Factors Influencing Trainee Enrolment in Modular Courses in Technical Training Institutes in Kenya

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Abstract

Previously Technical Vocational Educational Training Institutions were offering Business Technical Education Programs as well as Technical Education Programs that would run for three years. However, in the year 2009, Modular courses were introduced and with them set in a decline in enrolment. Education is acknowledged as a means for transforming and empowering the youth with skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable them become productive members of the society. This underscores the importance played by education and training in the Kenyan development agenda. It is within this recognition that the social pillar of Kenya vision 2030 sets to invest in the people of Kenya in order to improve the quality of life for all Kenyans by targeting education and training among other programs. Most Technical Training Institutes have commendable physical infrastructure and adequate qualified personnel to achieve excellent training and high performance in external examinations. They also have rich catchments areas to supply them with trainees. However it has been observed that trainee enrolment in modular courses is below the stakeholders" expectations. Hence, this paper sets out to establish possible factors influencing trainee enrolment in modular courses in Technical Training Institutes. The paper set out to ascertain enrolment trends in Technical Training Institutes; to establish internal factors influencing enrolment in modular courses; to ascertain external factors influencing enrolment in modular courses; to establish challenges faced by trainees when transiting from one module to the next. The paper found out that the enrolment in non-modular courses was higher over the period under study than that in modular courses. It was also found out that the external factors were influencing enrolment to modular courses more than internal factors notably the examination policies, logistics and the curriculum. The paper recommends that technical training institutes be empowered to examine and issue certificates; Strengthen links between industry and training; Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development should review course duration; Institutes should intensify marketing of their courses.

Key Words: *Technical, Programs, Vocational, Training, Modular, Enrolment*

INTRODUCTION

Technical Training and the National Development Agenda

Socio-economic development is not possible through capital investment alone. Nations which invest in education can draw upon a mix of skilled workers, technicians, technologists and engineers, and research scientists to support and sustain their socio-economic development efforts. Vocational training is one strategy to build human assets and capabilities, especially for poor and vulnerable people who may not have the opportunity for higher education.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is a key instrument of any public policy aimed at socio-economic development, employment generation and poverty alleviation

Technical Training Institutes (T.T.I.s) were established by the government of Kenya in the 1980s to provide Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (T.I.V.E.T.) to young primary and secondary school graduates who could not transit to middle level colleges and universities. Graduates from these institutes have been able to provide the much needed skilled labour that is required to propel the country to industrialization. The overall policy of TIVET as articulated in the sessional paper No. 1 2005, states that overall policy of TIVET is to provide and promote life-long education and training for self-reliance.

The national development agenda identifies T.T.I.s as one of the key drivers in the following areas: Science, technology and innovation – the development of the necessary scientific and technological infrastructure, as well as the technical and entrepreneurial skills are essential prerequisites to the

transformation of Kenya into a knowledge based society, education and training - the provision of quality education, training and research for all Kenyan, human resource development - there will be need to create a globally competitive and adoptive human resource base to meet the requirements of vision 2030. This will mainly be achieved through increased training, I.C.T. – to develop a critical mass of human resource required to support capacity of the industry, gender and youth development - integration and horizontal of issues affecting the youth as well as promoting gender equity in training.

One way of achieving these goals is the core need for quality training personnel in various specialized skills offered in quality Training Institutes of high standards. Technical Training Institutes were established in various stages to provide such functional skills.

Training forms an inseparable part of the development agenda of any nation. Atchoarena *et al.* (2001) defines Technical and Vocational Education as education which is mainly to lead participants to acquire the practical skills, know-how and understanding and necessary for employment in a particular occupation, trade or group of occupations. Nyerere (2012) further states that globally, education is acknowledged as a means for transforming and empowering the youth with skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable them become productive members of the society. This underscores the importance played on education and training in the development agenda.

It is within this recognition that the social pillar of Kenya vision 2030 sets to invest in the people of Kenya in order to improve the quality of life for all Kenyans by targeting education and training among other programs. Nyerere (2009) states that Vision 2030 proposes among others; intensified application of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to raise productivity and efficiency (GOK, 2007) through, government‘s commitment to provision of resources for scientific research, enhancement of technical capabilities of the workforce and the raising of the quality of teaching mathematics, science and technology in schools, polytechnics and universities. Other steps include the establishment of new technical training institutions, as well as the enhancement of closer collaboration between industry and training institutions.

