



Effects of Devolved TVET Laws and Policies on Trainees' Enrolment, Skills and Instructor Competencies in Embu County

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Abstract

The study focused on assessment of effects of devolved TVET laws and policies on trainees' enrolment, acquired skills and instructor competencies in Embu County. Devolved (TVET) is concerned with preparing and equipping secondary and primary school graduates with appropriate technical and entrepreneurial skills and attitudes for self and industry employment. Specific objectives included; to explore the effects of county laws and policies on infrastructure development and training facilities acquisition, to determine impact of county laws and policies on trainee's capitation and bursaries and assess the adequacy of the laws and policies on instructor competencies development. Constructivism theory of learning theoretical framework guided the study, because it has a bearing in career and technical Education. This theory states that learners actively construct their own knowledge and meaning from their experiences. The study adopted a descriptive research design with a mixed data collection approach. The target population comprised of 26 VTCs of Embu County, 756 second year trainees in the VTCs, 152 instructors, 26 VTC Managers and 25 VTC graduates' employers. Out of 26 VTCs, a sample of 10 VTCs, 2 from each sub-country were selected through use of a simple stratified random sampling technique with the sub-counties as the stratus. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 254 trainees from trainees' population of 756 second years. The county had 26 VTCs with instructors' population of 152. Through use of a simple and stratified random sampling technique with the 5 sub-counties as the stratus, a sample size of 108 instructors was achieved. Managers of the selected VTCs participated in interviews/Focus Group Discussions while through purposive sampling technique, 25 employers; 5 from each of the 5 sub counties were selected for interviews/FGDs conference at sub county level. Descriptive analysis was used; it included use of means, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse quantitative data while Qualitative data was grouped into emerging themes and narratives. The study found that there was no significant impact of devolved TVET laws and policies on infrastructure development, training facilities acquisition, apprenticeship opportunities, capitation and bursaries and instructor's employment and career development, all of which affect trainees' enrolment, acquired skills and instructor competencies. Devolved TVET Policies and laws were not effective. The study recommends that; County CECs, CEOs in consultation with Education and Technology Department directors and the legal office draft necessary devolved TVET policies and laws and ensure they are ratified by county assemblies benefit trainees, instructors and community at large.

Keywords: CEC, County Executive Committee Member. CEO, County Executive Office, FGDs, Focus Group Discussion

INTRODUCTION

The study undertook to determine effects of devolved TVET laws and policies on, acquired skills, trainees' enrolment and instructor competencies in the context and confinement to "youth polytechnics" which have since rebranded to Vocational Training Centres (VTCs). Youth polytechnics were established by National Christian Council of Kenya in the early 1960's to equip youth with appropriate technical and entrepreneurship skills for gainful self-employment so as to develop themselves and the communities they lived in through supply of required goods and services. Technical Vocational Education and Training is a comprehensive term referring to the educational process when it involves in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge in relation to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (Akpan 2014). Since then, TVET has undergone numerous restructurings in terms of administration, management, funding, curriculum development and national examination for skills certification. But still, the objectives why youth polytechnic were started seems not to be adequately met. Various factors are suggested as a basis for an explanation. Among the factors include poor infrastructure, inadequate facilities, low budget allocation, unqualified instructors coupled with lack of instructors' motivation and lack of political leadership towards TVET. Recently, Kenya constitution 2010 devolved the lowest level of TVET to counties for management and administration. The most probable question then is; what are the effects of devolving this level of TVET to County governments on acquired skills, trainees' enrolment and instructor competencies? The study was designed to answer this question, illuminate on key effects areas for better understanding as well as provide well qualified recommendations and direction.

In the US Vocational education was once used to track low-income students off to work while wealthier kids went to college. The early vocational education was driven by a philosophy of fitting people to their probable destinies," says Jim Stone, director of the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, Emily (2014). "By the late 1990s, vocational education had a major image problem. Vocational programs had become a kind of dumping ground for kids who weren't succeeding in the traditional academic environment. That included a lot of students with behavior problems, and a lot of students with learning disabilities. In many school districts, vocational education wasn't much more than a "second-tier special education program" says Jim 2014.

