International Journal of Scientific Research

http://journalijsr.com/ Vol. II, Issue 5, 2017

OVERCOMING CONSTRAINTS FACING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AT YOUTH POLYTECHNICS

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JULY 2017

Abstract

The innovations made in planning for manpower needs in the world today demand a corresponding advancement in the area of Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training. The paper on Poverty Eradication Strategy and Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation are among conference reports that have put emphasis on the importance of vocational education as an investment for economic and human resource development. The study objectives were to find out why youth polytechnics enrollments remained low; assess the purpose and functions of YPs and determine the status of instructional implementation using information communication technology (ICT). Teaching vocational technical subjects theoretically has deteriorated the need to improve evaluation and teaching systems in order to prepare the adolescents for the challenge of workplace. The study adopted functionalist theory on education and division of labour. The study adopted survey research design in the counties of Isiolo, Meru, Embu and Machakos in Kenya. Out of a population of 2911 a sample of 33.56% comprising of 48 YPs instructors, 144 BOM and 4 SCYTO and were purposively selected while 384 second year trainees and 384 parents were censured for participation as resource persons. The study triangulated questionnaire, interview schedules, schedules for document analysis and statistical data focus group discussions and checklists for data collection. Study findings revealed that agriculture is taught as a support subject to all trainees. 76.8% and 67.6% of trainees joined masonry and carpentry respectively because construction opportunities were readily available in the local area. Some 88.4% informants joined tailoring because it is an in house vocation in markets centres and homes requiring few inputs. 73.9% respondents said community's negative attitude towards vocational training influenced parents against enrolling their children at YPs as these were perceived institutions for academic failures. On functions of YPs the study concluded that YPs: - could expand their training by adopting modular curricula where any worker would be trained conveniently; had Poor training resources, outdated equipped/tools; supply vocationally trained personnel for community services, failure to embrace ICT knowledge. The study concluded that 93.1% and 90.9% informants were ICT illiterate and YPs lacked computer facilities respectively and trainees were not exposed to ICT knowledge and skills needed in labour market. Comparatively, most YPs

depended on manual planes, moulders and simple machines while the carpentry workshops in the YP neighbourhood shopping centers employed sophisticated wooden lathe machines. The study recommended that policy changes on equipping YPs be relooked with a view of providing market driven tools and equipment. A study to be carried out on analyzing training on other trades with respects to market demands.

Key words: Vocation, Training, Instructions and Information Communication Technology

INTRODUCTION

The changes so far made in planning for manpower needs in the world today demand a corresponding advancement in the area of Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TVET); if technological advancement can be highly sustained for economic development presently and in future. As a result of poor technological growth since the end of the Second World War in 1945, educational development in Africa and other less developed countries has faced critical challenges. In third world countries like Latin America, Africa and South Asian countries, education systems have been blamed for causing unemployment and for contributing towards inadequate manpower needs by offering academic based education (Coombs, 1985).

The paper on Poverty Eradication Strategy (RoK, 2004b) and Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (RoK, 2004b) and UNESCO conference of 2004 held in Bonn Germany are among conference reports that have put emphasis on the importance of vocational education as an investment for economic and human resource development (Makatiani, 2008). These reports have pointed out sharp mismatch between training and labour market skill demands. Critics argue that the lack of inputs from prospective employers into curriculum design and training delivery are partly responsible for the mismatch. Another reason that is often cited for the incidence of high unemployment among graduates is the absence of entrepreneurial training in the school curriculum. These may be summarised as follows: - poor quality, high cost, offers training not suited to actual socio-economic conditions, disregard of: the informal sectors' needs labour market needs and of the high unemployment rates among graduates (Atchoarena *et al*. 2008 and Gloria & Efajemue 2011).

One of the most important features of TVET is its orientation towards the world of work and the emphasis of the curriculum on the acquisition of employable skills. In most countries in Africa, large numbers of graduates coming out of the formal school system are unemployed, although opportunities for skilled workers do exist in the economy. For example, urban youth unemployment rates in 2012 in Sierra Leone were highest at 60% followed by Mauritius 59.9%, Swaziland 50%, Republic of Congo 42% and Rwanda 42% (Araya, 2012).

Statement of the problem

From the foregoing discussions in the background an inquiry into the empirical analysis of users' perceptions about planning and implementing vocational education and training on the existing environments was found essential (Ma'aji, 2014). This was perceived to bring out the factual strengths and weaknesses bedeviling this type of training. This is because vocational training at YPs has been emphasised in several government policy documents yet it has continued to lag in many aspects. Therefore the study focused on choices of trades by trainees, why youth polytechnics (YPs) enrollments remained low, purpose and

functions of YPs and instructional implementation using information communication technology (ICT).

Study objectives

The study objectives were to:

i. Find out why youth polytechnics enrollments remained low;
ii. Assess the purpose and functions of YPs ;
iii. Determine the status of instructional implementation using information communication technology.

EMPIRICAL UNDERPINS

Studies by Akyeampong (2002) on Vocationalisation of Education in Ghana revealed that all schools depended on grants from government to run their programmes where institutional heads use their own discretion in allocating funds to various departments to cater for their specific needs. This methodology lend to wide disparities in the allocation of funds for the different programmes within and between schools to occur. Further, Akyeampong (2012) observes that funds for capital projects in technical schools were grants by government of Ghana, and or from donor agencies. These studies indicated that whilst some efforts were made to improve facilities such as classrooms and boarding halls, no efforts were made to provide staff accommodation or improve the infrastructure, equipment and materials supply for vocational training. Besides, fees paid by parents supplemented government grants in catering for tuition, school equipment and non-teacher costs.

