

A Critical Analysis of the Effectiveness of the TVETA Curriculum on Learners Practical Skills Acquisition in Technical and Vocational Institutions in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Technical and vocational institutions in Kenya were created to offer an alternative to the students who did not qualify to join university. The learners were intended to acquire practical skills that would lead them into the job market. Some of the areas studied in these institutions include, carpentry, plumbing, electrical engineering, motor vehicle engineering, secretarial studies, tailoring, among others. The curriculum for these particular institutions has been under review in the past years latest being the TVETA Act 2013 that led into the government appointing members of an authority to look into the issues of curriculum, human resource and management of the Technical Training institutions in Kenya. It is however an undeniable fact that majority of the graduates from these institutions leave without the required practical skills or the skills that are required in the job market. It is for this reason that the researchers sort to critically analyze the effectiveness of the TVET curriculum in the Technical Training institutions and if they are disseminating the skills they are supposed to give to learners. The study is intended to come up with recommendations to enable this curriculum to be able to achieve its intended purpose. That is to make the graduates of these particular institutions to be able to fit into the job market.

Key words: Technical Training institutions, TVET curriculum, practical skills acquisition, industrial attachment, job market/employment.

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of the TVET curriculum of the Technical training institutions can be measured or evaluated through the practical skills of the graduates produced for the job market in Kenya. The graduates from these institutions should be able to put in practice, more so on the job market, what they have learned in their areas of specialization. It however emerged that the kind of people produced from the Technical Training institutions mostly are not able to put their skills into practice after completing their study of three years and two years in diploma and craft courses respectively. The study shares our research on the effectiveness of the TVET curriculum in technical training institutions on the practical skills acquisition of learners in Kenya. The researchers incorporated the findings of other researchers who conducted studies in the same area.

STATEMENT PROBLEM

The government of Kenya has put in much effort in carrying out its mandate as far as the Technical and vocational institutions are concerned. These include funding through annual budget allocation to these institutions and putting in place an authority to be in charge of the technical training institutions called TVETA. Despite this, it is well known though, that some of the graduates from technical training institutions cannot be able to put to practice skills that they are supposed to have learned in the various areas of study or are not able to fit in the job market.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to critically analyze the effectiveness of the TVET curriculum to learners' practical skills acquisition in Technical Training institutions to specifically investigate the entry behavior, abilities and experience of learners, investigate the

content, analyze critically the teaching/instruction methods, establish the availability of learning/teaching resources and related workbooks, investigate the criteria of examining and to analyze critically the effectiveness of industrial attachment in Kenya.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To critically analyze the effectiveness of learners entry behavior, individual experiences and abilities in practical skills acquisition in TVET institutions.
2. To critically analyze the effectiveness of learning/teaching resources in practical skills acquisition in TVET institutions
3. To critically analyze the effectiveness of instructional methods in practical skills acquisition.
4. To critically analyze the effectiveness of assessment and evaluation in practical skills acquisition among learners in TVET institutions
5. To critically analyze the effectiveness of industrial attachment in practical skills acquisition in TVET institutions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do the learner's entry behavior, individual experiences and abilities affect skills acquisition?
2. How do learning teaching resources affect the acquisition of skills in TVET institutions?
3. How do instructional methods affect acquisition of practical skills?
4. How does assessment and evaluation affect practical skills acquisition?

5. How does industrial attachment affect acquisition of practical skills acquisition in TVET institution?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Technical and Vocational institutions play a major role in human resource development and building of the economy of Kenya. They are in charge of producing most of the artisans like masons, plumbers, constructors, tailors, hoteliers and many others. The government, The Ministry of Education, TVET Authority, teachers, curriculum developers and learners will benefit from this study if the recommendations will be put in place. The major concern of this study is the deficiency of learner's practical skills acquisition in Technical institutions. Changes should be made both in the curriculum and its implementation that would enable learners to leave these institutions when they have acquired skills that are related to the job market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a qualitative study method based on a critical design. The researchers through this method critique the TVET curriculum and its implementation in practical skills acquisition in Technical and Vocational institutions in Kenya. The critical method further offered recommendations to be put in place by the stake holders in the education sector that could help in acquisition of practical skills by learners who graduate from these institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the challenges of the TVET curriculum in Kenya has been the fact that it is not meeting the needs of the employers. Ngure S (2013) says that the curriculum is also not meeting the current changes in technology and therefore the practical skills acquired are not able fit in the job market. One of the problems contributing to this is that the learners entry behavior and abilities are not put into consideration when comes to their choice of courses the learners are to do in this institutions. Entry into a course is based on the previous performance, that is, marks obtained in certificate of Secondary education and not on the capabilities or talents.

