

**FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' ACQUISITION OF
VOCATIONAL SKILLS IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING
CENTERS IN IGEMBE AND TIGANIA DISTRICTS OF MERU
COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my dear wife Grace Kendi and to my children Gloriah Murugi and Michelle Gachui. I also dedicate it to my best friend Martin Mungania for his constant assistance he offered to me. Finally I dedicate it to my father Sebastian Baituti who laid a strong foundation for my education.

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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
TEP	Technical Education Programme
TIQET	Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
VC	Vocational Centers
YP	Youth Polytechnics

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish factors influencing student's acquisition of vocational skills in vocational training centers in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were: To establish the influence of provision of physical facilities on acquisition of vocational skills in vocational training centers; to determine how students attitudes influences acquisition of vocational skills in vocational training centers; to establish the influence of availability of a qualified academic and professional staff on acquisition of vocational skills ;and to establish the influence of managers administrative experiences on acquisition of vocational skills in youth vocational training centers. The study employed descriptive survey design and targeted six vocational training centres in Tigania and Igembe districts of Meru County, Kenya. The study therefore targeted 51 students 30 teachers and 12 managers. The study adopted stratified sampling procedure for students. For teachers and managers, the study adopted census method, since the sample was too small. The study relied on questionnaires and checklists for data collection. The findings of the study revealed that lack of physical resource in youth vocational training centers has an adverse influence on acquisition of vocational skills. The study also revealed that students had negative attitudes towards vocational courses offered in these institutions and were forced to join these institutions by their parents. The study established that most of the tutors in these institutions were certificates and diploma holders and lastly most of the institutional heads and their deputies had less then three years of administrative experience. Others findings of the study were that majority of the learners were dropping out of vocational training centres before completion of their studies. Also captured in this study was that learners were performing poorly in end of course examinations. The study concluded that various factors such as lack of facilities, negative attitudes towards vocational training, lack of qualified professional staff and lack of administrative experience in managers influenced student's acquisition of vocational skills. Based on the findings, the study recommended that government of Kenya should focus on improving infrastructural facilities to vocational training centers. Government should also embark on employment of full time qualified teachers to vocational training centers to improve on skill acquisition. Study also recommends that teachers to be taken to refresher courses to keep abreast on contemporary issues on skill acquisition.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Tum (1996) defines vocational education as formal training program that trains students for work in a particular trade. Van ark (1992) further stipulates that vocational education is kind of instruction intended to equip persons for industrial or commercial occupations. It may be obtained either formally in trade schools, technical secondary schools, or in on- job training programs.

Berner, Lasaga and Carrels (1993) asserts that physical resources such as workshops in a vocational education centres supports acquisitions of vocational skills. He argues that for any meaningful learning to take place, physical resources are inevitable. Poplin (1992) concurs with Berner et.al (1993) that in many cases the lack and inadequate infrastructural materials seriously hampers the effectiveness of non-formal training. Sustainability of programs in vocational centres have frequently proved difficult due to scarcity of resources, hence hampering acquisition of vocational skills.

Ismail (2010) in his study on relationship between attitude and performance in vocational education found that attitude played a vital role in determining pupils' performance in their subjects. He later found out that learners with favourable

attitudes to courses they were undertaking would do better in their examinations and in their profession later in life than those with less favorable attitude. Hitti and O' Gorman (2004) pointed out that negative attitude towards vocational education among a large section of community has been reported which is claimed to have been bred and crystallized by coming of rulers in Africa where subjects were expected to be manual workers for Europeans that is why Africans developed negative attitude towards vocational training.

Burnett (1995) found that professional training is pre condition of teachers professional efficiency where its absence makes it difficult for the teacher to face students with confidence in vocational training centres. Cash (1993) ascertains that in service training for tutors in vocational training institutions is a lifelong process in which the teacher is constantly learning and adapting new challenges of the job.

Pigors and Myers (1984) agree with Burnett that no vocational institution can choose whether as not to train it's professional staff. Tutors regardless of their previous training education and experience need to be introduced to new methodologies. Pigors and Myers (1984) found that vocational centres and institutes that inculcated contemporary skills to their staff performed better than those kept on old instructional techniques.

Knootz and Wehrich (1998) in his study about managers and experience carried out in united states of America found out that managers with ten years of experience performed better than those with less than three years of experience in vocational youth centres. In contrast to his findings Fernandez et.al (1995) argues that managers shows the greatest productivity gains during the first years on the job after which their performance tend to level off in youth polytechnics.

Knootz and Wehrich (1998) suggest that managers with long years of experience performed better since their leadership styles improve with experience. This is contributed by their ability to influence people so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically towards their achievements of group goals.

Bwisa (2012) agrees with Musau that qualified trained tutors are very essential in ensuring that entrepreneurship education is implemented to the letter. Bwisa (2012) further notes that apart from availing qualified personnel , it is also crucial to provide laboratories, workshops, teaching aids and classrooms to improve acquisition of vocational skills.

Ayoo (2002) noted that most vocational institutions in Mtito Andei district were poorly equipped and that they lacked essential physical facilities which are necessary for learning such as workshops and classrooms. Ayoo's findings pointed out that there was a correlation between students' performance in these vocational centres and infrastructural facilities. Introductions of entrepreneurship

education is aimed at equipping the trainees with entrepreneurship skills that would enable them engage in self employment based on the technical skills acquired hence earn their livelihood while they create Jobs for their colleagues (Alvedi 1999).

According to Ministry of Youth Gender and Sports report (2013) academic performance among learners at youth vocational centers in Igembe and Tigania districts is very poor and more to say the enrolment rate in these institutions is ever declining.

Table 1.1 Academic performance in youth vocational centres in Igembe and Tigania Districts.

The table below shows performance in National Industrial Training Authority Exams in six vocational training centres in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county, Kenya. It shows number of learners who passed and failed exams from 2009 to 2012.

Vocational centre name	Year		2010		2011		2012		Average percent pass	
	2009		Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Karichu poly	70	30	68	25	60	30	50	30	68	32
Kianjai poly	100	70	96	20	90	20	92	15	75	25
Muthara poly	80	20	60	15	70	20	60	20	78	22
Maua poly	70	25	60	25	70	15	50	40	70	30
Laare poly	30	10	20	15	40	8	30	20	68	32
Ithima poly	60	20	55	30	50	30	45	15	69	31
Totals	410	115	358	130	380	123	327	140		

From the above information in the above table it is evident that performance in National Industrial Training Authority exam is sharply declining in the four common courses offered in these institutions. Therefore this research aims to find out why large number of students is failing in these vocational centres in Igembe and Tigania district of Meru County. The data shows that 1475 learners passed exam whereas 508 learners failed. This is clear indication that 25 percent of learners failed this exam. This also shows that the number that failed did not

adequately acquired skills in their respective vocational centres. Therefore, my research sought to investigate factors influencing acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners in vocational training centers in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county Kenya.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Data obtained from Ministry of Youth Gender and Sports in Igembe and Tigania districts about performance in six vocational centres in National Industrial Training Authority exam shows that a total number of five hundred and eight learners failed end of course exams on the four common courses offered in these institutions in four years. The four common courses offered in these vocational centers are tailoring, carpentry, masonry and electrical fitting.

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing students acquisition of vocational skills in vocational training centers in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru County.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives.

1. To establish the effects of provision of physical facilities on acquisition of vocational skills in vocational centers.
2. To determine how students' attitudes affects acquisition of vocational skills in youth vocational centers in Igembe and Tigania Districts.
3. To establish the effects of availability of qualified academic and professional staff on acquisition of vocational skills in youth vocational centers.
4. To establish the effects of managers' administrative experience on acquisition of vocational skills in youth vocational centers in Igembe and Tigania districts .

1.5 Research Questions

This study tried to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent does the provision of physical facilities affect the acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners in Igembe and Tigania districts?
2. What is the attitude of the students towards acquisition of vocational skills in youth vocational centers in Igembe and Tigania districts?.
3. How does the qualification of academic and professional staff affect learner's acquisition of vocational skills?

4. To what extent does the managers' administrative experience affect the acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may be useful to heads of vocational centres in recognizing the importance of physical facilities in enhancing acquisition of vocational skills. Managers may understand how their managerial skills affect learners acquisition of skills. These managers may also know that attitude of learners towards their centres affect their acquisition of vocational skills in one way or the other. The Board Of Management may understand the extent to which hiring of qualified staff affect learners acquisition of vocations skills.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

According to Mugenda and Muganda (2003) limitation is some aspect of the study that the researcher knows may negatively affect the results or generalizability of the results but over which he/she probably has no control. Uncooperative respondents such as administrators who were unwilling to discuss negative aspects of their institutions such as dropouts and declining enrolments. To check on this it was explained to the managers that the study was useful for academic purposes only.