According to Ma'aji (2014) in a study on status of vocational education in Kaduna State of Nigeria, workshops and laboratories in vocational institutions were lacking. These studies observed that education in Kaduna State had suffered many years of inadequate funding leading to teaching situation where facilities and motivation for innovation processes in vocational education at secondary school level were inadequately provided. In effect, these practices have seriously threatened the stability, suitability practicability and credibility of vocational education. Lack of adequate teaching and training facilities hinders adequate instructional delivery (Ma'aji 2014). Teaching vocational technical subjects theoretically has deteriorated the need to improve evaluation and teaching systems in order to prepare the adolescents for the challenge of workplace.

Moreover, these studies by Kennedy (2012) continue to claim that vocational training institutions should be interested in improving the efficiency and relevance of their activities that should be reflected in their adoption of management mechanisms aimed at ensuring quality. Such measures include modernisation processes such as personnel training, identification of critical factors, spelling out of a mission and vision entailing the qualitative upgrading of the institution.

Trainees' Requirements for Vocational Education and Training

Studies by the World Bank, (2013) point to shortage of skills that present a real obstacle to increased firm competitiveness in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean

States (OECS). The studies lamented that lack of skilled workers hinders a firm's growth. These studies contend that in the only internationally comparable survey conducted in the OECS, Grenadian firms seem to have greater difficulties finding workers with the required skills and education than any other country in the entire Western Hemisphere.

In a Caribbean survey of 130 well-established companies, of which 105 were from the OECS, majority of business representatives explained that relationship between education and business is disjointed. World Bank, (2013) in support of earlier studies in vocational education at Caribbean documents that over-emphasis on academia leads to an education system that does not necessarily impart skills related to the labour market. These studies by the World Bank, (2013) observed that both emerging skills needs at the institutional level, communication and joint strategies are needed at both sectoral and local levels. These studies concur that the United Kingdom (UK) Learning and Skills Councils (LSC) are probably the best example of a model that could be adapted in the Eastern Caribbean because: (i) the Eastern Caribbean education system has, for historical reasons, many similarities to the UK system; (ii) the model has been evaluated extensively and it works; and (iii) it can be implemented relatively and easily in steps. Thus, at a local level, each LSC has representatives from employers, learning providers, and community groups. For example, the Board of the local LSC in Kent and Medway, in southeast England, consists of a bank director, a business proprietor, the director of a real estate company, one union member, four local government representatives, and four members from education and training institutions.

Summak and Samancioglu, (2011) and Ibuathu and Kubaison (2013) observe that information technology integration in vocational education and training schools is not only an option but also a necessity for making the education process more attractive. Consequently, computer technology has a great effect on teaching and learning vocational programmes, carrying the potential to deliver VET to more learners in satisfactory ways. These findings reinforced study observations by (RoR, 2016) in that integration of ICT into vocational instruction could provide schools with potential access to the world of work outside the school environment. ICT allows instructors to design useful learning environments that emphasise learning in the context of real world activities for vocational students.

Ibuathu and Kubaison (2013) assert that instructors input are very important to the success or failure of integrating ICT into instruction, and they play a critical role during implementation process. Thus, the instructor is the true agent and plays a crucial role in the success of training and learning in VET programmes. Hence vocational instructors should model the appropriate uses of ICT resources in the workshop and classroom to equip their trainees with the necessary vocational knowledge and skills transferable to a workplace.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopted functionalist theory on education and division of labour advanced by Emile Durkheim in 1892. In his theory, Durkheim argued that *education teaches*

individuals specific skills necessary for their future occupations (Holborn & Haralambos, 2004). Durkheim asserts that, every society sets itself a certain 'human ideal', an ideal of what a person should be from the intellectual, physical and moral points of view; this ideal is the crux of education. This is because society can subsist 'only if there is sufficient homogeneity among its members'. This homogeneity is, however, only relative in societies characterised by a division of labour, the greater the differentiation and solidarity between various types of occupation, the more a certain degree of heterogeneity is necessary (International Bureau of Education, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted survey research design using explanatory approach which lies within qualitative research methods paradigm in analysing empirically the perceptions of users about vocational training among sampled YPs in counties of Isiolo, Meru, Embu and Machakos in Kenya. Thus, Cohen and Manion (1995) observed that survey is employed to get data at a particular time and use it to describe the nature of existing conditions. Out of active 50 YPs existing by 2004, 8 public and 4 private YPs were randomly sampled for the study. The study target population comprised the following informant resource persons: instructors, trainees, parents, board of management (BOM-this includes YP mangers), and Sub County Youth Training Officers (SCYTO). Each of these had different roles in fulfilling instructional needs for pre-service training in YP's vocational education in the 16 YPs. They provided most of the insightful, analytical and specialised information from which the study based its findings, recommendations and conclusions. Thus, the specifications of the YP institutions were 36 and 14 government sponsored and private owned respectively (MOYAS, 2012).

Thus, the qualitative nature of the study which needed an in depth examination of rich mix of YPs' characteristics through repeated measure of tools application explains the choice of stratified sample as well as the respondents. Thus out of a total population of 2911 identified as potential informants, the researcher used sampling to obtain 33.56% (977) of 2911 as target informants. For purposes of representativeness 48 YPs instructors, 144 BOM and 4 SCYTO and were purposively selected while 384 second year trainees and 384 parents were censured for participation as resource persons. The study triangulated different tools which entailed the use of more than two instruments in data collection. The five key instruments used in data collection were: questionnaire, interview schedules, schedules for document analysis and statistical data, focus group discussions and checklists.

