DBA AFRICA MANAGEMENT REVIEW

2023

VOLUME 13 NO 2

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FERDINAND GEORGE MBECHE
ANDREW RIECHI
WISTON JUMBA AKALA

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (FBMS) UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

ISSN NO: 2224-2023

http://uonjournals.uonbi.ac.ke/ojs/index.php/DBAAMR
August 2023, Vol 13 No 2 Pgs 15 – 34

ISSN - 2224-2023

DBA Africa Management Review

Received Date
07/06/2023
Review Date
10/06/2023
26/07/2023
Accepted Date
27/07/2023

INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON EFFICIENCY IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AT VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN KISII COUNTY, KENYA

Ferdinand George Mbeche[1], Andrew Riechi PhD[2], Wiston Jumba Akala PhD[3]

Abstract

Training is a critical process that can assist to shape and determine a country's social-economic development progress. Research evidences demonstrate that there exists a positive correlation between the skills and competencies of the labour force and the long term growth of productivity of a country's economy. However, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Kenya continue to face challenges of mitigating gaps in skills development process in order to respond to the changing labour market needs. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to evaluate the influence of stakeholders' perception on efficiency at skills development at Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions in Kisii County. The study adopted correlational research design. To collect data, questionnaires were distributed among the managers and instructors at the 17 public VET institutions in the county. In addition, the county education officers and auditors were also interviewed to obtain the critical data. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed for data collection and analysis. The findings showed that majority of the respondents were in agreement that there exists a strong positive relationship between the stakeholders' perceptions towards VET and the level of efficiency in skills development in the county. The implication of the study findings is that there is need to address the negative stakeholders' perceptions towards vocational education and training in order to enhance and strengthen efficiency in skills development. Therefore, unless urgent strategic policy and legal interventions are instituted by the County Government of Kisii to mitigate these negative perceptions, inefficiency in skills development at VET institutions will continue to persist with grave consequences. Hence, poverty, social inequality and unemployment will continue to be a hindrance to the community's socio-economic development. As result, effective attainment of the Kenya Vision 2030, East Africa Vision 2050, and Sustainable Development Goals target by 2030 will remain a dream.

Key Words: Training, perceptions, skills development, policy and strategy

[1] PhD Candidate, Department of Educational Management, Policy & Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Nairobi - *g_ferhand@uonbi.ac.ke*
[2] Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Management, policy & Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Nairobi
[3] Associate Professor, Department of Educational Management, Policy & Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Nairobi

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Introduction

Background to the Study

Skills development fuels innovation, economic investment, social and occupational mobility. Over the years, education and training has been considered to be a fundamental human right (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1990; United Nations (2001). Researchers have confirmed that the motive behind investment in skills development by individuals and society is to reap economic and social returns in the future (Shultz, 1993; Becker, 1964). Similarly, the Jomtien conference in Thailand on *World Declaration on Education for All (1990),* reaffirmed that education is considered to be a basic right given that it is instrumental in enhancing socio-cultural, and economic development as well as international cooperation (UNESCO, 1990).

In the same vein, investment in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) whose main focus is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2016). The report on *Strategy for TVET (2016-2021)*, UNESCO noted that it is important for member countries to design sustainable intervention to promote quality and relevance of TVET systems. UNESCO further confirmed that among its priority targets by 2030 are; to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical and vocational education; and to increase the number of youths and adults who have relevant technical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

Anecdotal evidence from countries across the world have demonstrated many countries have made considerable efforts to improve the image of TVET. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report on *Vocational Education and Training in Germany* confirms that both the government and private sector provide financial resources to TVET sector because it is deeply rooted and highly respected. These positive perceptions by stakeholders have been attributed to the fact that the TVET system adequately prepares the youth to adapt to the dynamic labour market needs and requirements (OECD 2010).

On the other hand, policy briefs by the African Development Bank (ADB), revealed that the government of South Korea between 1970 to 1990 initiated and strengthened policy incentives to the private sector that were aimed at attracting private companies to invest in the TVET sector in order to train skilled workers. Consequently, the initiatives played a part in enhancing the prestige of vocational education, secondary vocational and technical training. As a result, 21 Meister high schools were opened first in 2010, with 38 in operation in 2013. The purpose was to motivate students to view Meister schools as a high-status (ADB 2013).

The African Union (AU) report on *strategy to revitalize technical and vocational education and training in Africa* indicated that European countries such as United Kingdom and Belgium, 50% of the learners in upper secondary education are introduced to some vocational education and training (VET). However, countries in Africa such as Kenya and Zambia it is less than 4% who are introduced to VET (AU, 2007). In Nigeria, the TVET sector is also negatively perceived major stakeholders. As a result, individuals with TVET qualifications tend to have a low prestigious position in society (McGrath, 2005). These findings are in agreement with a study conducted on *TVET and human resources development in West Africa* by Osuji, which revealed that most parents make decisions to have their children to enrol at TVET institutions only when they fail to gain entry for university education. In this regard, TVET is considered to be inferior to general education (Osuji, 2003).