1.8 Delimitations of Study

Questionnaires were administered to the teachers, learners and their managers in youth vocational centres. Questionnaires were also administered to learners since

they were taking vocational courses that were captured in the study. Teachers participated in the study to give insight on acquisition of vocational skills. The study was confined to six vocational centres because these institutions offered courses that researcher was interested in their study in Igembe and Tigania District of Meru County.

1.9 Basic Assumptions of the Study

In this study the researcher made the following assumptions.

- i. That the respondents were honest and gave appropriate answer to the questions in the questionnaire.
- ii. That the respondents gave correct answers to the researcher.
- iii. That the respondents were knowledgeable about the subject of the study.

1.10 Definition of significant terms

The following are the definitions of significant terms used in this study.

Administrative development refers to on- job training to the administrator such as manager of a Vocational Training.

Administrative experience refers to the length of service of the administrator in a Vocational Training Centre.

Attitude refers to how one thinks or feels about an act towards a specific course such as tailoring in a vocational Training Centre.

Funds refers to a sum of money or other resources set aside for specific purpose such as equipping workshops in a Vocational Training Centre.

Manager refer to person responsible for planning and directing the work or a group of employees in a Vocational Training Centre.

Physical facilities refers to all resources that enhance learning invocational training centres.

Managers' administrative experience refers to length of service of head of institution in a management post.

Physical resources refers to Classrooms, sewing machines, vehicles, computers and building tools like plum bobs, tapes planes and scissors.

Qualification of academic and professional staff refers to level to which vocational tutors and managers are trained.

Staff development refers to on –job training given to members of teaching staff to improve their methodology of teaching in a Vocational Training Centre.

Vocational centres refer to institutions that offers practical courses to instil a skill for a career and admit students who complete primary education.

Vocational skill refers to practical skills that one acquires on a specific area of interest such as artwork.

Youth learners refers young learners aged between 15 -18 years and enrolled in youth polytechnics and vocational centres.

Youth polytechnics refer to institutions that train young people in technical, vocational, and entrepreneurial skills in an effort to increase their productivity and equip them with skills to participate fully in productive activities.

1.11 Organization of the Study

This study is organized in five chapters. Chapter one consist of background of the study, statements of the problem, purpose of the study, objective of the study, research questions , significance of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, basic assumptions, organizations of the study and definition of significant terms. Chapter two consisted of literature review under the following sub-topics: availability of physical resources and acquisition of vocational skills ,the attitudes towards vocational skills acquisition, head of institutions administrative experience and staff and administrative development at vocational centres. Summary of reviewed literature and conceptual frame work is also captured .

Chapter three described research methodology used in the study with the following sub-headings; research design, target population , sample size and sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, validity of the research instruments, reliability of the instruments, piloting, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis. Chapter four consisted of data analysis and discussion of the findings.

Chapter five captured summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research in the area.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter dealt with the literature review on factors influencing students acquisition of vocation skill in vocational training centres. These include availability of physical resources and acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners, attitude of learners and acquisition of vocational skills, availability of qualified professional academic staff and acquisition of vocational skills and managers' administrative experience and acquisition of vocational skills among youth

2.2 Concept of Vocational Training

Vocational education and training is that part of tertiary education and training which provides accredited training in job related and technical skills (Ismail 2010). It covers a large number of careers and industries such as carpentry, tailoring and mechanics. In Kenya vocational education is offered in vocational training centres.

Vocational education emphasises skill acquisition for self employment .In this regard the major factor in the design of vocational education programs comprise of acquisition of entrepreneurial skills for self employment [Bwisa 2012].

2.3 Provision of Physical Resources and Acquisition of Vocational Skills among Youth Learners

Berner (1993) asserts that physical resources such as workshops in vocational education support skill acquisition .He argues that for any meaningful learning to take place, physical resources are inevitable.

Alvedi (1999) notes that all technical schools in Kenya on conversion to technical institutions in 1986 ended up inheriting the same facilities that had been used for training the secondary school students. The studies therefore sought to find out if the old and outdated physical facilities inherited are still being used for training.

McGuffey (1982) hold that specific Laboratories and workshops needed to be well equipped . They go further to note that provision must be made for proper maintenance of building and equipments Upgrading of workshops was priority in their findings.

Ayoo (2002]found out that lack of library facilities was one of the most serious problems, standing in the way of achieving high education standards in learning institutions whereas Ayoo (2002) carried out study on the effects of school physical facilities on academic performance and established that availability of facilities had direct link with the performance of learners in exams.

Datton(1998) found positive correlation between school facilities and learners performance in a study carried out in Nigerian vocational centers. Kathuri (1986) noted that the new educational system stipulated various activities, materials and requirements that would be provided at all levels of system in order to meet the objectives of the new programme. The nature of the new curriculum presupposed that infrastructure, laboratories, workshops and classrooms, equipment, physical facilities and teaching aids would be provided to implement the scheme successfully and thus success is determined by student performance in examination at end of designed course.

Ayoo (2002) concurs with Datton (1998) on the importance of learning facilities. Mutua noted that most vocational centers in Mtito Andei Division were poorly equipped and that they lacked essential physical facilities, which are necessary for learning.

Kathuri (1986) notes that better facilities in vocational centers lead to better performance in exams. This study was therefore focused on establishing the extent to which availability of physical resources e.g workshops affects academic performance in youth vocational centers.

Poplin (1992) says that in many cases the lack and inadequate infrastructural materials seriously hampers the effectiveness of non-formal training. Sustainability of programs has frequently proved difficult using

available resources. Frazier (1993) asserts that education sector has ignored vocational institutions in terms of financial and resource allocation . It is finances that enable the head of vocational institutions to purchase learning resources that are adequate in supporting academic performance.

A study of the District of Colombia school system found , after controlling for all other variables such as student's socio-economic status, that students, standardized achievement scores were lower in vocational centers with poor buildings conditions.

Similarly, Hines (1996) study of large urban high schools in Virginia also found a relationship between building condition and students achievement . Indeed , Hines found that student achievement was as much as eleven percentile points lower in standard building as compared to above standard buildings.

A study of North Dakota high schools, a state , selected in part because of its relatively homogenous , rural population , also found a positive relationship between school condition (as measured by principals survey responses) and both student achievement and student behavior (Earthman 1995).

Mc Guffey (1982) Concluded that heating and air conditioning systems appeared to be very important along with special instructional facilities (i.e. science laboratories or equipment) and color and interior painting in contributing to student achievement. Proper building maintenance was also found to be related to better attitude and fewer disciplinary problems in one cited study .

Research carried out in youth vocational centers in Egypt found out that quality of air inside public institution significantly affected students ability to concentrate. The evidence suggests that youth , especially those under ten years of age are more vulnerable than adults to the types of contaminants (asbestos, radon and formaldehyde) found in some school facilities (Andrews and Neuroth 1988).

Lowe and Jerry (1990) interviewed state teachers of the year to determine which aspects of the principal environment affected their teaching the most and those teachers pointed to the availability and quality of classroom equipment and furnishings , as well as ambient features such as climate control and acoustics as the most important environmental factors .

A Carnegie Foundation (1988) report on urban school concluded that “ the facit message of the physical indignities in many urban schools is not lost

on students . It bespeaks neglect and students conduct seems simply an extension of physical environment that surrounds them “ Similarly Poplin and Weeres (1992) reported that based on an intensive study of teachers, administrators and students in four schools, the depressed physical environment of many schools is believed to reflect society’s lack of priority for these children and their education. Overcrowded schools are serious problem in many schools systems, particularly in the inner cities , where spaces for new construction is at a premium and funding for such construction is limited .

A study of overcrowded schools in New York city found that students in such schools scored significantly lower on both mathematics and reading exams that did similar students in underutilized schools . In addition when asked , students and teachers in overcrowded schools agreed that overcrowding negatively affected both classroom activities and instructional techniques (Rivera-Batiz and Lilian 1995). Corcoran et.al, (1998) found that overcrowding and heavy teacher workloads , created stressful, working conditions for teachers and led to higher teacher absenteeism in vocational training centers in Newyork.

