

Factors Influencing Trainee Career Choice in TVET Institutions in North Rift Kenya

¹Makworo Edwin Obwoye & ²Singoei James Kibor

¹KISII University
P.O Box 408 - 40200, KISII, Kenya.

²KISII University
P.O Box 408 - 40200, KISII, Kenya.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v3.n3.p9>

How to cite this paper:

Edwin Obwoye, M., & James Kibor, S. (2016). Factors Influencing Trainee Career Choice in TVET Institutions in North Rift Kenya. *IRA-International Journal of Management & Social Sciences* (ISSN 2455-2267), 3(3). doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v3.n3.p9>

© Institute of Research Advances



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) subject to proper citation to the publication source of the work.

Disclaimer: The scholarly papers as reviewed and published by the Institute of Research Advances (IRA) are the views and opinions of their respective authors and are not the views or opinions of the IRA. The IRA disclaims of any harm or loss caused due to the published content to any party.

ABSTRACT

Career choice has always been a very challenging venture for most students in their transition from secondary school to higher learning institutions in most countries. Many factors come to play including self-motivation, influence by peers, parents and even performance in high school examinations. In Kenya, enrolment in market driven courses like engineering and hospitality has remained below capacity despite efforts by the Kenya government to boost it. The main objective of this study was to determine the factors that influenced trainees in their career choice in TVET institutions in North Rift of Kenya with the aim of assisting TVET institutions gain strategies to address skewness witnessed in enrolment in market driven courses. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study constituted of students and TVET providers in the TVET institutions in North Rift Kenya. Stratified random sampling technique was used to group students into the respective courses undertaken in the TVET institutions and simple random sampling technique was applied to select 316 respondents proportionately from the different strata. Questionnaires were the main research instruments used in the collection of data. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS and results presented in tabular and graphical forms. The research findings showed that student's career choice was influenced by seven main factors. Among the recommendations was that secondary schools should come up with a career sensitization programme each year to help learners be better informed on available careers and current trends in the job market.

Key Words: TVET, Career Choice, North Rift.

INTRODUCTION

The main goal for provision of education and skills development is to improve people's lives, reduce poverty and enhance productivity. The acquisition of education, skills and knowledge is commonly referred to as human capital (World Bank, 2000). Studies indicate that human capital is built on education and skills development that increase a person's economic productivity. It enables one to earn higher income and improve on their general ways of doing things. TVET programs are expected to provide opportunities for individuals to learn the practical, cognitive, social and personal skills that will enable them to function at the work place and as members of society. It is therefore of great importance that students develop a clear understanding and appreciation of what is in the job market as they lay strategies of developing their careers in today's competitive job market. They are also to provide progress within their occupational area and serve as avenue for further education and training (Kerre, 2010). Ayot & Briggs (1992) observed that trained people are more receptive to change, more skilled and knowledgeable, have job mobility and their health conditions are greatly improved. Therefore, they are more likely to be more valuable in the job market.

In Kenya there are over 40 public TVET institutions and over nine hundred other vocational training institutions (VTI'S) operated by the private sector, NGO's and religious organizations in the country (Kerre, 2010). Despite this large number of technical training institutions many students who do not make it to universities still continue to stay at home because they cannot make a decision on which course of study they want pursue at a TVET institution. Each individual undertaking the process of career

choice is influenced by many factors, including the context in which they live, their personal aptitudes, and educational attainment (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 2001). In order to realize vision 2030 the government and the private sector are investing heavily to provide equipment/facilities to TVET institutions build/upgrade TVET Institutions to provide access and equity to technical skills and enable them provide training in skills consistent with emerging technologies and match these skills to the market demand. Choice of career then becomes a very important issue to be addressed by policy makers and all stakeholder dealing with high school graduates.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this research was to identify the factors that influenced the trainees’ choice of career courses of study in TVET institutions in North Rift Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, survey research was the methodology chosen since it was useful in determining the current status of a population with respect to one or more variables (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). It also has the advantage of identifying attributes of a large population from a small group of individuals (Babbie, 1990 & Fowler, 2002). According to Babbie (1990), survey research can apply questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection and hence questionnaire was the tool used. The study targeted 3,149 students registered in TVET institutions in Uasin Gishu County. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), for any social science study at least 10% of the population under study is representative enough hence a sample of 316 students were included in the study. Stratified random sampling was used to select students for inclusion in the research based on the respective courses undertaken in the TVET institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the findings of the research, there were seven factors that influenced trainee’s choice of career courses in TVET institutions in North Rift Kenya. The findings are presented below.

i. Role models, parents and peers

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses on the groups that influenced trainee’s in their career choices. The influence was rated using a five point likert scale and weights were assigned from 1 to 5 for the responses and then the weighted mean was used to rank the responses.