In 2001, Congress passed the No Child Left behind Act. That law required states, in exchange for federal education funding, to test their students every year and to ensure that all students would eventually be proficient in math and reading so as to create a student who was able to go out and get a job, but also able to get accepted into a four year college or university. Massachusetts State has largely succeeded in bringing the academic quality at its vocational high schools up to par with its traditional high schools. In 2013, students at regional vocational high schools in Massachusetts did as well on the state English tests (92 percent proficient) as students at traditional high schools (93 percent proficient). On the math tests, they did nearly as well: 78 percent of students at regional vocational high schools were proficient in math compared to 82 percent at traditional high schools and when it comes to graduation rates, vocational high schools in Massachusetts do better than traditional schools. In 2013, the graduation rate at regional vocational high schools was 95 percent. At traditional high schools, the graduation rate was 86 percent (Dave, 2013). But advocates for today's career and technical education say things have changed, and graduates of vocational programs may have the advantage over graduates of traditional high schools. In

Germany, the vocational education act is very important (BBiG) The Law of 1 April 2005 reforming vocational education and training comprehensively amended and combined the 1969 Vocational Education and Training Act (23) and the 1981.

The aim of the reform was to safeguard and improve youth training opportunities and high-quality vocational training for all young people, irrespective of their social or regional origin. Major innovations since the introduction of the Vocational Education and Training Reform Act are the recognition of time-limited training periods completed outside Germany, the amendment of the Enabling Standard for the promulgation of training directives by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), and the amendment of the crediting of prior VET to the training period. Other important VET legislation includes the regulation on Craft Trades, the Regulation on Trainer Aptitude, the Safety at Work for Young Workers Act, the Works Council Constitution Act, the Aid for Further Training for Advancement Act and the Distance Learning Courses Act.

METHODOLOGY

This research study was conducted in Embu County. It lies 120 kilometers east of Nairobi, on South Eastern side of Mount Kenya. Embu County covers an area of 2,818 square kilometres. It has 26 VTCs distributed in 5 sub-counties with trainees' population of 756 second years and 1421 first years. For purpose of the study only second year trainees were sampled because of their increased awareness of VTCs matters and welfare. The VTCs have an instructor population of 152 instructors. The study adopted a descriptive design which was used while both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to collect and analyze data concerning the research problems. The target population comprised of 26 VTCs of Embu County, 756 second year trainees in VTCs in Embu County, 152 instructors, 26 VTC Managers and 25 VTC graduates employers. Simple stratified, random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select samples from the respondents in the study area. Out of 26 VTCs, a sample of 10 VTCs, 2 from each sub-country were selected through use of a simple stratified random sampling technique with the sub-counties as the stratus. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 254 trainees from trainees' population of 756 second years. The county had 26 VTCs with instructors' population of 152. Through use of a simple and stratified random sampling technique with the 5 sub-counties as the stratus, a sample size of 108 instructors was achieved. The size of instructor sample was determined by use of Krejcie & Morgan table. For FGDs, between 4 and 12 participants were deemed enough for a researcher to get in-depth details of phenomena under study. Managers of the selected VTCs participated in interviews/FGDs. Through purposive sampling technique, 25 employers, 5 from each of the 5 sub counties were selected for interviews/FGDs conference at sub county level (Annette, 2011). The instruments of data collection in the study are the instruments used in both qualitative and quantitative mixed design, these are; questionnaires, observation list, document analysis, Indirect measures interview/FGDs. Test- retest measure of reliability ($r = 0.76/0.81$) for the trainees/instructor questionnaires was done by use of same subjects but different from trainees/instructors who were included in the sample to ensure reliability of the questionnaires. This means same results would be realized if questionnaire is administered at different dates to the same type of respondents.