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Studies have also shown that majority of TVET institutions in Sub Saharan Africa countries are characterized by inadequate physical facilities, resources, tools and equipment. In addition, these institutions, use old-fashioned curriculum that is not responsive to the dynamic labour market (McGrath, 2005; Yihunie, 2011; African Union, 2007). In a study conducted on *Vocational education and training in Southern Africa* by McGrath revealed that key stakeholders such students and parents often viewed TVET to be of low prestige (McGrath, 2005). Similarly, a study conducted in Ghana revealed that the TVET sector over the year has been held in low esteem (Council for Technical Education and Training, 2012). Consequently, the negative perceptions towards TVET seems have adversely affected efficiency in skills development in most African countries.

In Kenya, the TVET Policy of 2012 and the TVET Act of 2013 focus on expansion of development of a national skill strategy and provision of financial resources to promote the image of the training in order to improve participation rates and quality training. However, many parents prefer general education to vocational education and training (MoE 2012; MoEST 2012). A survey conducted on enrolment in youth polytechnics in Kisii Central District revealed majority of the institutions experienced low enrolment rates because of the negative attitude towards TVET by the stakeholders (by Moranga at el, 2012).

Problem Statement

The stakeholders' negative perceptions towards Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Kisii County has had adverse effect on efficiency in skills development. As a result, majority of the vocational training institutions continue to experience low rates of enrolment, participation and completion. However, there is scanty documented evidence to show the steps that have been taken or being taken by the County government to mitigate the stakeholders' negative perceptions. Hence, without coming up with appropriate policy interventions to mitigate these negative perceptions towards VET, this situation will continue to persist resulting in more educational wastage, unemployment and further widening of income and social inequalities gap.

In this respect, the current study was informed by the fact that there were limited in-depth studies to inform strategic policy interventions to address the existing negative attitude towards VET. As matter of fact, unless urgent interventions are made, efficiency in skills development will remain a dream for many years. Consequently, unemployment and poverty will continue to persist with grave negative impact to the community in particular and the country at large

In this regard, the study mainly focused on determinants that influence efficiency in skills in Kisii County in Kenya. Hence, data on stakeholders' perceptions towards TVET was collected and analysed. The aim was to provide recommendations that could assist in enhancing efficiency in development of skills at VCTs in the County.

Review of Related Literature

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) global monitoring report on *Education for All* revealed that Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is the master key that can assist to improve the quality of life for all and assist in enhancing sustainable development (UNESCO, 2005). In addition, the UNESCO conceptual framework on *Indicators of Skills for Employment and Productivity* noted that training institutions have to adequately equip trainees with relevant employability skills (UNESCO, 2013). In this regard, investments in TVET provide opportunities to women, youth, adults and vulnerable citizens to acquire fundamental practical skills, competencies and

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attitudes required in the changing knowledge based economies (Hanni, 2019).

In addition, in a report on *Indicators of Skills for Employment and Productivity*, UNESCO further noted that adequately trained and qualified human capital contributes significantly to increased productivity, efficiency and economic returns (UNESCO, 2013). On the other hand, in a report on *Learning to Realize Education's Promise*, World Bank confirmed that vocational and technical skills are required in almost 80% of occupations and employment related opportunities (World Bank,

A study based on a Mincerian model established that an additional year of schooling results in average in a 9.7% increase in hourly earnings at the global level. The study noted that that there is significant variation across regions, with some regions registering results lower than the global average: Middle East and North Africa (6.5%) and South Asia (7.2%) (Montenegro & Patrinos, 2014). It is for this reason that Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) continue to gain recognition and attention over the years at the global level.

In addition, the UNDP (2019) report on *Economic Return to Investment in Education and TVET* investment indicates that the production of knowledge, practical skills, values and attitudes is critical in modern sector firms and micro and small enterprises. The report confirmed that a TVET graduate with a bachelor in civil engineering earn an average monthly wage of US$467 whilst a graduate with general higher education earns an average monthly wage of US$573.According to the World Bank (2018) report, in Brazil and Indonesia, technical and vocational trained workers have higher chances of accessing well paid employment opportunities than workers with general secondary education (World Bank, 2018). This evidence supports observations by Lewin (2008) and Monika (2012) who argued that global technological and economic changes demand for more and better skilled human capital.

Planning for flexible, responsive and diverse pathways for skills development could be instrumental in increasing the prestige of TVET (Shanti, 2013). A study conducted by McKinsey and Company in 2013 on *the competitiveness repository South Korea Meister schools* revealed that these schools were designed not only to prepare the youths for the world of work, but also to give them a higher sense of prestige and esteem. The findings further revealed that 85% of the first cohort of 'Young Meisters' had already signed contracts for employment even though they hadn't graduated (McKinsey & Company, 2013). On the other hand, a study conducted on *the other arms race: 'South Korea's education fever needs cooling'* by the Economist confirmed that 93% parents in South Korea were determined to have their children pursue postsecondary education. However, asserts that due to cultural subjectivity, it has been difficult to convince a large number of youths and their parents to prefer vocational training to university education (The Economist. 2013).In Singapore, studies have shown that prestige of Vocational Training Education (VET) was enhanced through the upgrading and repositioning it into the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), and transforming it to be recognized as a world-class educational institution. On the other hand, introduction of 'applied degree' programme assisted to raise the prestige and the signalling value of technical training in the market. Consequently, these strategic interventions have assisted in elevating and strengthening the status of vocational education and training in Singapore (Shanti, 2013). Similarly, these initiatives assisted in making the training attractive to students and key stakeholders in South Korea and Singapore.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) recognized TVET as a priority national development agenda. For example, the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020