Table 1: Groups that influenced choice of current course of study

Groups	LIKERT SCALE RESPONSES					Weighted mean	Rank
	Not at all	Very little	Some extent	Great extent	Very great extent		
Role models	15	11	58	81	66	57.67	1
Parental influence	21	35	57	82	26	48	2
Peer influence	68	33	93	35	09	39.87	3

The findings show that role models (57.67) were the major influencers of career course choice followed by parental influence (48) and lastly peer influence (39.87).

The findings indicate that the people that high school graduates interact with greatly influence their career choices. According to Super, Savicks, & Super (1996), Initial career decision-making is a cultural, developmental task that adolescents are expected to have accomplished by the end of their high school year. Further, according to Chen, (1997), the career choice that adolescents make is a decision that is influenced not only by their development but also by the context in which they live. It is therefore very important to expose high school graduates to conducive informative environment in order to assist the make informed choices.

The family environment at home is also very critical in shaping the youngsters career choices. The lack of family involvement in the career choice process appeared to be influencing youth’s inability to make decisions (Ferry, 2005). Parents are therefore to be keen in guiding their children in order not to be misled by their peers. According to Perrone et al., (2001) role model supportiveness, and quality of relationship contributed to the career choice of college students. Whereas role models, parents and peers can influence decion on career choice, it should be noted that everyone has different abilities and talents and this should be carefully considered in helping them in career choices.

ii. Training facilities

Table 2 shows the distribution of responses on training facilities in TVET institutions that was a factor influencing trainee career choice.

Groups	LIKERT SCALE RESPONSES					Weighted mean	Rank
	Not at all	Very little	Some extent	Great extent	Very great extent		
Library well equipped	24	37	69	60	31	46.67	4
Enough furniture	33	37	54	79	25	47.33	2
Adequate Labs & workshops	19	55	60	79	18	47.67	1
Enough car parking space	34	46	61	77	17	46.80	3
Lecture theatres are adequate	37	42	61	80	06	43.60	6
Facilities are always clean	40	39	88	49	16	43.87	5

From table 4.2, it is evident that availability of learning resources like laboratories and well equipped libraries are important determinants of career choice in TVET institutions in North Rift Kenya. This findings indicates that if institutions in the North Rift do not have adequate facilities, then they are likely to lose students to other regions which have better equipped TVET institutions. This is likely to lead to an imbalance in student distribution which may lead to serious policy implications. Availability of physical learning facilities in TVET institutions is therefore a very key factor to be checked.

iii. Advancement opportunities

The researcher sought to establish the extent to which the respondents considered advancement opportunities as a criterion for choosing a career course in TVET institutions. Table 4.3 shows the results obtained from the field.

Table 4.3: Advancement opportunities

Advancement opportunities	Response Scale					$\sum F_i$	$\sum W_i F_i$	$\frac{\sum W_i F_i}{\sum F_i}$	Rank
	Not at all	Very little	Some extent	Great extent	Very great extent				
The course will enable me go for further studies	07	14	52	70	87	230	906	3.94	1
The certificates of this college are internationally recognized	08	25	63	75	57	228	832	3.65	2
Get a job after graduation	17	39	57	60	48	221	746	3.38	3
The course is easy to pursue	26	23	84	65	24	222	704	3.17	4
College has collaborations with universities	37	30	69	51	28	215	648	3.01	5
Wide range of specialization electives	23	43	104	44	18	232	687	2.96	6
Mean weighted average								3.35	

From table 4.3, it was established that the following factors weighted heavily in the scale of preference; ability to go for further studies, internationally recognized certificates and getting a job after graduation. However, the factors which weighted less than the mean weighted average and therefore given less priority were; the course being easy to pursue, College having collaborations with universities and the course having a wide range of specialization electives.