2.4 Attitude of the learners and Acquisition of Vocational Skills.

Amimo (2008) defines attitude as positive or negative feeling that an individual holds about objects, persons or ideas. Young trainees who join youth polytechnics already have formed opinions. Some of these opinions are culturally based (Hansen 1992).

In the report of the Commission of Inquiry into Education Systems of Kenya 1999, Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET) chaired by Koech pointed out that one of the hindrances to the development of technology is cultural beliefs and practices among members of Kenyan communities towards technically related work. Tum (1996) argued that educationist should be liberated from this mentality. One important recommendation of Koech commission was that education be designed to play a deliberate role of demystifying the negative attitude towards work and locally manufactured goods. It is possible for trainers to build positive attitude into student to ensure good performance. Datton (1998) Laments that immediately after independence students attitude towards vocational training was very positive. He further notes that it is at this time that youth polytechnics were very vibrant. Ismail (2010) study on relationship between attitude and performance in vocational training centers in Malaysia found that attitude played a vital role in determining learners performance in acquiring a skill. Learners with negative attitude in vocational courses undertaken failed in trade test exams.

Corcoran and Lisa (1998) pointed out that one of the most important factors that influence academic outcome is positive attitude approach to pupils performance rather than negative attitudinal imposition of punishment for poor result.

Ijaiya (1998) write that negative attitude towards TVET among a large section of community has been reported which is claimed to have been bred and crystallized by coming of rulers in Africa where subjects were expected to be manual workers. These Africans were provided with technical and vocational training while general academic education was reserved for Europeans who filled the white collar jobs.

Bwisa (2012) notes that parents wants their children to be teachers, nurses, doctors and very few encourage their children to enter blue collar jobs. The results of negative attitude is lack of skills for the labour market. Dutton (1998) citing African Economic outlook [2011], points that the African youth face high rates of unemployment despite having a vast reservoir of talents, skills and opportunities that smart intervention can be transformed into productive workforce . This information is brought out in the study done on west and East African countries. The study shows that the worst hit are Kenya and Madagascar in East Africa and Cameroon, Nigeria and Cote d ivory (Adams 2011). A skill mismatch makes the situation worse where for example the youth insist on getting a course in

information Technology (IT) while the demand is on the plumbers or even farmers.

In Kenya technical studies have been re-introduced in secondary schools as examinable subjects. These had been dropped out of the programme in 2003, when the ministry of education launched a revised syllabus for primary and secondary schools in bid to relieve the learners of strenuous workload of the 8-4-4 system . It was in the year 2007 that the permanent secretary for Education said that the ministry had reconsidered its decision to scrap technical subjects (Tum 1996).

A survey by Earthman, Carol and Denny(1995), revealed that vocational education in Malawi has not adequately helped to open the youth himself so that he becomes knowledgeable to himself , his interests, capacities values, attitudes and the world around him. He further asserted that positive attitude be cultivated to learners in youth vocational centres in order to improve their vocational skills.

2.5 Availability of qualified professional staff and acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners.

Institutions are very important part of society. They do not exist in isolation. They exist in a society with social economic and political needs and problems (Ismail 2010) . In this regard education is therefore planned at any

level to make it more effective and efficient in responding to social economic and political needs of the society.

In regarding to an institution , it is to make more effective and efficient in responding to the needs and goals of the institutions . All these call for good and effective management. According to Ismail (2010), he Concurr with the above statement by recommending that vocational education and training instructors be trained in pedagogy and their terms and conditions of service be improved. The Mungai report of (1995) recommends that youth vocational centers managements be strengthened, local authorities should give full support. It further stresses that facilities of youth polytechnics be improved.

Ijaiya [1998] investigated the problems of teacher staffing in Kwara district vocational training centers in Uganda and found that acute shortage of qualified staff contributed to massive failures as well as poor quality teaching.

According to Pigors and Myers (1984) no organization can choose whether or not to train employees .All new employees regardless of their previous training education and experience need to be introduced to their new working environment and to be shown how to perform specific tasks. Moreover , specific occasions for retraining arise when employees are transferred ,

promoted or when Jobs change and new skills must be learnt, perhaps because of changes brought about by technological changes.

Frazier Linda (1993) asserts that in-service training is a lifelong process in which the teacher is constantly learning and adapting new challenges of the job. Much of this training is self-directed and is carried out by reading books and articles on education. It is clear therefore that he recommends the training of those on job to help them keep a breast with the new changes. This includes those teaching at the vocational and training centers. Burnett and Gary (1995) agrees that professional training is precondition of a teacher's professional efficiency. In its absence the teacher will not face the student with confidence and is likely to commit serious pedagogical blunders. Burnett and Gary (1995) in his study on staff training found that teachers with professional growth and development in American vocational institutes performed better than those without on-job training.

2.6 Managers Administrative Experience and Acquisition of Skills among learners

It has often been argued that learning institutions are as good as their head of institutions. Poplin et. al (1992) says that schools success depends on the head of institutions .According to Poplin et al (1992) a leader gets things done and has the ability to inspire, moderate, guide , direct and listen. These qualities are crucial for head of institutions to be effective in their work. He

further notes that managing a school is like charting a ship through turbulent waters. Knootz and Wehrich (1998) define leadership as the art or process of influencing people so that they strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals.

Knootz and Wehrich (1998) carried out study about managers with experience in a sample of 289 managers of vocational institutions in Newyork and established that there is inverse relationship between managerial performance and experience. Lewis and Anne (1989) concurs and stipulates that the managers who have served more than ten years were likely to perform at above average while their peers who did not have more than three years of managerial experience under performed. In contrast, according to Fernandez et. al (1995) managers shows the greatest productivity gains during the first year on the job after which their performance tend to level off. This is illustrated by the study using New York City data which shows that diminishing managerial performance in relation to experience.

Qualities that lead to success of a leader differ depending on the situations. Ismail (2010) in his study on leadership and experience in Malasyian vocational centers found that leaders exhibit certain characteristics such as intelligence, initiative, self assurance and social –economic position due to their long service. Cash (1993) states that a manager with wide range experience possesses the following qualities: intelligence, energy and resourcefulness. An institution head

who portrays such qualities is more likely to steer such institutions to produce good results .

Knootz and Wehrich (1998) suggest that group performance in education institution is dependent upon the interaction of head teachers management experience and the extent of control the leader has over the environment.

The second key variable is the leader on-job experience. Two basic leader orientations, which are; relationship oriented (staff centered) and tasks oriented (task centered). In Fielders view, the leader group relationship oriented is most important. The contingency concept of experienced leadership was developed by John Adair (Cash 1993). This model incorporate concerns for the task and concern for people. It further distinguishes the concern for individuals and stresses that effective leadership experience lies in what leader does to meet needs of the tasks groups and individuals within prevailing conditions. Therefore, in an institutional setting according to Ijaiya (1998) an experienced manager sets an appropriate standards of performance and helps in team building hence improving acquisition of skills in vocational centres.

In another dimension talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth are the two main themes of instructional leadership (Blasé & Blase 2000). According to Murphy, Dawson and Almira (2007c) school leadership is defined by purpose, leaders set goals and focus their duties on goals. In order to manifest a positive school culture managers need to be able to

communicate his/her schools vision to others so as to engage them in the process of reshaping the organization and articulating essential beliefs regarding learning (Davies et al, 2005 Jenkins, 2009). According to cash [1993] head teachers with long administrative experience developed charismatic leadership style that help teachers work freely hence improving performance.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

The review has shown that a lot of research has been done on vocational and technical skills acquisition. Ijaiya [1998] found that learners are ignorant of the importance of vocational subjects which would help them acquire skills and abilities essential for independent life needs. It is further noted by Bwisa [2012] from the literature that the inability of tutors in vocational centers to use adequate instructional techniques does not enhance students' acquisition of vocational skills and development of self concepts as well as interest. There is no study that has been done on factors affecting learners acquisition of vocational skills in vocational centers Igembe and Tigania Districts of Meru county, Kenya. Therefore, this study hopes to fill in the gap.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The theory adapted by this study was derived from System's Theory input-output model developed by Ludwig Von Bertalanfy [1974].The theory according to Koontz and Weihrich [1988] postulates that an organized enterprise such as

school does not exist in vacuum .It is dependent on its environment in which it is established. They add that the inputs from the environment are received by the organization which then transform them to outputs. In this study the students [inputs] are admitted to vocational centres and through process of interacting with qualified staff, managers with administrative experience and physical resources, in the process of teaching and learning these learners are transformed and the output is seen through skill acquisition and academic performance.