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under Strategic Goal 4, confirmed that, ASEAN supports the development of TVET and Lifelong Learning by maximizing access to TVET; strengthening Regional Harmonization and TVET Personnel Development; establishing Regional Quality Assurance and Recognition of TVET; and reducing the gap between supply and demand of skilled labour (AIP Conference Proceedings, 2017). Consequently, governments in Southern Asia have initiated strategic interventions aimed at improving the image of TVET in order to ensure supply and demand of skilled labour is at equilibrium (Shanti, 2013). The UNDP study on *economic return to investment in education and TVET* in 2019 showed that TVET is considered by students to be inferior compared to general education. Thus, the low enrolment and retention rates in TVET institutions compared to general education has been attributed to these negative attitudes by students from poor households, school dropouts and marginalized groups. The study further revealed that TVET has been placed at the centre of Cambodia's development agenda. Thus the government and development partners have made concerted efforts to fund this sector with an aim of increasing awareness among high school students. The government is committed to make these students to prefer TVET related programmes to general education. The government hopes to become an upper middle income country by 2030. In this way, Cambodia will have adequate stock of skilled labour force to enable it not only address the skills mismatch, but also, attain high-incomes status by 2050 (UNDP, 2019). **O**n the other hand, a study conducted by Moenjak and Worswick in Thailand which revealed that graduates from TVET institutions provided more economic returns than those with general education **q**ualifications (Moenjak and Worswick, 2003). In the same vein, the launching of the national policy in Cambodia in 2015 was aimed at strategically promote the role of TVET in realization the country's vision and development goals. As a result, the government has continued to receive enormous technical and financial support to boost skills development. As a result, the government has made a commitment to increase budgetary allocations to the industrial sector from 24.1% to 30% by 2025 (UNDP, 2019). A study by Kahyarara and Teal in 2008 in Tanzania revealed that investment in TVET has more returns than that of general education. However, many countries in Sub Saharan Africa still seem to have a negative perception towards TVET. Available studies have shown that most countries in developing countries still consider Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to be an inferior type of education that is meant for people who have less cognitive and intellectual ability. According to the UNESCO report on *Indicators of Skills for Employment and Productivity*, TVET continue to be negatively perceived in many developing countries. Consequently, this negative attitude has made the training to be less attractive leading to low enrolments in TVET institutions (UNESCO, 2013). A study conducted on *the state of the textiles training and its impact on Recidivism* in Ghana by Boateng in 2010 revealed that the negative perceptions have been associated to poor TVET policy which too often relegates the sector to least desired status in the overall education system in many countries (Boateng, 2010). Similarly, in South Africa, graduates of the TVET sector are considered inferior compared to their university graduate counterparts. The low prestige of graduates is further punctuated by the negative perception attributed to certificates obtained from TVET institutions. This position was supported by a comparative study on *implementation of TVET policies* in South Africa which pointed out that the majority of key stakeholders had a negative perception towards the training. As a result, the TVET sector was poorly funded by the government. Hence, the sector did not have the capacity to

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attract a large number of trainees (Afro, 2015). In Ghana, over the years, the TVET sector has been held in low esteem (COTVET, 2012). As a result, the technical vocational education and training pathway is considered to be an option of the last resort by the society and perceived as a career path for the less academically endowed. People who attended TVET institutions are considered as people with low status (Afro, 2015). Similarly, the TVET systems in most Sub Saharan Africa are characterized by insufficient human, physical infrastructure, facilities and equipment. Given that, most TVET institutions use old-fashioned curriculum, and offer training programmes, the training has continued to be negatively perceived by major stakeholders (McGrath, 2005; African Union, 2007). In Nigeria, the TVET sector is also negatively perceived major stakeholders. As McGrath (2005) notes individuals with TVET qualifications tend to have a low prestigious position in society.

Reforms in the TVET sector in Kenya since independence have focused on establishing a practically oriented system of education to promote self-employment and self-reliance. A large number of youth graduating from the TVET system are unemployed despite the fact that opportunities for high technology skilled workforce exist. This situation has been attributed to negative attitude towards TVET, a mismatch between training and skills demanded in the labour market, and limited input from employers/industry into curriculum design in TIVET institutions (MOE 2008; MoEST 2012).

The study was guided by the Human Capital theory, which was advanced in the earlier 1960s by great economists such as Shultz and Becker. The theory is anchored on the relationship between human capital and productivity and the distribution of wealth. The theory holds that knowledge, skills and competencies acquired through education and training improves the productivity, employability and earning capacity of individuals (Schultz, 1962; Becker, 1964; Jarego, 2014). In addition, the Education Production Function model was applied to analyse the relationships between the inputs and outputs in the skills development process. It was against this back ground that the stakeholders' perceptions were analysed to determine its relationship with efficiency in skills development as demonstrated in the conceptual framework presented in Figure2.1.