This findings concur with research carried by Kochung and Migunde (2011) who carried out a study on Factors Influencing Students Career Choices among Secondary School students in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya. Their findings indicated that availability of advancement opportunities (42.9%), availability of jobs (47.3%) and ability to choose career specialization (35.6%) all influenced career choices. They also found out that other factors like employment security, career flexibility, prestige associated with the profession, self employment opportunity and opportunity to apply skills and knowledge were also factors that influenced career choice.

iv. Government TVET policies/curriculum

The research sought to establish the extent to which the respondents considered government policies/ curriculum as a criterion for choosing a career course in TVET institutions. Table 4.4 shows the results obtained.

Table 4.4: Government TVET policies/curriculum

Government policies/curriculum	Response Scale					ΣF_i	$\Sigma W_i F_i$	$\frac{\Sigma W_i F_i}{\Sigma F_i}$	Rank
	Not at all	Very little	Some extent	Great extent	Very great extent				
Computer literacy is incorporated in my course of study	23	27	51	85	46	232	800	3.45	1
Skills of personnel match the job they do	16	29	71	84	31	231	778	3.37	2
Students support services	19	30	78	75	21	223	718	3.22	3
There is access to extra curricular activities	25	38	73	45	27	208	635	3.05	4
Students appraise lecturers	23	36	75	52	18	204	618	3.03	5
Mean weighted average								3.22	

From table 4.4, it was established that the following policies contributed greatly to students' career choice: Computer literacy incorporated in the course of study, Skills of personnel matching the job they do and Students support services. It is therefore important to ensure that all TVET institutions have computer literacy causes for all students at all levels and well qualified academic staff in order to mentor the students. The student support services in technical institutions should also be enhanced in order for them to have a smooth and motivating learning environment.

v. ICT integration

The research sought to establish the status of ICT integration. Table 4.5 shows the response obtained.

Table 4.5: ICT integration

ICT integration	Response Scale					ΣF_i	$\Sigma W_i F_i$	$\frac{\Sigma W_i F_i}{\Sigma F_i}$	Rank
	Not at all	Very little	Some extent	A great extent	Very great extent				
Lecturers are computer literate	16	32	70	60	47	225	765	3.40	1
The college has	13	36	87	62	30	228	744	3.26	2

enough modern computers									
The college's internet facilities are reliable	23	38	81	69	14	225	688	3.06	3
Online learning is available	51	36	57	50	25	219	619	2.83	4
Mean weighed average								3.14	

From table 4.5, it was established that lecturers were computer literate and that the colleges had enough modern computers. However, reliability of colleges' internet facilities and availability of online learning weighed below the mean. In the modern education systems, internet is very important for resource sharing and access to learning resources by students. TVET institutions should therefore ensure that there is ready availability of network in their premises and maintenance team is standby to always work on any hitches experienced.

vi. Institutional marketing

Institutional marketing is part of an integrated strategy that formulates and implements steps that ensure students do not think about dropping out or switching to another institution of higher learning. The research sought to establish whether there existed marketing strategies which were used by TVET institutions in Uasin Gishu County to both attract and retain their clients. Table 4.6 indicates the responses obtained.

Table 4.6: Institutional marketing

Institutional marketing	Response Scale					ΣF_i	$\Sigma W_i F_i$	$\frac{\Sigma W_i F_i}{\Sigma F_i}$	Rank
	Not at all	Very little	Some extent	Great extent	Very great extent				
Classes start and end on time	19	24	73	76	28	220	730	3.32	1
Exams are done periodically	13	28	79	66	26	212	700	3.30	2
Timetables are strictly followed	26	24	78	65	36	229	748	3.27	3
Exams are done on schedule	29	24	75	65	33	226	727	3.22	4
Classes are conducted during the day and in the evening	23	27	85	61	28	224	716	3.20	5
Deferments are allowed	21	31	63	70	22	207	662	3.20	6
Advertisement	28	38	49	77	27	219	696	3.19	7

is placed in media									
Make up classes are offered	20	35	82	54	20	211	652	3.09	8
Mean weighted average								3.22	

From table 4.6, it was established that the following were periodically practiced to both attract and retain students in TVET institutions: Classes began and ended on time, exams were done periodically, timetables were strictly followed and exams were done on schedule. However, Classes were being conducted during the day and in the evening, deferments being allowed, advertisement placed in media and make up classes being offered weighed below the mean weighted average and hence they were not given serious consideration. Marketing Strategies are an important ingredient in determining the student's choice of a higher institution of learning. This has been supported by Kotler (2003) who suggests that for organizations to compete effectively, they should embrace the use of marketing strategies in order to create awareness of their existence and the product they are offering in the market place.

vii. Fees, Levies & Bursaries

The researcher sought to find out the views of the learners as regards to affordability of the courses offered in terms of the fees, levies and bursaries. Table 4.7 indicates the responses obtained.