STUDY FINDINGS

Youth Polytechnic Trainees' Parental Socio-Economic Background

During focus group discussions with the researcher, out of 96 parents who participated in the study some parents said they were employed by various organisations like churches, *matatus* (public service vehicles) welfare associations and Government of Kenya. They included church pastors, drivers, nurses, teachers and policemen totaling

to 29.1% respondents. The average monthly income for teachers and nurses were Ksh. 30,000, policemen Ksh. 20,000 and drivers Ksh. 4,500. This category of parents did jobs that required specialised skills and therefore were classified as skilled workers. Moreover, they enjoyed a regular monthly income. Some 53.1% and 15.6% of the parents engaged in peasant farming, and were business persons respectively. Few parents reported that they did not have a specific occupation and sought work at people's homes and farms. These categories of workers were classified as none skilled workers. This is because the socio-economic activities they engaged in did not require specialised skills. The following narration is a reflection of a parent's socio-economic status by parents and depicts a sorry state on the part of the parents as regards economic status.

> *Majority of the parents are poor peasant farmers. When rains fail we lose all crops to drought. The same effect is transferred to youth polytechnics where parents without alternative economic means of livelihood cannot afford to pay fees. Most of the time institutions survive on government relief food (personal communication with parents at Vyulya YP, March 2015).*

This observation explains that most parents found it difficult to pay for education of their children at YPs. Only intervention by the government through donations of relief food kept children learning at YPs. These observations were supported by Ngumbao (2012) in his studies among YPs in Mombasa County. He observed that 45.9% and 13.6% of the studied parents of YPs were peasant farmers and business persons respectively.

Choices of Trades by Trainees

a) Agriculture

The core business of a vocational training centre is to offer a variety of skills needed by people to carry out activities for their daily livelihood. During field inquiry, the researcher found out that none of the YPs mounted agriculture as a trade but it was offered to all 284 trainee informants as a support subject. In an interview with Nkubu YP manager on why the institution did not offer agriculture as a trade, he had the following sentiments:

> *We do not receive trainees requesting to train in agriculture. However, all trainees are taught basic agricultural concepts and practice cultivating maize, beans, carrots, tomatoes and kales. We use a simple greenhouse to demonstrate practical aspects of drip irrigation. The main challenge is tools and equipment for use in this subject (personal communication with Nkubu YP Manager, March, 2015).*

The respondent concluded that some specific aspects of agriculture like fish rearing, poultry keeping among others could be taught to farmers and youth as a short course for a week or two. Furthermore, during formal interviews with instructors at Vyulya YP when asked why the institution did not offer agriculture as a trade yet it was a main economic activity in the area, the instructors were in agreement that agriculture was unpopular with most trainees. A carpentry instructor at Vyulya YP instructing agriculture observed that:

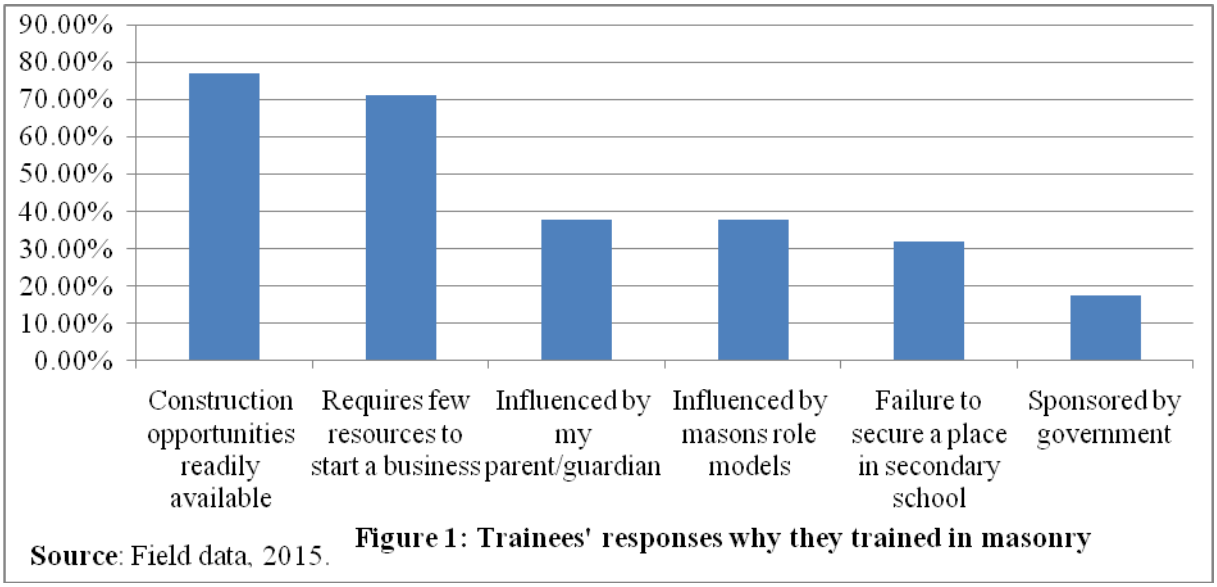
> Agriculture is taught as a support subject to all trainees. It is not popular among the prospective trainees (personal communication with instructor, March, 2015).