According to input –output model it is assumed that the students who interact well with qualified staff, physical facilities and cultivate positive attitude towards courses offered perform well In their skills and in academics.

If the heads of institutions management styles are poor then acquisition of skills to the learners is bound to fail . If he /she embraces closed system then the tutors performance will be compromised hence affecting acquisition of skills among learners.

Provision of learning resources is done in bureaucratic way where subject tutors are given priority to make procurement of the most basic resources in their department. This makes them appreciate being part of the school system hence their performance lead to acquisition of vocational skills to the learners.

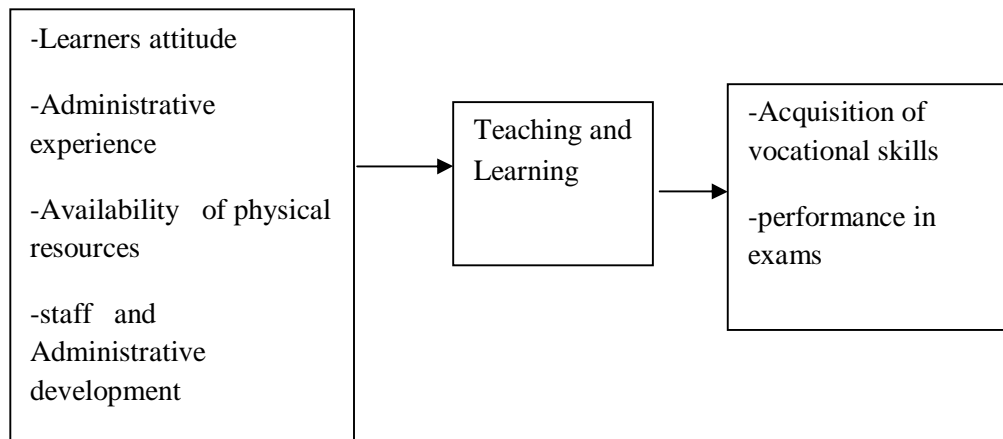
Cordial relationship among all components is very important to the learner's who are the center of interest in acquisition of skills that will enable them perform task after completion of their courses .

Open system will help indulge in dialogue that will enable learners appreciate courses they are taking in their vocational centers.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

Fig 1. Conceptual framework of the factors affecting learners' acquisition of vocational skills in vocational Training centres.

The conceptual framework below shows relationship between inputs, process and outcomes. Learners attitude, administrative experience, resources and staff development influences acquisition of vocational skills.



Independent variables act as factors affecting acquisition of vocational skills in vocational training centers in Igembe and Tigania districts. They are viewed as inputs. Dependent variables are the skill acquisition and performance in exams (output).

In the figure above, factors such as attitude of the learners, administrative experience, provision of physical resources and availability of qualified professional staff through process of teaching and learning affects in one way or the other the acquisition of vocational skills among learners in youth vocational center.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the methods used in the study. They include research design, target population sample size and sampling procedures, instruments for data collection, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research Design

Orodho (2004) state that research design is the plan, structure and strategy of investigation proposed for obtaining answers to research questions. This study adopted a descriptive survey design because it will enable researcher to collect detailed data from respondents through questionnaires, interviews and observation schedules. The researcher attempted to describe data collected in ways that are concise and accurate through use of pie-charts and histograms. Descriptive survey research will collect data in order to answer questions on factors affecting students acquisition of vocational skills in vocational centers.

3.3 Target Population

The study was done in Igembe and Tigania Districts of Meru County. The target population of this study comprised of six vocational training centres, two of them

are privately owned and four are public institutions. The study also targeted six head of institutions and six deputies. The number of students on target was one thousand and seventeen comprising of males and females. It also targeted sixty one teachers. The total population targeted was one thousand and eighty nine respondents.

3.4 Sample size and sampling procedures

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define a sample as a small group obtained from accessible population. The study adopted stratified random sampling on learners and teachers because population is not homogeneous. Therefore, sample size of students was fifty one whereas that of tutors was thirty. The study also adopted census method on managers and their six deputies. Therefore my total sample size was ninety three respondents.

Table 3.4: Sampling design

Vocational centre	Students		Tutors		Heads	
	population	Sample	population	Sample	Population	sample
Karichu poly	142	7	8	4	2	2
Kianjai poly	202	10	12	6	2	2
Muthara poly	211	11	14	7	2	2
Maua poly	160	8	10	5	2	2
Laare poly	120	6	7	3	2	2
Ithima poly	182	9	10	5	2	2
Total	1017	51	61	30	12	12

3.5 Research Instruments

The researchers used questionnaires to collect data as follows. Questionnaire for institutional heads bearing questions on their administrative experience and dropouts. Students questionnaire captured information on student attitude towards vocational training their ratings on facilities and their career choices.

Tutors questionnaire captured information on their academic qualification, their professional development, courses they are teaching, problem experienced in teaching those courses and satisfaction of students in taking those courses. I used an observation checklist for facilities such as workshops, classrooms and sewing machines. The checklist helped to ascertain the availability of physical resources in these vocational centers.

3.6 Validity of Instruments

Orodho (2004) contends that validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represents the phenomenon under investigation. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) observed that an instrument may be constructed to measure a number of things hence the validity of such instruments must be established. In this study I will use Kianjai youth polytechnic by giving them questionnaires to fill and collect them to find out whether they have given enough information to answer my research questions . Secondly, I will give research instrument to my two supervisors where they will analyze them and give feedbacks on whether they will collect enough information to answer the research questions.

3.7 Reliability of Instruments

Orodho (2005) argues that reliability focuses on the degree to which empirical indicators are consistent across two or more attempts to measure theoretical concepts. The reliability of instruments will be ascertained by testing the questionnaires in a pilot vocational training centre two times in an interval of two weeks. I used test retest method, which entail giving questionnaires to respondents in a pilot institution and then collect them after a few weeks. Thereafter, I returned the same filled questionnaires to the respondents to ascertain whether the information is corresponding. The standard error of measurement was determined through standard deviation.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Before collecting data , the researcher will get a permit from the National Council for Science Technology and Innovation .The researcher will also get a letter of introduction from the University of Nairobi . This will enable the heads of institutions and other respondents to allow the researcher to collect data . The researcher will visit all the centres sampled for research in Igembe and Tigania districts with a letter of introduction.

The researcher will introduce the topic and explain the assistance that he needed from the respondents. The researcher will explain to them that the research is for academic purposes only.

The questionnaires will be distributed to the Managers of these centres , teachers /Instructors and students to fill after a brief explanation by the researcher .

The researcher will come to consensus with the respondents about the time limits for filling the questionnaires. The researcher will give consistent explanation in all the centers. The researcher will collect the questionnaires from all the selected centers for data analysis after the agreed period has lapsed.

3.9 Data Analysis Techniques

Prior to data analysis, data cleaning will be done to correct errors, record matching, deduplication and column segmentation. Findings of this study will be

discussed in three sections. Demographic information on the respondents will be analyzed in the first section in a tabular form. Respondents categories will be learners, instructors and institutional heads. The second section will discuss and describe various factors affecting acquisition of vocational skills in the area of students' study. Tables , pie-charts and discussions were be used to analyze the data collected. Summary of the responses will come in the last section. Qualitative data will be analyzed through coding . Further, photography will be used in the study to give explanation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the findings of this study. The analysis was carried out with the guidance of the research objectives. The objectives of the study were :to establish the effect of provision of physical facilities on acquisition of vocational skills; to determine how students' attitudes affects acquisition of vocational skills; to establish the effects of availability of qualified academic and professional staff on acquisition of vocational skills and to establish the effects of managers' administrative experience on acquisition of vocational skills in youth vocational centres in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county, Kenya. The results are mainly presented in the form of preliminary analysis of the respondents' information and analysis of descriptive statistics.

4.2 Respondents Response Rate

The study sampled all the six vocational training institutions in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru County, Kenya. Stratified sampling method was used on 51 students ,30 tutors and 12 head of the 6 vocational training centres. A total of 82 respondents participated in this study, thus the response rate was 88 percent which was satisfactory to represent the views of the targeted population

(Mugenda & Mugenda 2003). Table 4.1 below was used to report response rate of the respondents.

Table 4.1 Respondents response rate

Respondents by by category	Expected	Actual	Percent
Students	51	50	98
Vocational Training Tutors	30	20	66.7
Head of institutions	12	12	100
Totals	92	82	88

Table 4.1 shows that the average response rate for the study was eighty eight percent which was judged acceptable for the purposes of the study by the researcher.

