 percent disagreed, 4.6 percent strongly agreed while those who strongly disagreed and not sure were both represented at 1.1 percent. . The item had a mean of 2.2299 and a standard deviation of 0.75792 this indicates that majority of the respondents feel that the courses offered do not equip the trainees with technical skills necessary for self-employment. The results indicate that informants at 78.2 percent disagreed that vocational education and training has been given prominence at lower levels of schooling, 8.0 percent agreed, those who strongly disagreed and not sure were both represented at 5.7 percent while those who strongly agreed at 2.3 percent. . The item had a mean rating of 3.7701 and a standard deviation of 0.77311 this is an indication that majority of the respondents feel that vocational education and training has not been given prominence at lower levels of schooling. The descriptive statistics results also indicate that respondents disagree at 64.4 percent vocational education has gained high social acceptance, 16.1 percent were not sure, 12.6 percent agreed while those who strongly agreed and strongly disagreed both represented at 3.4 percent. The item had a mean of 3.5172 and a standard deviation of 0.88741. Therefore, the descriptive statistics results making a conclusion that most of the respondents feel that vocational education has not gained high social acceptance.

Table 4.21 Trainees' responses on relevance of vocational training courses

Statement	Mean	SDev	SA %	A %	N.S %	D %	SD %
The courses offered meets labour market needs	2.4000	1.2569	26.3	42.6	1.0	25.1	5.1
The courses offered has attracted more trainees	3.9487	0.94406	4.2	7.1	1.0	65.4	22.4
The courses offered meets the trainee’s needs	1.9679	0.68441	17.0	76.3	0.6	5.1	1.0
The courses offered equips the trainees with technical skills necessary for self-employment	2.01600	0.78351	17.0	74.7	0.6	5.1	2.6

Vocational education and training has been given prominence at lower levels of schooling	3.8878	0.67827	1.9	4.2	5.1	80.8	8.0
Vocational education has gained high social acceptance.	3.9281	0.52633	1.0	2.9	3.5	88.1	4.5
Valid N= 87							

Key for the mean

Strongly agree 1.0 - 1.7, Agree 1.8 - 2.5 Not sure 2.6 - 3.3
 Disagree 3.4 - 4.1, Strongly disagree 4.2 - 5.0.

The descriptive statistics results shown in table 4.21 reveal that trainees agree at 42.6 percent that the courses offered meets labour market needs, 26.3 percent of them strongly agreed, 25.0 percent disagreed, 5.1 strongly disagreed and not sure at 1.0 percent. The item had a mean rating of 2.4000 and standard deviation of 1.2569. This is an implication that majority of the respondents feel that the courses offered meets labour market needs. The descriptive statistics results also indicate that respondents disagree at 65.4 percent that the courses offered has attracted more trainees, 22.4 percent of them strongly disagreed, 7.1 percent agreed, 4.2 percent agreed and those who were not sure were represented at 1.0 percent. The item had a mean of 3.9487 and a standard deviation of 0.94406. Therefore, the descriptive statistics results making a conclusion that most of the respondents do not agree that the courses offered has attracted more trainees. The descriptive analysis results shown in table 4.21 indicate that 76.3 percent of the respondents agree that the courses offered meets the trainee’s needs, 17.0 percent strongly agreed. Those disagreed as represented by 5.1 percent, 1.0 percent representing those who strongly disagreed while 0.6 percent of the informants were not sure. The item had a mean of 1.9679 and a standard deviation of 0.68441. Therefore, most of the informants indicated that the courses offered do not meet the trainee’s needs. The results indicate that respondents at 74.7 percent of informants agreed that the courses offered equips the trainees with technical skills necessary for self-employment, 17.0 percent strongly agreed, 5.1 percent disagreed , while those who strongly disagreed were represented at 2.6 and 0.6 percent of the informants were not sure. The item had a mean of 2.0160 and a standard deviation of 0.78351 which indicates that majority of the respondents feel that the courses offered do not equip the trainees with technical skills necessary for self-employment.

The results indicate that informants at 80.8 percent disagreed that vocational education and training has been given prominence at lower levels of schooling, 8.0 percent strongly disagreed, 5.1 were not sure, 4.2 agreed and those who strongly agreed were represented at 1.9 percent. The item had a mean rating of 3.8878 and a standard deviation of 0.67827 which indicates that majority of the respondents feel that vocational education and training has not been given prominence at lower levels of schooling. The descriptive statistics results also indicate that respondents disagree at 88.1 percent vocational education has gained high social acceptance, 4.5 percent strongly disagreed, 3.5 were not sure, 2.9 percent agreed while those who strongly agreed were represented at 1.0 percent. The item had a mean of 3.9281 and a standard deviation of 0.52633. Therefore, the descriptive statistics results making a conclusion that most of the respondents feel that vocational education has not gained high social acceptance.