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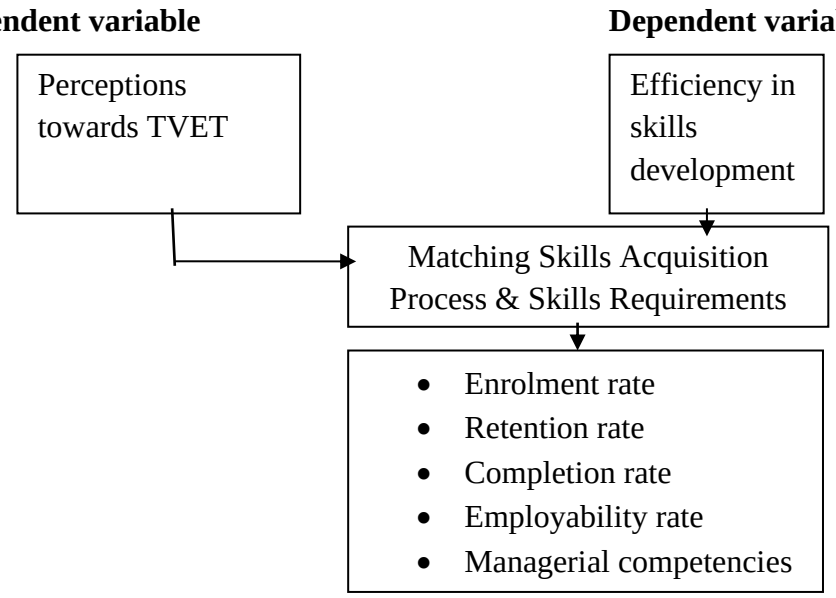

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Research Methodology

The study employed a correlational research design. This approach is centered on collecting data to generalize it across groups of people to give details on a particular phenomenon (Barbie, 2010). The method was best suited for this study because it was possible to adequately examine the relationship between a dependent variable and an independent variable. This design assisted in collection of significant amounts of data from the population using structured questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis guide. The process of date collection was comprehensive which assisted do in depth description and analysis of the opinions, comprehension and attitudes of the respondents without manipulation of the study variables.

The study was conducted in Kisii County which is one of the 47 Counties in Kenya. The target population comprised of all the functional 41 public Vocational Educational and Training (VET) institutions, 41 managers and 420 instructors. Similarly, the target population also included the County Director of Education, two Sub County Directors of Education, two County School Auditors and the County Executive Member for Education (Kisii County Government, 2018). Simple random sampling was used to selected 17 VET institutions that were registered and have clear institutional arrangements. Purposeful sampling was used to select key informants. This technique was appropriate given that it involves selecting particular sample because they have important information on the issue under investigation (Saunders et al., 2009). As a result, it was employed to select 17 managers of VET institutions, the County Education Executive Committee Member, the County Director of Education, the two County Sub Directors of education and the two county school auditors. These respondents were selected given that they were strategically positioned to provide crucial required information.

In addition, due to the covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to reach out to the anticipated targeted population. Hence, the study employed non probability sampling technique to select 16% of 420 instructors at the selected seventeen vocational education training institutions. Therefore, the sample size for the instructors was sixty eighty. Consequently, the sample size

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in each category of participants fell within the recommended range between 10 to 30 percent (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) for large populations. The total sample size was 90 participants.

Questionnaires were used to collect data from principals, instructors and trainees from 17 vocational education and training institutions. On the other hand, structured interview schedules were used to collect data from the County Executive Committee Member for Education, the County and Sub County Directors of Education, and the School Auditors. The data collected was cleaned up; checked to ensure it was accurate, complete and suitable for further analysis. The data was then organized into thematic categories to facilitate easy and effective analysis. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques was applied to explain the data and draw inferences. Multiple regression analysis techniques were also used since it was to show the individual effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Similarly, this statistical technique was important for exploring the strength of relationship between several independent variables and one dependent variable. The advantage of multiple correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis is that it permits one to analyse the relationships among a large number of variables in a single study (Borg, et al, 1983).

According to Jagero's study, using computer Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) the values of the constants will be established. The step-wise multiple regression analysis is appropriate since it eliminates the independent variables whose contribution to the regression model will decline to a non-significant level and all the included independent variables in the regression model was to be significant at 0.05 confidence level in a two tailed test (Jagero, 2014).

Data Analysis and Findings

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of stakeholders' perceptions on efficiency in skills development at Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions in Kisii County in Kenya. The study findings, interpretation and discussion have been reported based on this research objective. In this study, 5 (100%) face to face interviews were conducted with the County Director of Education, two Sub County Directors of Education, two County School Auditors and the County Executive Member for Education.

In addition, open ended questionnaires were administered to the seventeen and sixty eighty managers and instructors respectively at the sampled seventeen public VET institutions in Kisii County. The return rate was excellent, given that 14 (82%) and 52 (76.5%) duly filled questionnaires were returned by managers and instructors respectively. Edward et al. (2002) noted that, if return rate is at least 80 percent, it is excellent; if between 60 and 70 percent, the rate is sufficient but if it is less than 60 percent, the return rate is said to be poor. Therefore, the return rate for this study was perfect. In all categories, research instruments attained a return rate of 75% and above. This return rate was considered appropriate for data analysis as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who observed that a 50 % response rate is adequate, 60 % good and above 70% as highly acceptable for social sciences.