4.2 Preliminary Analysis

This section presented an introduction of the respondents and their relationship with the vocational training centre. This chapter therefore present the gender of; students, teachers and heads; age of the three samples and courses taken by students.

4.2 Gender of the Respondents

The researcher aimed at finding out the gender of respondents in an attempt to gain more information of the population under study. This is because when analyzing data, responses based on gender can have significant impact on a data.

Table 4.2.1 Gender of all respondents

Gender	Administrator		Tutors		Students	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	percent
Male	24	48	13	65	8	67
Female	26	52	7	35	4	33
Total	50	100	20	100	12	100

Table 4.2.1 shows that majority of 52 percent of the students were female and the rest 42 percent were male. The number of female students is slightly higher than male learners in the vocational training centers. The table also shows that the number of females was higher than that of males. The probable reasons for this might be economic aspect where most of men are engaged in lucrative miraa business. Secondly negative attitude towards vocational courses might be a contributing factor because vocational courses such as tailoring and cookery are viewed as courses for female gender.

The above table also illustrate that 65 percent of tutors were male while female tutors were only 35 percent of the total. Bwisa [2012] attributes this to attitude towards acquisition of vocational skills. After completion of secondary education many girls tend to shun away from undertaking courses such as carpentry, masonry wood work, mechanics and electric fitting. This probably may be the reason as to why many girls might not be willing to train as tutors in such courses hence affecting the teaching staff.

Secondly, Alvedi (1999) attributes this to role modelling where vocational training careers such as mechanics, woodwork, metalwork and driving are associated with male gender thus this might probably be the reason why in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county, female gender is not attracted in training as vocational tutors.

Another indication on the table is that the heads of the institutions were mostly men since 67 percent were male heads with the female ones been only 33 percent. The table clearly shows that number of male vocational institutional heads is double that of female gender. The study found number of probable reasons for this. Firstly, the respondents pointed to cultural beliefs and practices in the area of study that hinder women from taking up the leadership roles. The women are expected to take care of family chores.

4.2.4 Age of the respondents

The research evaluated the age of the various respondents and the findings were as presented below:

Table 4.2.5 Age Bracket of Students

	Frequency	Percent
Below 20 years	29	58.0
Between 21-25 years	14	28.0
Between 26-30 years	7	14.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 4.2.2 a shows that 58 percent of the students were below 20 years, 28 percent were in the age bracket of 20-25 and only 14 percent were in the age bracket of 25-30 years. This is an indicator that most of the students in the institutions were in their teen years.

From the table it is revealed that majority of learners are below twenty years of age. This means that majority of learners join vocational training centers at a very tender age. Some of the learners in vocational centers entered these institutions after completion of class eight without having matured enough to make rational decisions in their career choices.

Secondly, most of the learners were coerced to join youth vocational centers by their parents thus contributing to negative attitudes towards vocational training. Many parents prefer taking their children to vocational training centers at tender age because it is cheaper compared to financing secondary education.

Table 4.2.6 Age Bracket of Tutors

	Frequency	Percent
20-30 Years	5	25.0
30-40 Years	7	35.0
40-50 Years	5	25.0
50 Years and above	3	15.0
Total	20	100.0

From table 4.2.2 b 35 percent of the tutors were between 30 to 40 years, those age 20-30 years and 40-50 years had an equal percentage of 25 percent each. Only 15 percent were above 50 years. This shows that most of the tutors were in their middle ages.

Table 4.2.7 Age Bracket of the Heads of Institutions

Years	Frequency	Percent
31-40	2	16.7
41-50	3	25.0
50 years and above	7	58.3
Total	12	100.0

From table 4.2.2 c 58.3 percent of heads were above 50 years of age, 25 percent were in the age bracket of 41-50 years while only 16.7 percent were in the age bracket of 31-40 years. This shows that majority of the Institutions'' heads were above 40 years

4.2.3 Courses taken by students

The research sought to find out the type of courses that were offered to students in the Institutions sampled. The major common course that were taken in the six vocational training centers were tailoring, carpentry, mechanics ,electrical fitting cookery and woodwork. The circle graph below is used to represent this information.

Course taken by the respondents

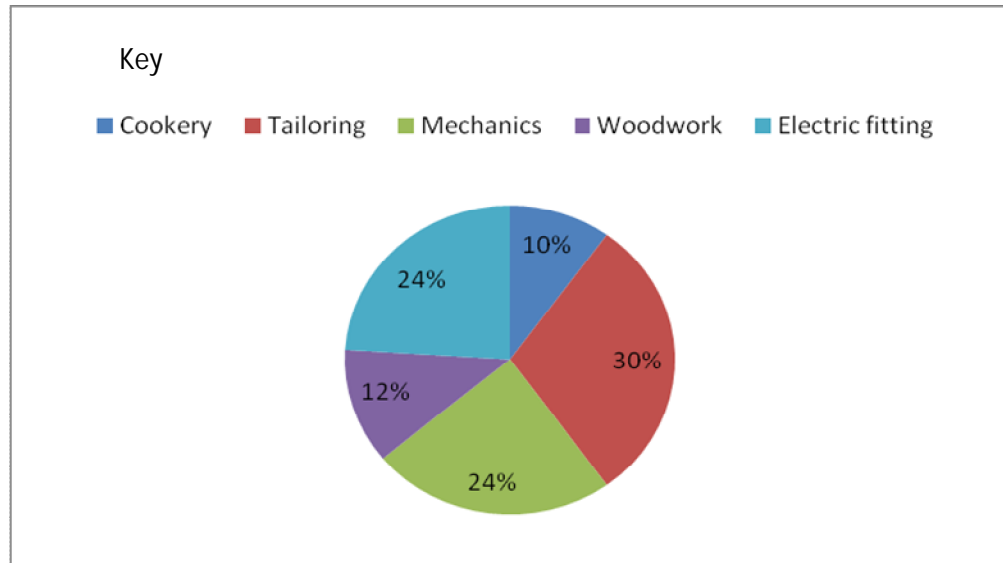


Fig 4.2.3: A pie chart displaying courses taken by students

From the figure 4.2.3, 30 percent of the students were enrolled in tailoring course, 24 percent were enrolled in electric fitting and the same number for mechanics course. 12 percent of the students were taking woodwork course and only 10 percent taking cookery.

4.3 Effects of Learners' Attitudes on Acquisition of Skills

To analyze the effect of learners' attitudes on training process the researcher evaluated the learners' satisfaction on the courses they were taking and the influential factors of one choosing a certain course. The results were as presented by the tables below:

Table 4.2.8 Level of Course Satisfaction

	Frequency	Percent
Highly satisfied	4	8.0
Satisfied	1	2.0
Neutral	12	24.0
Not satisfied	33	66.0
Total	50	100.0

From table 4.3 it is clear that most of the students were not satisfied with the courses they were taking as indicated by the highest percentage of 66 percent. 24 percent of them were neutral about course satisfaction with only 10 percent been comfortable with the courses they taking. This implicates that most students did not have positive attitude or motivation to pursue their course.

Table 4.2.9 The Person Influencing the Decision of the Student on the Course to Take

	Frequency	Percent
Self	11	22.0
Parent/guardian/sponsor	30	60.0
Former pry/sec teacher	9	18.0
Total	50	100.0

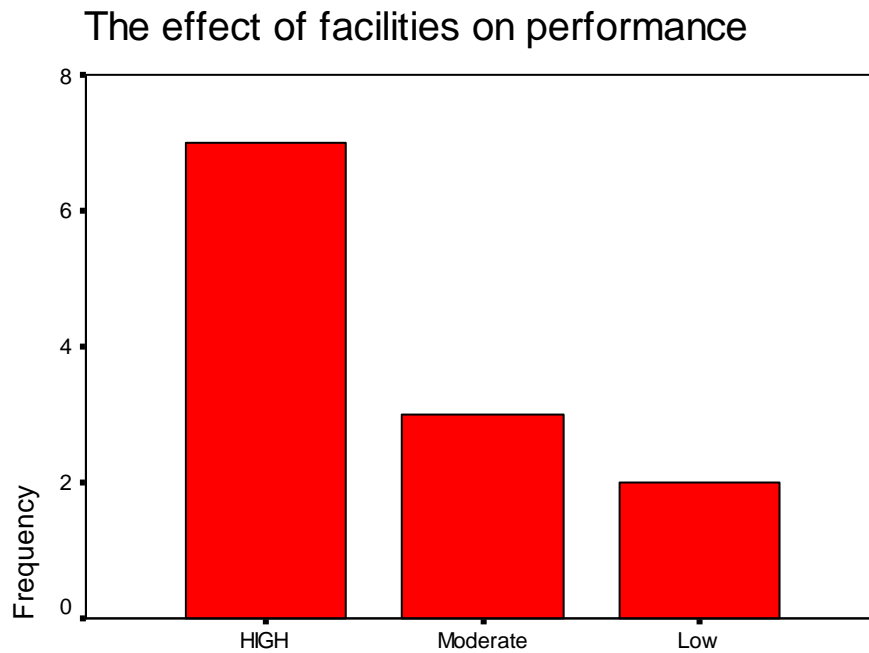
Table 4.3 b shows that 60 percent of the students were influenced to join the institutions by their parents/guardian, 22 percent were self motivated to join the institutions with only 18 percent seeking advice from their former teachers. This is an indicator that most of the students did not join the institution on free will.