The informant explained that the community viewed agriculture as an old occupation

whose economic benefits were poor due to unreliable rainfall. Hence local community members perceived training in agriculture having no promising future career. The area being a semi-arid land lacked water for crop irrigation and animal rearing which would provide farm models to be emulated by trainees. These observations contrast sharply study findings by Kayoma (2009) cited by UNESCO-UNEVOC (2010) about model YPs in Kenya. They documented that training in farming was important for sustainable development because trainees gain skills on land preparation, use of manure, planting, weeding and watering of seedlings. Moreover, these studies argue that YPs could venture into least exploited areas of agriculture such as beekeeping, poultry-rearing, pasture growing, horticulture, growing aloe vera plants (for production of beauty and medical substances) among others. MoYAS (2012) suggests that additional courses in which youth would be interested include indigenous-chicken (*'Kienyeji')* rearing, fish farming, greenhouse farming, bee keeping, garbage collection and recycling. However, MoYAS review did not provide extensive discussions on types of skills (cognitive, non-cognitive and technical) every YP trainee should develop. Thus, YPs training by exploiting least exploited and unexploited areas of agriculture was perceived by the current study as an important aspect in vocational training. This component of VET was lacking in studied YPs.

b) Masonry

In a multiple response question item in trainees' questionnaire the researcher sought from trainee informants' reasons why they selected and trained in masonry. It was noteworthy that only one female trainee enrolled in masonry. The trainees' views presented in Figure 1 shows that 76.8% opined that construction opportunities were readily available and 71% perceived masonry as requiring few resources to start a business.



Source: Field data, 2015. **Figure 1: Trainees' responses why they trained in masonry**

Some respondents explained that house construction works were in demand in both rural and urban areas, therefore there were almost ready jobs awaiting them after completion of training. These opinions suggest majority trainees had confidence in their training and hoped to settle down to business after completion of their training. Besides, 37.6% trainees were influenced by their parents to train in masonry because they paid for their education and wanted them pursue courses that had higher chances of gainful or self-employment. However, 31.8% trainees joined the trade because they failed to secure a place in secondary school. Many trainees explained why they trained in masonry as

follows:

Masonry tools are cheaply available in the market. Some of the equipment like mortar mixers and vibrators are hired by owners of construction projects; while others are substituted for cheaper ones such as using water in transparent flexible horse pipe to achieve floor level (masonry trainees' responses written in a questionnaire, March 2015).

Thus, some masonry trainees were aware of the trade's tools of work, ways of innovating tools and obtaining equipment in circumstances of need at work places such as level tool using water. In this regard studies by Ngumbao (2012) in YPs at Mombasa County concur with current findings in that majority 49.9%, 20.3% and 44.4% trainees said they enrolled at YP due to parental influence, role model and to get better employment opportunities respectively. Besides, these responses were strengthened by UNECSO (2012) on people's change of attitude towards technical vocational education in Uganda in that male dominated trades were slowly being taken up by women.

c) Tailoring

Trainees in tailoring trade gave their responses in a questionnaire on why they pursued tailoring career. Their analysed views presented in Figure 2 show that majority 91.8% trainees opined tailoring had better opportunities in the clothing industry because people like fashionable clothes, therefore this presented them with opportunities to make clothes to customers.

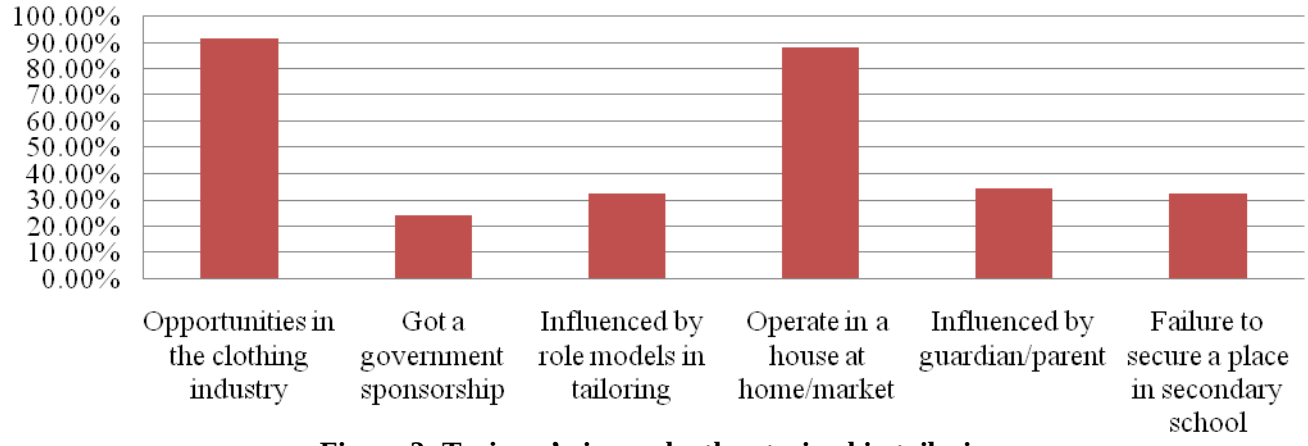


Figure 2: Trainees' views why they trained in tailoring

Source: Field data, 2015.

Some 88.4% and 32.6% informants wrote they joined the trades because it is an in house vocation in markets centres and homes; and were motivated by role model tailors working in tailoring shops respectively. Some 34.6% and 32.6% informants wrote that they trained in tailoring because they were persuaded by their parents and took tailoring as a second choice after failing to secure a place in secondary school. In this connection, a male respondent at Kanaani YP wrote remarked:

"I have been motivated by my uncle who is a tailor. He makes and sells men's suits and school uniforms. Whenever I visited his tailoring shop during my primary school days, I admired the way he was taking clients' measurements" (male trainee's written response, March 2015).