Table1: Sample distribution

Population Category	Population	Sample	Percent
Trainees	756	254	33.5
Instructors	152	108	71.0
Principals	26	10	38
Employers	-----	25	-----

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 2: Devolved TVET ratified laws and policies effects on trainees' enrolment
VTC Instructors Responses**

Statement	SD	D	SWD	A	SA	M	STD D.
1. Effects due to increase in VTCs training capacities	31 (39.7)	34 (43.6)	10 (12.8)	1 (1.3)	2 (2.6)	1.83	.889
2. Effects due to increase in dissemination of information to youth	29 (37.2)	33 (42.3)	11 (14.1)	3 (3.8)	2 (2.6)	1.92	.950
3. Effects due to increase in bursary allocation	40 (51.3)	25 (32.1)	7 (9.0)	4 (5.1)	2 (2.6)	1.76	.996

VTC Trainees responses

Statement	SD	D	UD	A	SA	M	STD D.
1. Effects due increase in VTCs training capacities	55 (24.1)	110 (48.2)	37 (16.2)	18 (7.9)	8 (3.5)	2.18	1.003
2. Effects due to increase in dissemination of information to youth	47 (20.6)	96 (42.1)	59 (25.9)	14 (6.1)	12 (5.3)	2.33	1.038
3. Effects due to increase in bursary allocation to VTC trainees.	117 (51.3)	78 (34.2)	20 (8.8)	8 (3.5)	5 (2.2)	1.71	0.927

Instructors n=78, Trainees n= 228, KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, SD=Somewhat Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, S. Dev. = Standard Deviation; Values in parenthesis are percentages

Devolved TVET ratified laws and policies effects on trainees' enrolment.

TVET Law is enshrined in the right to education and right to work in international human rights instruments, and under the auspice of human rights exactly within the concept of those two rights, in the international level, TVET is guided by UNESCO and ILO, specifically, UNESCO it is regulated as part of the Education For All (EFA), Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and poverty reduction of UN Millennium Development Goals (UN-MDGs) through to TVET standard-setting instruments (Wang, S. 2012). Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) reforms are based on Sessional Paper No. 14, 2012 which is a policy framework on Reforming Education in Kenya. This framework resonates with Vision 2030 upon which the required knowledge, skills and attitudes are hinged. Policies and laid down laws are key for any organization to conduct its business efficiently and effectively according to the aspirations of the stake holders. The study sought to establish the impact of devolved TVET ratified policies and laws on trainees' enrollment. The findings are shown in Table 2 above for trainees and instructors respectively.

1. Availability of increased VTC Training Capacities

The findings shown in table 2, for trainees cum instructors, indicate that majority 165(72.3%)/65(83.3%), of respondents strongly disagreed, that devolved TVET laws

and policies have led to increase in VTC training capacities. This is imperative that devolved TVET policies and laws are not streamlined for VTCs to afford increased VTCs training opportunities. Preliminary data provided by managers from their stations prior to the focused group discussion indicate that, trainees' enrolment in VTCs has not significantly improved with devolution which is contrary to constitution 2010 drafters' expectations. According to managers, the slight increase in enrolment is attributed to general youth population dynamics and the fact that the national government has increased surveillance to stop exam cheating (Otieno, 2016), therefore, many students scoring grade D – (minus) and Es in KCSE joining VTCs. Therefore, County laws and policies did not ensure increased VTCs training capacities.

2. Dissemination of information to youth on existence of training opportunities in VTCs

The results in table 2, for trainees and instructors' respondents indicate; majority of trainees and instructors 143(68.6%)/ 62(79.3.2%), strongly disagreed, that, devolved TVET laws and policies have led to increased awareness of youth on training opportunities in VTCs. It means therefore that devolved TVET management is not keen to disseminate information about TVET opportunities in VTCs. Managers' discussion confirmed the status and went ahead to indicate that, marketing of devolved TVET training opportunities is an affair largely left to the individual VTC because it is the trainees and instructors who go their way to advertise the institution to potential trainees.