The key policies impacting TVET include sessional paper number 5 of 2005, KESSP, ERS, vision 2030, youth policy and the new constitution 2010 with its devolved structures and new governance dispensation. The TVET specific policies are: national training strategy for TVET 2005 which aims to ensure that TVET institutions are adequately funded and equipped by 2008, gender policy in education which seeks to increase the enrolment, retention, transition and achievement in TVET, especially for girls and women, the TVET act, and the national industrial training authority (NITA) of 2011.

Previously TVET Institutions were offering Business Technical Programs (BTEP) as well as Technical Programs (TEP) that would run for three years. However, in the year 2011, Modular courses were introduced and with them set in a decline in enrolment. The paper set out to: ascertain enrolment trends in Technical Training Institutes; establish internal factors influencing enrolment in modular courses; ascertain external factors influencing enrolment in modular courses; and establish challenges faced by trainees when transiting from one module to the next. The study was undertaken in Mount Kenya Region. Six Technical Training Institutes participated in the study. The sample comprised of six administrators and 240 trainees.

Most T.T.Is have commendable physical infrastructure and have been provided with adequate trained Human Resource by the T.S.C. to achieve excellent academic performance. Mwangani (2009) also confirmed that many technical students did agree that technical education had a major role to play in realisation of vision 2030 but their attitudes had been negatively affected by the lack of focus and incentives on the part of the government to make technical education interesting. Most of the institutes have rich catchments to supply trainees. However it had been observed that trainee enrolment in modular courses was below the stakeholders‘ expectations. Hence this research set out to establish possible factors influencing trainee enrolment in modular courses in T.T.Is.

Mwangani (2009) found out that the technical policy and education policy in Kenya has not had a comprehensive review in accordance with the changing environment. The findings of this study would therefore help the TVET Institutions to make informed decision on matters relating to improving strategies of increasing enrolment of trainees in modular courses. They would also assist in identifying the

challenges faced by specific institutions in enrolling trainees to various courses. The findings would also assist the government in achieving its development agenda in vision 2030 on matters of education and training by increasing enrolment in order to produce adequate quality manpower not only at TVET Institutions, but also other Middle level Institutions. The study would thus be crucial in providing crucial information for policy action by the stakeholders.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was undertaken using the survey design. The study area was the Mount Kenya Region and six Technical Training Institutes were selected purposively to participate in the study. An administrator from each institute served as a key informant while 240 trainees from the six institutions served as respondents by filling in questionnaires. Data collected was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Information from the data analysis was presented using frequency tables and text boxes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study involved key stakeholders including the students, staff and management. These stakeholders had separate questions designed to address the specific areas of concern relating to the objectives of the paper. Data collected on enrolment trends in TVET institutions in diploma and craft courses between 2010 and 2012 revealed that there had been a sharp decline in enrolment with the shift from non-modular to modular courses as illustrated in the table 1.0. This is a setback from the findings of the Gender Policy in Education (GoK, 2007) which had indicated that enrolment in public TVET institutions increased from 40,622 in 1999 to over 66,500 in 2004.

Table 1. Enrolment trends in technical training institutes in the years 2010 to 2012

Year		**2010**				**2011**				**2012**			
Training Mode		**Non-Modular**		**Modular**		**Modular**		**Non-Modular**		**Modular**		**Non-modular**	
Sex		**F**	**M**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**F**	**M**
Institution	**Level**												
A	Dip	260	140	29	19	43	36	170	52	178	51	36	34
	Craft	30	102	22	16	15	42	85	86	65		22	34
B	dip	150	180	34	22	54	42	142	143	74	58	48	63
	cert	20	114	18	14	66	43	101	45	92	28	41	22
C	dip	140	159	66	26	62	41	128	72	148	73	55	54
	cert	18	82	15	9	84	22	86	82	22	34	28	59
D	dip	135	226	21	12	76	22	111	73	58	74	49	53
	cert	90	98	11	13	34	21	152	50	38	62	42	62
E	dip	120	130	59	18	82	39	169	82	78	62	62	28
	cert	60	51	20	8	18	43	48	54	32	24	22	52
F	dip	69	180	14	8	63	48	102	82	72	54	48	22
	cert	42	65	7	16	68	23	60	48	24	18	18	33
Total	Dip	874	1015	223	105	380	228	1122	504	608	372	262	220
	Cert	260	512	93	66	285	194	532	365	273	228	173	228
G		**2661**		**487**		**1087**		**2523**		**1481**		**883**	