The guiding objective of this study was to examine how the stakeholders' perception towards TVET affects skills development at VET institutions in Kisii County. Descriptive and inferential statistics methods were used to analyse data that was collected from the respondents. The stakeholders' perceptions towards vocational education and training as the independent variable whist efficiency in skills development as the dependent variable. It is important to note that the description of the

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stakeholders' attitude was important in comprehending the enrolment rates, dropout rates, repetition rates, retention rates and completion rates in various vocational education and training institutions in Kisii County. The principals of VET institutions were among the key informants and their responses are captured in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Principals' Views on Stakeholders' Perceptions towards TVET

Public Attitude	Frequency	Valid Percent
Public have negative attitude towards TVET	8	42.9
Public believe TVETs are for K.C.P.E failures	2	14.3
TVET do not assist the youths to access employment	4	42.9
Total	**14**	**100.0**

Results presented in Table 1.1 showed that 42.9% of the principals revealed that the stakeholders had negative attitude towards technical vocational education and training. The findings demonstrated that vocational education and training has a low image and therefore it still remains largely a mirage in Kisii County. It can be argued that the low enrolment rates experienced by majority of the vocational training centres can be associated to the stakeholders' negative perception towards vocational education and training. The implication of this finding was that unless deliberate efforts are made to change this negative attitude towards VET, it could remain a major challenge towards improving efficiency in skills development at VET institutions.

The results in Table 1.1 also showed that 42.9% of principals were in agreement that the negative attitude can be attributed to people believe that the training does not help youths to access employment opportunities in the modern formal sector of the economy. These findings demonstrate the poor and low enrolment and retention rates at various vocational training institutions can be associated to the existing negative attitude by the public towards TVET. These findings are in agreement with a study by Adewale (2018) that confirmed that although members of the society were aware of the benefits of vocational education, they preferred their children to enrol for general formal education because of the prestige associated with it.

These findings were in agreement with views that were obtained from the other key informants. These respondents were the County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for education, County Director of Education (CDE) and the Sub County Directors of Education(SCDE). They were interviewed during the study on the stakeholders' perceptions towards VET. The interviewees provided the following responses:

Respondent number one:

"The public and more particularly the youth generally have negative attitude towards TVET. Most of them regard it as a training that is best suited for low academic achieves".

Respondent number two:

"The courses offered in most Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) are old fashioned that do not reflect the changing labour market needs".

Respondent number three:

"The parents generally view TVET as an option

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of last resort. They prefer general education to TVET. This negative perception has adversely affected attraction of potential trainees and therefore negatively affected enrolment and participation rates at most of the VTCs in Kisii County".

These findings confirmed that majority of the stakeholders in the county perceive that vocational education and training is meant for students with low intellectual ability. Consequently, parents cannot encourage their children to pursue career in vocational education and training. These findings demonstrated that it is imperative for the county government in partnership with other stakeholders in the society to sensitize people on the role and value of vocational education and training in mitigating poverty social inequalities, employment and wealth creation, and enhancing socioeconomic development in general.

However, it can be deduced from the study findings that the county government has not been at the fore front in educating the public on the importance of vocational education and training. This means that the government has not played a leading role in championing and advocating for positive attitude towards the sector. This observation is in concurrence with a study by Adewala et.al. (2018) which confirm that the government of federal republic of Nigeria has not only failed to educate its citizens on the role of VET, but also hasn't provided the required financial support to the institutions to attract students.

Further, instructors were asked to provide justification for community's perceptions towards TVET. The obtained data was computed and results are illustrated in Table 1.2

Table 1.2: The Community's Justification on Perception towards TVET

Community Rationale	Frequency	Valid Percent
Creates jobs and decrease crime rates in the society	18	36.7
Misunderstanding of the value of technical skills	10	20.4
Youth have turned to white jobs	5	10.2
To provide more facilities and tools	4	8.2
Low entry qualification	4	8.2
Graduates become successful	3	6.1
Poor infrastructure	3	6.1
Poor financial support by parents	1	2.0
Cheap for the whole program	1	2.0
Total	**49**	**100.0**

Valid N=52

Results in Table 1.2 revealed that 36.7% of the instructors revealed that the community members who had a positive attitude towards TVET believed that the training is important because it creates job opportunities and plays a critical role in crime reduction in society. This positive perception was attributed to the feeling that TVET can equip the youths as well adults with employability skills needed by the labour market. The training is also important in

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reducing crime rates in society through economic empowerment of the graduates. These findings are incurrence with the GoK (2015) which emphasizes that the TVET sector plays an important role in meeting the skills demands for the labour market. Adewale at, el. (2018) notes one of the goals of TVET is to provide training that enables student acquire continuous education for self-reliance, wealth creation and provision of employment.

Results in Table 1.2 also showed that 20.4% of the instructors revealed that the community members who had a negative attitude towards VET was because they have a misunderstanding about the value of technical skills for the world of work. The findings are in agreement with Adewale *at. el* (2018) who confirms that the society believes that TVET is for the academically weak students, who may not be able to meet the requirements to pursue university education. The misunderstanding makes the community not to consider VET as an important avenue for the youths to acquire practical employability skills highly needed in the labour market.

It is important to note that VET institutions are incubation zones that can be used to nurture and develop effective and competent artisans needed to fill skills gaps in various sectors of the economy. This finding demonstrates that vocational education and training has not received the attention it deserves in the county's human resource development policy and strategy. It implies that inadequate sensitization and awareness programmes have not been mounted to change the negative towards VET to ensure 100% acceptance. This situation calls for concerted efforts to reimage and reengineer the sub sector in order to make VET a top priority but not the alternative of the last resort.