3. Bursary allocations to VTCs trainees

Researcher findings displayed in table 2, for Trainees and Instructors respondents indicate; 195(85.5%)/65(83.5%), disagreed, with the statement that there was an increase in bursary allocation leading to increase in VTC trainees' enrolment, retention and course completion. Managers Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) confirmed the study findings. They said it was difficult to know the criteria Members of County Assembly (MCAs) and ward administrators were using to award bursaries because county bursary fund is lumped up together for General Academic Education (GAE), national government Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Devolved (TVET). This confusion has worked against the devolved TVET trainees as a huge chunk of the bursary which would have benefited them is awarded to GAE and National Government TVET students. The findings agree with (OECD, 2016) that bursary allocations systems by developing countries are against TVET in favour of GAE.

Table 3: Effects of County Human Resource laws and policies on Instructor's competencies

Statement	SD	D	SWD	A	SA	M	S. Dev.
1. Timely employment of qualified and promotion of VTCs instructors	35 (44.9)	35 (44.9)	7 (9.0)	1 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	1.67	.696
2. Effects on instructor career development opportunities.	40 (51.3)	26 (33.3)	7 (9.0)	4 (5.1)	1 (1.3)	1.72	.924
3. Effects on Seminars/workshops for Managers and Instructors	41 (52.6)	31 (39.7)	6 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1.55	.638

n= 78, KEY: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, SWD=Somewhat Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, S. Dev. = Standard Deviation; Values in parenthesis are percentages

Effects of County Human Resource laws and policies on Instructors Competencies

The study sought to establish the effects of county human resource management on instructor competencies. The findings are shown in table 3 above.

1. Timely employment and promotion of instructors

The study findings shown in Table 3 indicate that; 70(89.8%), respondents disagreed with the statement that, there was timely employment of instructors. Because a majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement, it is imperative to conclude that county human resource does not employ instructors in time and therefore affecting instructors' competencies to deliver on the objectives of the VTCs.

2. Career development opportunities for instructors

Results from the findings in Table 3, indicate that; 66(84.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that, county human resource government has increased opportunities of Instructors career development. A majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement and therefore it is prudent to say that there are no opportunities for career development for Instructors and Managers. Instructors like many other workers in contemporary society have a desire to pursue more than just a job. They want employments that promise an extension of their interests, personality and abilities. They expect a variety of things from their jobs besides the salary and a few fringe benefits, and their loyalty to the department depends upon the degree upon which the department satisfies these wants (Bartlet, 2012). Unfortunately, the county government like many employers have failed to recognise this need and the tools and experiences it provides to instructors do not enable them to develop their careers (Nzuve, 2007). Armstrong (2001) opines that, career development is key to both the individual employee and the employer. Definitely there is a relationship between the employer for which he/she works and the development of the enterprise through the employee's career. An employee develops his/her own career through subsequent acquisition of managerial or professional skills and experience which may bring rewards and promotion. In today's competitive market, successful organisations regardless of their size need employees who have the necessary knowledge and skills to make effective contributions as drivers towards achieving a competitive edge in the organization. Career development of instructors should be seen as an investment, not a cost; and that bad performance, ignorance and low commitment to duty are very costly barriers in an organization performance (Kakui, 2016).

In the manager's discussion, career development issue is a thorn in the flesh. Many were dissatisfied with the ineptness of the county department in dealing with instructors and managers career development. Even though initially, there were teething problems while the departments were capacity building, the silence and indecisiveness worries them. To this day, none of them has been confirmed formerly as a VTC manager, they continue to serve as acting managers in the same job groups as other instructors and no allowances. This definitely has a bearing in the degree of the managers' commitment in the job which further affects overall performance of the VTCs.

3. Rolling out of seminars and workshops for Managers and Instructors

Seminars/workshops are group meetings led by experts focusing on a specific topic or discipline and they take place over a few days and involve cooperative discussion, multiple speakers and opportunities to share perspectives, experiences and issues related to the topic. Among the benefits of attending seminars/workshops includes improving communication skills, gaining expert knowledge, networking with others and renewing motivation and confidence (Besa *et.al*, 2018).