Table 4.22 Summary of Informants' responses on the relevance of vocational training courses

Statement	Trainees overall				Managers				Instructors			
	N	Mean	Std. deviation		N	Mean	Std. deviation		N	Mean	Std. deviation	
i). The courses offered by the institutions meets the labour market requirements	21	3.1429	1.1952	87	3.0115	1.1860	312		21	2.4000	1.25640	2.85146
ii). The courses offered have attracted more	21	3.4762	1.0305	87	4.0230	0.6383	312		21	3.9487	0.94406	3.81597

trainees hence increasing the enrolment								
iii).The courses offered meets the trainee's needs. eg. employability skills	21	2.3333	1.0646	87	2.2069	0.8645	312	1.9679
								0.68441 2.16937
iv).The courses offered equips the trainees with technical skills necessary for self-employment	21	2.4762	0.9808	87	2.2299	0.7579	312	
								2.0160 0.78351 2.24070
v).Vocational education has been given prominence at lower levels of schooling	21	3.6190	0.9207	87	3.7701	0.7731	312	3.8878
								0.67827 3.75897
vi).Vocational education has gained high social acceptance by the community	21	3.6190	1.2032	87	3.5172	0.8874	312	3.9231
								0.52633 3.68643
valid N (listwise) N = 420	N=21			N=87			N=312	
		3.08715						

Key for the mean

Strongly agree 1.0 - 1.7, Agree 1.8 - 2.5 Not sure 2.6 - 3.3
 Disagree 3.4 - 4.1, Strongly disagree 4.2 - 5.0.

Table 4.22 is a summary of Managers', Instructors' and Trainees' responses to statements presented under research objective one. The summary presented in Table 4.22 reveal that the majority of the informants indicated that the training courses offered by the County Vocational Education and Training Institutions does not meet the job market requirements. The item had an average mean of 2.85146. It was revealed that the courses have not attracted more prospective trainees at an average mean of mean 3.81597 who meet the minimum admission requirements. This implies that the courses which were established long before, have not kept the phase of advancing technology in the labour market hence could be a contributor to low enrolment in most vocational education and training institutions making them to remain non-attractive.

To ascertain whether the courses met trainees' needs, the data captured in the questionnaires indicated that the informants were in agreement (mean = 2.16937) that the coursed meet trainees' needs. In this study, trainees' needs emphasized on were, the acquisition of soft skills, social skills, development of self-confidence and the ability to practice the skills they are expected to develop. This could be attained through provision of repeated opportunities to practice the technique which calls for more training resources. This kind of response brought a contradictions to their previous response on whether the courses offered meets the labour market demands. It can be concluded that, a training programme that does not increase the graduates' employability in both formal and informal sector, will also be difficult to produce goods of the industrial nature that my meet the market demand in both sectors. Even though the informants had the opinion that the training courses equip the vocational education and training graduates with technical skills for self-employment (mean =2.24070). The findings of this study were in line with the challenges currently facing TVET Kenya as outlined in Sessional paper No 1 of 2019 on a policy framework for Reforming Education and Training for sustainable Development in Kenya. The document states that, the TVET graduates suffer a deficiency in the competences required for efficient participation in the labour market. It is evident that, quality relevant TVET programmes guarantee a significant link between skills learnt and the needs of the industry (Ministry of Education, 2019).

A study carried out by Cathleen et al (2014), conducted under CEDEFOP in 32 Countries in Europe on the attractiveness of initial vocational education and training indicated that, once the quality of VET is assured its likely to attract the attention of learners and the esteem of a wide range of education and training stakeholders. This was based on the fact that, the structure of the labour market largely determines the attractiveness of VET. The study further states that, by improving its quality and formulation of relevant training programmes which meet the labour market needs creates a positive perception about the value of VET and the likelihood of finding an employment (Cathleen, Raffé, Georg, Ammerman, & Watters, 2014). In this study, the training gaps identified in the training programmes is an indicator that the trainees does not acquire relevant skills to participate in the production industry. The document analysis on the various training courses revealed that, they cover basic skills which may not match the needs of the employers. The training model then makes vocational training courses non-attractive leading to low enrolment and making trainees to seek for training alternatives in the informal sector as it was revealed by 12 managers who were interviewed in the course of the data collection exercise. It was established that vocational education and training courses have not been attractive enough to have a positive impact on the institutes' enrolment at all levels of training. This kind of response overlooks the training gap pointed out in the first two responses and may hinder the instructors'

recommendations on improving vocational education and training courses, which should be designed to meet the labour market requirements and in line with the ever-changing technological economy to make them more attractive for prospective trainees.