These sentiments explain a self-driven trainee motivated by a role model into joining tailoring career. Thus, observing what others do could positively influence what an observer is likely to do. Further, a girl trainee wrote her opinion why she joined tailoring trade as follows:

"Masonry and carpentry are laborious courses. Take for example to plane a timber for table top or lifting a building block 10kgs up the 8th course. Also the skills required in tailoring like cutting out the right size of a garment material is easily attainable by use of scissors unlike cutting stones with a chisel" (female trainee written response in a questionnaire, March 2015).

These opinions show that some females were still influenced by their kin and the society's culture towards choosing a vocational trade while others were influenced by role models in their society today. However, majority of tailoring informants wrote the following sentiments:

With a singer, few sewing threads, tape measure, a table, few clothing materials and an iron box one can get started in tailoring. All you need is to tidy up your working environment and customers will come (tailoring trainees' responses written in questionnaires, March 2015).

The respondents cited the ease to initiate a tailoring business as a motivating factor. These sentiments explain what motivated some tailoring trainees into joining tailoring career. However, on the question about competition trainees were likely to face in their tailoring career by infiltration of clothing market by old imported cloths (*mitumba),* some of the trainees pointed out that:

The cloth markets are dynamic and there is a place for new cloths. For example, weddings, schools and special parties require participants wear new cloths and uniforms; such groups and individual persons would be potential customers (tailoring trainees' responses written in questionnaires, March 2015).

Thus, tailoring trainees did not perceive (*mitumba)* cloths businesses a challenge to their careers. Furthermore these findings agreed with study observations by Ibuathu and Kubaison (2015) which documented that tailoring and hair dressing were ranked the most popular trades with 86 and 66 trainees respectively in 6 sampled YPs in Nyambene region. Moreover, Bello *et al*. (2007) in Nigeria found that youths (18.75%) chose computer maintenance and operation works followed by tailoring (9.38%) among other trades in decreasing order. Such career choices were attributed to the then prevailing economic conditions, parental guidance and role models among others.

d) Carpentry/Joinery

Sampled carpentry/joinery trainees analysed responses are presented in Figure 3 on questionnaire items on why they joined the trade. Majority 67.6% informants wrote they joined the trade because of many construction opportunities available in their locality.

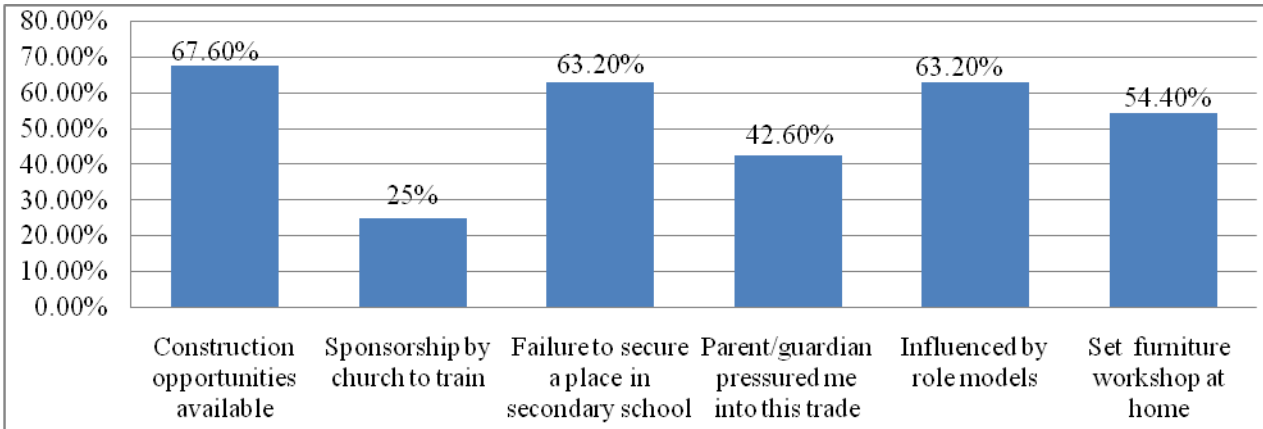


Figure 3: Trainees opinions why they trained in carpentry/joinery

Source: Field data, 2015.

They explained that there was a lot of repair works to do like furniture, doors, roofing of houses, and painting in institutions like schools, peoples' homes and market centres. On the other hand, 54.4% of informants felt one could set up a furniture workshop at home at a relatively cheap costs; hence minimising expenses for renting a house to operate in. However, in explaining their responses, majority of informants wrote the following sentiments in a questionnaire:

Today, there are many carpentry works outside there. People are building while others are demolishing houses. Institutions like schools and hospitals, to mention a few, need carpenters for construction and repair works (carpentry/joinery trainees' written responses, March 2015).

Thus, most trainees were influenced by job opportunities available in their community into joining carpentry/joinery trade. Moreover, a girl respondent in carpentry/joinery at a public YP in Mbeere Sub County wrote the following sentiments on why she joined the trade:
"I was attracted to do carpentry by opportunities available in schools and hospitals among others. Although carpentry is associated with men, these days' women can do what men can do (girl trainee's written response, March, 2015).
These sentiments were a clear indication that the trainee was motivated into joining the trade because of carpentry opportunities available in her community. Moreover, on the question about competition they were likely to face in carpentry/joinery career from industry readymade plastic furniture, some of the informants wrote:
Presence of plastic furniture sold cheaply in the market is a challenge to carpenters to produce cheap, durable and quality furniture. Therefore, some buyers require durable wooden furniture such as school desks, Tables, beds among others which are expensive to make but attract good profit (carpentry/joinery trainees' written responses, March 2015).