Table 4.7: Fees, Levies & Bursaries

Fees, Levies & Bursaries	Response Scale					$\sum F_i$	$\sum W_i F_i$	$\frac{\sum W_i F_i}{\sum F_i}$	Rank
	Not at all	Very little	Some extent	Great extent	Very great extent				
Bursaries are available especially for female in engineering courses	30	30	42	81	39	222	735	3.31	1
Examination fees is affordable	32	44	54	61	23	214	641	3.00	2
Fees charged is lower compared to other institutions	36	35	57	62	13	203	590	2.91	3
Flexibility in payment of fees	37	49	52	64	14	216	617	2.86	4
Cost of the programme is affordable	32	44	54	61	23	214	641	2.30	5
Mean weighed average								2.88	

From table 4.7, it was established that the following mechanisms were used by the TVET institutions in a bid to make the courses being studied affordable and thereby encouraging more learners to enroll: availability of bursaries especially for female in engineering courses, affordable examination fees and lower fees charged compared to other

institutions. However, flexibility in payment of fees and affordability of programme cost weighed below the mean weighted average. It is well known that without finances, it's almost impossible to attend schooling. Fees charged in TVET institutions should be checked to ensure it tally's with policy.

CONCLUSION

Career choice in TVET in the North Rift region is influenced by many factors among them social, infrastructural, financial, job market dynamics and even marketing. The TVET institutions should work independently and also in collaboration with the government to ensure that they are well positioned to meet all student demands and possibly go beyond. From the findings, its also important that all stakeholders who come in contact with students take time to give them the right guidance in order to assist them in their choice of careers.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations can go a long way in informing policy makers in all education sectors.

1. Secondary schools in Kenya should have compulsory career guidance and counselling sessions to students at all levels in order to sensitize them of the available opportunities and critical factors that should help them make career choices.
2. Parents are advised to be very sensitive to the needs of their children who are in high school and be close and timely in advising them on various careers and entry requirements while in the home setting.
3. Technical institutions in Kenya should invest in physical infrastructure in order to ensure that students have equal opportunities of getting practical skills required wherever they are.
4. The Kenya government should put into place strategies to ensure relevant training for TVET instructors and also in-service causes for those who have served for a long time in order to make them more current and relevant.
5. The Kenya government should ensure standardized fees is paid for similar programmes in all TVET institutions to avoid bias in choice of institution to attend by students.

REFERENCES

- Ayoti, H.O, Briggs, H. (1992). *Economics of Education*. Nairobi: Educational Research and Publications.
- Babbie, E. (1990). *Survey research methods*. 2nd ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing
- Fowler, F. J. (2002). *Survey Research Methods*. (3rd ed.). ThousandOaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc;
- Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G.V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and career trajectories. *Child Development*, 72, 187-206.

- Chen, C.P. (1997). Career projection: Narrative in context. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 54, 279-295.
- Ferry, N. M. (2005). Factors Influencing Career Choices of Adolescents and Young Adults in Rural Pennsylvania. *Journal of Extension*. Vol. 44 (3).
- Kerre B.W., (2010), *Inaugural Lecture Teaching and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): A Strategy for National Sustainable Development*. Moi University Press; Eldoret.
- Kochung E. & Migunde Q. (2011). Factors Influencing Students Career Choices among Secondary School students in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*. 2 (2), 81-87
- Kotler, P & Armstrong, G. (2003). *Principles of marketing*. 10th edition. Prentice hall of India private company; New Delhi
- Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A.(2003). *Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Nairobi.
- Perrone, K. M., Sedlacek, E. W. & Alexander, M.C. (2001). Gender and ethnic differences in career goal attainment. *Career Development Quarterly*. 50 (2), 168-178.
- Super, D.E., Savickas, M.L., & Super, C.M. (1996). The life-span approach to careers. In D. Brown, L. Brooks, & Associates (Eds.) *Career choice and development* (pp. 121-178). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.