4.4 Impact of Institutional Facilities on Acquisition of Vocational Skills

The researcher investigated the institutional facilities and sought further their effect on acquisition of vocational skills.

Table 4.3 The Adverse Effect of Facilities on Performance

	Frequency	Percent
High	7	58.3
Moderate	3	25.0
Low	2	16.7
Total	12	100.0



The effect of facilities on performance

Fig 4.4 The Effect of Facilities on Performance

The graph shows that inadequacy of learning facilities had a high effect on performance of the students in the institutions. This was also indicated by the

table with 58.3 percent of the institutions heads highly agreeing that learning facilities had substantial effect on performance, 25 percent and 16.7 percent suggested that facilities had moderate and low effects respectively

4.5 Effect of Tutors' Qualification on Acquisition of Vocational Skills

The researcher was concerned with establishing the level of tutors' academic qualification and experience as well as the impact on acquisition of vocational skills.

Table 4.3.1 Performance of Students Vs Tutors' Academic Qualification

		Performance of students in courses taught by the teacher				
		Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Total
Academic Qualification.	KAPE/CPE/	0	0	0	2	2
	KCPE	0	0	3	0	3
	KCSE	1	1	8	2	12
	DIPLOMA	0	0	2	1	3
	DEGREE	1	1	13	5	20
Total		1	1	13	5	20

Chi-square statistic=14.872, p-value=0.095

Table 4.5 shows that there was a relationship between students' performance and tutors' qualification at 90.5 percent confidence level. Most of the tutors had attained a qualification of diploma with even some having only KCSE and KCPE qualification and only three had degree academic qualification. We could also say that the results of learners and academic qualification of tutors are statistically

significant. From above table it can be revealed that: from twenty tutors who responded, two of them had KAPE and CPE certificates respectively and that they posted poor results whereas three tutors had KCSE certificates and had posted average results. Twelve tutors had a diploma and they posted the following results: one tutor excellent, another posted good results, eight of them posted average results and two of the tutors posted poor results respectively. Only three tutors had a degree certificate and their results were as follows: two had posted average results and one posted poor results respectively.

4.6 Effect of Administrators Experience on Acquisition of Vocational Skills

The research evaluated the level of administrative experience of the heads of the institutions and compared it with the level of performance to find out the effect of administrative experience on acquisition of vocational skills.

Table 4.3.2 Level of Administrative Experience Vs Average Percentage of Passing in the Last Four Years

		average percentage of passing in the last four years					Total
		68%	69%	70%	75%	78%	
Level of administrative experience	0-2 years	2	0	0	0	0	2
	3-4 years	0	1	1	0	0	2
	5-6 years	0	0	0	1	0	1
	above 7 years	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		2	1	1	1	1	6

According to table 4.6 highest passing percentages was recorded in the institutions where the administrators had experience of more than 3 years. The institutions where the administrators had experience of 0-2 years had the least passing percentage. From the table it can be revealed that there were two managers with experience of between zero and two years and their performance was at sixty eight percent. There were two managers whose institutions recorded average of sixty nine and seventy percent respectively with experience of between three and four years. One manager had experience of six years and his institution had average of seventy five percent average pass. In above seven years of experience, one manager posted seventy eight percent average pass.

4.7 Challenges Faced by Vocational Training Centers

The research sought to find out the challenges faced by the vocational training centers in order to come up with relevant recommendations on how such problems can be solved. The results were as presented below:

Table 4.3.3 Challenges Encountered by the Heads of the Institution

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Low enrolment	4	33.3
Lack of facilities	5	41.7
Lack of enough teachers	2	16.7
Low remuneration of teachers	1	8.3
Total	12	100.0

Figure 4.7 Challenges Encountered by the Heads of the Institutions

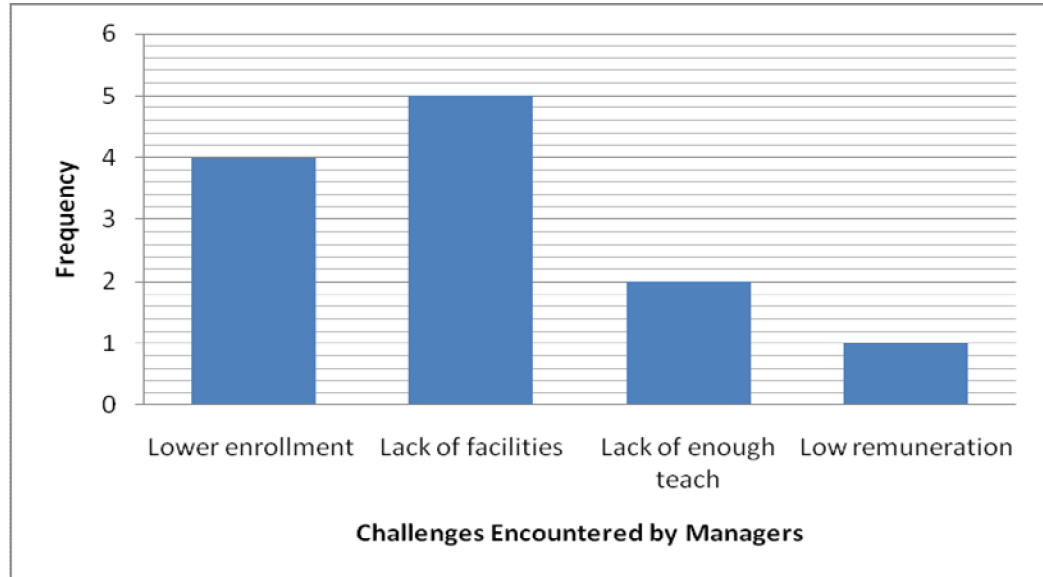


Fig 4.7: Bar graph showing challenges faced in administrating vocational training institutes

From table 4.7 and fig 4.7 lack of adequate facilities was the most experienced challenge in administration of vocational training institutes. This was followed by low enrollment, lack of enough teachers and low remuneration rate for teachers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study ,the conclusion drawn from the research findings of the study and the recommendations based on the findings and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Study

Vocational Education's main aim is to offer skills to learners. These learners are expected to acquire specific skills for self employment or career skill instructions. Vocational education is recognized by the government as the education which creates great impact on human resource development and economic growth.

However a good number of youth learners leave vocational centre's without proper acquisition of vocational skills. They opt to go for other jobs after leaving vocational centers other than practicing the skills acquired. These fact arose the interest of the study which proposed the researcher to find out the factors affecting students acquisition of vocation skills in vocation training centers in Igembe and Tigania district of Meru county, Kenya.

The study gathered information from heads (manager) of six vocational training centers, teachers (instructors) and student (learners).The study made

an attempt to establish effects of learning resources, qualification of trainers, attitude of learners and manager administrative experience on acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners in Tigania and Igembe district of Meru county, Kenya.

In order to investigate the above issues, several research questions were formulated. The literature review related to this study provided the guidelines and laid foundation on which interpretation of the data collected was laid.

Three categories of questionnaire were developed from research questions. These questionnaires were used as the instruments to collect data from three categories of respondent and a checklist for facilities was also used.

The return rate or response rate of the questionnaires was eighty eight percent. Given the sample is more than one third of the target population, it is sufficient for the study to draw conclusions concerning the whole population.

Tables, pie charts, bar graphs and narrations were employed in the representation and analysis of the skill acquisition especially among the youth learners in vocational training centers.