Trainees perceived readymade plastic furniture as threat to their career, but could produce durable wooden furniture to ready buyers like schools and people's homes. These findings agreed with Ngumbao (2012) that majority (44.4%) of YP trainees at Mombasa County were motivated into joining carpentry and masonry because of available employment opportunities in their local community, albeit this being dictated by economic

growth. However, the low enrolment rates prevalent at sampled YPs despite many primary school leavers missing form one places at secondary schools is a clear indication of today's youth negative perceptions about VET.

Trainees Views on Why YPs Enrollments Remained Low

The analysed data tabulated in Table 1 shows that majority 73.9% respondents opined that community's negative attitude towards vocational training influenced parents against enrolling their children at YPs. Strong parental pressures for academic credentials leading to white collar jobs has made TVET programme a 'second-class' option rather than an important component of the life-long learning process. This can be explained partly by the difference in salary of 'blue collar' workers compared to that of 'white collar' employees. Besides, 61.2% and 55.6% informants opined that YPs were perceived as institutions for academic failures and there being few YP leavers serving as role models to their peers respectively.

Table 1: Trainee informants' views on why YP recruitment of trainees remained low

Trainees opinions	Frequency	Percentage
Community negative attitude towards vocational training	210	73.9
Government has neglected YPs training	196	69.0
YPs have been regarded institutions for academic failures	174	61.2
There were not many YP leavers serving as role models	158	55.6
Trainees future career prospects not promising	154	54.2
YPs competing for students with day secondary schools	154	54.2
Failure to advertise YP programmes	112	39.4

N = 284 **Source:** Field data, 2015.

Some 39.4% informants wrote that lack of vigorous advertisements of vocational programmes by YPs kept the masses unaware of existing YP potentials.

These findings were reinforced by King and Martin (2002) and World Bank (2013) who explained that Foster's (Foster, 1965a and 1965b) main message was that youths in Africa had rationally decided in the sixties; despite all types of attempts to change the attitude that an academic education would be better for achieving their goals and improving their position than vocational schooling. Indeed the same perceptions and feelings were held by some sampled trainees and parents of YPs in this study.

During formal interviews with instructors at Gitugu YP on why their institution was under enrolled, one instructor had the following sentiments:

> Children in primary school are told YPs are places for failures. Last year, a parent in this YP lamented that the son had repeated class eight for two consecutive years without scoring good marks to join boarding secondary school (personal communication with instructor, March 2015).

These sentiments indicate that some parents took YPs as institutions for the poor

students.

Further, the researcher during interviews with instructors at Don Bosco YP sought their opinions on status of trainee enrollments in all trades. An instructor gave the following observations:

> We receive many applications in all trades. But we select best 20 applicants with good KCPE marks. The institution enjoys good training facilities donated by Friends of Don Bosco from Italy (personal communication with instructor, March 2015).

Don Bosco YP receives many applicants giving room to instructors to select the best from the pool of applicants. This was attributed to availability of good training facilities at the YP. Further, during interviews with instructors at Kyemutheke YP, the researcher sought their opinions on why their institutions registered poor trainee enrolments. One informant argued that:

> Local people hate educating their children here. They say its waste of resources. Some say 'so' and 'so' is a carpenter and has never been to anybody's school. Opinion leaders and politicians tell public gatherings those passing well at class eight and form 4 will be sponsored through Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and failures belong to YPs (personal communication with instructor, March, 2015).

These sentiments allude that even community leaders look down upon YPs rather than explaining their usefulness in the community's economic development agendas. Such pronouncements discourage parents and potential trainees from enrolling into YP training. In supporting these findings, Ngumbao (2012) observed that most of the respondents (63.3%) in Mombasa County preferred secondary school education over vocational training. However, the respondents said that this perception was not based on YPs being for the academically weak.

Trainees views about purpose and functions of YPs

Trainees analysed responses tabulated in Table 2 show that majority 72.8% appreciated the functions of YPs by then. They explained that YPs could expand their training by adopting modular curricula which could accommodate trainees in need of vocational skills at different times in a year. A further, 36.2% informants wrote that YPs had the potential to transform into vocational innovation centres at village levels.

Table 2: Trainees views about purpose and functions of YPs

Written responses	Frequency	Percentage
Positive views		
Making flexible curricula-modular.	207	72.8
Setting up income generating units	173	60.7
Trainees equipped with relevant vocational skills	156	54.9
Transforming into vocational innovation centres at village levels.	103	36.2
Negative views		
People's negative attitude towards vocational training	87	30.6
Poor training resources, outdated equipped/tools	75	26.4

YPs neglected by national government	73	25.7
Failure to embrace ICT knowledge	70	24.6
Youths dislike manual work	69	24.2
YPs operate independent of host communities	50	17.6

N = 284 **Source:** Field data, 2015.

On the other hand some 30.6% informants said that some people had negative attitude towards vocational training. Thus, some parents were not willing to have their children study vocational courses at YPs. In concurring with these findings, studies by Wheelahan and Moodie (2011) observed that only 30% of VET graduates work in jobs that are directly associated with their qualifications while a further one third (33%) found the training relevant. The low percentage of graduates working in jobs directly associated with their qualification undermines the purpose of VET qualifications as currently defined, which is to provide the specific skills needed for specific occupations and to ensure efficient training.