The study sought to establish from the respondents the strategies that address the negative perceptions towards vocational education and training in order to increase enrolment rates, participation rates and quality of VET. The managers' results are depicted in Table 1.3:

Table 1.3: Managers Proposed Strategies to Improve the Image of VET

Principals' Strategies	Frequency	Valid Percent
The Government to create job opportunities for trainees	2	16.7
Put up descent modern physical facilities (structures)	3	25.0
Employ qualified instructors	2	16.7
Provision of adequate tools and equipment	4	33.3
Graduating of trainees	1	8.3
Total	**12**	**100.0**

Valid N=14

The results in Table 1.3 showed that 33.3% of the managers indicated provision of tools and equipment could be important in improving the image of vocational education and training. This finding implies that one of the most effective strategy of changing the existing negative attitude towards VET is to ensure adequate tools and equipment. This intervention is likely to encourage students to enrol at the VET institutions.

These findings also demonstrate that adequate tools and equipment will be essential in

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enhancing acquisition of practical and applied skills by the trainees. Hence, the quality of training will be dependent on how adequately workshops in vocational education institutions are equipped with adequate modern tools and equipment. This finding implies that well established and sufficiently equipped workshops at VET institutions will provide exclusively good avenues for trainees to acquire practical skills and competencies in their different technical and vocational career pursuits.

In essence, the practical component of the curriculum can be efficiently and effectively implemented in VET institutions that have functional and well-equipped workshops with the necessary tools and equipment. These workshops will provide opportunities for trainees to conduct practical learning sessions and demonstrations that reinforces skills acquisition and advancement. This finding indicates that the implementation of the VTE curriculum need to be carefully, cautiously and intelligently interrogated to guarantee purposeful and meaningful transition from a theory-based training system to a practically oriented training system in order to attract more students.

Generally, education must prepare students for future world of work that doesn't rely solely on academic and theoretical knowledge. The administrators and managers of the VET institutions must be focused on provision of tools and equipment that can ensure on effective development of practical skills and core competencies that are in high demand and necessary for success in a reconstituted future. The VET institutions must therefore, focus more than academics and ensure they develop trainees holistically in line with the changing labour market needs.

The vocational training institutions should pay more attention to the development of employability skills and attitudes that will be most demanded in the changing labour market. This situation means that that the VET institutions should go an extra mile to adequately prepare and equip trainees with practical skills to ensure that they become and remain competitive in what is likely to be a shrinking labour market. To achieve this objectives, the VET institutions require sufficient modern tools and equipment to enable trainees to acquire practical and transferable skills that will empower them to become resilient and be able to respond quickly to changes in the job environment. Similarly, it is significant to trainers to ensure their trainees become empowered to navigate the future labour market demand, rather than just prepare them for those jobs that currently exist. It is for justification that VET institutions should have adequate tools and equipment in order to enhance enrolment rates, participation rates and quality training.

The World Economic Forum's projections 2020 survey shows that companies are expecting to restructure their work force in response to new technologies. The companies are likely to adopt a number of technologies in the coming years. The companies are looking to provide reskilling and upskilling opportunities to the majority of their staff (73%) cognizant of the fact that, by 2025, 44% of the skills that employees will need to perform their roles effectively will change. This projection suggest that new technologies are set to drive the future growth across all sectors of the development, as well as to demand for new job roles and skill sets. The VET institutions must have adequate tools and equipment to adequately prepare trainees to be ready for the future changing labour market skill needs. VET institutions must pay special attention on ensuring that trainees become competitive through acquisition of practical employability skills and core competencies beyond the academic curriculum. In addition, the VET institutions should incorporate a wireless networking technology (Wi-Fi),

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identified universal employability and soft skills as an integral part of the TVET curriculum. These skills should not be taught independently, but rather be integrated within all the areas of trade offered at VET institutions.

The findings further suggest that well trained and qualified instructors require an enabling training environment with adequate tools and equipment to effectively execute their mandate. In order to develop these skills efficiently, trainees need tools and equipment for demonstrations and practice. The instructors require these tools and equipment to be able to provide trainees with frequent and specific practical assignments, daily learning engagements, formative and summative evaluations. However, the study established that most of the VET institutions in the County do not have workshops that are equipped with modern tools, equipment and other relevant training facilities. This situation has contributed to the poor image of VET institutions and therefore, majority of the KCPE and KCSE graduates have not shown consistent interest in enrolling and pursuing TVET programmes in the Kisii County.

Results in Table 1.3 also showed that 25% of the principals reveal that putting up descent and modern physical facilities can act as a magnet of attracting potential trainees to enrol at VET institutions. This finding implies that dilapidated physical facilities in most of the VET institutions seemed to paint a negative picture about vocational training education. Consequently, the low enrolment rates in most of the VET institutions can be attributed to the negative perception towards VET institutions. It therefore means that Board of Management (BOM) and the VET administration to plan on how the improve the standards of the dilapidated of physical facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops, toilets, and administrations blocks. The buildings and other relevant infrastructural facilities are likely to enhance and reinforce the teaching and learning in the vocational education and training institutions. The infrastructural facilities and material resources are important assets that could be utilized to promote the delivery of quality education and training. Ikoya & Onoyase (2008), contend that there is a positive correlation between school environment and students' attitude to schooling.