Internal Factors Influencing Enrolment in Modular Courses

Six administrators were asked to rate the factors internal to the Institutes that were influencing trainee enrolment to modular courses. Table 2 presents the frequency of internal factors influencing enrolment to modular courses in Technical Training Institutes.

Table 2. Internal factors influencing enrolment in modular courses

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Fees	4	66.7
Students discipline	3	50
Length of course	5	83.3
Work load	3	50
Syllabus coverage	1	16.7
Trainee pass rate	2	33.3
State of facilities	1	16.7

External Factors Influencing Enrolment in Modular Courses

Six administrators were asked to rate the factors external to the Institutes that were influencing trainee enrolment to modular courses. The following factors were raised.

Table 3. External factors influencing enrolment in modular courses

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Universities allow lower grades	4	66.7
Higher entry point requirement for modular courses	5	83.3
Length of course	5	83.3
Mushrooming of commercial colleges	2	33.3
Perception of the society	3	50
Aggressive marketing by Universities and private tertiary institutions	4	66.7
Lack of clear links between institutes and industry	1	16.7
Logistics of transiting from one module to the next	6	100
Examination Polices	6	100
Curriculum	6	100
low levels of knowledge about TVET options	6	100

Table 3 illustrates that 66.7% of the administrators felt that the Universities admit most students with a mean grade c (plain) to pursue degrees and c- (minus) to pursue diplomas leading to stiff competitions as a University diploma takes a shorter period and has prestige. While 83.3% felt higher entry point requirement for modular courses attracted more students in the universities. Other factors included: Mushrooming of commercial colleges(33.3%),Perception of the society that technical education is inferior thus many opting to join Universities (50%)Aggressive marketing by Universities and private tertiary institutions(66.7%),Logistics of transiting from one module to another that requires one to have passed in all the subjects in the previous module. This is as opposed to Universities that allow a re-sit of a failed exam allowing movement to the next stage(100%) Lack of clear links between institutes and industry (16.7%).

Table 4. Challenges faced by trainees when transiting from one module to the next

Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Stringent policies that regulate transition from one module to the next	200	83.3
The allure of the job market upon successful completion of a module	120	50
Length of course	140	58.3
The lapse period between modules	100	41.7
Mode of evaluation	221	92
fees	180	75

Asked to identify challenges influencing transition from one module to the next, trainees raised five main challenges. Firstly, there were the stringent policies that regulated transition from one module to the next. Trainees explained that they were supposed to have passed KNEC examination in all subjects in a module

before moving on to the next. Secondly, they highlighted the allure of the job market upon successful completion of a module. To them, it was sometimes possible to get a job after the first or second module thus terminating the course before completion. There was also the issue of the lapse period between modules while awaiting results which made some drop out for various reasons. This also made the Diploma course take well over the stipulated three years. The trainees also felt T.T.Is should offer internal examinations instead of the KNEC examinations. Moreover, there was the issue of fees especially where trainees would move to a different institute for the next module.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study showed that the enrolment in non-modular courses was higher over the period under study than that in modular courses. It was thus concluded that as the non-modular courses were phased out, enrolment in Technical Training Institutes was seen to be going down. It was also found out that the external factors were influencing enrolment to modular courses more than internal factors. The paper therefore concludes that unless stringent measures are taken, Technical Training in Technical training Institutes in Kenya is under threat.

Recommendations

This paper highlights the following recommendations: Universities should be discouraged from offering diploma and certificate courses; More marketing should be undertaken by the concerned institutes; Examining bodies should revise the minimum entry grades; Technical institutes should be empowered to examine and certify; Links between industry and training should be strengthened; Bursary allocations to needy students should be increased; The staff capacity should be improved; K.I.C.D should review course durations to match those of Universities and other Examiners.

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BIO-DATA

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