Instructors' views about purpose and functions of YPs

The instructors' response statistics presented in Table 3 indicate that 77.2% and 75% informants appreciated functions of YPs within the community. They perceived YPs had continued to supply vocationally trained personnel to community services and equipped youths with vocational skills for self or gainful employment respectively.

Table 3: Instructors views about purpose and functions of YPs

Written Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Positive views		
YPs supply vocationally trained personnel for community services	34	77.2
Equipping youths with vocational skills for self or gainful employment	33	75
County governments responsible for YPs will transform and equip YPs.	29	65.9
YPs have opportunity to empower local people with vocational skills	23	52.2
Negative views		
Continued communities' negative attitude towards vocational training.	17	38.6
Lack of clear government policy guidelines on YPs	16	36.3
Persistent poor training environment at YPs	12	27.2
Piece meal government support to vocational training	12	27.2

N = 44 **Source:** Field data, 2015.

Such personnel included tailors, carpenters and masons. Furthermore, 52.2% respondents observed that YPs had the opportunity to empower local people with vocational skills. Some 38.6% and 36.3% informants explained that continued communities' negative attitude towards vocational training and lack of clear government policy on YPs vocational training respectively were barriers against vocational training.

The instructors lamented that it was unfair to lump together YPs with other mainstream technical training institutions like national polytechnics under one training policy guidelines as was the current status in Kenya.

Towards this end MoYAS (2012) and Balwanz, (2012), observed that the extent to which courses offered are supply or demand-driven and relevant to the local economy was unclear, however, it is likely that YPs have less flexibility in updating courses, as curriculum must pass through several stages of quality assurance.

Instructional implementation and information communication technology (ICT)

By use of a checklist, the researcher ascertained the number of computers availed to instructors in workshops for use during instructional implementation. The YPs of Don Bosco, Uhuru and Vyulya had each a single desktop computer kept in the YP manager's office. Although some instructors confessed having some knowledge in MS ward they did not utilise ICT in giving instructions due to lack of ICT facilities. One instructor at Vyulya YP, had the following observations:

> Although the YP offers ICT courses to outsiders for income generating project, none of the computers is availed to instructors for use in teaching (personal communication with instructor at Vyulya YP, March, 2015).

Some instructors observed that YPs were encouraged by the parent Ministry (MoYAS) to introduce ICT alongside other support subjects taught to all trainees during the first year of study. The informants' views presented in Figure 4 show that majority 93.1% and 90.9% of the informants reported that they were ICT illiterate and YPs lacked computer facilities respectively. Thus, only 6.8% of sampled instructors had some knowledge about ICT but could not utilise it due to unavailability of computers. Thus, skills in ICT had not been embraced by both trainees and instructors as an enabler in enhancing skills acquisition by YP trainees.

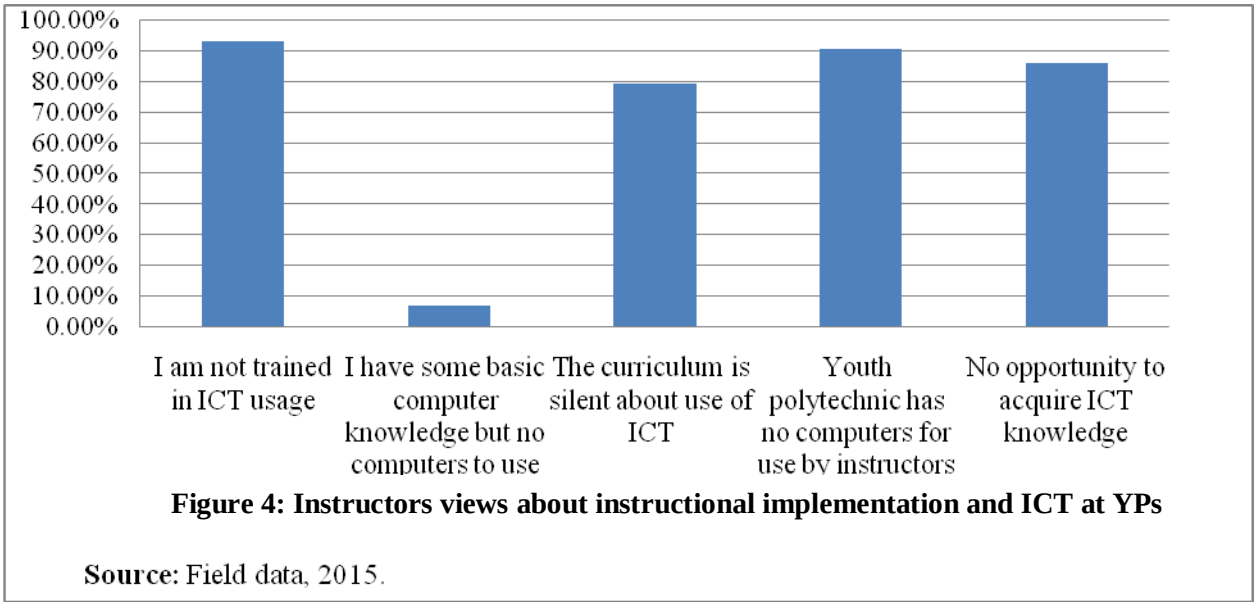


Figure 4: Instructors views about instructional implementation and ICT at YPs

Source: Field data, 2015.