Failure in a certain subject like Mathematics would make a learner not be able to join a course that he/she would have been able to do better in skill performance and those who actually passed to do courses that they cannot actually practically perform. Enrolment in Technical and Vocational institutions in certain courses is another major issue. Without consideration for the labor market, the female learners would tend to join business and social science courses that are deemed to be easier therefore leaving the engineering and mechanical courses for their male counter parts. Ngure S(2013) says that the courses in this institutions should be made palatable and accommodative for both the male and female ,and the poor and rich to encourage all learners to join.

There is a close relationship between the learning materials and skills acquisition. There is a challenge in Technical and Vocational institutions in Kenya when it comes to teaching and learning resources. According to Nyerere J. (2009) The insufficient financial support to TVET institutions from both the government and other stake holders in the education sector results in the lack of physical facilities and tools and hence leads to poor quality education. This

in turn makes it difficult for learners to acquire the practical skills that are required on the job market. In addition, most of the learning and teaching are outdated and not relevant and therefore make learning and acquisition of skills difficult for learners.

Afeti(2011) says that in order for acquisition of quality skills to be acquired by the learners, there is need for appropriate workshop equipment adequate training materials for the learners. In some institutions learners do not have access to these learning and teaching resources because they are not available. This therefore makes it difficult for the learners to acquire the skills required for the job market.

The teaching methods play a significant role in the acquisition of skills. The learners cannot be able to acquire the skills required for the job market because much concentration is put on the theoretical aspect of the content than on the practical aspect of it. In his article, Afeti(2011) confirms that much emphasis is not put on the quality of training but on the theory and certification. This therefore makes it difficult for the learners to acquire the skills that are required for the job market.

The assessment and evaluation of learners is crucial to show that learning has taken place and has an important role in learner's acquisition of skills. The TVET's curriculum evaluation is examination oriented and based on certification. Concentration therefore is placed on passing of the examinations rather than practical skills that are to be acquired by the trainees.

Industrial attachment is one of the requirements in TVET curriculum for completion of the various courses. Nyerere(2009) says that currently there is no relationship between the labor production and the market needs and that there is need for the trainees to be exposed to a hands on practical experience in a working environment pg15. This can only be done through industrial

attachment and internship which is not much emphasized in the curriculum. The industrial attachment in these institutions is not done with an aim of skills acquisition but as a requirement to complete the course.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study advocates that in order for TVET institutions to be able to fully carry out their mandate of producing skilled personnel, there are aspects of the curriculum and its implementation that should be looked into. There should be equity in the provision of training to all, keenly looking in the entry behavior, abilities and other factors that could hinder practical skills acquisition.

The teaching/instructional methods should be improved and more emphasis put on training the learners the practical skills rather than on the theoretical content that is majorly aimed at passing of examination. The teaching methods should focus more on disseminating of the skills that are to be acquired by learners in readiness for the available job market.

The assessment and evaluation of trainees in Technical and Vocational institutions should shift focus from being examination and certification oriented to making the learners to acquire the skills required for the job market. Furthermore, much emphasis should be put on industrial attachment to enable learners to get hands on experience so that they can be able to acquire the skills required.

The government should also improve in financing of the TVET institutions so that new, current and relevant learning and teaching materials are put in place. This will create an

environment where the learners are able to use this learning and teaching materials to acquire the required skills. The content developers should work hand in hand with the potential employers to be able to fill the gaps in terms of the needs of the job market.

CONCLUSION

From the findings above, the researchers concluded that skills acquisition in TVET institutions was low because of many factors including teaching method, resources, industrial attachment and others. All the stakeholders have to put in more effort to enable learners to be able to acquire the skills that are required for the job market.

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