Research findings shown in Table 3, above for instructor's responses indicate that; 72(92.3%) disagreed with the statement that human resource management has increased the pace of rolling out seminars and workshops for managers and Instructors while only a few agreed with the statement. Focused group discussion confirmed the findings. They indicated that they are rarely called upon to attend seminars and workshops by the county education and technology department which is supposed to liaise with county human resource and department of finance to fund and roll out seminars and workshops for instructors and managers. Before devolution, managers disclosed that they used to attend seminars and workshops frequently on matters of youth training, quality standards and assurance, VTC funds utilisation and income generating activities.

Thus, the county human resource has not been rolling out seminars and workshops for instructors and managers for capacity building or it is suffering from teething challenges after devolution of Vocational Training Centres.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was; to determine whether devolved TVET ratified laws and policies had effects in addressing trainees' enrolment, acquired skills and instructor competencies through training capacities in the VTCs, increase in dissemination of information to youth on availability of training opportunities in VTCs and bursary allocation to VTC trainees and employment and career progression for instructors. The objective statements were put across to trainees and instructors through the various questionnaire items, and they gave their responses in the disagreement with the statements of the objective. They were not aware of any ratified laws and policies in place to guide in running devolved TVET matters. Managers and employers focussed group discussions with the researcher confirmed the ineffectiveness of devolved TVET laws and policies if at all they existed to address trainees' enrolment in VTCs, the skills acquired and instructor competencies. Laws and policies which would envision devolved TVET aspirations and targets in addressing increased trainees' enrolment, quality of acquired skills by trainees and instructors' competencies were found to be either too weak or they did not exist at all. There were no strategies of disseminating information to youths about training opportunities in VTCs. While infrastructure development and facilities acquisition are key to skills development, they were not consistently and adequately availed throughout the County. On instructors' competencies and motivation, there was no clear-cut employment and career development and job progression strategies. Perhaps a key point to observe from the managers discussion was that, instructors were lastly promoted in the year 2010 before devolution of VTCs to Counties.

This calls for a major concern by the county governments management, for devolved TVET as a sector is very important to be conducted without a thoroughly thought-out road map of how issues of TVET should be conducted. There should be a deliberate effort by the CECs and CEOs responsible for county education and technology departments in counties to formulate policies specifically to address how matters of devolved TVET should be conducted. These policies should address enrolment capacities in the VTCs, in terms of infrastructure, acquisition of facilities, employment of qualified instructors and their subsequent career development. Where a policy does not exist, it would be very difficult to appraise achievement of the department objectives for no targets will have been set which both the departmental staff and the instructors should strive to achieve. In fact, without targets, the department may not

know whether it's progressing on well in implementing TVET programmes for trainees to acquire the right appropriate skills relevant in the modern job market.

Based on the findings of the study, counties administration and management seem to offer a deaf year to the perennial challenges bedeviling vocational education and training. They are not keen to fund TVET infrastructure development and acquisition of modern tools to enable VTCs implement training programmes for trainees to acquire modern market relevant skills. Trainees support through capitation is minimal and insufficient for meaningful training to take place. Therefore, the findings generalize to a majority of the counties, that trainees are acquiring skills that are obsolete because they don't match skills required at work place. Secondly, there is lack of strategies on how to increase training capacities, enrolment, retention and course completion; No laws to guide bursary allocation to devolved TVET trainees, apprenticeship incentives to enterprises and all these conspire against the plight of the trainees. Lastly there is ineptness by the county human resource departments in tackling instructors' career development and promotions to improve on their training competencies lowering their performance and job commitment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study makes the following recommendations based on the findings, that;

1. Considering the significance of infrastructure development, acquisition of training facilities and trainees support in knowledge and skills development, County Executive Committee Members, Chief Executive Officers in consultation with Education and Technology Department directors and the legal office draft necessary Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) policies and laws and ensure they are ratified by county assemblies. These laws and policies should address smooth and efficient administration and management of Vocational Training Centres' activities.
2. Education and technology department to consider, propose to county assembly for ratification of incentives areas to enterprises so they can create apprenticeship opportunities for Vocational Training Centres trainees and instructors.

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