This specific study sought to determine the factors affecting students acquisition of vocational skills in vocational training centre's in Igembe.

and Tigania districts of Meru county, Kenya. This is because regardless of government efforts to boost vocational training in Kenya, this kind of training is not articulated in our vocational training centres especially in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county. The objectives of the study were; to establish the effects of provision physical facilities on acquisition of vocational skills in vocation training centres in Igembe and Tigania district of Meru county, Kenya; to determine how students attitude effects acquisition of vocational skills in youth vocation training centres in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county, Kenya; to establish the effects of availability of qualified academic and professional staff on acquisition of vocational skills in youth vocational centres in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county, Kenya and finally to establish the effects of managers administrative experience on acquisition of vocation skills in youth vocational training centers in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru county, Kenya.

Chapter two covers literature review which covered the following areas: Introduction to literature review, the concept of vocational training, provision of physical resources and acquisition of vocation skills among youth learners, attitude of the learners and acquisition of vocation skills, availability of qualified professional staff and acquisition of vocation skills among learners and finally to establish the effect of manager's administrative experience on acquisition of vocational skills.

Chapter three in this study deals with research methodology that is used in the study. It covers introduction to the research methodology, research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collecting procedures and data analysis techniques.

The study employed descriptive survey design where researchers collected detailed data from respondents through questionnaires, interviews and observation checklist. The target population for the study is 510 students both males and females, thirty teachers and twelve head of institutions. The head of institution are heads and their deputies in the six vocational training centers namely: Kianjai vocational training centres, Laare youth polytechnic, Ithima youth polytechnic, Karichu youth polytechnic, Ithima youth polytechnic and Maua youth polytechnic. The main method for data collection was use of questionnaires. The test re-test method of ensuring validity and reliability was used to make sure that the instruments were valid and reliable. Then, the data was collected, categorized thematically as per the objectives and each question, then coded and analyzed using computer software called statistical packages for social sciences.

In chapter four data was analyzed and quantitative data was presented in frequency distribution tables, pie charts, percentages and bar graphs. Some qualitative data was presented in narrative form.

The major findings of the study were that: availability of physical resources such as library, classrooms and workshops had adverse effect on students acquisition of vocational skills among young learners in vocational training centers in Igembe and Tigania districts.

The study concludes that most of youth vocational training centers have inadequate facilities that can train learners on contemporary issues. This means that facilities available could not cope with changing trends.

The study recommends that there is a need for the government to priorities vocation education. This would best be done through equipping libraries and learning resource centers in vocation training centers . Government should set aside a sizeable budget to finance vocational training centers as well as employment of qualified tutors to such institutions to enable skill acquisition to learners.

The first objective of this study sought to establish the effects of provision of physical facilities on acquisition of vocational skills among learners in vocational training centres in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru County, Kenya. The findings reveal that inadequacy of learning facilities had a high effect on performance of the students in their vocational training centres. According to data collected from the six vocational training centres, facilities such as classrooms, workshop and libraries and were very important as far as acquisition of vocational skills to learners is concerned. More than half, that is seven institution

heads/ managers acknowledged that lack of facilities in their vocational centers had affected learning process hence hampering acquisition of skills among youth learners. Three managers and two managers respectively suggested that facilities had moderate and low effects on acquisition of vocational skills. It was established that most of facilities in training centers were very old hence would not support training on contemporary issues. These included workshops and automobiles. The study revealed that teachers used old syllabuses and instructional materials and yet they were required to nurture contemporary skills that would suit changing trends in the digital era.

The second objective revealed from the research that student performance is highly determined by level of academic qualification of the factors in vocational training centres. From the research findings student acquisition of vocational skills and performance is dependent upon teachers qualification. Majority of learners who performed well in their courses they were undertaking were taught by teachers with diploma qualification.

This can be interpreted by responses of twelve diploma teachers who revealed having posted the following results: One teacher had posted excellent results, the other one had posted good results whereas eight of the teachers with diploma certificates had posted average results. Only two out of twelve teachers had posted poor results. These were two teachers one with CPE certificate and the other one with KAPE certificate and they both posted poor results.

There were three teachers with degree certificate and they posted results as follows :- two of the teachers posted average results whereas one of them had posted poor results. There were three teachers with KCSE certificate who posted average results. The findings also revealed that the two teachers with KAPE certificate had acquired skills through apprenticeship. There were no refresher courses taken by the tutors in vocational training centers. Similarly, the teachers who possessed KCSE certificate were never taken to refresher courses to learn new methodology in instruction.

The third objective found out that majority of students were not satisfied with courses they were undertaking in their vocational training centers in Tigania and Igembe Districts. It is revealed that from the sample taken, more than three fifths of learners were not satisfied with their courses whereas less than one-quarter of them were neither satisfied nor motivated to their courses. Only a part of the respondents that is eight percent and two percent respectively were highly satisfied and satisfied respectively. This concludes that majority of students enrolled in vocational training centers have negative attitude towards courses they were undertaking.

Another notable aspect is that most of the students were influenced by their parents to take a particular course in vocational training centers in Igembe and Tigania districts. Three quarter of students in vocational training centers were influenced by their parents /guardians / sponsors to take courses of

parental /guardians choice. Only eighteen and twenty two percent of respondents were advised by the head teacher and their own initiative to take course they were currently studying in vocational training centers.

This includes that most of the learners in vocational training centers were influenced by parents / guardians /sponsors to take a certain course at their specific vocational training center.

On evaluation of managers administrative experience against average percentage of passing in the last four years , it was revealed that those administrators with less than two years as administrators posted sixty eight percent average results in their institutions. This revealed that they had not acquired enough experience to spur those institutions to good performance .

The study found that inexperienced managers experienced what they referred to as traumatic first years experiences which involved management issues. This means that managers were very new in management field.

They also had to learn how to form important relationships and how to develop self-learning . This learning occurred through professional , organizational and personal socialization methods and reinforced the important role of mentors , teachers and former managers.

From the findings, it can also be revealed that managers with above seven years of experience in management had greater achievement in performance

and acquisition of vocational skills among learners .The reason given to this was that majority of them motivated their teachers and others had learnt from their previous mistakes done during their management tenure .

5.3 Conclusions of the study

From the findings of the study it can be concluded as follows : the government of Kenya is committed to vocational Educational since it has great impact on human resource development . This can be supported by the government's funding to vocational education every year in out .

However, many factors have been identified to be affecting skill acquisition especially among the youth learners . According to the findings , attitude of the learners has great hindrance to skill acquisition. Parents feel that vocational education is for standard eight or fourth form failures in secondary schools and school dropouts as well .

Vocational centers were found to experience financial constraints due to lack of facilities. Government was found to be allocating a meager amount to finance infrastructural facilities such as workshops and classrooms . Running of the programmes by managers was a bit difficult due to financial constraints .

Another factor that affected acquisition of vocational skills was inadequate learning resources . Most vocational training centers did not have equipped workshops and classrooms .

Administrative experience was another factor that affected students acquisition of vocational skills with heads of institutions having over seven years in administration performing better than their colleagues with less than two years of administrative experience .

Qualification of tutors was also captured has having affected learners acquisition of vocational skills .

Those with diploma certificates had performed better than their colleagues with ordinary CPE and KAPE Certificates . the higher the qualification of the tutors the better the performance .

Other factors affecting acquisition of vocational skills were lack of parents involvement in their children's education . Most of the learners were forced to take their courses by their parents .

Enrolment dropped every year as dropout rate went high because students were not motivated to acquire vocational skills . Students were not given freedom of choice that would otherwise motivate them to acquire vocational skills as expected .The courses they were undertaking were either their parents /choice or being coerced by their head teachers .

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions drawn , the following recommendations were made. The government of Kenya in partnership with the county government should add more tutors (Instructors) to vocational training centers. There was serious understaffing to vocational training centers which was the main hindrance to acquisition of vocational skills.

The government should add appropriate learning resources and improve physical facilities. Learning resources such as workshops is very essential towards achievement of vocational skills .

Successful students from vocational training centers should be motivated by giving them incentives to encourage them to perform better in exams as well as in acquisition of vocational skills. This can be done by managers and instructors at vocational training centers.

Campaigns for vocational educational should be carried out by education stakeholders in the local community .They should advice the youths on the importance of vocational educational especially in meeting the aspirations of vision 2030 blueprints.

All the stakeholders of vocational education should create awareness on the benefits and importance of vocational education and give it as more positive approach than it has been before . This will attract more youths to these

centers so that enrolment is enhanced and retention of learners in the vocational education centers.

Restructuring of the curriculum to incorporate emerging and contemporary issues in vocational education to keep abreast with the demands of vision 2030 . This is because most of the curriculum taught at these vocational centers has not been revised for a long time.