The results in Table 4.3 further showed that 16.7% of the principals revealed that employing adequately qualified instructors can assist to change the negative attitude towards vocational education and training. The finding means that VET institutions that have sufficiently qualified instructors are likely to have a positive image. Hence, are likely to attract and retain more trainees. The implications of this finding are that VET institutions need to have adequate instructors in order to improve the status of vocational education and training. This strategy can be instrumental in attracting and retaining trainees at VET institutions. Secondly, the County government has to make consistent commitment not only to recruit well trained training personnel but also ensure that all the instructors in VET institutions undergo in-service training course to acquire and advance pedagogical skills. These teaching skills are important to enable the instructor to be able to follow and interpret the curriculum and to use developed learning guides to assess the progress of the trainees in acquisition of practical knowledge, employable skills, core competencies and attitudes.

The study sought to establish the steps the County Government of Kisii has taken to promote the image of VET. Therefore, the principals' views on County government initiatives to change negative attitude perception towards VET was obtained and analysed data are presented in Table 1.4

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Table 1. 4 Principals' Views on Steps Initiated for Perceptions' towards VET

Steps Taken by County government	Responses	
	N	Percent
Assisted in areas of infrastructure	9	31.0%
Assisted in employment of instructor/tutor	7	24.1%
Provide tool and equipment for institution	5	17.2%
In provision of equipment	8	27.6%
Valid N	**14**	**100.0%**

The principals were asked to point out the strategic interventions that had been initiated by the county government to mitigate the existing negative perceptions towards vocational education and training. The findings in Table 1.4 showed that 31% of the principals revealed that the county government has been providing financial support to assist in renovation of physical infrastructural facilities. The findings implied that the county government in partnership with the national government has assisted in providing funds and technical support in the maintenance of physical facilities such as classrooms, workshops and laboratories some of the vocational education institutions.

Similarly, County government has been allocating and distributing the national government conditional grant funds to the vocational education institutions to assist in the renovation of dilapidated physical facilities. This intervention has been instrumental in assisting the face lifting of the institutional physical facilities. The face lifting of the physical facilities seemed to have improved the image of the VET institutions and thereby changing the negative attitude towards VET by students and parents in particular, and the community members in general. As a result of this intervention, there has been an increase in enrolment rates and participation rates in some of the VET institutions. Hence, the increase in enrolment rates and participation rates in some of the vocational education institution can be attributed to this strategic intervention.

The results in Table 1.4 also revealed that 27% of the principals involved in the study confirm that the county government has been at the fore front in using the national government grant funds for the provision of tools and equipment in all the functional and eligible VET institutions. The study established that the capitation from the national has been used by individual VET institutions in procurement of the some of the critical and important tool and equipment that are in short supply. It can be argued that the availability of these tools and equipment has also had a positive impact in changing the negative perception towards VET by potential trainees, their parents and other key stakeholders. Consequently, the trends in increasing enrolment rates, retention rates and completion rates in some of the VET institutions in the county.

Results in Table 1.4 also showed that 16.7% of the principals were contended that the government need to create job opportunities in order to improve the image of vocational education and training. This finding implies that some students have negative attitudes towards vocational education and training because of insufficient job opportunities in the formal sectors of the economy. Therefore, the low enrolment rates common in most VET

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institutions in the county can be attributed to the increasing unemployment rates among TVET graduates. Consequently, potential students are not attracted to enrol and pursue VET. The finding demonstrates that unemployment rates among the VET graduates has contributed to low enrolment trends common in VET institutions. Consequently, it could be important for the government to puts in place practical mechanisms that can assist to increase employment opportunities both in the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

The study sought to establish the instructors' views on how the community can be sensitized about the importance of VET. The study findings tabulated in Table 1.5.

Table 1.5: Instructors' Views on Community's Strategies towards VET Image.

Community's Strategies	Frequency	Valid Percent
Advertisement	8	22.2
Organize education awareness and advocacy days	11	30.5
Public participation	4	27.8
Create awareness	4	11.1
To put technological and modern equipment	3	8.3
Employing graduates from VETS	2	5.6
Give trainees government grants	1	2.8
Church leaders' involvement	1	2.8
Total	**36**	**100.0**

Valid N=52

From Table 1.5 findings showed that 48.9% of the instructors revealed that some of the community members had a negative attitude towards vocational education and training. These findings implied that there is need to establish ways through which the negative attitude can be changed. Results in Table 4.5 showed 30.5% of the instructors indicated that there will be need organize education awareness and advocacy days. This intervention can be an important strategy to sensitize the community members who have negative attitude towards VET. The results in Table 1.5 also showed that 27.8% of the instructors felt that public participation can be a powerful strategy that can be employed to influence positive attitude change towards VET. The public participation can be enhanced through involving key stakeholders like parents in curriculum review and making important decisions on issues affecting VET implementation and evaluation.

The results in Table 4.5 further showed that 22.2% of the instructors felt that advertisement can be a powerful mechanism that can be employed to influence positive attitude change towards TVET. This finding means that the national and county governments can use a variety of media platforms to inform and sensitize on the contribution of the TVET sector to employment creation, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. This effort is likely to change the impact of the negative perceptions of the stakeholders in the education sector have instigated the society against vocational education.