A higher percentage of the trainees who participated in the study were satisfied with vocational training courses being offered. In their opinion, the courses meets the labour market requirements, their individual needs and after completion they felt that they can engage themselves in self-employment economic activities. Though their opinion holds a majority of them had observed that the course were not attractive since enrolment in almost all the vocational institution was low except a few. This raises questions why low enrolment in vocational centres if the courses meets labour market demands, meets individual trainee’s needs and can equip them with technical skills for self-employment in the prevailing economic environment. The trainees’ expectations are narrowed to the kind of training model they are subjected to. With limited knowledge about the labour market requirements, graduates may get frustrated once they face the reality in the job market which may discourage their career progression. The findings of this study indicates that VET in Makueni County is yet to realize a wide range of benefits realized in the European labour market were vocational qualification constitutes about 60% of all the middle level qualification (Cathleen, Raffe, Georg, Ammerman, & Watters, 2014). To realize these benefits, the training courses should equip the vocational training graduates with vocational skills that are acceptable to the employers and responsive to the industrial requirements. Their responses on whether vocational education and training has been given prominence at the lower levels of schooling was negative with a mean of 3.75897. This was an indication that, the learners at the basic education level of schooling are inadequately prepared to choose the vocational education and training pathway as they progress in their schooling at their young age. Such unpreparedness may influence’ readiness to gather information on technical education and training which in an important ingredient needed to make a career choice.

Managers’ responses on the period that the institutions have been offering the training courses

To ascertain whether the training courses offered by CVETIs are the same courses which were offered by the village youth polytechnics which by design could meet the needs of KCPE graduates and other primary level of schooling dropouts, an enquiry was made from the Managers only. The underlying assumption was that, the information required was too administrative such that the instructors and the trainees were not in apposition to provide reliable responses on the item. The questionnaire item yielded the data in Table 4.19.

Table 4.23 managers' responses on how long the institution has been offering the courses

Period	frequency	percent	valid percent	cumulative. Percent
5 – 10 years	4	19.0	19.0	19.0
11 – 15 years	3	14.3	14.3	33.3
16 – 20 years	1	4.8	4.8	38.1
21 – 25 years	2	9.5	9.5	47.6
Above 25 years	11	52.4	52.4	100.0
Total	21	100.0	100.0	

The data from table the Table 4.23 indicates that 11 or 52.6 of the Managers indicated that the vocational institutions have been offering these training courses for more than twenty five (25 years). The key concern was to establish whether the training courses have been aligned with the changing technology to address the mismatch between the training institutions and the labour market. To capture this information a questionnaire item was constructed for the managers and instructors only. It was assumed that the trainee could not have information about the alignment of the training courses and therefore they were exempted. The data captured from the managers and instructors are in Table 4.24

Table 4.24 Responses on the alignment of training courses with the changing technology

Respondent	YES			NO		
	Frequency	%	valid percent	frequency	%	valid percent
Managers	3	14.3	14.3	18	87.5	87.5
Instructors	4	4.6	4.6	83	95.4	95.4

The data in Table 4.24 indicates that more than 85 percent of the respondents revealed that the vocational training courses have not been aligned with the changing technology. This implies that the vocational institutions are unable to offer market oriented training to generate human capital in form of knowledge, skills

and appropriate attitudes to enhance the graduates' capacity to competitively participate in the world of work. The quality of training has a significant impact on the nation's capacities which can only be realized by the nations that invest in post-secondary education. The type of training that meets labour market requirements is one which is based on research. Labour market needs assessment has not been supported in Kenya to align the training programmes with the ever-changing industrial requirements. It has been observed that the TVET sub-sector is facing inadequate research support services (Ministry of Education, 2019).

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concluded that institutional factors significantly influenced access to CVETIs in Makueni County. The findings of the study shows that the training courses offered by the CVETIs does not meet the job market requirements. It was revealed that the courses have not attracted prospective trainees who meet the minimum admission requirements. This implies that the courses which were established long before, have not kept the phase of advancing technology in the labour market hence could be a contributor to low enrolment in most of the vocational centres making them to remain non-attractive.

Recommendations of the study

The main focus of this study was to improve CVET delivery system and increase the trainees' enrolment. The findings of the study revealed that enrolment in County vocational institutions has remained low in Makueni County. Based on this findings the following recommendations have been made.

(1) There is need to re-plan the Vocational Education and Training curriculum in Kenya with the KCSE graduates in mind as opposed to their historical establishment as village youths polytechnics.

(2) The state of the CVET in Makueni County and other Counties in Kenya calls for industry participation in curriculum review, TVET policy implementation and setting of standards to produce employable TVET graduates with capabilities to drive the country's economy towards the achievement of Kenya Vision 2030.

(3) TVET remains the first paramount step from being unemployable to employability. This calls for its re-positioning and financing to improve the quality of training programmes and support research.

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