County government to set up a taskforce made up of technical experts to come up with courses that suits a particular social setting. They should be able to re-align courses according to environment to attract learners to enrol in such courses.

If possible county governments to set up model vocational training centers in every ward to address the rising demand for vocational education. This will help tap talents of youth who may not be willing to pursue higher education.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the findings of the study , further research areas which would enhance effective acquisition of vocational skills have been recommended from the issues that arose and were beyond the scope of the study , these include:

Carrying similar study in other parts of county so as to establish the actual state of vocational education in the country . If this is done findings that would assist in policy formation and decision making among vocational education stakeholders would be formed.

Other courses apart from the ones that have featured in this study that affect acquisition of vocational skills among the youth learners would be established.

Factors leading to low enrolment and high dropout rate among vocational education learners should be studied.

A comparative study of the youth polytechnics and non-formal adult literacy should be carried out.

Carrying a similar study on level of satisfaction and motivation to learners. This will help find out why learners are not motivated to vocational education.

In vocational education institutions particularly on courses offered should be carried out . This will help in determining whether some students are more attracted to some courses than to others.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter of introduction

University of Nairobi

Department of educational administration

P.O BOX 30197,

Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam

REF: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

I am a student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a masters degree (MED)

I am requesting your office for permission to carry out research in your school on “Factors affecting students acquisition of vocational skills in vocational training centers in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru County”.

The information collected will be used for academic work only and respondents will be treated with confidentiality. The attached is the questionnaires for gathering data.

Yours faithfully

Isaiah Mwikinya Baituti

Researcher

Appendix B

Questionnaire for institutional heads

The questionnaire is designed to gather information related to factors that affect acquisition of vocational skills among the youth learners in Igembe and Tigania districts of Meru County. You are kindly requested to fill the questionnaire as honestly as possible by putting a tick.

Section A Personal Details

1. What is your gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. What is your Age bracket 20 – 30 () 31 – 40 () 41 – 50 () 50 and above ()
3. What is your administration experience [] 0-2yrs [] 3-4yrs [] 5-6yrs [] above 7yrs.
4. What is your qualification
Certificate () Diploma () Bed () Masters ()

Section B Course Details

5. What courses are offered in your centre
 - (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii).....
 - (iv).....
 - (v)

6. Is there any outstanding balance unpaid? Yes () No ()
7. Does the government offer any financial assistance? Yes () No ()

If yes, what percentage of the total fees does it give

-
8. How do you rate the performance students in your center?

() Very high () High () Moderate () Low

How satisfying is the work done by your tutors/instructor?

(tick against item that fits your response)

Highly satisfying	
Satisfying	
Dissatisfying	
Highly dissatisfying	

Section C Enrolment Details

9. For how long have you been in this centre [] 0-2yrs [] 3-4yrs [] 5-6yrs
[] above 7yrs
10. (a) using the table below describe the centers enrollment for the last five years

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2009			
2010			
2011			
2012			

b) What factors do consider to be affecting enrolment?

.....

11 A. In the table below fill in appropriate dropout cases data in the centre for the last 4 years.

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
2009			
2010			
2011			
2012			

b) What factor do you think contribute to the dropouts in this center?

.....

12. What challenges do you encounter as the head of this institution?

.....

.....

13. What is the level of effect of inadequate learning facilities on performance?

High [] Moderate [] low []

13. In the table below tick against the item listed, the description that best fit it.

	Highly Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Highly inadequate
Fee Payment				
Job Satisfaction by Facilitator				
Self Motivation				
Teachers Facilitator/ Burnout				
Board of management experience				

Appendix C

Questionnaire for the Vocational Tutors

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about the factors that affect the acquisition of vocational skills among the youth learner's in the area you are teaching.

Instructions

Do not write your name for confidentiality.

Fill in the space provided.

Answer the questions in a honesty way possible

Section A Personal Details

1. What is your gender? (Tick against the appropriate)

Male () Female ()

2. What is your age?

20 – 30 Years () 30 – 40 Years () 40 – 50 Years () 50 and above.()

3. What is your highest academic and professional qualification?

4. KAPE/CPE/KCPE () KCSE () Diploma () Degree () Masters ()

Section B Professional Details

1. For how long have you been teaching vocational skills?

0-2yrs () 2-4yrs () 5-6yrs () above 7yrs ()

2. For how long have you been in this center?

0-2yrs () 2-4yrs () 5-6yrs () above 7yrs ()

3. Which course are you teaching?

.....
.....

4. Rate the students' performance in the courses you teach?

Excellent [] Good [] Average [] poor []

5. Are you comfortable with teaching this course

Yes [] No []

6. What problems do you experience with the learners concerning skill acquisition?

.....
.....

7. How can the problem, be addressed? Give suggestions.

.....
.....

8. What are the ages of the learners in your school?

11-13yrs [] 14-16yrs [] 17-19yrs [] Above 20yrs []

9. What factors do you consider to be affecting enrolment?

.....
.....

10. In brief give suggestions on how skill acquisition can be enhanced.

.....
.....

11. How often do you go for in-service courses to update your knowledge?

(Tick where necessary)

After every six months ()

Annually ()

After two years ()

Never at all ()

Appendix D

Questionnaires for students

The questionnaire is designed to gather information related to factors that influence acquisition of vocational skills among youth learners in the areas that you are teaching. You are kindly requested to fill the questionnaire as honestly as possible. Your response will be used for this specific study only.

Instructions

Do not write your name for confidentiality.

Fill in the space provided.

Answer the question in a honesty way possible

Section A Personal Details

1. What is your gender?

(Put tick in appropriate box)

Male

Female

2. What is your age bracket?

(Put tick in appropriate box)

Below 20 Years

Between 20 years and 25 Yrs

Between 25 Years and 30 Years

above 30 Years

3. What course are you taking in this institution?

.....

4. Who advised you to take the course?

Self Parent/Guardian/ sponsor

Former teacher in primary/ secondary school

Section B Course Details

5. Please indicate with a tick the adequacy of the facilities in the department.

Scale

Very adequate (VA) Adequate (A)

Fair (F) Inadequate (I)

Very Adequate (VI)

	Activity	VA	A	F	I	VI
1	Equipment for training					
2	Text Book					
3	Workshops					
4	Classrooms					
5	Furniture					
6	Library					
7	Water and Electricity					

6. Please indicate with a tick the level of achievement of the following activities

Scale

Very good (VG) Good (G)

Fair (F) Poor (p) Very poor (VP)

	Activity	VG	G	F	P	VP
1	Parents discussing students performance					
2	Attitude towards vocational training.					

7. What is your own entry mark /grade for the course you are undertaking

.....

8. Are you satisfied with the course you are taking?

Highly satisfied [] Satisfied [] Neutral [] Not satisfied []

9. State four factors affecting the acquisition of vocational skills in this center

.....

10. State four suggestions for improving the acquisition of vocational skills

.....

.....

APPENDIX E: AUTHORISATION LETTER



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: secretary@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:

25th July, 2014

NACOSTI/P/14/3946/2405

Mwikinya Isaiiah Baituti
University of Nairobi
P.O.Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Factors affecting students acquisition of Vocational skills in Vocational Training Centers in Igembe and Tigania Districts of Meru County, Kenya*," I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Meru County** for a period ending **30th September, 2014**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Meru County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


DR. S. K. LANGAT, OGW
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
The County Director of Education
Meru County.



National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 9001:2008 Certified

APPENDIX F: RESEARCH PERMIT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

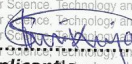
MR. MWIKINYA ISAIAH BAITUTI
of UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, 0-60601


LAARE, has been permitted to conduct
research in Meru County

on the topic: 'FACTORS AFFECTING
STUDENTS ACQUISITION OF
VOCATIONAL SKILLS IN VOCATIONAL
TRAINING CENTERS IN IGEMBE AND
TIGANIA DISTRICTS OF MERU

for the period ending:
30th September, 2014

Permit No. : NACOSTI/P/14/3946/2405
Date Of Issue : 25th July, 2014
Fee Received :Ksh 1,000


Applicant's
Signature


Secretary
National Commission for Science
Technology & Innovation

CONDITIONS

- 1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit**
- 2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.**
- 3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.**
- 4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.**
- 5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one(1) soft copy of your final report.**
- 6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.**


REPUBLIC OF KENYA
NACOSTI
National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

Serial No. A 2401

RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT

CONDITIONS: see back page