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The study sought Instructors' views on National and County government interventions to change the negative perception towards TVET are shown in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6 Instructors' Interventions to Improve the Attractiveness of VET

Interventions	Frequency	Valid Percent
National and County Government funding	10	25
The trainees go for industrial attachment	12	30.0
Provide physical, human and instructional resources	13	32.5
Educational seminars	2	5.0
Stakeholders' involvement	2	5.0
Trade fairs	1	2.5
Total	**40**	**100.0**

Valid N=52

Results in Table 1.6 showed 32.5% of the instructors indicated that there will be need to provide physical, human and instructional resources as apriority intervention to improve the attractiveness of the VET courses. These findings implied that the provision of these resource will assist to motivate potential trainees to enrol in the different VET course. In essence, trainees view these resources to be important when making decisions to enrol and pursue the courses at VET institutions. The results also showed that 30% of the instructors were in agreement that going for internship by the trainees will be a significant step in making the VET courses attractive. The implication is that industrial attachment is considered to be important because it offers trainees an opportunity not only to blend theory and practice, but also, to relate and interact with the work environment.

The results in Table 1.6 further showed that 25% of the instructors were in agreement that funding by the national and county governments will be important interventions towards making the VET courses attractive. The findings implied that some potential trainees from poor households fail to enrol in VET courses because of difficulties in meeting the direct and indirect costs of their education. Hence, funding by both the national and county governments can act as an incentive for one to enrol.

Respondents was interviewed about the strategic interventions that have been initiated by the county government to improve the image of VET. The interviewee number one confirmed that:

"The county government has set up Digital Information Communication and Technology (DICT) Centres at four VTCs; Keumbu, *Nyaore, Masakwe and Nyamorumbasi to act as centres of excellence with an aim of improving the image of TVET in order to attract more trainees. Trainees have been encouraged to enrol for certificate classes in ICT alongside the courses they intend to train in as a trade. This initiative has had positive outcomes as reflected by slight increase in enrolment at these VTCs".*

These findings revealed that the county government may need to set up Digital Information Communication and Technology (DICT) Centres in all VET institutions in order

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to improve the image of TVET. Similarly, the government may need to embark on a robust sensitization and campaign programmes to change the negative attitude towards TVET by parents and potential trainees.

Respondent number two alluded that:

"Recruitment and deployment of well trained and qualified to VTCs has been instrumental in boosting the image of the training. The construction and rehabilitation of workshops and classroom in some of the VTCs has considerably given them some facelift. Hence, the trainees and parents developed positive attitude towards the training".

The findings show that the county government has made considerate effort in mitigating the negative attitude towards TVET by the public, parents and trainees. However, the enrolment and retention rates in most VTCs is still very low. This situation calls for more commitment by various key stakeholders to support the initiatives of the county government in order to change the negative attitude towards TVET.

The study further interviewed respondent number three about the strategic interventions that can be by the county government to improve the image of TVET. The interviewee was confirmed that:

"The county government should demonstrate serious commitment to change *the negative attitude towards TVET by being at the fore front in the construction of modern workshops and rehabilitation of dilapidated ones in most VET institutions. It should also equip these workshops with adequate tools and equipment with an aim of boosting the image of the training. Similarly, the government should make more budgetary allocations in order to provide adequate qualified instructors to all VET institutions with an aim of replacing unqualified instructors. This intervention will not only improve the status of VET institutions, but also, promotes quality of the training to make it more attractive to potential trainees, parents and other key stakeholders".*

The findings suggested that Kisii County Government in partnership with other key stakeholders should pay special attention to rehabilitation of dilapidated workshops and construction of modern ones in all VET institutions. It may need to make more budgetary allocations to the VET sub sector with an aim of equipping the workshops with adequate tools and equipment, and to provide adequate qualified instructors to all VET institutions. These strategic interventions are likely to change the negative attitude towards TVET.

Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the Null Hypothesis (***H*₀**) that stated, "*There exists no relationship between perception towards TVET image and Efficiency in Skills Development"*. To achieve this, the study conducted Spearman's Correlation Test between the two variables and the results are illustrated in Table 1.7

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Table1.7: Stakeholders' Perceptions towards TVET Image and Efficiency in Skills Development

Spearman's rho		Efficiency in skills development	Perception towards TVET image
Efficiency in skills development	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.713
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001**
	N	52	52
Perception towards TVET image	Correlation Coefficient	.713	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001**	.
	N	52	52

****Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

Results in Table 4.7 showed that there exists a strong positive correlation between perceptions towards TVET image and efficiency in skills development (Spearman's rho=.713, N=52, P Value=.001). This implied that the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant (*P<.05*). Further results in Table 4.15 implied that the two variables correlate in the same direction, as the perception towards TVET image increases, the efficiency in skills develops also increases in public VET institutions in Kisii County.

Conclusions and Recommendation

The findings confirmed the stakeholders' negative perceptions towards VET has adversely affected not only the participation rates, but also, the quality of skills development in majority of the Vocational Education and Training institutions in Kisii County. There is need for the county government in partnership with other key stakeholders to upscale sensitization and advocacy campaign programmes to change the negative perception toward TVET.

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