However, when asked to explain the status of employing ICT in giving instructions, Vyulya YP manager observed that:

> Our trainees were taught basic computer packages during first year. Such knowledge is not tested in trade areas. The ICT instructor was a BOM employee. The rest of instructors are not ICT literate. Only 3 computers were used by trainees (personal conversation with manager March, 2015).

Thus, few computer packages were taught to trainees at Vyulya YP in first year. These findings did not agree with Phiri, (2010) in studies about TVET in Botswana observed that there was much use of ICT services, such as Internet and computer-based tutorials. Moreover, ICT has rapidly transformed the lives of youth who use ICT tools for entertainment, social networking, seeking and creating jobs, gathering information or communicating their interests to government/actors. Besides, Buntat, et.al (2010) argues that changes occur in technology in helping instructors deliver instructions to students. These changes are important to VET programmes in supporting workforce development.

Trainees perceptions about teaching instructions using ICT

Trainees' opinions about trades' instructional implementation using basic computer packages such as Microsoft (MS): Word, Excel, Access, and Power point were as in figure 5. Majority 76.4% were not exposed to ICT knowledge and such knowledge was not examined in the

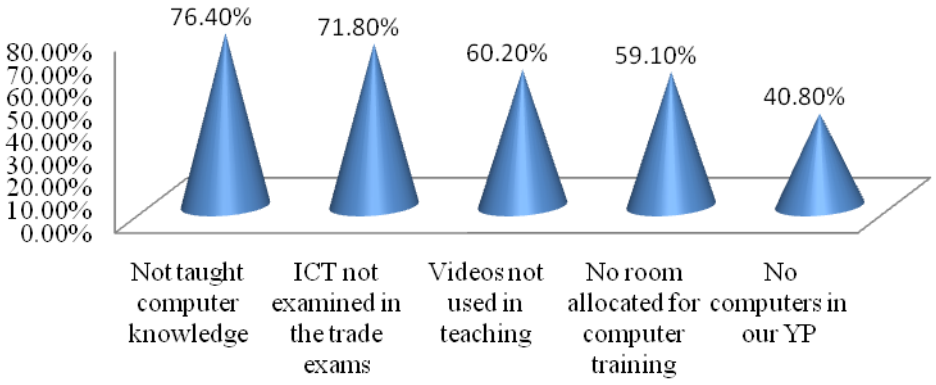


Figure 5: Trainees views about teaching instructions and ICT at YPs

Source: Field data. 2015.

trades exams. No computers were available for trainees to train. This was due to lack of ICT facilities and instructors at YPs. These findings contrasted sharply with Summak and Samancioglu, (2011) observations that the integration of ICT in Turkish VET schools was not an option but a necessity for making the education process more attractive. Thus, due to emergence of automated tools and machines, YPs training have to embrace ICT in giving instructions while instructors must be able to use new technologies that are continually changing the ways people live, work, and learn.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found out that more males than females enrolled in sampled YPs during the year 2013 with tailoring rated most popular trade. Majority of these trainees came from

poor socio-economic backgrounds where parents/guardians practised peasant farming and simple businesses respectively within their locality. These parents faced challenges in paying for their children upkeep at YPs.

The study found out that none of the sampled YPs offered agriculture trade because trainees did not request to train in it. However, agriculture was taught to all trainees as a support subject. Besides, trainees studied masonry trade because of readily available construction opportunities in schools, churches, people's homes, estates, bridges, and dispensaries, among others in both urban and rural areas. The study concluded that trainees joined tailoring to seize opportunities in the clothing industry since people like fashionable clothes despite the challenges posed by *(mitumba)* cloths prevalence in local markets. The findings showed that community members' negative attitude towards vocational training discouraged youths from enrolling at YPs resulting to poor trainee enrollments per trade.

The study found out that almost an equal number of trainees rated their YPs very good and poor respectively. YPs rated poor lacked most of the training tools and facilities while those rated very well had adequate training facilities, tools, and instructors. This made training favourable.

The study findings have shown that trainees perceived key functions of YPs could be enhanced by adopting modular curricula which could accommodate trainees in need of vocational skills at different times in a year. On the contrary, the study found out that communities' negative attitude towards vocational training and that vocational training does not lead to promising career respectively made people dislike vocational training at YPs.

Financial challenges and unqualified serving instructors were the biggest hindrances facing YPs training. Besides, the state of inadequate training resources at YPs threatened the good course of VET at YPs. However, some YP trainees achieved skills competences despite difficulties experienced in financing of vocational education.

The study concluded that instructors' taught without enough training tool/equipment and trainees' having English language difficulties in understanding vocational concepts, respectively posed some challenges during lessons. They were also not conversant with ICT methods of giving instructions. These difficulties forced instructors to use '*Kiswahili'* language to explain some vocational concepts and skills to trainees.

The study concluded that trainees were not exposed to ICT knowledge and skills needed in labour market. Comparatively, most YPs depended on manual planes, moulders and simple machines while the carpentry workshops in the YP neighbourhood shopping centres employed sophisticated wooden lathe machines.

The study recommends that county governments mandated to run YPs should carry out civic education to sensitise people on importance of VET in turning around the economy and reduce resistance by potential trainees willing to enroll in a YP for training. Older people who left school should be encouraged to enroll for skills training at YPs. County governments should set aside funds for equipping YPs with training tools, equipment and consumables so as to offer hands on training. The training in all trades should be modeled on ICT basis. The study recommended that policy changes on equipping YPs be relooked with a view of providing market driven tools and equipment with ICT taking a lead. A study to be carried out on analysing training on other trades with respects to local market

demands.

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